

# SEO: In-House or Outsource?

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The internet has become the main marketplace for companies to do business and attract new customers which requires much more than simply having a website. Think of your website as your storefront, if no one can find your store then you cannot expect to do much business. The best way to attract new customers to your website and improve online visibility is through effective [search engine optimization \(SEO\)](#) strategies. Good SEO strategies include a combination of activities both on-site and off and usually require a team of experienced professionals to successfully implement including analysts, technical specialists, copywriters, strategists, web designers, and front and back-end developers.

SEO has become an important part of marketing and sales strategies which means that the question for businesses is not if they should invest their time or resources into developing an SEO strategy, but rather how they want to invest in an SEO strategy that will best achieve their marketing goals. Companies can choose one of the 2 approaches: they can either handle the SEO in-house or outsource their internet marketing to an agency that specializes in SEO strategies. There are advantages and disadvantages with each approach and deciding which one is best for your company largely depends on your company's goals, budget, and the importance of online marketing to your overall marketing campaign. The following guide lists some of the advantages and disadvantages of handling your SEO in-house and outsourcing your SEO to an agency.

## Handling Your SEO In-House

### *Advantages of In-House SEO*

- **In-House SEO Manager Knows the Business:** In order to develop a good SEO strategy, it is important for the SEO manager to understand various aspects of the business. Effective SEO strategies are always unique to the business and unlike an outside agency, an in-house SEO expert will already understand your company's daily business operations, needs, policies, and employees. Your in-house SEO manager also has access to company resources on a level that cannot be matched by an outside agency.
- **Confidentiality:** SEO agencies simultaneously manage multiple accounts from different clients which means that they are focusing on several other clients as they manage your SEO and the strategies they use for your company may also be used for your direct competitors. With an in-house SEO manager, you are guaranteed to have someone focusing exclusively on your SEO campaign and you can rest assured that information about your business or marketing campaign will not be shared with others.

### ***Disadvantages of In-House SEO***

- **High Risk:** As mentioned above, SEO involves many facets beyond traditional meta tags and descriptions including social media links, re-directs, canonical tags, and xml site-maps and much more. Creating an effective SEO strategy requires a good understanding of each of these facets because a mistake could prevent Google crawlers from finding and properly indexing your website. An SEO manager who does not have a full understanding of some SEO tactics is at high risk to unintentionally make a mistake that might be penalized by Google.
- **SEO Requires Consistent Training:** SEO strategies are constantly evolving as new technologies and Google algorithm updates are released. So your in-house SEO manager not only needs to be familiar with the main concepts of SEO marketing, but they must also continue to receive training and do research to stay up to date with the latest SEO tactics. This can cost companies time and money in providing additional training for their SEO manager.
- **High Investment of In-House SEO:** If you do not already have someone within your company that can handle the SEO responsibilities, you will need to hire one which will require paying an additional salary, benefits, vacation days, and training for a new person. Good SEO strategies also require a team to implement including a manager, data analyst, and content creator. Hiring at least three additional people to handle in-house SEO could be a significant investment for your company.

## **Outsourcing your SEO to an Agency**

### ***Advantages of Outsourcing SEO***

- **Trained SEO Experts:** SEO managers that work for marketing agencies are highly trained and experienced in the latest SEO strategies and they always stay up to date on new strategies and technologies. In this way, an agency that specializes in SEO can bring much more expertise and experience than an in-house SEO manager and the cost of the training for an SEO agency is shared between the agency and their clients.
- **Proven SEO Strategies:** Part of the risk of going with in-house SEO is that you may have to go through a process of trial and error before discovering which SEO strategies bring you the desired results. There is much less risk in the effectiveness of SEO strategies with an agency because they use proven methods that have been successful with other clients. Of course you have to do your homework before hiring an agency so make sure to ask them for past examples and case studies in which their strategies have yielded good results. You can also talk to their current clients to decide if you want to work with a certain agency. It is important to hire someone with a proven track record of SEO success.
- **Research and Development:** SEO agencies have worked with many different types of clients and as a result, they have developed a number of proven SEO strategies through research and implementation. The most successful strategies developed within an SEO agency can be applied to many different clients to achieve the same level of success.

- **Cost and ROI:** The cost of outsourcing your SEO to an agency is generally lower than the salary of a full time in-house SEO manager and as mentioned above, your company will not have to devote additional money and resources towards training or providing benefits. Hiring an SEO agency can also save costs with a better return on investment (ROI). SEO agencies have web analytics experts that can precisely measure data to determine which aspects of the SEO campaign are working and multiply them and which ones are not and eliminate them. This allows them to increase your ROI by maximizing what is working and reducing efforts on what is not working.

### ***Disadvantages of Outsourcing SEO***

- **Agencies Invest Time Coordinating Between Your Company and Web Development Team:** While SEO agencies can complete most of the work on their own, they still must coordinate their efforts with your company and any third parties handling your web design and development. This means that SEO agencies have to invest time reaching out to your company and your web developer to create and implement SEO strategies that will be productive and this can be difficult and time consuming to do. One way this problem can be resolved is by hiring an SEO agency that can handle the design and development of your website as well as your SEO.
- **Agencies May be Working with your Competitors:** If you hire an SEO agency that is working with one or more of your competitors, then chances are much of the same strategies they are using for your account are also being used for your competitors. It is wise to make sure that an agency is not working with any of your direct competitors before deciding to hire one.
- **Level of Expertise:** While there are many legitimate SEO agencies out there with seasoned SEO professionals, there are also many that provide SEO services with very little experience or expertise in the field. Make sure to ask an agency for case studies and current clients so you can ensure that they perform quality work.

### **Mix of In-House and Outsourced SEO**

If you are not sold on in-house SEO or outsourcing your SEO, you can do a mix of the two, sometimes referred to as in-sourcing, to have an agency handle highly technical aspects of your internet marketing campaign while keeping other aspects like content marketing in-house. This will allow your marketing personnel to assist the agency team with some of the SEO activities while reducing the expenses of hiring and training a new staff as well as the cost of SEO services from an agency. Several of our clients have found this approach useful as they can create their own content in-house while still outsourcing some of the highly technical aspects of their SEO marketing. The goal of in-sourcing is to help make the focus of your SEO campaign more clear and provide the SEO agency with content marketing materials as they cover the technical aspects of the campaign which will help the agency better achieve your marketing goals. With the right mix of strategies, in-sourcing can be a win-win situation for your company and the SEO agency.

There is no concrete answer to the question of whether your company should keep your SEO in-house or hire an agency to handle the SEO. You must weigh your goals for the SEO campaign and the desired level of involvement against your budget to help determine if your money is better spent on in-house SEO or hiring an agency to provide a higher level of expertise for less money. If you decide that hiring an agency is the way to go, compile a list of questions to ask to multiple agencies to get an accurate comparison before making a final decision.

Proceed Innovative, LLC has been providing internet marketing and [SEO services](#) for clients since 1996 with a focus on [SEO](#), paid search, [web design](#), analytics, lead generation, and [local SEO](#). We have many clients in a variety of different industries and our SEO experts can help you form an effective strategy that is unique to your business. [Contact us](#) to learn more about how we can help boost your online marketing campaign through proven SEO strategies.