

Marketers Step Up Collaboration with Agency Partners

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More complex digital campaigns encourage growing reliance on agency partners

Marketers have long relied on agency partners for **advertising** efforts, but in recent years, the degree and level of collaboration occurring between the two entities appears to be expanding. This is particularly true as the discipline of **digital marketing** gets more complex, requiring more resources and knowledge to execute around tactics like programmatic media buying and user experience **design**. It also means that agencies are increasingly involved in long-term strategic initiatives like product **innovation**.

According to research by [SoDA](#), an organization that puts out an annual report on the state of **marketing innovation**, one sign of the increasing spirit of collaboration between marketers and agencies is the number of retained partner agencies. More than half (52%) of marketers said they partnered with two or three agencies in 2016, a higher rate of collaboration than was seen in either 2014 or 2015.

While there's a number of reasons client-side marketers turn to agency partners for help, one

factor may be a growing skill gap related to more technologically-complex **digital marketing** techniques. When asked about their most significant **digital marketing** skill gaps, 61% indicated they had either a “major” or “minor” gap related to UX (user experience), while another 54% mentioned they had a major or minor gap related to programmatic media buying.

Client-side marketers’ need for outside support isn’t just limited to **digital marketing** knowledge, however. Increasingly, many are also asking agency partners to help them drive long-term strategic initiatives for traditional in-house disciplines like product **innovation**. In SoDA’s study, 50% of clients relied on agency partners to help them innovate on products and services, higher than any other category of partner.

This new role for agencies reflects a growing shift in the **advertising** space, driven not only by new opportunities to take advantage of **marketing** technology but also by its increasing complexity as well.

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