Maximizing Agency Revenue: The Power of SaaS Partnerships

Most marketing agencies are optimistic about revenue growth in 2023. This is despite challenges like a potential economic downturn that's seeing many companies rush to reduce their spending.

So, why should your agency feel good about the future?

As a marketing agency, you can stay agile. Whether you have an in-house team with a variety of skills or you work with contractors, your agency has the ability to adapt to a changing environment. This in itself drives value for your current and potential customers.

By working with you, your clients can adopt the latest tactics and trends quickly without the need to hire and train new employees.

Adding new services that help clients adjust to trends in the digital marketing space is an excellent way for you to grow your business.

In one survey by CallRail, a whopping 98% of agencies agree that new offerings will be the key to growth in 2023.

Let's take a closer look at some key digital marketing agency trends for 2023 and how you can increase revenue by offering new services and engaging in strategic partnerships to implement those new offerings.

Table of Contents

Looking ahead: marketing agency growth predictions for 2023

Want to know what's in store for marketing agencies in 2023? Here are a few key takeaways and trends you ought to know about.

Small business to continue working with agencies

Small businesses spent an average of $198,550 on outsourced services in 2022. Will that number go down if there's a recession?

According to Clutch's small business survey, it's actually the opposite.

Despite a potential economic recession, the outlook for marketing agencies that cater to small businesses remains positive.

Most small businesses are focused on growing their businesses in 2023 and beyond.

Not only that, but small businesses see outsourcing as a vital tool to help them weather any economic recession while still continuing to increase revenue.

Here are some key stats to know about small business outsourcing in 2023:

83% of small businesses plan to maintain or increase their outsourcing spending

52% of small businesses opt to work with firms or agencies when outsourcing

Marketing is the most common outsourcing need for small businesses
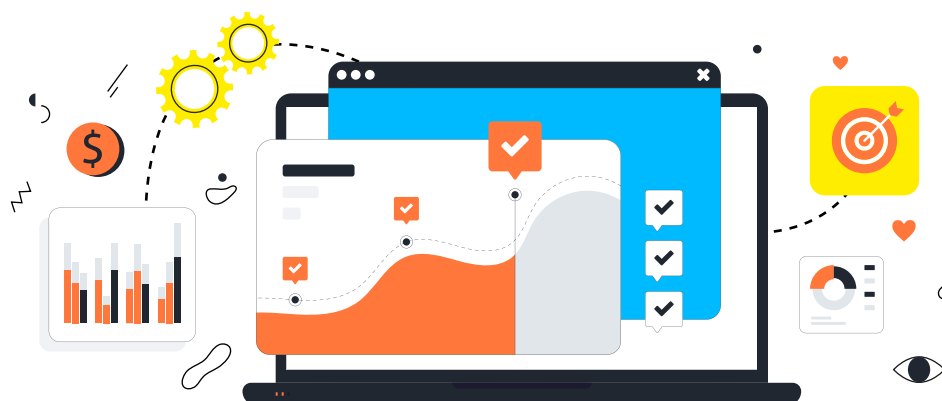
When surveyed, small businesses reported that their top motivations for outsourcing were reducing business expenses and filling skill gaps.

As many small businesses may not have fully developed marketing teams, agencies that offer more comprehensive services can create a competitive advantage with this audience.

Outsourcing motivations vary by size

A survey by Foundry found that 99% of clients rate their experience with outsourcing as very good or excellent. But the reasons clients look to outside agencies in the first place change depending on their size.

For smaller organizations (500-999 employees), the top outsourcing motivations include avoiding the time and money spent on hiring, **access to better technology** than they have in-house, and access to expertise.

If your agency wears multiple hats and brings powerful technology, you can create an advantage with the small organization segment. You can do so by expanding the number of services you offer and partnering with the right software providers to execute them.

In contrast, businesses with more than 5,000 employees were motivated by more efficient cost management, access to language skills and local expertise, and **support for scaling**.

If you want to target medium to large organizations, the ability to operate at scale is key. Clients want to know they can trust the tools in your tech stack.

GetResponse MAX offers powerful email and marketing automation tools that support businesses of all sizes. GOG is a digital distribution platform for video games and film content. Learn how GOG used GetResponse MAX to send emails to their millions of subscribers while maintaining a 99% delivery rate.

Doubling down on client retention

Return clients are an essential part of any marketing agency's business. That said, client retention has become a significant challenge for most marketing agencies.

The average marketing agency client retention rate dropped from 53% to 44% in 2022. A staggering 81% of agency marketers predict client retention will become more difficult in 2023 as other businesses look for ways to trim spending.

Because of these difficulties, agencies are more focused than ever on maintaining their long-term relationships.

In 2023, retainer income is expected to rise from 45% to 55% of total agency income. On the other hand, project-based revenue is expected to drop from 55% to 52%.
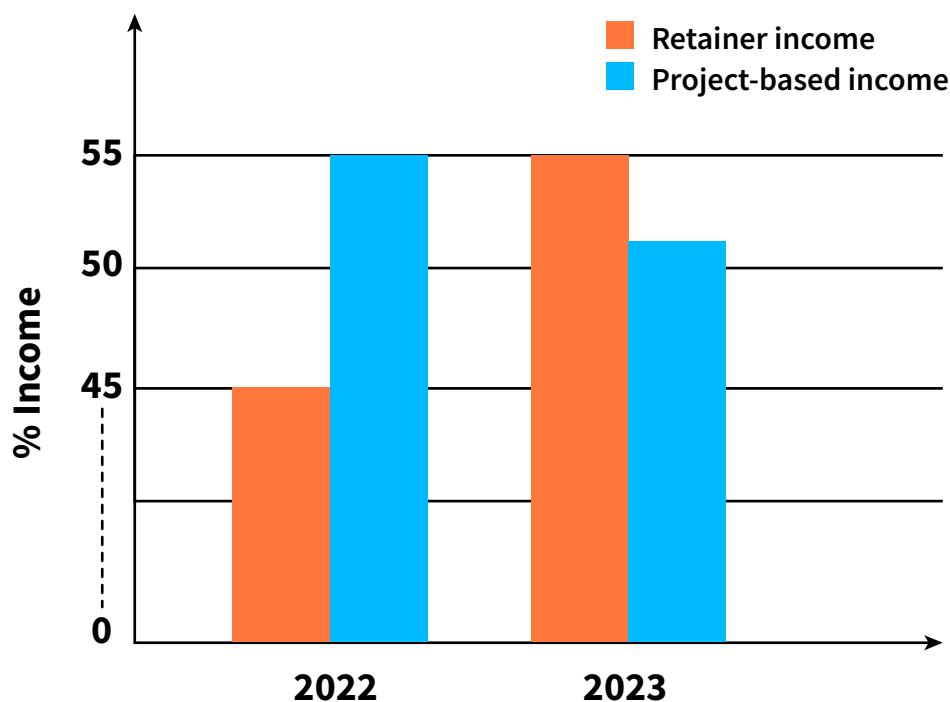
While project-based revenue and client acquisition remain important, the focus on retention is growing.

How can you increase client retention and shift towards more retainer income?

The way forward is all about winning more of each client's business by providing more holistic services.

Holistic services you can offer may look like:

- Comprehensive digital marketing solutions that include everything from content marketing and paid advertisements to social media management and email marketing automation.

- A full-service approach to a specific type of marketing. For example, SEO marketing agencies that handle strategy creation, execution for all types of SEO (on-page, off-page, and technical), and the tracking and reporting of KPIs.

- Partnering with tech providers and recommending new software to clients and helping them manage that software. For example, GetResponse MAX offers a partnership program for its all-in-one marketing automation platform that agencies can recommend to their clients and then help with executing email campaigns.

Expanding your agency's capabilities is the key to strengthening relationships with current customers and **creating stronger partnerships**. The more your clients can come to you to solve their problems, the more clients you'll be able to retain.
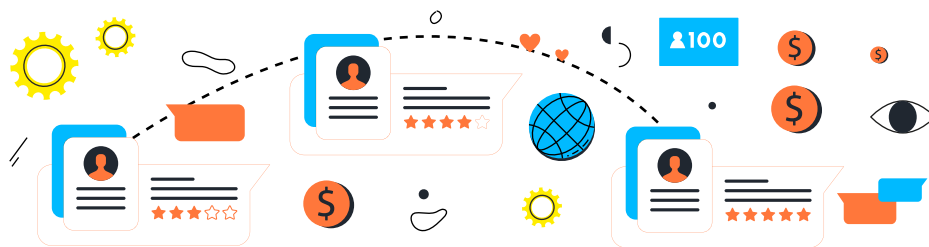
Why you need to add new services
And how they benefit your business

A total of 91% of agencies added new services in the past year. And 76% believe clients will want more comprehensive services in the next 5 years.

Here's how adding new services can boost your performance in the near future.

Improve client retention

Adding new services can help deepen relationships with existing clients by winning more of their business. By doing more for your clients, you become a strategic partner rather than a one-off provider.

Example

You own a content marketing agency that specializes in writing blog posts, and you want to move from single projects to retainer pricing. You create a retainer plan that includes new services, such as:

- Creating more content types, including white papers, case studies, and landing pages.
- Expanding into content strategy by pitching ideas and crafting editorial calendars.
- Adding distribution services, such as CMS uploads, and crafting social media posts to save your clients more time.

As a result, you become more valuable to your existing clients because you're executing more of their marketing strategy. They see you as an extension of their team.

The takeaway

When you offer a comprehensive set of services, you have a stronger pitch for a retainer contract. This helps you move away from a project-to-project basis and establishes a sense of continuity in your client relationships.

Attract more clients
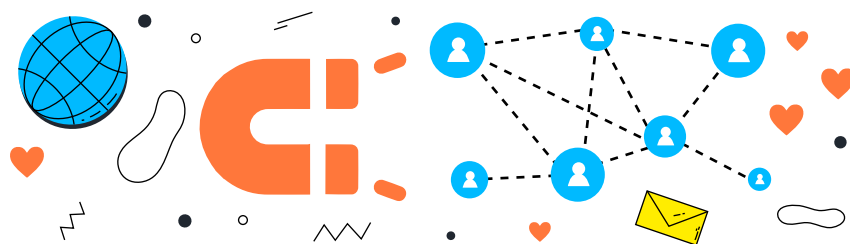
You can also use new services to attract a wider range of clients. This can mean entering new industries or being able to approach clients looking for services that aren't in your current list of offerings.

Example

You run a creative marketing agency that provides graphic design services to your clients. You decide to offer branding services as a way to win clients who want a more comprehensive solution. You do so by adding the following services:

- Market research
- Competitive research
- Brand identity design (name, logo, color palette)
- Style guide creation
- Website design and development
- Social media templates
- Packaging design

With your new services, you're able to win contracts with new businesses that need to establish their identity, as well as existing brands that want to refresh. Because you offer comprehensive services, your clients keep you on to execute the strategy you designed.

The takeaway

You can target clients looking specifically for your new services and improve your chance of winning leads who want comprehensive solutions. In other words, when you expand the services you offer, you also increase the size of your potential client pool.

Create a competitive edge

Offering services that other agencies don't can give you a unique competitive edge in your industry. Instead of trying to charge less than other agencies, you stand out by doing more.

Example

You're the owner of a web design agency that offers UI/UX designs for brands. To better compete with similar providers, you start offering web development services, such as:

- End-to-end web development
- Ecommerce store development
- Mobile website design and development
- Development consulting and website migration
- Routine website maintenance and content updates

Offering additional development and management services sets you apart from other design agencies. You're able to raise your prices because you deliver more value, and you create a monthly retainer plan for maintenance and updates, which means you have a longer relationship with your clients.

The takeaway

When you offer services other agencies don't, you can compete based on the value and time savings you deliver. This way, you're not tempted to lower prices and offer discounts, both of which can eat into your profit margins.

Diversify revenue streams
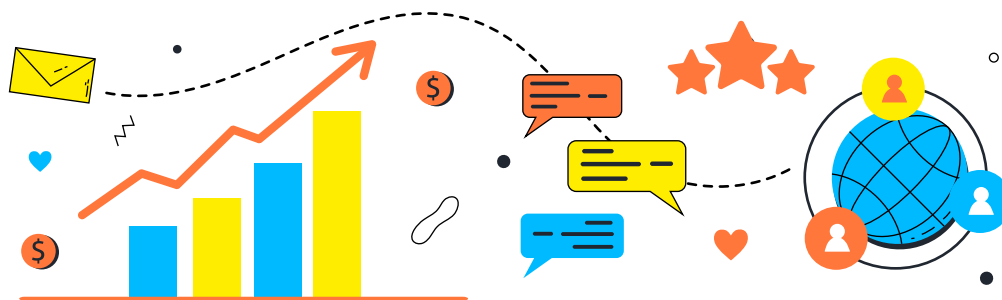
Every agency has its best clients. While top clients represent a more reliable source of income, becoming too reliant on a few contracts can be risky. Adding more services that help you attract new clients reduces your reliance on your biggest existing customers.

Example

Your agency handles social media and digital advertising. You schedule social media posts and paid ads for your biggest client, who represents the majority of your income. In order to win more business from other clients and bring on new customers, you add the following services:

- Social media video production
- Social media video editing
- Video sales funnels
- Animation and explainer videos
- Podcast production
- Video scheduling for Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube

By selling these services to your smaller clients, you reduce the percent of income earned by your top client. The new focus on video marketing for social media also helps you attract new brands who want to expand into video but don't have the internal resources to do it themselves.

The takeaway

Use new services to stay agile. In the digital marketing world, some trends come and go. If one service loses popularity, you have a more comprehensive list of services that lets you adapt and pivot.

Find the right services for your agency

When it comes to increasing services, there are several directions you can go in. The key is finding the **right mix of services** for you and the potential customers you want to target.

Here are a few strategies you can use to narrow down which services are the best fit for your marketing agency.

Ask your existing client base

Your current clients can provide valuable input and insight into what marketing services would have the most impact.

When you talk to your clients, ask them what trends and tactics they'd like to use.

> Ask clients which capabilities and types of expertise are lacking in their internal marketing team. This way, you know you're filling a **high-priority need** for them.

Analyze new target markets

If you want to expand your agency's reach into new segments, you can focus on adding services that support the clients you want to win in the future. Hone in on what marketing channels, activities, and metrics are most important for this target audience.

Consider your existing services

Another way to turn your marketing agency into a comprehensive solution for clients is to find the services that naturally complement your existing work.

For example, if you have a traditional advertising agency, you may choose to offer more social media marketing services to attract clients who want to improve their online presence. But if you have a creative agency, you can expand from simple graphic design to offer more advanced content creation, such as video production and editing.

Another benefit of adding on to your existing services is it makes it easier for clients to understand what type of marketing agency you are and **how you fit into their strategy**.

If you pick and choose services that aren't related to one another, clients can have a harder time understanding how to best work with your agency.

Research industry trends and competitors

Stay on top of digital marketing trends by adding new services. Research the services most relevant to your customers and check out what your competition is doing.

Here are the most common marketing industry agency offerings at the moment:

- Full-service digital
- Branding services
- Sales training
- Creative services
- Email marketing
- Website design and development

When looking at other agencies, think about the particular industries you serve. Make sure to ask yourself which services are the **most relevant and impactful for your target audience**.

Level up your new service offerings with strategic partnerships

Once you've established the right services to add by following the previous steps, it's time to figure out how you want to implement them.

Specifically, you should decide whether to develop them yourself or partner up with an experienced provider.

What does partnering with a tech provider look like?
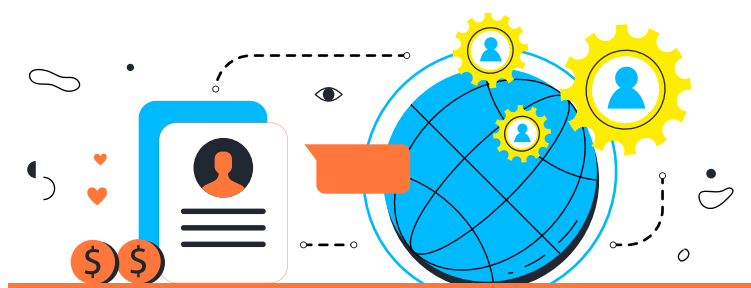
Strategic tech partnerships: the basics

What they are:

Strategic technology partnerships are working relationships you have with your software providers. You help sell their product, and they provide additional support for you and your clients.

Note that using marketing software doesn't automatically make you a partner. Typically, you'll sign up for these relationships with your provider.

How they work:

You use the software at your agency and **act as a reseller** for your partner by recommending it to your clients. As part of your services, you can help them implement the software and use it to enact their digital marketing strategies.

Your technology partner **pays you a commission** when clients take your recommendation and buy their software. In addition to profit-sharing benefits, tech platforms often provide premium benefits to their strategic partners.

For example, the GetResponse MAX Partner Program pays a lifetime commission when you recommend clients who sign up with the platform. You can also receive benefits like sales and technical training, a dedicated onboarding manager, and access to certification courses.

Get the most from your strategic partner programs

With strategic partnerships, the benefits you receive depend on how well you use the relationship to your advantage. In other words, you get out of them what you put in.

Here's how to work smarter (not harder) and use partnerships to deliver more value to your clients and boost your bottom line.
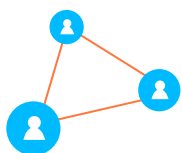
Leverage increased capabilities to win more clients

Increasing the tech capabilities you offer as part of your digital marketing services is especially impactful. The ability to help clients select the right providers for their tech stack and integrate new tools with their current workflows positions you as a valuable strategic asset.

Create more value for your clients by helping them get the most out of new technologies. You can do this by:

- Teaching them how to use the software.
- Managing the software for them.
- Helping them figure out which features to use.
- Answering questions that come up.

GetResponse MAX for marketing agencies makes it easy to manage multiple brands and add new users so you can work with your customers in whichever way is best for them.
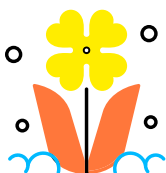
Create new revenue streams with profit-sharing

Understand that you bring value to your technology partners. After all, you're the one exposing them to new customers. Choose partners that offer commissions for referrals to create a new income stream for your marketing agency. This way, you don't rely solely on customer projects and retainers for your company's revenue.

Increase your revenue per client

Use your new capabilities to win more business from existing clients. Pitch your comprehensive services and show how you're **driving more value and saving them time** by managing new software providers.
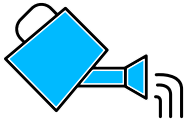
Take advantage of top-tier support

When you engage with your technology service providers at the partnership level, you become a preferred client. As such, your tech parztners are willing to go the extra mile for you and your clients. Collaborate with your technology partner to get the most from your relationship. You can do this by:

- Working with them to create custom solutions for your clients.
- Taking advantage of education programs and certification opportunities.
- Participating in co-marketing opportunities, like attending events.
- Giving feedback about the product to advocate for features your clients want.

What to look for in digital marketing agency partnerships

Agency owners know there's no shortage of tech partners available in the marketing industry.

The question business owners need to ask is, "Which partner is the right choice for my agency?"

Here are the factors to consider when evaluating potential partners for your business.

Factors affecting potential business partners

1. Product quality and fit
2. Competitive commission rates
3. Customer support
4. Relevant and flexible integrations
5. Ongoing growth opportunities

1. Product quality and fit

Is their product high quality? Does it create meaningful value for your customers? Maintaining the trust of your clients should be your number one priority. As such, you need to believe in the quality and capability of any product you recommend to them.

Additionally, if you're recommending products to clients, they should be a fit in terms of capabilities and budget.

> If you have a wide range of clients in terms of size and budget, look for a tech partner with **flexible pricing options and features** that can be tailored based on your clients' needs.

2. Competitive commission rates

Once you've found the products that meet your quality standards, compare the exact terms of the partnership programs. To get the most out of a profit-sharing business model, look for providers that offer **higher commission rates**.

3. Customer support

At the end of the day, it's going to be up to you to make sure your customers see a return on the tech you recommended to them. If there are any issues with onboarding or implementation, you want to be able to trust that your channel partners will be there to **support you when you need it**.

> Make sure to ask questions about what type of support is available. Can you get in touch with them through email, phone, and online chat? Understand which communication channels you need before committing to a partnership.

With GetResponse MAX, you get 24/7 support by phone, email, chat, and Slack.

4. Relevant and flexible integrations

Choose a partner that works well with your existing tools. Specifically, research their integrations to see which native connections they offer and what customization options you have. Success in digital marketing often comes from **access to data in real-time**.

As such, you want a provider that has the capability for API connections and effective data syncing. It's even better if you find a partner that can create custom integrations. This way, you know they can find a solution that works with your clients' tech stacks.

5. Ongoing growth opportunities

While high commission rates are excellent starting points for a potential partnership, the best programs offer even more. Look for partners that offer more well-rounded benefits for you and can help your agency grow.

In particular, keep an eye out for **learning opportunities, certification courses, and industry events** that can help you with business development. Ideally, you want a partner that's invested in your growth, too. That way, both of you will get the most out of the relationship.

Explore the GetResponse MAX Partner Program

GetResponse MAX is a powerful marketing automation platform that offers a highly competitive partnership program.

Become a GetResponse MAX partner and extend your services, deliver more value to clients, and earn industry-high commissions.

What your clients get

- Best-in-class award-winning marketing automation solution trusted by more than 100,000 businesses across the globe.
- An integrated marketing automation platform that can handle email automation, SMS marketing, Facebook and Google ads, and more.
- Top industry deliverability for email marketing.
- Unlimited monthly email volume and advanced segmentation.
- Ecommerce-focused tools, including AI recommendations and cart abandonment emails.

What you get

- Up to 50% commission (the highest rate in the SaaS industry).
- Knowledge base with training materials and use cases.
- Monthly partner product sessions.
- Access to an exclusive online community.
- Access to certification courses.
- Dedicated expert support.
- Seamless onboarding.
- Invite to our Annual Partners Meeting (Silver and Gold Resellers).
- Events to grow collaboration (Gold Resellers).
- Free MAX² account (Gold Resellers).
- Cross-marketing funding.

Join our Partner Program to get all the benefits of our powerful, industry-leading marketing automation platform.