This is our 1st annual Agency New Business Thought Leader Survey Report.

Given we at RSW/US typically generate questions for our surveys, we thought it would be helpful to get perspective from some of the industry's leading agency new business Thought Leaders.

We asked each of them to submit questions they believed would prove helpful to agencies across the country.

We would like to thank the following Thought Leaders for including questions in this survey:

Jay Baer
Michael Gass
Paul Roetzer
Tony Mikes
Tim Williams
Tom Martin
Peter Caputa
The 1st annual Agency New Business Thought Leader Survey was completed by 270 Agency Principals from across the United States during July 2013 and commissioned by RSW/US.

RSW/US is a full service, outsourced agency lead generation and new business development firm that helps marketing service companies (exclusively) find and win new business. They help Agencies find qualified leads, set meetings, better position them in the market, and help move them closer to close.

The following report provides an overall summary of findings as well as perspective from RSW/US.

For further perspective, click below to view the RSW/US webinar Perspectives on the 2013 Agency New Business Thought Leader Survey Report.

In this webinar, Mark Sneider reviews the questions directed at agency executives from our key industry thought leaders, providing insights and implications from agency responses.
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Please Note: All perspective is that of RSW/US. Separate interviews and guest blog posts will serve as platforms for our thought leaders’ perspective and insights.
Chapter 1:
Jay Baer asks...
Jay is hype-free social media and marketing keynote speaker, author, and consultant.

He speaks more than 75 times each year to groups as large as 5,000.

He has started 5 companies and consulted for 29 of the Fortune 500.

His blog is ranked as the #1 content marketing blog in the world, and he's author of 2 books including the new Youtility: Why Smart Marketing is About Help not Hype.

Jay can be reached via his site:

www.convinceandconvert.com

@jaybaer
CHAPTER 1: Jay Baer asks.

Question 1

Does your agency publish content on Slideshare?

Social Media Examiner calls SlideShare “The Quiet Giant.”

In their post, *How to Generate Leads With SlideShare*, they start with an interesting stat.

“Data collected by ComScore and presented in an infographic by Column Five Media, SlideShare: The Quiet Giant of Content Marketing, reveals SlideShare has 5 times more traffic from business owners than Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn (which now owns SlideShare).”

Reading this, you’d have to think a majority of agencies are utilizing it.

But that’s surprisingly not the case.
CHAPTER 1:
Jay Baer asks.

Question 1

Does your agency publish content on Slideshare?

With 79% of agencies not using it, Jay then asked, “Why do you or don’t you publish content on Slideshare?”
CHAPTER 1: Jay Baer asks.

Question 2

Why do you or don't you publish content on Slideshare?

“I never heard of Slideshare - and we have a director of Social Media - and this will be a question to her - in about ten minutes.”

Responses, like the one above, were interesting and fell into a three specific camps:

1) **No Time.** Further responses included:

   “Don't have the time to develop the content.”

   “We've thought about it, but being small (9 people), we don't have the resources to commit to publishing on Slideshare.”

   “We're behind the curve in producing thought leadership content.”
Why do you or don't you publish content on Slideshare?

RSW/US Perspective

As we see it, it’s the age-old agency new business problem—the story of the Cobbler’s Children.

Clients have to come first and the agency’s new business effort inevitably comes last.

But the presentations you could post on SlideShare are essentially already done and agencies don’t realize it.

You can take that amazing PowerPoint you created for your last client pitch and alter it to take out anything confidential or specific, highlighting not only your expertise and knowledge, but amazing creative as well.

SlideShare is a great companion to agency new business because it is so visual, and easily shareable across networks.
Why do you or don't you publish content on Slideshare?

“We know that others copy content. . . .we don't want our client strategies to be understood by companies outside our agencies sphere of influence”

2) **Competition.**

Responses like the one above,, while understandable in a big-picture sense, don’t need to be a concern for agencies.

The point of SlildeShare, or a main point in relation to agency new business, is to use it as a lead generator.

You certainly don’t have to share anything confidential.

You should use tools like SlideShare because the agency world *is* so competitive. It can help your agency stand apart from competitors.
**Question 2**

Why do you or don't you publish content on Slideshare?

3) **We use it and it works.** Responses included:

"Inbound links and another opportunity to showcase our work for prospective clients and staffers - shows agency is new media savvy."

"We started publishing content on Slideshare years ago because it positions us so well in search results."

"Demonstrates thought leadership and is an effective marketing channel."

We believe these are the agencies ahead of the curve.
CHAPTER 1:
Jay Baer asks. . . .

Question 2

Why do you or don't you publish content on Slideshare?

RSW/US Perspective

By starting small and committing to creating even one thought leadership piece a quarter that can be used multiple times, it will set your agency apart.

Here are a few links that will help if you’re interested in Slideshare:

How to Generate Leads With SlideShare

Jay Baer's SlideShare Site

RSW/US Slideshare Site
CHAPTER 1: Jay Baer asks

Question 3

Do your agency employees post multi-media content (photos, videos, presentations) to the newly expanded LinkedIn profile pages?

Encouraging to see 52% answering affirmatively.
CHAPTER 1: Jay Baer asks.

Question 3

Do your agency employees post multi-media content (photos, videos, presentations) to the newly expanded LinkedIn profile pages?

Agencies often miss newer features on channels like LinkedIn.

Photos, videos and presentations are ideal for prospecting efforts, especially on LinkedIn, where the majority of your prospects, regardless of sector, are.
Question 4

Why do they or don't they post on the newly expanded LinkedIn profile pages?

Responses included:

“It's the best business related network.”

“It's a good way to build awareness among the types of clients we pursue.”

“We require them to.”

RSW/US Perspective

The last quote above reminds us of Jeff Fromm’s (Barkley) presentation at the 2013 Mirren Conference. In it he described Barkley’s new business turnaround, saying he had a specific amount of individuals working on new business at the agency, that is, *the entire staff*.

Encouraging your entire team to participate will not only help the new business effort, but agency morale as well.
CHAPTER 1: Jay Baer asks.

Question 5 & 6

Does your agency make an effort to interview its future clients via blog posts or podcasts, and if so, or not-why?

![Bar Chart:]

- Yes: 23.60%
- No: 76.40%

76% of agencies saying no.
Does your agency make an effort to interview its future clients via blog posts or podcasts, and if so, or not-why?

The 24% of agencies currently interviewing prospects find it effective, providing responses like:

“To better understand the person, company, culture and key points on interest and pain.”

“It is an effective way to approach a prospect and show what our agency is about.”

“We believe it's valuable for prospects and clients like getting the extra publicity as well :)

A few agencies mentioned the difficulty in reaching certain prospects and that’s a fair point, but people generally enjoy talking about themselves.
CHAPTER 1:
Jay Baer asks.

Does your agency make an effort to interview its future clients via blog posts or podcasts, and if so, or not-why?

RSW/US Perspective

One way to effectively use blog posts and podcasts? Put some thought into a set of 5-8 questions that show your agency understands the general challenges prospects are facing and then make it all about them.

Your prospects will be much more receptive seeing good questions. And to make it easy to start, offer your prospect the option of a phone or email interview, rather than a podcast right out of the gate.

And lastly, several agencies in the “no” category saw the value:

“I never thought of it!”

“Haven't thought of that, I must admit.”

“No, but great idea.”
Chapter 2:
Michael Gass asks...
CHAPTER 2:
Michael Gass asks. . .

Michael Gass is an international new business consultant to advertising, digital, media and PR agencies. Since 2007 he has led in the use of social media and content marketing strategies to make agency new business EASIER.

He is the founder of Fuel Lines, which has been rated among the top 100 marketing blogs in the world, according to Ad Age’s Power 150.

Michael has worked face-to-face with well over 160 agencies in almost all 50 states here in the U.S. and with agencies in over 14 foreign countries.

Michael can be reached via his site: www.fuelingnewbusiness.com

@michaelgass
Do you currently use social media as part of your new business program?

An overwhelming “yes” with 92% answering affirmatively.

Encouraging to see these high numbers.
CHAPTER 2: Michael Gass asks . . . .

Do you currently use social media as part of your new business program?

RSW/US Perspective

The number one mistake agencies make when using social media is not following or interacting with their prospects. There are still too many agencies talking only to each other.

Another reason this high percentage is encouraging: more of your prospects are communicating this way.

An RSW/US new business director recently had a prospect tell her he “didn’t do voicemail” and not a lot of email either, other than internal company communication.

He essentially communicated through social channels on his phone, Twitter being the main one.
Has your agency had success using social media to generate new business leads?

“We see it as another critical touch point, not THE hook that’s going to bring a client in.” Agency Response

With 58% responding yes, it would appear agencies are more effectively using social channels to get new business. A good sign.
CHAPTER 2: Michael Gass asks.

Question 3

Briefly describe your agency's success or why you lacked success using social media for new business.

We saw several comments like this one:

"Continue to generate content for FB, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest and other sites -- and to merchandise our activity on our site and elsewhere -- but have yet to receive ANY value in return."

RSW/US Perspective

The first place we’d look in a situation like this: the value of the content being generated.

Is it targeted to your prospects’ sectors? Is it bringing value to your prospect’s “world” or simply rehashing other’s thoughts?

And most importantly, are you overtly selling? Don’t. Per the below quote in response to Michael’s question:

“.. Fortune brands are more traditional in their communications. They don't want to be pitched on Twitter."
Briefly describe your agency's success or why you lacked success using social media for new business

“Don't think it's the primary channel for our clients.”

This respondent's comment is a viable point to consider—certain sectors are still behind in their use of social, so don’t waste your time if that’s the case.

Social is just one channel, you can’t let it be the only one.

“Our Agency Management is more convinced of the face-to-face approach…”

We know from our experience at RSW/US that different marketers respond to different methods of outreach.

Which is why you have to mix it up, and use every channel available, to better your chances of breaking through.
Briefly describe your agency's success or why you lacked success using social media for new business

And lastly, a few further responses from agencies finding real success in social:

“90% of our new leads come because we have leveraged SEO for our agency through social media, blogging, Twitter, FB, etc.”

“Almost 80,000 organic followers - we produce a new white paper every week so we have original content. The white paper also serves as continuing Ed for our employees, as the responsibility to write the paper rotates through the agency. With each white paper, we write 5 tweets and put them into TweetAdder rotation. More than 60% of our website traffic come from social media links, primarily Twitter. Organic (SEO) accounts for close to 30%.”

“We have had 2 clients contact us as a result of FB and Twitter postings.”
What is the most important social media platform for your agency's new business?

- Blog: 24.14%
- Facebook: 13.79%
- Twitter: 13.79%
- LinkedIn: 46.21%
- Google+: 2.07%
What is the most important social media platform for your agency's new business?

While the majority of agencies use LinkedIn, Michael, and we, would tell you, when used in concert with other channels, blogging can be extremely effective.

Understandably, agencies get quickly frustrated with it—blogging does take time and it doesn’t get any easier over time to come up with good original content.

We’ve talked about it in our own posts (Why Agency New Business Is Like A NYC Cab Driver), but agencies have to start small and be realistic.

Even one, sector-focused post a month highlighting your thought leadership in the space will help your new business effort.

Here are a few links from Michael’s blog, Fuel Lines that will help:

Why You Need Content for Ad Agency New Business

20 Tips to Create a Niche Blog for Ad Agency New Business
Chapter 3: Paul Roetzer asks...
Paul Roetzer is founder and CEO of PR 20/20, a Cleveland-based inbound marketing agency; author of The Marketing Agency Blueprint (Wiley); and creator of Marketing Agency Insider - the hub for a more open and collaborative agency ecosystem - and Marketing Score - a free assessment tool and marketing intelligence engine.

Paul and his team at PR20/20 can be reached via his site: www.pr2020.com
What pricing model do you use for the majority of your services?

“Set project pricing” rates at the top (37%), although there’s a fairly even split between billable, project and retainer pricing.
CHAPTER 3: Paul Roetzer asks.

Question 1

What pricing model do you use for the majority of your services?

Paul, and others, have made a case over the past several years to do away with billable hours. Here’s a quote from one of Paul’s blog posts:

“I discovered early on that the billable-hour model was a flawed, archaic, agency-centric system that wrongly ties agency performance to outputs.” [Adios Billable Hours]

And Avi Dan wrote in the Forbes piece, “In The Upside-Down World Of Agency Fees, Is Coming Up With Bad Ads Worth More Than A Good One?”:

“The biggest problem with hourly fees is that they do not separate the sheep from the goats. By agreeing to pay upfront for hours of work, not for ideas, clients often pay equally for a bad idea, as they do for a good idea.”

Yet, looking at the results, it would seem the billable hours model is still viable, or at least ingrained, into agency culture for 34% of agencies surveyed.
How satisfied or not satisfied are your clients (in general) with your pricing model

Positive on its face with over 75% of agencies stating their clients were satisfied or very satisfied.
CHAPTER 3: Paul Roetzer asks.

**Question 3**

Why do you use the pricing model you do?

Answers were varied and shed some light on where agencies find themselves:

“Fixed pricing just can't work. Clients will always take advantage under that model. Billable hours is the most transparent, and the most fair to all parties.”

“Clients want transparency in pricing; and believe hours are the only unit that can be measured and manipulated.”

“Our clients are most comfortable working from a strong project scope and defined project fee. We do include contingencies for changes in scope and scope creep.”
What percent of your clients who are on retainer have left, or been let go by your agency, in the past 12 months?

Almost 65% of agencies stating only 0-10% have left or been let go.
Chapter 4:

Tony Mikes asks...
Second Wind is a powerful information resource designed with one thing in mind – helping smaller and midsize advertising agencies, design firms and related businesses to be better.

Our goal is to help your agency be stronger, faster, smarter, more creative and ready for anything that comes. And not just ready to defend your position against competitors -- but ready to out-maneuver them, out-strategize them, and out-service them. Second Wind can take you to the next level.

Tony and his team can be reached via their site: www.secondwindonline.com
CHAPTER 4: Tony Mikes asks.

Question 1

Check the one response below that best describes your new business process.

Answers to Tony’s initial question were spread across the board with teams led by the agency principal proving to be the most prevalent structure for agency new business teams.
Question 1

Check the one response below that best describes your new business process.

It’s encouraging to see such a high percentage of agency principals take the lead, but it can also be a double-edged sword. We’ve touched on this previously in our RSW/US blog.

“The problem is, the principal is the person in the agency that has the least amount of time. No question that the principal is going to know the agency better than anyone else, but letting a principal make decisions on their own isn’t always best for an agency – specifically when it comes to new business.

The problem with making decisions on their own is that just like many small business owners, they work in a vacuum.” Don’t Operate in a Vacuum

Those agency principals that can be objective and recognize when it makes sense to have others involved most often succeed in these situations.
CHAPTER 4: Tony Mikes asks.

Question 2

How effective or not effective is your new business process?

Over 50% of agencies surveyed state their new business process is “effective” to “highly effective.”
How effective or not effective is your new business process?

RSW/US Perspective

While cause for celebration, we talk to countless agencies who don’t have the time or sales background to maintain new business programs.

And those we talk to whose programs are doing well are often solid due to referrals and networking.

We know these avenues don’t last forever however, and at the very least are sporadic in their timing—the best time to invest is when business is doing well.
CHAPTER 4:
Tony Mikes asks . . . .

Question 3

Do you practice "shameless self-promotion" (using available tactics to build awareness of your agency brand, people, creative work and client success stories)?

RSW/US Perspective

With 60% saying yes to this question, it should be noted, Tony’s definition of “shameless self-promotion,” as well as ours, comes from the position of thought leadership and not overt, pushy sales tactics.

We find too many agencies don’t take the time to highlight their thought leadership or success.

There is a difference between talking about your agency incessantly to the exclusion of the prospect (and to your detriment) and showing that your agency “gets it” and is expert in the space.
Question 4

Which agency self-promotion tactics do you find most beneficial for generating leads?

- Content marketing through... 62.64%
- Press releases/publicity 50.55%
- Social media (e.g. Twitter...) 57.14%
- Agency blog 58.24%
- Community/civic work 32.97%
- Referrals program 30.77%
- Targeted direct mail to qualified... 41.76%
- Email lead capture program 29.67%
- Client case studies 62.64%
- Advertising 19.78%
CHAPTER 4: Tony Mikes asks.

Question 4

Which agency self-promotion tactics do you find most beneficial for generating leads?

RSW/US Perspective

Encouraging to see so many channels being used by agencies for new business and reaffirms the importance of client case studies and content marketing through agency websites for success as well.

The true key to success here is utilizing multiple channels, it’s the approach we take at RSW/US and ensures touching prospects in multiple ways to cover all bases.

Further reading: Agency New Business Discussion with Tony Mikes from Second Wind
Chapter 5: Tim Williams asks...
Ignition Consulting Group is the leading knowledge hub for marketing communications professionals devoted to helping marketing firms create and capture more value.

Ignition exists to provide not just information, but insights designed to help make you - and your firm - more valuable and relevant to your clients.

You can reach Tim and the Ignition Consulting Group team via his site: www.ignitiongroup.com

@TimWilliamsICG
CHAPTER 5:
Tim Williams asks.......

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "Our agency has a focused positioning strategy designed to attract clients that want us for what we do best".

![Bar chart showing percentage agreement with the statement]

- 10 = Agree: 17.76%
- 9: 15.79%
- 8: 17.11%
- 7: 19.74%
- 6: 7.24%
- 5: 11.18%
- 4: 3.95%
- 3: 3.29%
- 2: 2.63%
- 1 = Disagree: 1.32%
Question 1

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "Our agency has a focused positioning strategy designed to attract clients that want us for what we do best".

RSW/US Perspective

Over 65% of agencies agree. Tim’s first question should be top of mind for every agency and should be revisited at least quarterly.

Why?

Because it’s been our experience that many agencies may believe their positioning is focused and designed to attract clients, when in fact it’s at best generic, or at worst, hurting them.

Agencies should never take for granted that their positioning is rock-solid without the opinion of someone outside the agency-like a current client or others outside the industry that can give an unbiased opinion.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "Our agency has a set of core values that guide our business dealings with clients, associates, and business partners".
CHAPTER 5: Tim Williams asks.

Question 2

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "Our agency has a set of core values that guide our business dealings with clients, associates, and business partners".

RSW/US Perspective

A surprise that the agreement isn’t closer to 100% on Tim’s second question.

Without those core values it makes it harder to guide your team, whether managing current clients or when pursuing new business.

Every employee should have an idea of what those values are.

One point to make in regards to new business-do your best to show those values to clients and prospects, rather than talk too much about them, especially early in the relationship.

Agencies tend to talk a lot about philosophy and values to the point a prospect will shut down. While a part of the agency and important to the culture, merely talking about them, or talking too much about them, isn’t what a prospect is interested in up front.
CHAPTER 5: Tim Williams asks.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "The people who work at our agency are inspired by a sense of purpose that transcends just making money".

- 1 = Disagree: 0.66%
- 2: 1.99%
- 3: 3.97%
- 4: 4.64%
- 5: 8.61%
- 6: 5.30%
- 7: 21.19%
- 8: 20.53%
- 9: 15.89%
- 10 = Agree: 17.22%
CHAPTER 5: Tim Williams asks...

Question 3

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "The people who work at our agency are inspired by a sense of purpose that transcends just making money".

RSW/US Perspective

An overwhelming majority of agencies agreed.

Never underestimate the driving inspiration that is making money, but as the past several years have shown at agencies, even when individuals are making money, they’ll ultimately leave if they’re not happy.

And if they can’t afford to leave and still aren’t happy, it’s even worse.

Of course, it’s always a balance between keeping your staff happy by providing an amazing space, culture and perks and “be lucky knowing you have a great place to work-sit down and get to it.”

Further reading from Tim’s blog:

What is your value proposition?
Chapter 6: Tom Martin asks...
CHAPTER 6: Tom Martin asks.

Tom is a 20+ year veteran of the ad agency industry, over half of which has been spent leading new business efforts, with a penchant for stiff drinks, good debates, and digital gadgets.

He helps agencies create innovative and effective digital marketing strategies and shows them how to painlessly prospect their way to more clients.

You can reach Tom via his site: www.conversedigital.com
CHAPTER 6: Tom Martin asks......

**Question 1**

Does your agency have a formal inbound business development program where you are creating and sharing content on the web that is designed to be found by prospective clients who then contact you?

Almost dead even between yes and no, and impressive that so many agencies do have an inbound program.
CHAPTER 6: Tom Martin asks.

**Question 1**

Does your agency have a formal inbound business development program where you are creating and sharing content on the web that is designed to be found by prospective clients who then contact you?

**RSW/US Perspective**

One of the biggest challenges we see from agency clients, beyond maintaining a new business program, is creating content for the effort.

And this challenge typically prevents many agencies from either starting or maintaining an inbound marketing effort.

Further to that challenge is the difficulty many agencies have in disseminating the content once it is created. With so many viable options, it can become daunting and time-consuming.
CHAPTER 6: Tom Martin asks......

Question 2

Please explain why do you (or don't you) have a formal inbound business development program?

“We are just too lazy or busy working on our client's business.” Respondent Comment

And another comment we’ve heard in relation to an inbound program:

“We have the beginnings of one, but we have trouble getting out of our own way.”

Reasons for this can be too many staff members involved, not focused enough, agencies doubting there’s anything to write about or lack of organization via an editorial calendar, for example.
CHAPTER 6: Tom Martin asks . . . .

Question 2

Please explain why do you (or don't you) have a formal inbound business development program?

Several agencies see the value in inbound:

“Because we can't hunt anymore. We must learn to farm and this is the way to do it.” Respondent Comment

To make content work for your agency, one quality blog post, survey report or white paper a month is an excellent place to start.

“It's a great way to share our thinking and provide value to prospects.” Respondent Comment
Question 3

What do you most often do with the leads that you get from your inbound business development program?

- Call them: 68.03%
- Email them: 25.85%
- Drop them into an automated...: 2.04%
- Nothing: 4.08%
CHAPTER 6:
Tom Martin asks.

Question 3

What do you most often do with the leads that you get from your inbound business development program?

RSW/US Perspective

Good to see such a high percentage of agencies are actually following up on those leads.

But often with those that are, we find they don’t have any sort of plan when they do call or email.

Certainly the follow up strategy depends on the information the lead gives the agency (if there is any) but where we see agencies drop the ball is not moving the potential relationship forward in that follow up call.

You don’t want to alienate the prospect or be overly pushy, but once you’ve asked relevant questions about the prospect’s challenges, respectfully ask for that second call or face-to-face meeting.
What percent of your inbound leads request a formal proposal & what percent of proposals/leads convert into clients?
What percent of your inbound leads request a formal proposal & what percent of proposals/leads convert into clients?

Fairly similar to what we see on average: 30-50% of leads turn into proposals or initial pitches.

Most important here: Agencies have to make sure leads are well-qualified on the inbound-side.

We’ve seen situations where inbound leads are entirely too small in terms of company size for example, or not aligned with the agency’s “right-client” goals.

Further reading from Tom’s Converse Digital blog: Inbound Marketing versus Outbound Marketing Compared
Chapter 7:

Peter Caputa asks...
The final set of questions comes from Peter Caputa IV. Peter is VP Sales @Hubspot overseeing 120 salespeople. Each of these salespeople work with marketing agencies, helping them to secure longer and larger retainer work, and retain those accounts by delivering ever-improving ROI.

His team helps his more than 1200 agencies generate tens of thousands of new leads every month, secure 100's of new retainer clients and retain more than 98% of their clients on a monthly basis.

Peter can be reached via HubSpot at:
www.hubspot.com/partners

@pc4media
CHAPTER 7: Peter Caputa asks . . . .

Question 1

What % of your monthly revenue is from long term retainers where you perform a consistent amount of work each month and charge a consistent fee per month?

- 0-25%: 36.05%
- 26-50%: 21.77%
- 51-75%: 27.21%
- 76-100%: 14.97%
CHAPTER 7:
Peter Caputa asks . . . .

Question 1

What % of your monthly revenue is from long term retainers where you perform a consistent amount of work each month and charge a consistent fee per month?

RSW/US Perspective

With answers spread fairly evenly; it’s a testament to the cyclical nature of retainer agreements.

Certainly agencies have seen retainers shrink in duration as marketers tend to move against agencies or use multiple agencies depending on the project.

This leaves open many more opportunities for agencies to win new business if they’re open to starting on projects and working their way up.

At RSW/US, many clients build relationships by starting this way.
CHAPTER 7: Peter Caputa asks.

Question 2

What % of your clients would say, "The services our agency provides consistently helps us grow our traffic, leads, and sales every month - month over month. They measure and improve the ROI of their services every month."

The answer to this question is certainly dependant on what kind of agency is answering the questions, and the specific needs of the marketer hiring the agency.
What % of your clients would say, "The services our agency provides consistently helps us grow our traffic, leads, and sales every month - month over month. They measure and improve the ROI of their services every month."

**RSW/US Perspective**

As an increasing number of marketers focus further on Return on Investment and are responsible for justifying how their marketing drives leads and sales, agencies will need to provide this type of data as a matter of course.
“Which of the following sales, marketing, and services activities do you perform regularly in order to acquire and retain accounts?”

- Generating opt-in leads: 33.80%
- Building a list of target...: 61.27%
- Prospecting in order to connect with...: 69.72%
- Connecting in order to probe for...: 63.38%
- Setting up exploratory conversations...: 71.83%
- Setting up plan development...: 49.30%
- Presenting a solution: 75.35%
- Working with your new client to...: 61.27%
- Reviewing results with clients: 70.42%
CHAPTER 7: Peter Caputa asks.

**Question 3**

“Which of the following sales, marketing, and services activities do you perform regularly in order to acquire and retain accounts?”

**RSW/US Perspective**

When all is said and done, agencies exist for one reason—to find that solution for the client, whatever it may be.

And too often, agencies forget that it starts up front with the agency new business process.

Your end goal is to provide the solution that will solve the prospect/future client’s problem.

The reach-out, content and meeting strategy should always be based on this guiding principal to ensure success.
“Which of the following sales, marketing, and services activities do you perform regularly in order to acquire and retain accounts?”

RSW/US Perspective

While inbound is certainly an important element in the overall new business process, we see from these responses that outreach is by far the most dominant means of connecting with prospective clients.

And once that connection is made, it’s about presenting a solution and showcasing results to convince your prospects you’ve met their challenges, or similar challenges, with success and can handle their current challenges with similar success.

Further reading from Peter in HubSpot’s blog: BANT Isn’t Enough Anymore: A New Framework for Qualifying Prospects
Chapter 8:
Open-Ended Agency Comments
Chapter 8: Open-Ended Agency Comments

The following chapter contains further examples of questions agencies answered in fuller detail by question. We present these in response to agencies requesting more detail on the feedback their peers are offering.

Note: Open-ended comments on the remaining pages of this report are presented as given and were included as typed on the survey.
Jay Baer asks . . .

Why do you or don't you publish content on Slideshare?

“We do when we think it can advance our reputation for thought leadership. We don't when we feel the info is proprietary or involves client info that we feel we should not give away to common domain.”

“Not enough time to manage the social media channels we have or to create content that would make sense to share.”

“Uncertain of value of our content.”

“Inbound link and another opportunity to showcase our work for prospective clients and staffers - shows agency is new media savvy.”

“Great for SEO and exposure.”

“It's another way to get thought leadership pieces out there. It's another 'layer of the cake'. “

“Great way to demonstrate our work.”
Why do you or don't you publish content on Slideshare?

“Client case studies and thought leader white papers.”

“Good way to attract talent by showing how we think.”

“To promote our thought leadership in our area of expertise”

“Demonstrates thought leadership and is an effective marketing channel.”

“Its a good repository of content that gets a lot of traffic.”

“To make it easily available to contacts, clients and potential clients.”

“#1 To help others solve problems.”
Why do you or don't you publish content on Slideshare?

“We have uploaded a few presentations on Slideshare, but that medium has not been on our Content 'radar screen'. It is now!”

“We use it primarily as a new business tool publishing large Power Points.”

“Haven't heard any stories of new business dropping into an agency's lap because of it. Otherwise, you need to keep your best ideas for your clients and not the general surfing public.”

“We publish where we expect and understand core customer groups to gather for the greatest high-quality traffic and conversion potential.”

“As with most social media channels, it's narcissistic superficiality and "look at me" over any real substance.”

“To reach potential clients in healthcare recruiting.”
“We think linked in is our best access to prospects.”

“Strong interest in using new tools and channels.”

“We focus on other media.”

“We require them to.”

“We're a B2B agency, so it's the right place for us to be.”

“We purposely don't have a company LinkedIn page.”

“We have just had a conversation about including LinkedIn in our mix. I think it could be valuable, some of the younger staff have mixed feelings.”

“We want to be viewed as content marketing thought leaders.”
“I think it adds great value and we've been told more people look at content if it's media rich with photos and videos and the like.”

“Believe LinkedIn to be much more valuable and productive than Facebook or Twitter.”

“Didn't know about the newly expanded LI profiles!”

“No one really takes leadership on this channel.”

“Never have found LinkedIn to be a very good source for biz dev. Too crowded.”

“We grow our followers and see real engagement when we post on our LinkedIn profile page. Plus we look better than the majority of other companies (that are not taking advantage of this).”
“Linkedin is one of our primary recruiting resources. We also have made connections leading to new business opps. We do because LinkedIn is the 'go to' social media network for business.”

“We do: it's a great way to pump content out to individuals who are likely to be interested in what you're saying. We need to do it more often.”

“We love Linkedin. It's a great tool for new business.”

“Linkedin is quickly becoming the most important social tool for anyone in our space to build new business when your not on the new business team.”
CHAPTER 8: Open-Ended Agency Comments

Ch. 1: Questions 5 & 6

Jay Baer asks. . . .

Does your agency make an effort to "interview its future clients" via blog posts or podcasts, and if so, or not—why?

“It's tough to get their attention and when we do we want to focus on their issues and how we can help solve them.”

“Desire to maintain awareness, but more importantly, to ensure a steady pipeline.”

“To learn about what needs they need met.”

“Very interesting concept. We just have not visited that idea yet.”

“Great way for a non intrusive date.”

“It is what people want these days.”

“To better understand the person, company, culture and key points on interest and pain.”
Jay Baer asks.

Does your agency make an effort to "interview its future clients" via blog posts or podcasts, and if so, or not-why?

“Not part of our current outreach program....but a good idea, thank you.”

“It is a effective way to approach a prospect and show what our agency is about.”

“Access to thought leaders in healthcare can be difficult.”

“Need to learn how.”

“It's important for us to get a good feel for our potential new clients. Our agency has a very distinctive personality. Fit is a priority for us. Otherwise they will just end up being an ex client.”

“We believe it's valuable for prospects and clients like getting the extra publicity as well. : )”
Does your agency make an effort to "interview its future clients" via blog posts or podcasts, and if so, or not-why?

“We want to get a jump start on the sales process.”

“Never thought it possible.”

“It is critical to find the right match and the earlier in the conversation you can determine whether you are a good match the better. We don't want to spend lots of time and energy with a prospect who is looking for different value or relation type.”

“Great ice-breaker.”

“Time.”

“Prospect, prospect, prospect. Interviewing them allows us the opportunity to make sure there is a fit.”
“It's a qualifier to be in a competitive pitch. You must have a decent SM package.”

“Currently used as lead complement/supplement tool rather than overt lead generation tool.”

“We've generated a good bit of new business via social media, but primarily through programs we've developed for our clients. Companies inquire about the programs with our clients and they refer them to us. We also proactively engage w/ prospects on social media in various manners.”

“To be clear we have not had any trackable success. Our presence in SM has certainly gained us traction but as yet no one-to-one correlation.”
“Qualified prospects have reached out to us for our core competence, resulting in a shorter sales cycle and entering at a higher point in the relationship.”

“We've recently made some significant updates to our web site as well as other social media channels. Activity on our site has dramatically increased as well as inquiries that result from activity either from social media or web site.”

“I think we need to tick both boxes. On one hand, I think the Social stream and our fresh content looks alive on the front page of the website, so - I think we need to be there. But - as outreach, I don't think it's effective. We have, for a client, created content that gets thousands of hits a week and has built to a total of close to a million downloads - with great feedback. And the content is classic and classy and attracted stories on NPR and WSJ, etc. But - it hasn't moved the needle on his sales.”
“Don't think it's the primary channel for our clients.”

“Intercepting requests for agency services, announcements of rfps, changes in marketing, failures in marketing, understanding points of pain.”

“We use it as an opportunity to bring our agency brand to life, showcase our work and share what inspires us. The ability for 2-way dialogue has allowed us to strengthen our relationships with our fans, our clients, our prospects and potential new hires.”

“Constantly engaging with followers and following others while providing new industry content.”

“We use social media, but we cannot measure if it is helpful for new biz engagement.”
Michael Gass asks. . . .

Briefly describe your agency's success or why you lacked success using social media for new business

“Our social media programs have not been optimized, but it has helped get our message out following prospects on social media is helpful.”

“90% of our new leads come because we have leveraged SEO for our agency through social media, blogging, Twitter, FB, etc.”

“We see content as our secret sauce and it brings prospects to us.”

“Time consuming process. - Focused on wrong industry. - We don't have a prominent (well-known) figure in our agency.”

“In truth, I don't think that's how clients of any legitimate size pick an agency (you know, those with real budgets that allow us to make a living). Referrals, speaking at industry (the potential client's industry) events and personal e-mails with real and relevant info do a much better job.”
"It's keep us top of mind. Allows the agency to stand out when we do something great in a quick, clean and easy way."

"Companies find us there. Our thought leadership is displayed there. Our corporate culture is seen there. They do some of their due diligence on us there. We start discussions in social media."

"Clients are Not into Social media yet."

"Lack of consistent program and follow up."

"It's a new program so we'll see. But it's pushing us to be more innovative and correspond with existing and lapsed clients."

"Twitter has been a PHENOMENAL dialogue medium."

"Increased out of state leads."

Michael Gass asks...
Michael Gass asks. . . .

Briefly describe your agency's success or why you lacked success using social media for new business

“We were able to demonstrate modernity and a depth of knowledge, we were also being followed and observed.”

“Got a client based on our Twitter postings and expertise.”

“We monitor our presence in the social space but our best successes still come from more traditional, integrated disciplines and old-fashioned techniques like actual person-to-person communication. Things like "taking" and "interacting" and "engaging" and "immersion" that have gone out of fashion with today's abject celebration of self-involved self-aggrandizement.”

“Built visibility for the agency via Twitter. Demonstrated that we get it by following prospects.”

“We get "nibbles" which lead to bigger conversations.”
“We believe that all projects have a value - some are higher and some are lower. and those values are not necessarily related to how long it takes to complete a project but more to how important the project is to the client's business. (Brand identity is more valuable than an ad resize for instance.) Using a fixed project fee model, everyone agrees on the value for the project up front. The clients like this approach because they know their cost in advance, and the agency likes it because we can manage our resources against that cost. Plus, we are incentivized to get it right the first time - the sooner we get it right, the more money we make. However, we define the project very tightly so that we have room to requote should the client change the scope of work, or takes advantage by making too many revisions.”

“Rewarded for the quality of work we put out. Allows us to spend as much time as we need without bumping and hourly budget. Consistent cash flow for the agency.”
“Our clients are most comfortable working from a strong project scope and defined project fee. We do include contingencies for changes in scope and scope creep.”

“Ease - we also use a blended rate for the same reason. the challenge is selling X amount of hours, as we have to monitor how many hours we've used and often have to justify after the fact. But, we would never want another black panther retainer again.”

“We manage all aspects of promotion. Our fee is based on a proportion of the full budget (which is based on sales goals) and we don't want any of our direction or recommendations judged as though we had any greater or lesser reason to suggest one way over another.”

“Ensures the most consistent level of profitability while also allowing us to hold our clients accountable to scope we tend to develop annual plans so we can properly staff and plan.”
Why do you use the pricing model you do?

“We have talked a lot about this and how we need to modify our pricing. Clients want to know what they're getting for their money so I think more of a "project based" (and value-based) model may be better.

“Habit.”

“Typically, it's what clients select because it's what their purchasing department understands and benchmarks with for their own internal evaluation. We really don't care about the model, we just need a fair compensation in the end.”

“Because we are following procurement's lead.”

“Fixed pricing just can't work. Clients will always take advantage under that model. Billable hours is the most transparent, and the most fair to all parties.”
"Staffing constraints - also, we have sales people who are constantly uncovering new leads, so an inbound program isn't a top priority."

"Building an image and being out there is critical to success."

"Great way to share our thinking and provide value to prospects."

"The online and seminar feedback we have heard is that these programs only work if you make a huge financial and time commitment to do this. It also is typically performed in a way we find cheapens our services."

"We "think" we do - and to some extent we do - but it's not solid enough - and - we suspect that the clients we need to attract (at the level at which we're hired) are not driven by Social. Our very anecdotal info (clients we actually have - and some prospects we're 'getting to know' - seem to bear that out."
Question 2

Tom Martin asks. . . .

Please explain why do you (or don't you) have a formal inbound business development program?

“We are just too lazy or busy working on our client's business.”

“You must be active and persistent.”

“Having inbound new business plans is just as important to us as our outbound and organic growth plans.”

“It's the "latest" trend.”

“#1 it helps people.  #2 It helps them find us.  #3 It shows our value.”

“Not a priority.”

“We feel that too much of this stuff falls into the 'trying too hard' category.”

“Use targeted list... haven't experienced "strangers" finding us.”
Question 2

Tom Martin asks... .

Please explain why do you (or don't you) have a formal inbound business development program?

“We know that a majority of leads come from our site, and 100% of prospects visit it during the RFP process, so we make sure to have fresh content.”

“Because it helps prospective firms get a sense of who we are and how we think.”

“With only one new business person, flexibility has to be part of every interaction with potential clients. A formalized process has been perceived to slow the close.”

“We are part of the larger mother ship and don't have control over a local website for our specific country needs. Believe it or.”

“Mostly it's top of mind awareness. We also need to do a better job of activating the relationship when we detect an interest.”
CHAPTER 8: Open-Ended Agency Comments

Question 2

Tom Martin asks... Please explain why do you (or don't you) have a formal inbound business development program?

“If you do not have a formal new business plan it is impossible to get the rest of the organization as well as new, new business folks on board quickly and effectively.”

“We publish content on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and email marketing.”

“Just another tool in the new business tool box.”

“Not sure exactly how to implement it without turning people off by contact forms, etc.”

“We had one but could never stick to a publishing schedule. We eventually just stopped badgering people to develop the content. Morale improved and inbound leads stayed the same (zero).”
RSW/US is a full service, outsourced agency lead generation and new business development firm that helps marketing service companies (exclusively) find and win new business.

We help Agencies find qualified leads, set meetings, better position them in the market, and help move them closer to close.

More information about RSW/US can be accessed at [www.rswus.com](http://www.rswus.com) or by contacting Lee McKnight Jr. (Director of Business Development) at 513.559.3111 or lee@rswus.com.