



Agency Survival Guide



Top **10** Agency
Pain Points



2020

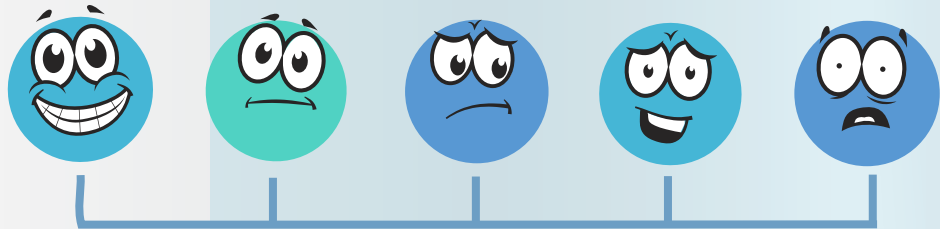


Are You Ready For 2020?

With 2019 officially in the rearview mirror, it is time for agencies and businesses to get laser-focused on their 2020 plans. Conduit Digital, as a division of Traffic Builders, Adweek's #21 fastest-growing agency in the world, knows a thing or two about how to rapidly grow your agency.

Conduit Digital recently had social media influencer and digital marketing expert Gary Vaynerchuk deliver a keynote address on the State of Digital Marketing in 2020. This rare keynote was also featured on Gary Vee's Podcast, "The GaryVee Audio Experience." Using the vast amounts of in-house data that we have collected through the thousands of clients that we service in addition to research from agencies across the country, and the insights that we discussed with Gary Vee, we have identified the biggest pain points for agencies heading into 2020.

How Much Pain Are You In?



NO
PAIN

EXCRUCIATING
PAIN

Chances are, your agency is dealing with one of these issues so we have provided the solution to your problems. Here are the top 10 ad agency pain points for 2020 and how to solve them:

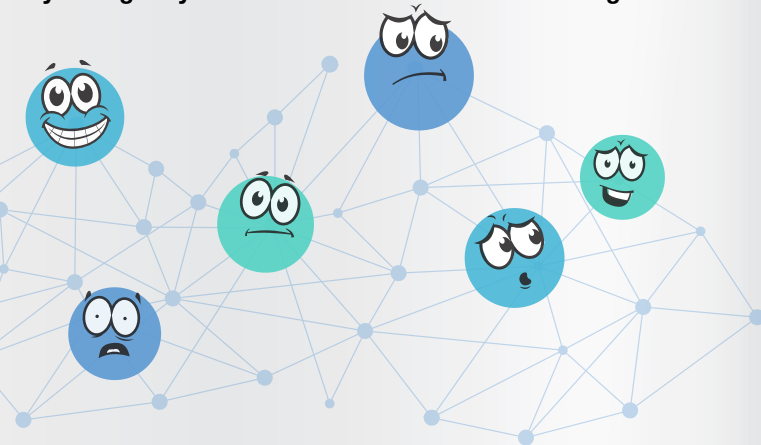
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PAIN POINT New Business Development

The biggest issue that almost any business, not just ad agencies, have is knowing how to attract new clients and grow business development. It is increasingly more important for the future of your agency to know the most effective strategies when it comes to new customer acquisition.

As a division of one of the fastest-growing agencies in the world, Conduit knows all of the things you can do (and the things to avoid) when it comes to new business development in 2020 and beyond.



HOW TO ATTRACT NEW CLIENTS

The digital marketing landscape in 2020 is more competitive than ever before. Agencies are competing not only with each other but also with the dedicated DIYers who would rather try their own internal marketing. Additionally, there is still a large segment of the population who still do not realize the necessity of digital marketing in today's landscape. This gives agencies like yours a huge opportunity to make their mark in their market. Too many agencies are taking a fragmented approach to digital marketing. Some agencies focus on creative while others focus more on media buying agencies. In order to succeed in 2020, you have to be prepared to offer a full suite of services in order to keep up with the competition.



It is increasingly important to offer a complete digital marketing solution. Being able to have a multi-product solution will greatly help your agency. Gone are the days when an agency would be dedicated to one digital marketing service such as PPC or SEO.

WHAT NOT TO DO

There are a lot of different ways an ad agency can try to attract new business. Unfortunately, there are a few methods that, while popular, are ineffective at both attracting new clients and growing your agency. The digital marketing landscape is currently undergoing one of the biggest shifts in history. Is your agency ready for these changes?

Slowly, agencies are moving away from outdated metrics like impressions and are moving to a more results-driven model. By continuing to push outdated performance metrics on prospective clients, you are putting yourself at a disadvantage compared to rival agencies that may offer more insightful performance metrics.

Additionally, agencies that only focus on one or a few products will be losing out to agencies with full-service offerings. By not expanding your horizons and only offering a limited product suite, you are limiting the potential revenue that you can bring in. Success in 2020 may mean offering a full suite of products and services so your client does not need another agency.

WHAT GARY VEE HAS TO SAY



Biz dev is a human game. From a cultural standpoint and a process standpoint, it's about having the right people and partners.



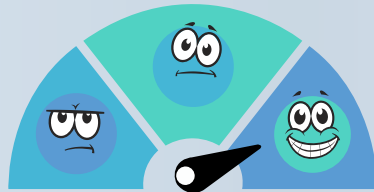
Increasing Agency Revenue

Every business owner wants to find ways to increase their revenue. In the digital marketing industry, agency owners face stiff competition and slim margins when selling ad space or creating brand assets. As the industry shifts toward a results-oriented approach, you need to be sure you are delivering the most value for your clients. Here are some ways your agency can increase revenue in 2020, including what not to do:



HOW TO INCREASE REVENUE

AGENCY PAIN POINTS



AGENCY SOLUTIONS

Attracting new clients is just one way in which your agency can grow revenue.

It is important to also look at how you can improve your internal systems to increase revenue with your existing capacity. We call this “Land and Expand.” The biggest way your agency can increase revenue in 2020 and beyond is to provide unparalleled value. Transparency in data reporting is more important than ever before. The digital marketing industry has seen great leaps in terms of quantifying performance over the past few years. As metrics such as impressions become an outdated measure, following the marketing funnel from brand awareness to conversion has become the best math for digital marketing success. So what does this mean for your agency?

In order to keep up with today’s marketing landscape, it is important for your agency to offer a full-funnel approach to your clients’ success. By adding these services to your product suite, you can expect to see clearer results and a path to conversion for every client. Additionally, you will be able to utilize increased budgets from your clients once they see the success that a full-funnel solution can generate.

WHAT NOT TO DO

Do not attempt to become a complete full-service agency without doing the proper vetting, research, recruitment, and buildout required. It is important to understand your agency’s strengths and weaknesses. Identify your strength and focus on them. If you are weak in certain areas, look for a digital partner that might be able to help you bridge the gap with your clients to offer a full-suite of services.

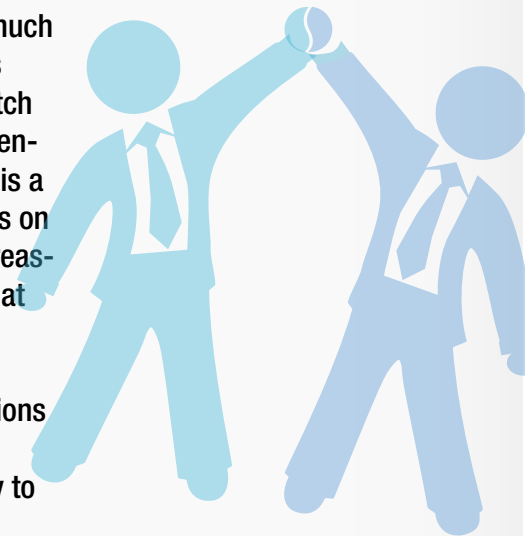


WHAT GARY VEE HAS TO SAY

As an agency, it is important to understand your strengths and weaknesses. If you consider your expertise in an area that is considered more vulnerable, you have to be careful.

One thing to avoid when searching for ways to grow revenue is to just raise your prices. While it may seem like a good idea to elevate revenue from a single client, in today’s value-driven marketplace, consumers are becoming savvier to industry practices. Today’s consumers demand greater transparency and data-driven results. Providing anything less than that while attempting to raise prices is a recipe for disaster.

What do you do as a B2B company when so much of what you do relies on what a client sees as success? What do you do when it doesn’t match your company’s point of view of what is happening on the consumer level? Often times there is a disconnect between agencies and their clients on how success is measured. It is becoming increasingly important to bridge the gap between what the end-client expects to see results-wise vs what agencies value in their results for their clients. By closing this gap between expectations and results, your clients can see their path to success more clearly and are thus more likely to increase their budgets with you.





Offering A Complete Digital Solution



If you are not solving all of your clients' advertising challenges, you risk being replaced. Agencies that are "specialists" on a particular type of service may find themselves losing more and more clients who are seeking a complete digital solution. However, it can be extremely difficult to find the right people in order to have a dedicated team that provides complete digital solutions. So how do you offer a complete digital solution without the expense and headache of training and recruiting a team?

HOW TO OFFER A COMPLETE DIGITAL SOLUTION

It is increasingly important for your agency to offer a complete solution for your clients or risk getting replaced by an agency that does. Unfortunately, it takes massive amounts of time and money to find the right people, train them, and ensure they are successful. One way to offer a complete solution without breaking the bank is to outsource or white-label your digital marketing services.

If you are an agency that only offers creative services, a white-label partner could help you offer your clients ad distribution plans. If you are a media buying agency, you could leverage a white-label partner to create incredible, thumb-stopping creative assets for your clients' campaigns.

Working with a dedicated white-label partner will enable your team to have access to industry innovations and trends, will give your clients incredible results on a budget and will create new revenue streams for your business.

WHAT NOT TO DO

If you have decided that white-labeling your digital marketing services are right for your company, it is important to understand what to look for in a white label partner. Given the nature of the digital marketing landscape, it may be hard to find a digital partner that you DON'T compete against. The important thing to look for when choosing an agency is to work with a partner that won't attempt to compete directly with you.

You already know the classic saying, "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is." The same applies when choosing a digital partner. If the services they are offering are priced incredibly low or they are promising unusually high results, chances are they are not a truthful or trustworthy partner. In today's digital landscape, transparency is key to any successful partnership.

Communication is key in any successful business venture.



If your potential white-label digital marketing partner is an unreliable communicator, it can be a sign of things to come. Make sure your service provider understands your brand and knows how to represent you. A track record of previous brand consistency is important when considering any partner.



Staying Up To Date On Industry News And Trends

Knowledge is power and agencies must always be learning if they want to succeed. Staying up to date with the latest industry trends and news is critical to ensure your agency doesn't fall behind. The speed of information today is faster than ever before. That means that while you can access data, trends, and information quicker than ever before, it is also changing just as quickly. Between regular Google algorithm updates and continuously emerging technologies, it can seem like a daunting task to stay up to date with the latest industry trends and news.

HOW TO STAY UP TO DATE

The easiest way to stay up to date on the latest industry news and trends is to follow the experts. Social media influencers have become the premier experts in the field, staying on top of industry trends and leading the way in innovation. Some people believe that influencers are a trend, but that couldn't be further from the truth. Leveraging the knowledge of these experts will allow you to stay on top of the latest changes to Google's algorithm or the latest trends and improvements in the industry.

Because influencer marketing is here to stay, it is a good idea to not only follow and listen to these marketing experts, but to invest in the platforms.

Platforms like LinkedIn, Instagram, or Tik Tok aren't going away anytime soon. Leveraging the experts on the most popular platforms to not only educate your agency but also as part of your own internal marketing efforts could help you separate your agency from the pack in 2020.



WHAT GARY VEE HAS TO SAY

Influencer marketing has been around forever. John Wayne was selling cigarette ads in 1958. So I laugh when people think influencer marketing is over or it is just a fad.

For a long time, the digital marketing industry has been like the Wild Wild West. Without clearly defined success metrics and the boom in digital marketing, it has been hard for some consumers to know who to work with. As the industry gets smarter, only the best, results-driven agencies will survive. Be sure to keep your agency ahead of the trends or you will risk seeing your agency go to the graveyard.

WHAT NOT TO DO

Whenever a business, not just agencies, refuse to stay up to date with the industry, they fall behind. Agency owners that insist that they know better than the industry will soon find themselves without any clients. Even if something has worked great for your agency in the past, do not hesitate to change it or improve it. For example, if you are a one-dimensional PPC seller, you run the risk of being a one trick pony. Agencies that offer a full suite of products and services can be truly product agnostic and hereby commit to what is best for the client.

An overall dive into the key metrics and deliverables across the industry will force agencies to be smarter about how they do business. Being able to adapt and overcome these issues will be the key factor in whether your agency thrives or fails in 2020.





Maximizing Data Opportunity

In today's current landscape, data drives the world. Unleashing the power of data to mine insights and deliver success for your clients will help you to see incredible success in 2020 and beyond. However, there is a tricky balance between utilizing the most amount of data and knowledge possible, while still keeping personal data private and secure. So how does your agency go about utilizing the increasingly important data in a way that doesn't jeopardize consumers' information?

HOW TO MAXIMIZE DATA

The key to maximizing data all comes down to a common buzzword in the industry: transparency. Only by being completely, fully transparent about your clients' data and results can you start to gain the trust and credibility you need to thrive in the industry. Not only will transparency help your clients better understand their campaigns, it will allow you and your analysts to make continuous optimizations and improvements based on that data.



At Conduit Digital, we understand that transparency is key.



That is why we leverage platforms such as Google Data Studio to present our client's their data and analytics in a way that is easy for them to understand. By being upfront and honest about performance metrics, KPIs, and what data is used, you will gain you the trust that you need to handle people's important data and information. Doing this will help you to protect the data that your clients want protected while utilizing the data that will help you see incredible results for their campaigns.



WHAT GARY VEE HAS TO SAY

At Vayner, we let everyone have full access to everything. No black boxes. Everyone has full access to their platforms and data. I'm not looking to make money on people's data, while most of my competitors are.



WHAT NOT TO DO

Many agencies in the past only showed clients the data that would help them to appear successful. As consumers and clients become more knowledgeable about the industry, it is time to stop with outdated and sketchy tactics. The digital marketing industry as a whole has, at times, gotten flak for the way that data has been utilized and handled. Be sure to move your agency away from unclear or misunderstood metrics.

If you continue to allow your agency to hide data from your clients or if you are careless about the protection of that data, the market will look elsewhere. Additionally, data privacy regulations in certain parts of the world or even within the US have become far stricter. Even though data privacy may subside in the future, it is more important now than ever before to be sure your clients data stays secure. Giving your clients an easy way to see and understand all of their data, and then using that data to continuously improve their campaigns, will go a long way in helping your agency to thrive in 2020.





Communicating Effectively With Clients



Just as it is increasingly important to be transparent about your clients performance and data, being able to effectively communicate these results with your clients will help you to gain far more credibility than your competitors. It is important to ensure your outbound and internal communications are not only effective, but actually help you to gain. Effective client communication will be a big determining factor for your agencies success in 2020. Does your agency have the infrastructure and preparedness to execute?

HOW TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY WITH CLIENTS

When it comes to client communication, transparency is one of, if not the biggest, factor. However it is not just data transparency, but also transparency in deadlines, results, and deliverables. Having a dedicated client experience team has enabled us here at Conduit to bridge the gap between client expectations and agency performance. Our in-house team enables us to effectively and accurately lay out exactly what kind of deliverables they are paying for, how our services affect client ROI, and what campaign performance results to expect.

One of the ways we excel in communication is through our own internal communication. By working intimately between different products, your internal communication will help you better understand your clients goals and how to attain the results they are looking for across their multi-product campaigns. With more effective communication both in-house and with your clients, you can start to bridge the gap between what the client expects to see and what your agency considers to be valuable.

Closing the disconnect between client expectation and performance will be a key factor for any successful agency in 2020. It is more important now than ever to ensure you have the team and infrastructure in place to properly execute effective communication not only with your clients, but within your company as well.



WHAT GARY VEE HAS TO SAY

Often times there is a disconnect between agencies and their clients on how success is measured. It is becoming increasingly important to bridge the gap between what the end-client expects to see results-wise vs what agencies value in their results for their clients.

WHAT NOT TO DO

Gone are the days of unclear deliverables and weeks going by without client engagement. If your agency is not putting a priority on client communication, you **will** fall behind your competitors. Only by creating clear internal processes and prioritizing internal communication will you be able to communicate effectively with your clients. Develop a repeatable process and you will be able to scale your agency.

Some of the most successful companies in the world such as McDonald's or Ford were built on processes that helped them to be more efficient than their competitors. The same is true for modern digital agencies.

Conduit Digital works with thousands of clients every single month and we know from trial and error and experience that having a client communication process that works is one of the keys to successful client communication.



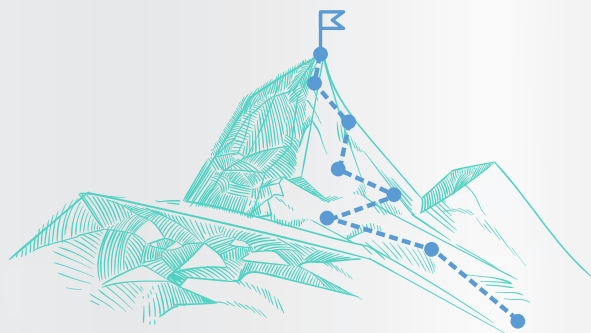


Demonstrating Value Through Results

There is one thing that every agency is trying to prevent: the dreaded client churn. What good is it acquiring a client if they do not use your services continuously? As consumers have become smarter and better educated on the digital marketing industry, there has been a massive shift in how results are measured. It is more important in 2020 to show your current and potential clients that you provide them with real value. Share success and reinforce to your clients why they entrust you with their advertising. Transparency isn't just about clear communication. It is also driven through results. [So what can you do to ensure your agency stays up to date as the industry shifts towards more results-oriented value?](#)

HOW TO DEMONSTRATE VALUE THROUGH RESULTS

Obviously, data transparency is a huge factor in the future of digital marketing. But how exactly do you demonstrate that value through the numbers alone? It is key to bridge the gap between client expectations and what your agency considers success.



You can no longer point to metrics such as impressions as a key indicator of success. In fact, singular metrics in general should have no place in today's measurement of results. How can a client tell success through random metrics that they are uneducated about?

[The main things clients expect to see in their digital marketing efforts is a return on their investment.](#)

That means creating better brand awareness that generates more leads that actually convert and put money in your clients' pockets. In other words, it is important to provide a full-funnel solution in order to create true results. While a consumer may not click on a programmatic ad after the 1st, 4th, or even 10th time seeing it, they will be introduced to the brand at the top of the marketing funnel. So the next time they need to use those services, your client's brand will be first on their mind. While basic KPIs and performance metrics find it hard to quantify these leads, communicating to your clients that this is the kind of success they can expect to see will help to set up your agency to provide more and more value.

The best way to truly demonstrate your agency's value to your clients is to help educate them about the industry, lay out all data and metrics in a clear and easy to understand method, and improve client communication. After these steps, you will notice a marked improvement in preventing client churn.

WHAT NOT TO DO

The only true way to decrease client churn is to provide real value that your clients can understand. If you continue to try and keep clients through gimmicks, price reduction, or suggested budget reductions. If you are experiencing client churn, you may not even understand why.



WHAT GARY VEE HAS TO SAY

Even if agencies are unaware of what they are doing is the wrong approach, an overall dive into the key metrics and deliverables across the industry will force agencies to be smarter about how they do business.

The next time you find yourself losing clients, [listen to Gary Vee](#) and really take a deep dive into your approach. If you are not providing clear and honest communication, presenting transparent data, and accurately demonstrate your value, you will continue to experience the dreaded client churn.



Proper Time Management

Time is money! Creating efficiencies are the absolute key to increasing output. Time management is a must in today's busier than ever digital landscape. Ensuring you have an airtight process for on-boarding clients, building campaigns, communicating with clients, and demonstrating results will be a major success factor in 2020. While your systems may be informal at the moment, if you want to truly grow your agency and increase your volume, you will need to have an easily repeatable process in order to attain true growth. The first step toward creating this process is time management.

HOW TO STAY UP TO DATE



Everything from basic campaigns to complicated RFPs cost a lot of time. It is absolutely imperative for your agency to know how long every task takes to complete, from the tiniest optimization to the longest meetings. The only way to truly know how long things take is to track you and your employees time. Time tracking may seem like a simple answer, but it is a tried and true method to not only deliver consistent results for your client, but to actually help you to optimize your agency.

Time tracking can be a difficult thing to implement and get everyone in your company on board with. Part of a time tracking approach relies on ensuring your company culture is built toward group success and collaboration. If you have the culture infrastructure to get your employees on board with time tracking, the execution will be much smoother and allow you to take a deep dive into your agency.

Building a collaborative culture will open allow you to open the doors to time tracking. This will allow you to have a better understanding of your client's budgets, invoicing, project management, and pricing. If you do not know exactly how long it should take your employees to perform a task, how can you ever expect to charge the proper amount for that task?



WHAT GARY VEE HAS TO SAY

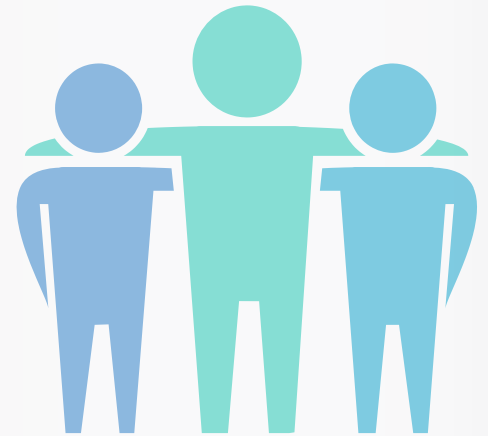
It is still so important to ensure your culture is a productive and exciting place to work. Investing heavily in HR to make sure that they are there for your employees' concerns is key to any successful culture.

WHAT NOT TO DO

Do not continue to blindly charge clients for services when you do not know their true value. Without knowing exactly how much time a task takes to perform, you will never be accurately charging your clients.

In today's age of transparency and a results-driven marketplace, your agency will be left in the dust if you continue to arbitrarily charge clients whatever you think the best price is. Additionally, you can't possibly be truthful and transparent with your clients until your understand your employees and how they work.

Clients want to pay for results, not time. When you understand the time it takes to complete each task, it is much easier to price based on performance.





Retaining Talent While Growing Your Talent Pool

One of the most difficult things for any business, not just agencies, is finding and retaining talent within your company. How do you keep quality employees? Why should they work for you instead of your competitor? If you want to grow your agency, you must be looking at ways to expand your talent pool.

HOW TO RETAIN TALENT AND GROW YOUR TALENT POOL

Branding is super important in today's digital landscape. Before you try and sell people on why they should work for your agency, they need to be aware of who you are and what you do. Building a recognizable and reputable brand is one of the major factors in being able to grow your talent pool. Company culture goes hand in hand with building a brand. If you offer a workplace that is built on collaboration and communication, celebrate it! Make sure that the people outside of your company understand how great it is to work there as much as the people in your company that already work there.



Many companies are hesitant to fire a troublesome employee such as a salesman or a member of the leadership team. Culture will never be what you want it to be unless you are willing to take those leaps. If an employee has great ideas that are being suppressed by a bad manager, it creates a bad culture. Be sure to take the time to really listen to your employees and empower them to create success. If your employees love coming to work every day, that message will spread naturally and others will begin to know that your agency is a great place to work.

WHAT NOT TO DO

Do not ignore company culture! Some people seem to think that as long as you offer good pay and decent working hours that it is enough to retain employees. However, workers are thinking differently than before. Many people today wish to be a part of something bigger than themselves. In fact, many people have said they would be willing to make less money as long as they enjoy the place where they work. So how do you ensure your culture stays alive and well?

Being involved in every aspect of your agency will go a long way in understanding your employees wants and concerns. If you are the type of agency owner that blindly listens to your leadership or upper management, you will be missing out on what the average employee says and thinks. Ultimately the best way to attract new employees and retain current ones is to ensure your culture is one that is exciting and collaborative.



WHAT GARY VEE HAS TO SAY

It is actually pretty simple to ensure culture stays alive and well within your company. Spend time getting to know the company and the employees. Really dive deep to ensure you are seeing more than just what upper management tells you.



10 PAINPOINT Bridging The Gap Between Creative And Media Buying

In today's digital landscape, content is king. Being able to create contextual creative at scale will be a huge determining factor in your ability to scale your agency. Creative and digital advertising must work together in order to deliver results for clients. That is why it is more important than ever to bridge the gap between creative and media buying.

HOW TO BRIDGE THE CREATIVE AND MEDIA DIVIDE

Even if you are not a creative agency, creating more content gives you the ability to create more relevance. This whole industry is built on potential reach. The majority of brands are losing market share because they are not relevant. Only by creating content at scale and building a reputable brand will your agency be able to take the next step.

Marrying creative with the media buying aspect of the digital marketing industry will allow you to improve your client offering and reduce churn. Even if you do not have the capabilities to form your own in-house creative team, working with a white-label creative partner could allow you to offer these services and more to your existing and potential clients.

We all have different opinions on what is funny or what works. That is why the key to content is quantity. Create mass content at scale and let the audience determine what works and what doesn't work. Create at scale and find "right" instead of pretending that you are right.



WHAT NOT TO DO

When Conduit sat down with Gary Vee to discuss the issue of segmented agencies, he identified these vendors as being the most vulnerable agency type. If you are simply focused on one digital service, some other agency has the ultimate control and you could be left vulnerable. Controlling the marketing from creative to ad spend is an important factor for agencies looking to separate themselves from the pack.



However, attempting to go out on your own and build a team for every digital service while simultaneously offering creative and media buying can be an almost impossible task. Working with a white-label provider can enable you to offer these services to your clients so that your agency doesn't fall behind. Finding a digital partner that enables you to grow your agency and offer relevant services could be just the thing that your agency needs to thrive in 2020 and beyond.



Conclusion

It may seem impossible to solve every challenge in 2020. Fortunately, there are ways that your agency can maneuver the unknown. By teaming up with a strategic white-label digital partner, you can solve all 10 of your biggest pain points in 2020. Conduit Digital has extensive experience working with agencies just like yours to attract new clients and increase your revenue. Our full-product suite, including our Catalyst Creative team, allow you to offer a complete digital solution. Conduit Digital not only stays up to date with industry trends, we speak directly to the influencers like Gary Vee who understand them the best!

With Conduit Digital's completely customizable and unique Live Reporting, we allow you to leverage your clients' data to show them real results in real time. Our Client Experience Team are absolute experts when it comes to effective client communication. Through this one-of-a-kind reporting and the hands-on attention our CXT team gives every single one of our clients, we enable your agency to not only show value, but to actually create it.

Our culture of positivity, innovation, and collaboration has enabled us to time track what we do so we know we are always completely transparent with clients when it comes to pricing. Additionally, our culture has enabled us to build teams of experts in the digital marketing field, including the largest programmatic advertising team in the nation!

If you are a creative agency, see how our services can boost your clients projects and provide them with proven, measurable success. If you are a media buying agency, see how Conduit's creative team can help you to build contextual creative at scale that is proven to work. Regardless of your agency's needs Conduit Digital has what it takes to help you tackle your biggest pain points and not only survive, but thrive in 2020. Contact us today to get started on how Conduit Digital can take your agency to the next level.

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