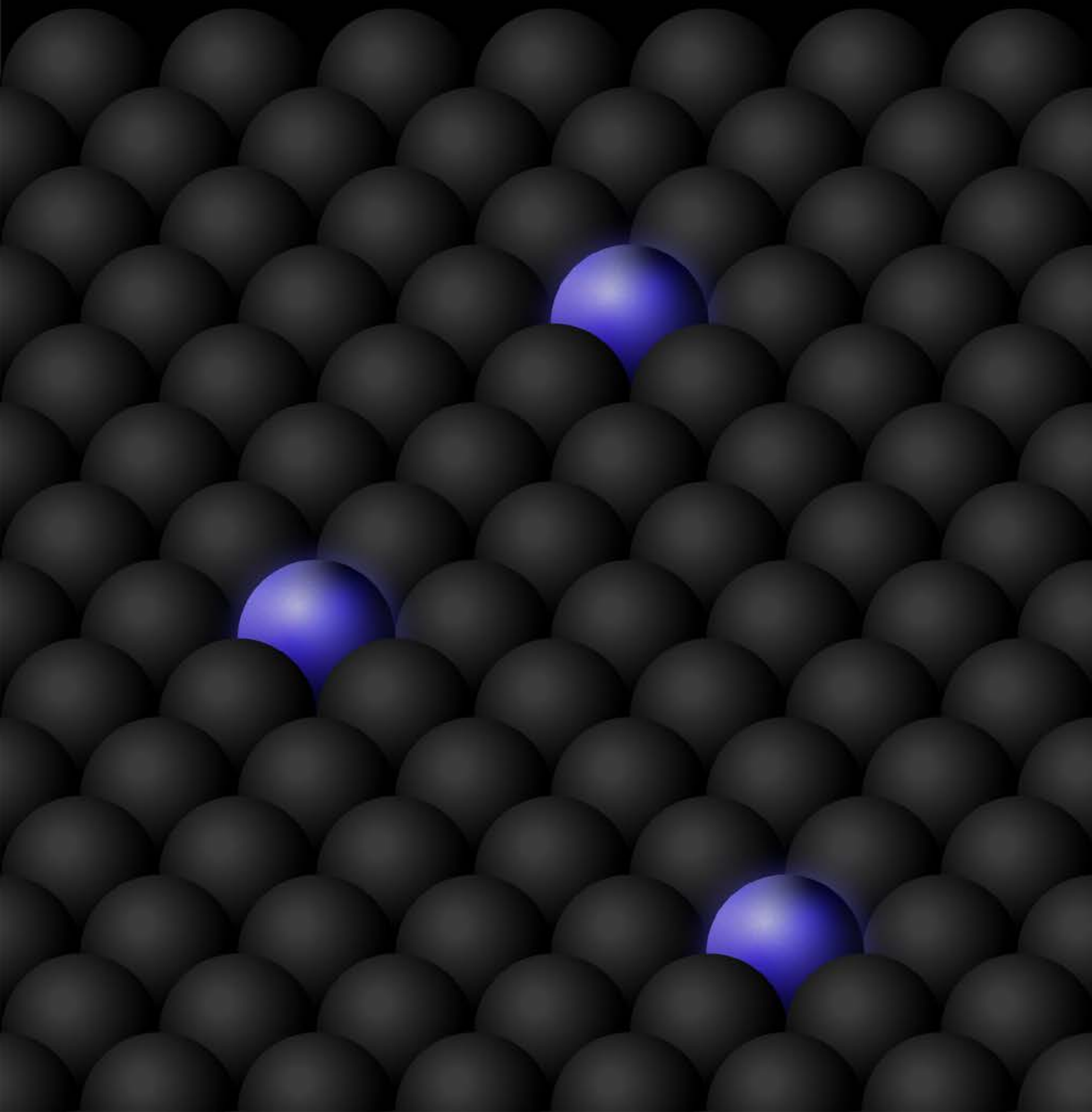


WIX Partners

**To make more money,
offer fewer services**



As agencies grow, so does the urge to offer new services and solutions to stay competitive and attract new clientele. While the full-service agency model offers an attractive way to develop business, there's risk in taking on too much too quickly and diluting the quality of your bedrock products.

We've discussed previously how a value-based pricing model [serves you long-term](#): By basing how much you charge on how much value you're bringing to an end user, you're creating a fuller picture of pricing for your clients. But when you expand your offerings without considering their impacts, price rather than service becomes the focus of what you can offer your clients.

Jay Harrington, president of Harrington Communications, a thought leadership PR firm for law firms, states that [the problem with full-service offerings is having layers of generalist knowledge](#). That's why so many clients shop around: They're looking for experts with deep expertise that can help them institute best practices and become industry trendsetters. Clients are willing to pay more for that expertise and the innovation that comes with it. And the best way to foster that mastery is to offer fewer, better services.

01 / Identify the pitfalls of a full-service agency

The “one-stop shop” is an attractive setup: Clients know the value of only having one agency to deal with all their needs. But when it comes to the inner workings of a full-service agency, there are many moving parts that cause things to get lost or fall through the cracks. Here are the common pitfalls for full-service agencies of any size that may cause clients to back away.

1. Inconsistent quality & strategy

“Quality” can be subjective, but if your team’s work is riddled with errors and hard to understand, your clients may think your team is rushing through the work and not paying attention to cohesive results.

The same hasty errors can apply to expertise as well: While a strategy may work for one vertical, it may not have the same impact in another. It’s your team’s job to apply best practices and thoroughly explain the reasonings behind decisions like keyword selection or content narratives. If the strategy sounds generalized, the client is left thinking they’re part of a “plug and play” strategy rather than on the other end of a bespoke partnership.

It’s easy for strategy to get lost in the checklist that a contract creates. You must ensure that everyone working on an account is synced on client expectations and how

verticals differentiate themselves. Clients look for ways to convince their stakeholders that your agency is worth the investment, and that argument is made weaker if your team is focused on quick wins and not prepared to present a long-term strategy that fully grasps your client's needs.

2. More time spent on deliverables

You may also run the risk of dedicating too much time to low-impact projects. With more than a [quarter of agencies outsourcing content](#), project timelines and budgets can quickly be thrown out the window based on back and forths between freelancers, agencies and clients.

If you're billing your client for time spent on deliverables, you run the risk of losing them for blowing through budgets and project timelines.

3. The issue of mismatched timelines

Clients want results, and when you're managing multiple verticals those results may come at different times. While coaching a client about expectations is important, they're focused on the immediate results that bring them business.

Think about holiday campaigns: Ideation for holiday specials and campaigns is something agencies have to do in addition to creating and editing copy month-to-

month. And because everyone is busy with the regular content calendar, clients may hold off on having the holiday conversation and your team might be focused on fulfilling the month's deliverables. Once everyone is finally ready to discuss a holiday campaign, you've already missed the opportunity to have the page crawled and ranked by search engines. By focusing on fewer, better deliverables, your team could jump into something like holiday planning and keep your clients accountable for providing information as early as possible, something that will impress clients and keep them working with you. .



02 / Embrace your expert mentality

Your team possesses various levels of industry knowledge. When you cut down on services and prioritize your team's expertise, you invest in the longevity of your business.

Taking a step back from the typical growth models agencies are accustomed to may seem like a failure, but being better isn't about being bigger.

[Nicolas Cole recently shared his experience in co-founding and growing his first company Digital Press](#), which now specializes in thought leadership. Digital Press began as a company focused on Internet writing, and grew to 20 employees and \$2 million in revenue within its first 18 months. The company was founded on Cole's specialized knowledge, so he spent hours bringing his employees up to speed. It created a bottleneck to onboarding more employees quickly, a challenge that became more dire as more clients signed on. The issue eventually became too much to handle: Cole ended up losing clients, which required laying off a quarter of his staff.

At the two-year mark, Cole realized that what he had tried to scale as a service was specialty knowledge and expertise. He cut down the number of clients and focused on building his company, including better understanding how to get his employees to grow with him. As soon as he decided to focus on thought leadership, Cole took the

first step toward moving his team from being generalists to specialists.



1. The benefits of “less is more”

When you center your business on the services that drive your team’s success, you’ll see the following benefits across the board:

Clarity

Figuring out which services to keep allows you to maintain clarity about your services and who you want to work with, which attracts your ideal client. Contracts and services rendered fall within a workable scope. There’s no confusion about what your team does for your clients, which sets clear expectations for everyone involved.

Efficiency

Fewer services mean that there aren't as many departments and deliverables from which to gather feedback and ensure messaging matches up. With a smaller number of services, there are fewer involved parties and fewer stakeholders required for approval. Your team is able to execute strategy and deliverables faster. Results can be seen sooner, which lets you adapt your clients' strategies toward true expertise.

Personalization

Having fewer services offers more opportunities to deep-dive into clients' content and offer truly personalized feedback versus general strategy or best practices. Instead of spreading out resources to hit marks on multiple services, your team focuses their time on researching clients and developing strategies for that specific service that will speak to the client's persona.

Innovation

When you're an expert at your service, clients trust your ideas, allowing for more leeway with creative thinking and diverse strategy. Because you know the client's industry inside out, you know what their competitors are doing and can make them stand out.

Profit

Your expertise and innovation allow you to charge your value: There are not many alternatives to the depth of knowledge you're offering. Specialization leads to better results delivered to your clients, so you can charge a premium price.

03 / **Decide where to cut back**

The services you keep are where you place your value. Taking cues from Harrington and Cole, you must determine where your agency's specialties and expertise lie.

1. What are you known for?

Conduct an internal audit with your team. You can approach the department leads to poll their departments and bring you their findings by considering the following questions:

What are your team's strengths?

By gauging where your team's collective knowledge lies, you can carve out where each team member would fit best in your new service plans.

Where does your team need support?

Consider where you need to invest in order to provide the level of service your clients expect from you. Is it seminars on SEO or social media best practices? Do you want to cut down turnaround time? By finding ways to move projects in-house, you can base your investment budget on your team's costs versus various freelancer rates.

What services have seen the best ROI?

Looking out among your services, where do you see the most success — and why? What type of content do you have to produce to execute your chosen services well?

What is the projected timeline for each service, and how do you measure quality?

What are you proud to showcase?

Look at where you can create case studies and gather testimonials to show your expertise. If you seem to be lacking in examples, work on gathering more testimonials and case studies as you pivot toward focusing on one or two services.

Once you narrow in on your team's skill set and what services you'd like to keep, you need to consider your ideal client or the industry that you'd like to serve. What are you seeing the industry is lacking? Better yet, are you able to poll your ideal client to find out what services they're interested in? Listen to what your ideal client wants because that plays a major factor in dictating what you ultimately keep.

2. What are you outsourcing?

Outsourcing deliverables to freelance writers, editors, designers and consultants has extra costs built in, such as word count, rates and the potential billable hour for designers. Freelancers also set their schedules, which can affect turnaround times for projects. If that's a primary concern, consider hiring that freelancer for dedicated hours per week or have them join full-time. It allows you to control your services' timeline and set clear expectations versus relying on their freelancing schedule and availability.

04 / Earn more through less

Scaling back on what's not working opens your business up to the services that are working. When you make your announcement, clients turn to you first to ask, "But who can I go to for that service?" You have the power to [refer other agencies](#) that you outsourced work to before you scaled back. If your client signs on with a partner agency, you receive a set amount or percentage of their contract as a referral bonus.

As long as your team performs with the same sense of efficiency and displays their specialized expertise by offering solutions and ideas before your clients even think of them, you set yourself up as an essential partner. The transition from full-service to focused services comes with a learning curve, but it will allow you to nurture your team into a premium agency worthy of premium clientele.