

# YOUR MARKETING AGENCY EVALUATION CHECKLIST

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**THE GO!  
NETWORK**

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# INTRODUCTION

In the past 3 years, the GO! Network have worked with brands on their search for best-in-class agency partners for over 300 marketing briefs with a value of over £30m. We've worked with brands from every industry on projects covering every marketing channel, but there are always similar challenges.

All too often, marketers 'settle in' to a particular relationship, and that can lead to complacency. We encourage all brands to regularly review the performance of their agency partners, to keep benchmarking against best practise, and to continuously push each other to build a better, more meaningful partnership. With this in mind, we're delighted to share our experience and offer our support to you.

This agency evaluation checklist will give you the groundwork to ask key questions about the output and relationship with your outsourced marketing agencies, whatever the channel or goal you're trying to reach.

**By the end of this workbook, you'll have a clear view of what is and isn't working and how to make the changes needed to make sure you're maximising your time and budget, and getting the right results.**

If you want independent advice on reviewing your strategy from one of our industry experts, you can book a call with us any time **here**.

Best regards,

**Russell Oakley**  
**Co-Founder & Managing Director**  
**The GO! Network**



## GETTING STARTED – SWOT ANALYSIS

A straightforward starting point for your agency performance review is to run a SWOT analysis – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats. Rather than a data-led analysis, this is more of a pulse check to understand what you and your team think is working best, and where you need to focus your efforts going forward with your agency.

Depending on your timeframe, you can run the SWOT analysis with just your team or with wider stakeholders involved in the process. The more perspectives of those involved that you can gather here, the more rounded a view on agency performance so far.

To clarify which section an idea belongs to, it helps to think of Strengths and Weaknesses as internal issues – that is, to do with the relationship with the agency. Think of Opportunities and Threats as related to the actual output of the agency, such as campaign performance or standard of final creative work.

### Example questions:

<b>Strengths</b> What do you enjoy about working with the agency?	<b>Weaknesses</b> Where are the challenges with the agency?
<b>Opportunities</b> Where could your agency activity expand?	<b>Threats</b> Where are the weaknesses in the agency output?

## GETTING STARTED – SWOT ANALYSIS *Continued...*

### Further tips:

- Only class something as a ‘strength’ if it brings you a clear advantage.
- Weaknesses will only be resolved if you address them honestly. No beating around the bush – it’s time to have hard conversations.
- When deciding on opportunities for your strategy to expand, watch out for changes in the channels your competitors are using. Where they are winning is where you are losing. Changes in social patterns, audience personas, and content styles can also throw up interesting opportunities.
- With ‘threats’, try to benchmark against some industry/agency averages. Is your budget reasonable? Are response times typical?

### Next steps:

The completed SWOT analysis will allow you to use this as a groundwork for your more in-depth agency performance. Whatever has jumped out as a key challenge or benefit should be kept front of mind as you run through the rest of the review.

#### Priority focus areas for performance review

List 3-5 key areas you’d like to focus on during the rest of the review

**GO!** regularly help the brands we work with to benchmark their agency cost, efficiency and performance against industry averages. If you need some guidance specific to your sector, get in touch below.



**GET IN TOUCH**

## KEY EVALUATION CRITERIA

While it can be tempting to focus purely on the bottom-line performance when it comes to your agency review, it's important to take into account both quantitative and qualitative measures. For example, you might be happy with the output, but your team working with the agency day-to-day might be spending a huge amount of their own time on managing the relationship.

You can adapt these for your own needs, but as a suggestion from us you would use criteria such as:

### Creativity in the process

An effective agency should be able to contribute creative ideas and new perspectives on projects, adding value to your own strategy.

### Process & Execution

A good culture fit will feel like you're working with your own team. Of course, considering that the agency will have time allocated for other clients, you don't want to feel like you're hounding them for delivery, or that you don't see eye to eye.

### Quality of output

Whether digital, creative, or research-led work, you should always be 100% satisfied with the final product and performance.

### Bottom-line ROI

Anything you spend with the agency should be evaluated as the impact it has on your bottom line, the same as if they were in your own team. Review how reasonable the budget is for the output, as well as whether the project itself is generating the ROI you want to see as part of your broader marketing strategy.

# CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE CHECKLIST

Before you actually complete the below checklist, some suggestions and considerations:

## Get other perspectives

You might not like the way of working from the agency, but your team might love it. It's important to consider the bigger picture for the benefit of the business.

## Discuss the checklist with the agency

Let your agency/agencies know that you're running this process in advance so that they can understand where any outcomes are developed from. Many times, tensions between brands and agencies occur when the agency think they are performing well in an area and unaware of the brand's perspective.

Try to overcome this as early as possible in the review process – you could even share your SWOT analysis in advance.

## Think about outcomes

Some agencies might not perform well in a specific area, but you'll decide that they don't actually need to – for example an agency working purely on execution might not need to be contributing to your wider strategy. Every brand-agency relationship is different, so try not to expect the world in every area!

## Create solid targets

Based on the above, mark up your 'as-is' score for each area and then also think about your 'ideal' score for the agency. This gives clear indicators of where you need to see improvement for your agency, provided the targets are realistic.

## Evaluate yourself as well

An agency won't be able to bring in millions in revenue if your budget is tiny, and they won't be able to hit deadlines if you don't give them a reasonable turnaround time. When completing the checklist, try to add in any considerations that could play into your own in-house marketing strategy review as well.

# YOUR MARKETING AGENCY EVALUATION CHECKLIST

## How to use

Run through each of the statements below, broken up into the categories we've discussed. For each statement, score your agency from 1-5 for their current performance, and 1-5 for your ideal performance. At the end, complete the final scorecard with your current and ideal performance scores for the agency.

Final Scores	Target	Score
Creativity in the process		
Process & Execution		
Quality of output		
Bottom-line ROI		

*“You want to be  
at the heart of your agency and have  
confidence that they understand the  
nuances of your world and challenges. Look for  
examples of this in their work.”*

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# AGENCY PERFORMANCE CHECKLIST

Score your answers based on how much you agree with the statement, 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree.

Creativity in the process	Target	Score
<b>On-brand</b> Suggestions and ideas from the agency align to our specific brand identity and strategy.		
<b>Innovative</b> The agency suggest new ideas and ways of working that we wouldn't otherwise have considered.		
<b>Efficiency</b> The agency provide quicker routes to delivery to enhance the project management process.		
<b>Alignment</b> Ideas and projects are aligned to other requirements in the broader strategy.		
<b>Data-driven</b> The team provide ideas based on previous performance alongside hard KPIs.		
<b>On-trend</b> The agency monitor trends and deliver innovative ideas to keep deliverables fresh and best-in-class.		
<b>Total score</b>		

Additional Considerations:



Process & Execution	Target	Score
<b>Collaboration</b> We never feel ‘out in the cold’ with our agency as they keep us informed and allow us to feed back regular.		
<b>Culture fit</b> We feel like the personalities of the agency work well with our team to deliver the best outcomes.		
<b>Responsiveness</b> The agency responds to questions and requests within a reasonable timeframe.		
<b>Accountability</b> The team assume responsibility for agency-side issues and provide paths forward.		
<b>Project management</b> Communication on timelines is clear, and all meetings have clear objectives and outcomes with a focused approach.		
<b>Total score</b>		

Additional Considerations:

Content output	Target	Score
<b>Quality</b> Written or visual content is always delivered to a high standard with no need for excessive proofing from our own team.		
<b>Delivery</b> Drafts and final deliverables are always provided within necessary project timescales.		
<b>Brand-led</b> All final outputs are in line with our brand identity and guidelines.		
<b>Customer focused</b> Delivery is aligned to the needs of our audiences, not personal preference from the agency.		
<b>Unique</b> Final delivery from the agency is of a standard and style that we would not be able to find elsewhere at a higher standard.		
<b>Total score</b>		

Additional Considerations:

Bottom-line ROI	Target	Score
<b>Goal-driven</b> The agency set hard targets on what they want to achieve and when.		
<b>Reporting</b> The agency provide regular updates on campaign/project performance to demonstrate return on investment.		
<b>Value</b> Price of work (hourly or project rate) is accurately reflected by the quality of work.		
<b>Expectation management</b> Agency provide clear and achievable SMART targets to manage our expectations.		
<b>Consistency</b> Projects and delivery are always consistent in line with our own expectations.		
<b>Total score</b>		

Additional Considerations:

## NEXT STEPS

With the above completed alongside your SWOT analysis, you should have a clear groundwork for a productive discussion with your agency – or a decision made about your next steps. Pull the key areas for improvement, and any really positive outcomes, into the below table, and use them as an agenda for your agency review session.

Areas of improvement

Positive feedback

If you feel there are too many areas of improvement to overcome, or that you may be better suited working with another agency, don't fall victim to the 'sunk cost' fallacy. Although finding a new agency can be hard, **The GO! Network** are always happy to have a conversation about next steps for your marketing strategy.

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# ABOUT THE GO! NETWORK

The GO! Network connects dynamic brands with best-in-class agencies when you've got a challenge we know they can solve. We're raising the bar on brand-agency relationships by building connections based on more than just the typical 'filters', providing opportunities to share ideas, and supporting conversations throughout.

We work cost-free with brands to help find their ideal agency partners from an unlimited network with the goal of building proper relationships that are built to last.

*"GO! were able to bring their innate industry knowledge and pair it with an understanding of our brand's needs to put highly relevant teams of creative, media and audience experts in front of us"*

**Rhodri Evans**  
Brand Content Director



*"With no cost or commitment required, there was no risk. GO! understood our challenges, helped us build a brief, and off we went."*

**Paul Lucherini**  
CEO



GO! work with brands at every stage of their marketing journey, and our team are always here to support. If you'd like to get in touch, contact the team, or email [hello@thegonetwork.com](mailto:hello@thegonetwork.com)

**CONTACT THE TEAM**

# #every day counts



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