SEO: IN-HOUSE OR AGENCY?

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Anyone who wants to set up online marketing in a company is often faced with an important question at the very beginning: Should I hire employees for it or hire an agency? Not an easy decision! Today I present to you the advantages and disadvantages of both sides.

Pros of Inhouse SEO

- The focus of your SEO is solely on your company and nothing else. The SEO knows the philosophy, the products, the customers, and the marketing strategy in every detail.
- Your SEO can react quickly because he only has you as a "customer".
- He knows the internal processes and knows who to contact. He attends marketing meetings and is always up to date.
- He can initiate cooperations much easier than an agency - here an employee seems to be much more credible!

Cons of Inhouse SEO

- Business blindness can become a big issue, especially after a few years
- The employee's know-how needs to be supported and developed
- The in-house SEO can have a hard time exchanging ideas within the company, other SEOs can

only be reached through conferences and outside professional contacts
- A full-time position must be fulfilled. If there is too little work, the company loses, if there is too much, the SEO can't handle it on his own

Pros of agencies

- Know-how is available right from the start (at least for most of them) and does not need to be developed
- Agencies are flexible, services can be added without having to hire new employees
- The environment in good agencies is very fertile and dynamic, often the level of knowledge is fresher than with in-house SEOs
- Further education and training are taken care of by the agency
- Agencies have insights into many markets and industries and can bring in a lot of knowledge from other areas

Cons of agencies

- Agencies are of course more difficult to handle than an employee who is based directly in the company
- The audience, the market, and the products are probably not as well known as they would be to an in-house employee
- Agencies have little, sometimes even no access to the company's resources. They don't have the interfaces (at least initially) that an in-house employee would
- You can end up with agencies that sell bad or even harmful services for expensive money
- The know-how of the employees is sometimes unfortunately below average, the fluctuation in many agencies is high. Contact persons are likely to change frequently

Preconception: Agencies are way too expensive!

Even as the head of an agency, I sometimes think to myself: Couldn't this be done more cheaply? After doing some calculations, I usually come back to reality. At first, it seems that agencies have a higher price than in-house teams. But only at first, because the costs are huge.

Some people think they can pay a newcomer with no previous experience a basic salary and some SEO reading and then off they go. In fact, this happens quite often and sometimes it can work. Often, however, there are problems:

The hidden costs of an in-house team

- Experienced SEOs require a high starting salary and not only that: The employer must be attractive and also meet the requirements of modern jobs
- Even career starters who become good SEOs over time quickly want more salary. Headhunters are constantly on the move in our field. Sometimes, just when the freshly hired SEO is well trained, he goes to another company. And then the search has to start all over again
- In-house SEOs need output from the outside: conferences, training, education - all that costs money. But more importantly from the CEO's point of view, it also creates jealousy within a team if the SEO is the only one allowed to go to a conference three times a year
- Many tools cost a lot of money
- Sickness, vacation, other costs, and many things that you know as an employer are of course also a big cost factor

At the end of the day, I now strongly believe that neither in-house nor agency has a real disadvantage or advantage in terms of cost. There are in-house teams that you could replace with a single agency employee. Or agencies that cost as much as a whole team, but only do as much as an intern. **The more important question is: Do I have a good agency? Or a good team?**

The best solution: A combination of agency and in-house

By now, it has proven very often that you are not faced with the "either ... or" question, but instead manage and challenge the agency through an in-house employee. This solution is also the best from my point of view.

- The in-house employee can evaluate the agency's measures very well - and takes the company's point of view
- The agency has a fixed contact person. In my experience, this shortens the paths and makes the collaboration more productive
- The work is wonderfully scalable because additional work is simply transferred to the agency. This then does not put a burden on the employee
- If the employee leaves, at least you still have the agency to continue working. It's the same the other way around, so a complete "break" never happens
- The management is relieved, the employee "translates" between management and agency

Naturally, the entire thing requires that both the employee and the agency have a certain level of expertise. A long-serving SEO will not work well with a cheap SEO outfit. Vice versa, a poorly or not at all trained employee might ask a professional agency to set blog comments - then trouble will follow inevitably. Both absolutely need to be on the same level.

By the way, the combination of agency + in-house can also work well with a complete team. In this case, the agency is then only used from time to time to take an external SEO look at the company. This eliminates the company's blindness, and the team can then implement the identified challenges in-house.

Final thoughts

The question of whether in-house or agency is not that easy to answer. From my point of view, it's important to have an easily accessible contact person in the company. Sometimes there is a lack of such a contact person, mostly when the contact person is the busy managing director. In that case, the solution in-house + agency would be better. Of course, this is also a question of budget.

But let's face it: In any case, always take a professional agency and an experienced SEO - who gets the latest information from our blog!

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