

3 production partner deal-breakers

When your brand's marketing team needs help, you turn to production partners who promise better costs, seamless workflows and lightning-fast turnarounds.

But why, then, does the project land back on your desk off-message, running behind, over budget and — worst of all — your team spent more time project managing it than they were hoping to?

Don't settle for watered down, poor performing partnerships by avoiding these 3 deal-breakers:

Deal-breaker #1: They're not a team player — inside or out

You select a partner with the promise to be a "member of your team," that is, until the work piles up, there is something more lucrative for them or they have conflicting priorities. A true partner will dedicate resources, sit at your table and provide solutions from the beginning to end — however a project unfolds.

"You want a partner who is willing to be immersed in your company, fighting the fight for you, positioned at the center of your marketing operations. In such cases, they will act as an extension of your team, understand your goals and then tackle head-on the most pressing challenges you have," says Oliver Kimberley, General Manager, Managed Services at Quad.

Questions to ask:

- Are you getting the resources and investment promised in the sales pitch?
- Are you still doing the heavy lifting on projects after a process redesign?
- Do they coordinate smoothly and interact with you as one voice?

You need a full execution partner, not another project to manage.

47%

of marketing leaders say managing a complex network of partners negatively impacts marketing operations*



Deal-breaker #2:

They don't get us

Ideally, your partner will assign a focused team of experts, with one leader who will play gatekeeper for all aspects of your marketing execution work. This point of contact leads every engagement, touches all projects and orchestrates the interactions with different departments and subject matter experts. Your partner leader understands what's a go or no-go for your brand. This gatekeeper ensures teams are aligned and brings a holistic and

thoughtful approach across all projects, so you're not bounced around like you are still working with multiple vendors.

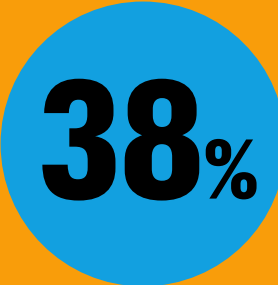
Questions to ask:

- Who will the partner dedicate as the leader of my project?
- Are they really invested in becoming an extension of our organization?
- What do other clients think; is your partner in it for the long term?

If the answers to these questions aren't clear, you might end up disappointed and seeking out a new partner sooner than you think. And who has time for that?

To avoid this, dig deeper with prospective partners — spend time with them, find out about their culture, visit their facilities, prove it's a good fit! In the long run this will save you time, money and effort.

You want a partner that is dedicated today and will deliver into the future.



38%

of marketing leaders say they are currently, or planning to start, working with external partners with specialized capabilities in the next 12 months*

Deal-breaker #3:

Their approach is too generic

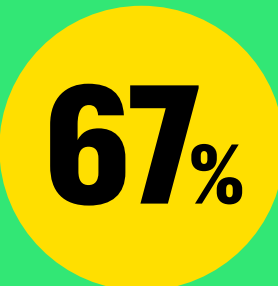
Often, production partners rely heavily or solely on outside manufacturers to execute their production. This means you are far removed from the people doing the work and can lack direct expertise. Your projects may quickly become costly, off brand or inconsistent in delivery. An ideal partner should service most of your needs themselves to ensure brand consistency and to access best cost opportunities.

Questions to ask:

- Does your partner have deep expertise in executing on your requests and offer their expertise to your benefit?
- Have they invested time in understanding your needs to build a custom solution?
- Do you know where your work is being done and by whom?

Highly customized solutions illustrate that your partner has your best interests in mind. So, as the brand owner, you can see that it's not just about what they can provide, but instead the investment they will make. Seize your opportunities for optimization to free up your time and deliver more at scale without making sacrifices.

Bottom line: Give a new partner enough information to innovate and find the best solutions for your business.



67%

of marketing leaders say they expect their organization to change their external partnerships in some way this year*

To learn more about working with a partner that brings a new way of thinking to marketing execution, visit [Quad.com](https://quad.com).