

# HOW TO WIN THE LONG GAME AS A SPECIALIZED AGENCY

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# Why Your Agency's Positioning Matters

(Even if you don't think it does)

**GUILLAUME DELLOUE**  
**PRINCIPAL CHANNEL CONSULTANT**

# MICROARTS

## CREATIVE AGENCY

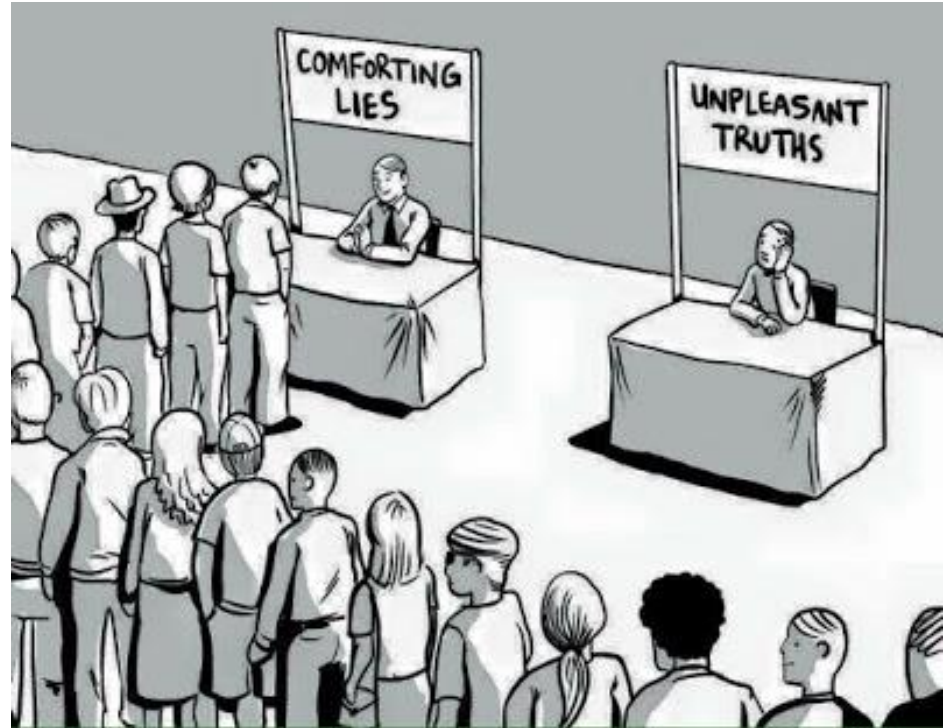




The background is a solid orange color. In the top right corner, there are several concentric, semi-transparent orange circles. In the bottom left corner, there is a large, semi-transparent orange circle. Another smaller, semi-transparent orange circle is located to the left of the main text.

I realized a couple of important lessons

Most HubSpot Partners  
have terrible poor  
positioning



## The top 25 Diamond Partners' positioning in one picture

A word cloud on an orange background. The words are arranged in a vertical stack, with 'marketing' being the largest and most central. Other prominent words include 'growth', 'agency', 'inbound', 'HubSpot', 'Digital', 'business', 'SALES', 'Stack', and 'RESULTS'. The words are in various shades of white and light orange.

inbound  
agency  
growth  
marketing  
SALES Stack  
RESULTS Digital  
HubSpot  
business

**Inbound  
agencies are  
becoming  
commoditized**





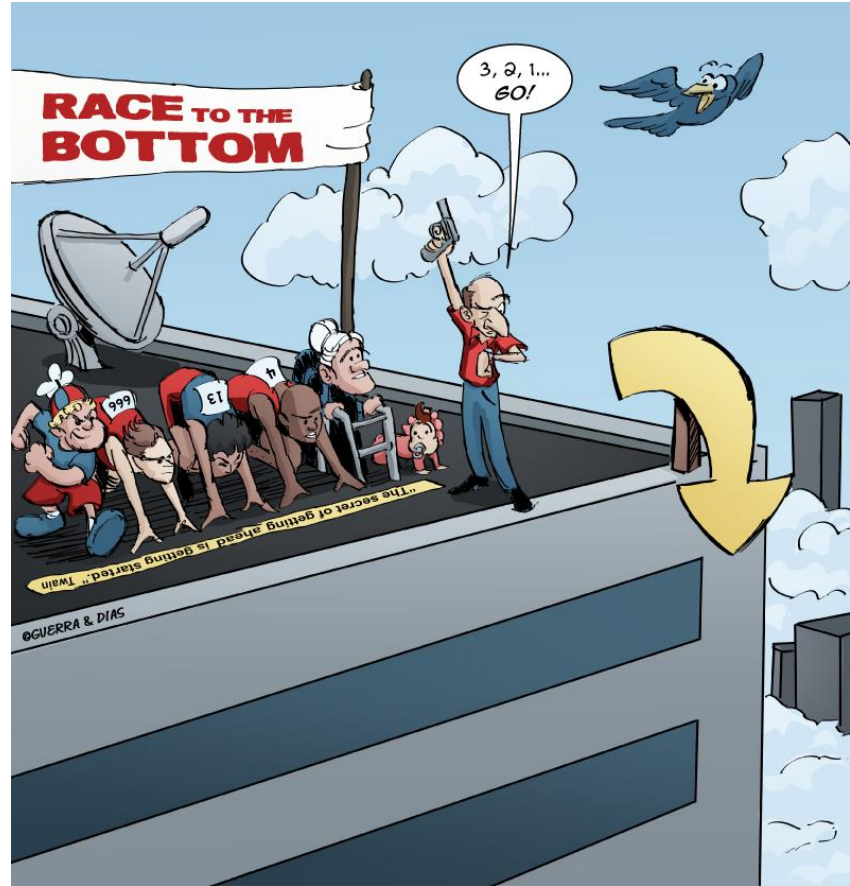
**65,000**

**in the U.S. alone**

**100,000+**

**worldwide**

- ✓ Your sales cycle becomes **longer** and more **competitive**
- ✓ You risk compromising on **price** and the **value** of your team
- ✓ Your retainers become **shorter** as the client believes you're easily **replaceable**



Positioning is  
your best  
defense over  
the long term



**You have  
no choice  
but to  
differentiate**



**There are two primary ways  
to position your agency**

# 1. Vertical Positioning

When an agency services a **specific industry** or set of **closely-related industries**

## Benefits of Vertical Positioning

- It's easier to prospect and find good-fit clients
- Your best clients might take you to their next job
- Your reputation will precede you
- You can charge a lot of money



## Requirements for Vertical Positioning

- How easily can you target members of that group?
- Does industry expertise a) matter to the services you deliver and 2) can it carry a premium?
- Are there conflicts of interest that might prevent you from servicing multiple clients?

## Examples of Vertical Positioning in the Inbound space

- Higher education
- Non-profits
- Manufacturing
- Private faith-based schools
- SaaS

## 2. Horizontal Positioning

When an agency delivers a **specialized set of services** to clients across different industries

## Benefits of Horizontal Positioning

- More diverse clients → variety is the 🍷 of life
- Little to no conflicts of interest
- Greater immunity during economic downturn



Combine your inbound expertise  
with a **complimentary &  
exclusive** set of services

# Inbound + Ecommerce

- About 1.3 million e-commerce companies in the US and Canada
- Shopify Integration & new API are both live



# Inbound + Paid Social

- Paid Social Advertising is exploding (37% growth YoY)
- Advertising platforms are complex and getting more so every day



# Inbound +

- Full funnel services
- Public Relations
- Custom CRM integrations
- Video marketing
- Branding
- Link building
- Reputation management
- Influencer marketing
- Complex SFDC integrations
- Sales enablement
- Shopify
- And more!



**Still struggling to find your  
differentiator?**

**What book could your  
agency publish that the  
person next to you couldn't?**

## Final takeaways

- Be proactive about your agency's positioning
- Leverage the Partner Directory to your advantage
- Let your passion for a topic guide you
- Consider hiring a professional consultant
- Subscribe to the 2Bobs podcast

# The DD Story

(How we learned the power of  
industry specialization)

**TONY FRAGA**  
**CEO @ DD**



# Meet Direct Development in 2014...





Markets

Services

Resources

Connect

# create.reach.grow

From start to finish, we know the parts that need to come together to produce successful direct marketing campaigns. Create innovative direct mail packages.. Reach constituents accross multiple channels... Grow your organization to meet your core mission.



► See how we've helped our clients grow

create.reach.grow



be direct with your marketing



production solutions



Direct-Connect®



Direct MySocial®



## NEWS & EVENTS

Follow the Direct Development team as we present and host live events and webinars where you can learn about direct response marketing strategies and innovative technologies.

Catch the Action



## RESOURCES

Access powerpoint slides, presentations, white papers, and case studies on higher education, fundraising and direct marketing tactics.

Download our Resources



## BLOG

Sharing our mind on current direct marketing trends, innovations and best-practices for the higher education and nonprofit industries.

Read our Articles

## DD 4 YEARS AGO (APRIL OF 2014):

- Team of 8
- 50 active clients
- 100% revenue from fixed-fee project work (no retainers)
- Top 10 clients producing 90% of Net Income
  - *(47% from our top client)*
- ***Became a HubSpot Partner Agency***



# 9 Months Later...

- ✓ 4 inbound retainers
- ✓ \$1,717 average monthly retainer

ONE-TIME SERVICES	QTY	RATE	COST
<b>CONSULTING</b>			
DIRECT MYSOCIAL -- Social Media Strategy Social media strategy using the F.I.V.E. approach covering overall strategy, audiences, voice, and engagement ideas. (\$950, or FREE with 6 months of Social Network Management)	1		FREE
<b>WEB DEVELOPMENT</b>			
WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT Design and Development of full-featured website (see website outline document for sitemap) Standard and Mobile Optimized using Responsive Design	1	\$6,250.00	\$6,250.00
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$6,250.00</b>

MONTHLY SERVICES	QTY	RATE	COST
<b>CONTENT MARKETING</b>			
DIRECT MYSOCIAL -- Social Network Management Management of 2 primary networks (Facebook and Twitter) up to 15 social network posts/month up to 25 follower responses/month Social Content Editorial Calendar Social Progress Reports	6	\$250.00	\$1,500.00
WEBSITE MANAGEMENT Monthly services of the following: - Hosting - Site Maintenance - Posting (blog articles, photos, updates, feature projects, etc.) - Analytics (new contacts, page analytics, visitor tracking) - Basic SEO (keywords, tags, link tracking, page performance)	6	\$285.00	\$1,650.00
HUBSPOT PLATFORM Monthly fees to use Hubspot Marketing Platform to integrate website, social media, blog, and back-end dashboard (includes non-profit discount; paid directly to Hubspot)	6	\$140.00	\$840.00
<b>6 MONTH TOTAL</b>		<b>\$675.00</b>	<b>\$3,990.00</b>

# Meet Direct Development today...



[Higher Ed Marketing](#)[Nonprofit Marketing](#)[Inbound Marketing](#) ▾[Services](#)[Resources](#) ▾[About](#) ▾

# We help Davids beat Goliaths.

[Learn More](#)

# DD TODAY:

- Team of 23 (19 full-time employees)
- 45 active clients
- 29% fixed-fee revenue vs. **71% retainer revenue**
- Top 10 clients producing 73% of Net Income
  - *(20% from our top client)*
- **1 client away from achieving Platinum!**

# 4 Years Later...

- ✓ 18 inbound/GDD retainers
- ✓ \$5,550 average monthly retainer
- ✓ 90% contract renewal rate



## **INBOUND MARKETING & WEBSITE MANAGEMENT PROPOSAL**

*for*

**Native Hope**

*March 1, 2018 — February 28, 2019*

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*Prepared By:*

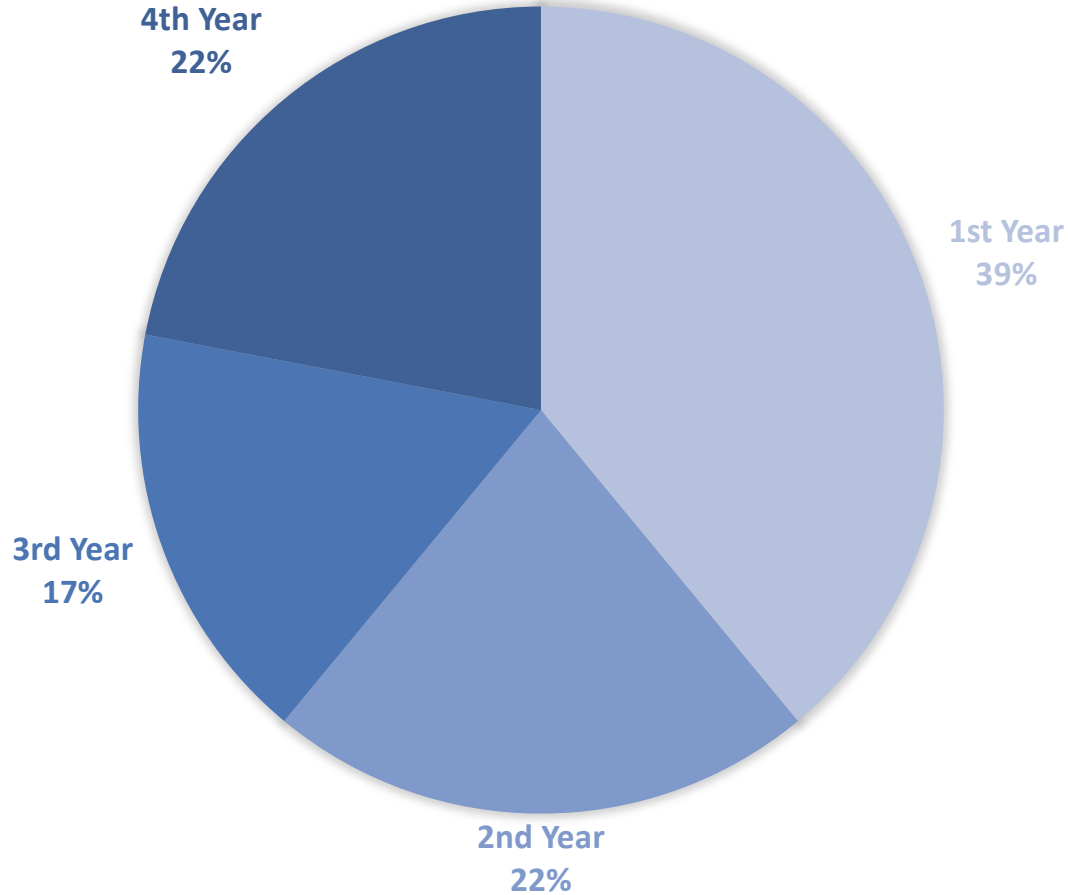
**Tony Fraga**

*CEO*

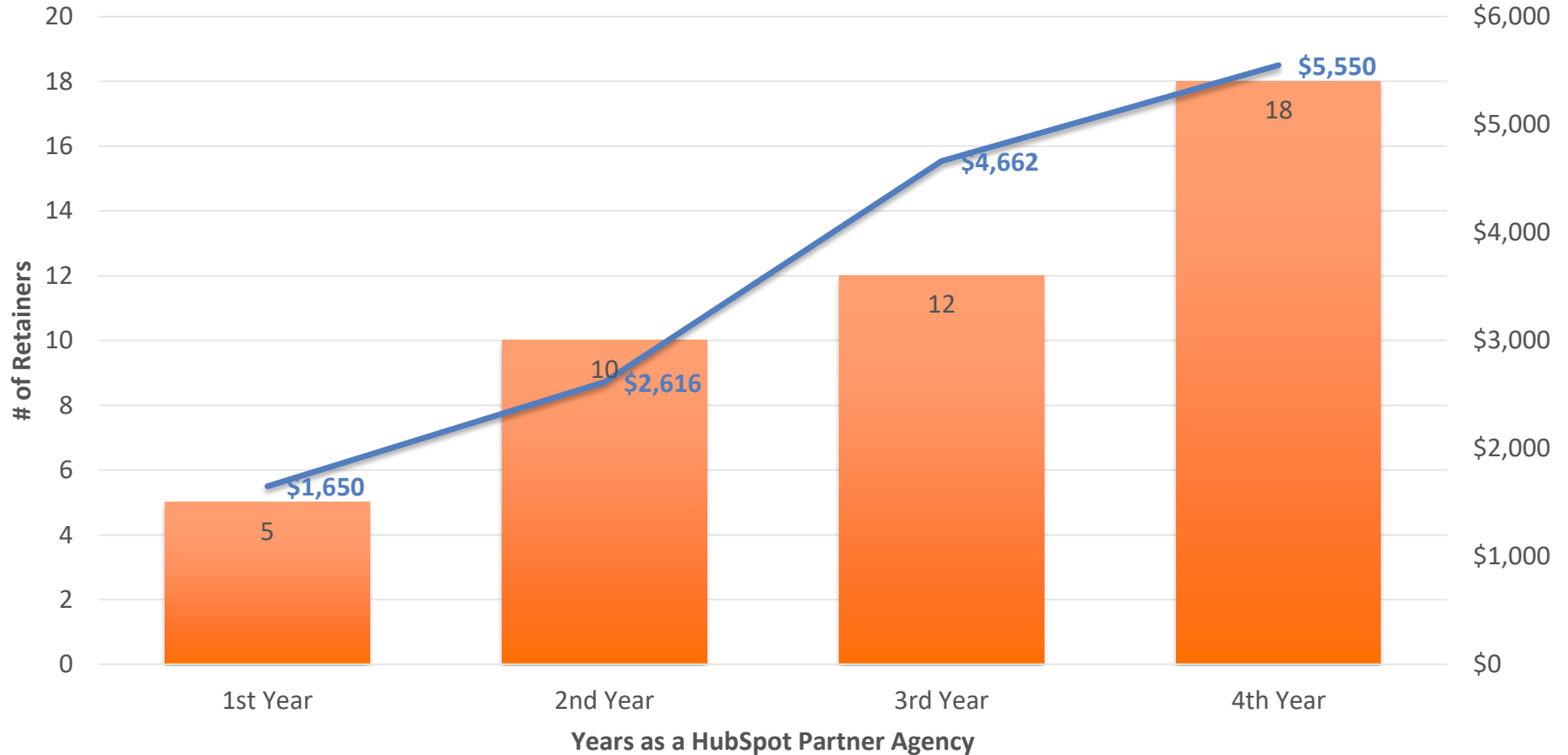
(888) 669-6722 x18

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# INBOUND MATURITY OF RETAINERS



# Growth as a Specialized Agency



# 52%

**Average Growth Rate  
of Retainers YOY**



What does  
*specialization* have  
to do with growth?

# ADVANTAGES OF SPECIALIZING:

1. Your team develops **deep knowledge** and industry expertise
2. You gain **public-speaking engagements** at industry events
3. It's **easier to differentiate** your agency vs. competition
4. Your **clients bring you along** when they switch jobs

# LESSONS LEARNED ALONG THE WAY:

- Finding what works takes more time (and data) than you think.
- Don't expect the same tactics to work for each client.
- Hiring “industry experienced” talent usually ends up failing – instead, look for “smart creatives” who will quickly learn industry expertise on the job.

# Know When to Let Go

Most marketing agencies are too scared to let go of a client – even if they aren't a great fit.

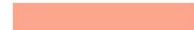


# How good are these conversion rates?

## All Submissions

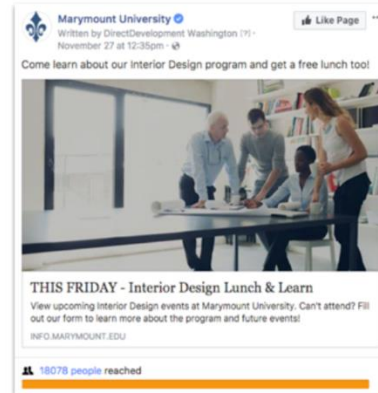


NAME	VIEWS	SUBMISSIONS	RATE
LP: Master Graduate Program Events Pillar (Reset) <span>●</span> Published	4,549	647	14.22%
LP: Human Services Event Info Pillar (2017) (Reset) <span>●</span> Published	2,091	419	20.04%
LP: Guide to Graduate Programs at MU <span>●</span> Published	1,685	409	24.27%
Subscribe to Choose Your Path! <span>●</span> Published	1,245	406	32.61%
LP: A Guide to Getting a Master's in Forensic & Legal ... <span>●</span> Published	1,414	322	22.77%



mistake to go out to social media for the first time and create an ad that invites people to apply to your grad school. Enrollment marketers have seen great success when it comes to social media when they go out with content first.

Here's an example of what a proper, Inbound Enrollment Marketing social strategy should look like:



*Increased our RSVPs from social media by over 130% and increased our new contact conversions from social by 50%.*



Change happens...  
but *progress* is a choice.

The background is a solid orange color. There are several abstract circular shapes in a lighter shade of orange. One is a small solid circle on the left. Another is a large solid circle at the bottom left. In the top right corner, there are three concentric circular outlines of varying sizes.

**LET'S TALK ABOUT YOUR  
REAL CHALLENGES!**