



Excellence Research Study:

What makes a marketing
service provider excellent?

North American Marketing Service Providers | 2019



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Overview



Who is UpCity?

UpCity is an online marketplace for businesses to identify the best marketing service providers for their needs.

In the marketing industry, it can be difficult to identify service providers that provide high quality work at a fair price. At UpCity, we've worked hard to build a methodology and criteria for our methodology to give business owners the tools and intelligence to research great providers in their local area, and to make it easy for those business owners to procure the services they need quickly.

UpCity's Marketplace launched in 2015, and has since expanded to include marketing service providers in cities across the United States and Canada.

33,000

Marketing services providers listed in UpCity's marketplace

619

Cities and markets in the United States and Canada included in UpCity's marketplace

7,385

Specialized lists in UpCity's marketplace

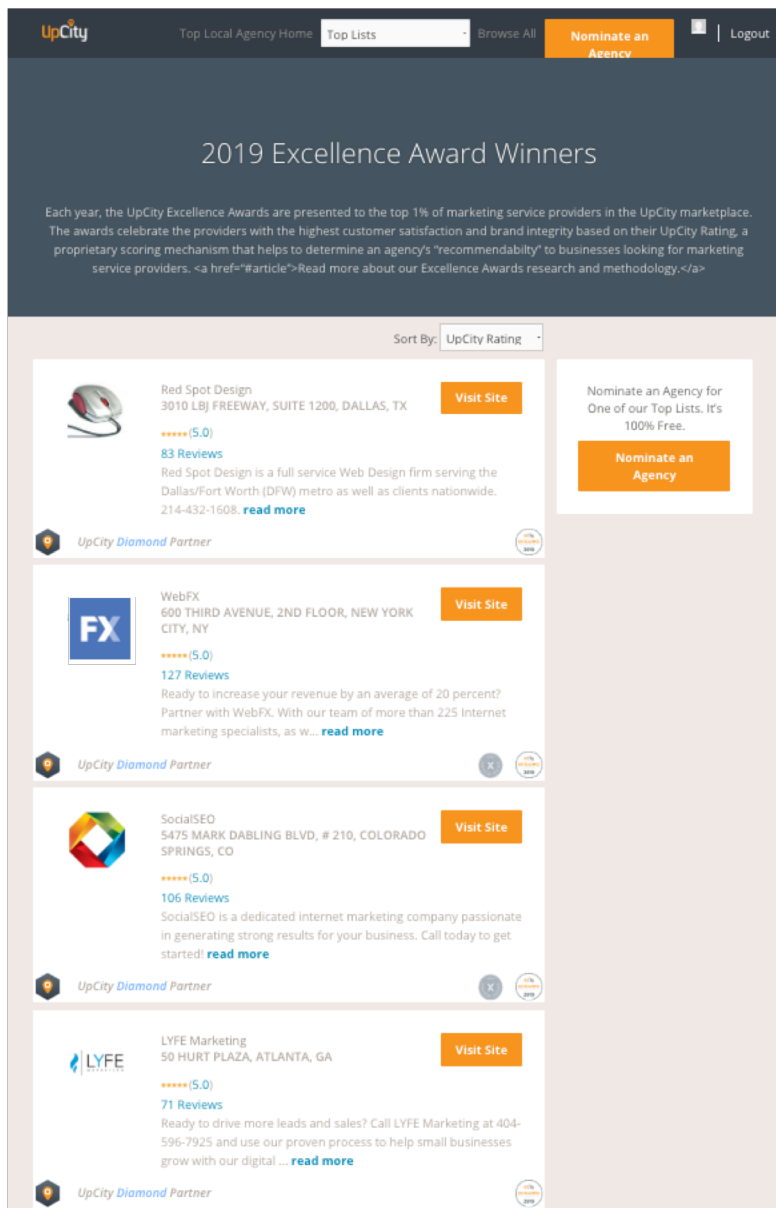
23

Vertical industries with specialized lists in UpCity's marketplace

225,000

Businesses seeking marketing service providers that visit UpCity on average each month

What is the UpCity Excellence Research Study?




UpCity

Top Local Agency Home Top Lists Browse All [Nominate an Agency](#) | Logout

2019 Excellence Award Winners

Each year, the UpCity Excellence Awards are presented to the top 1% of marketing service providers in the UpCity marketplace. The awards celebrate the providers with the highest customer satisfaction and brand integrity based on their UpCity Rating, a proprietary scoring mechanism that helps to determine an agency's "recommendability" to businesses looking for marketing service providers. [Read more about our Excellence Awards research and methodology.](#)

Sort By: UpCity Rating




Red Spot Design
3010 LBJ FREEWAY, SUITE 1200, DALLAS, TX
★★★★★ (5.0)
[83 Reviews](#)
Red Spot Design is a full service Web Design firm serving the Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW) metro as well as clients nationwide. 214-432-1608. [read more](#)

[Visit Site](#)


Nominate an Agency for One of our Top Lists. It's 100% Free.

[Nominate an Agency](#)




WebFX
600 THIRD AVENUE, 2ND FLOOR, NEW YORK CITY, NY
★★★★★ (5.0)
[127 Reviews](#)
Ready to increase your revenue by an average of 20 percent? Partner with WebFX. With our team of more than 225 Internet marketing specialists, as w... [read more](#)

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SocialSEO
5475 MARK DABLING BLVD, # 210, COLORADO SPRINGS, CO
★★★★★ (5.0)
[106 Reviews](#)
SocialSEO is a dedicated internet marketing company passionate in generating strong results for your business. Call today to get started! [read more](#)

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LYFE Marketing
50 HURT PLAZA, ATLANTA, GA
★★★★★ (5.0)
[71 Reviews](#)
Ready to drive more leads and sales? Call LYFE Marketing at 404-596-7925 and use our proven process to help small businesses grow with our digital ... [read more](#)

[Visit Site](#)

UpCity Diamond Partner

UpCity launched the UpCity Excellence Awards in early 2019, celebrating the top 1% of marketing service providers as measured by their UpCity Rating.

The UpCity Excellence Research Study was commissioned to provide rich insights pertaining to the marketing landscape, and the service providers that comprise this landscape. We have analyzed a number of data points, leveraging our proprietary marketplace data including tens of thousands of service providers across North America, collected over years to garner useful facts, figures and findings.

UpCity Rating

What is the UpCity Rating?

The UpCity Rating is an assessment of how recommendable a service provider is in comparison with other service providers. It is derived from a variety of data points that are designed to help business owners find a partner that is the best fit for them, with the goal of giving business owners peace of mind knowing they are partnering with someone they can trust.

We use factors such as reviews (both from UpCity and third party sites), web authority and online reputation. A service provider's UpCity Rating helps guide us in ranking and recommending the top service providers by marketing discipline in each local market, providing business with a trusted resource when selecting a provider for their marketing needs.

The UpCity Rating also provides us with the data required for the annual UpCity Excellence Awards, honoring the top 1% of agencies across the United States.

UpCity Ratings cannot be purchased, and rely solely on factors that impact how recommendable a service provider is.

How is the UpCity Rating Calculated?

There are nine factors used to calculate the UpCity Rating, including information from both within the UpCity marketplace and external sources.

- 1. UpCity Profile Completion:** UpCity lists over 33,000 agency profiles. Profiles highlight nearly 40 data points on each agency, including services offered, target markets, price points and more.
- 2. UpCity Engagement Rate:** Engaging in our marketplace community increases a service providers' chances of getting recommended. UpCity has over 6,000 active agency members.
- 3. UpCity Reviews:** The reviews on UpCity provide an in-depth view of how a service provider's customers feel about them and their services and are a key component to how likely UpCity is to recommend a provider to businesses in the marketplace. Both quantity and quality of reviews are considered in the algorithm. UpCity has collected 5,000+ in-depth reviews capturing specific feedback across 20 service categories.

UpCity Rating (Continued)

How is the UpCity Rating Calculated?

4. **Third Party Reviews:** The reviews on other review sites like Google My Business, Yelp!, and Facebook also give UpCity a good view of how customers feel about a service provider. Both quantity and quality of reviews are considered in the algorithm. We utilize over 60,000 third party reviews of our marketplace providers.
5. **Presence in Search Engines:** This signal measures how prominently a service provider ranks in search engines and is a good indicator of overall authority and domain expertise. To this end, UpCity is tracking over 40,000 industry keywords to determine which providers are doing a great job here across nearly 500 cities, 20 specialties and over a dozen verticals.
6. **Distance to City Center:** Similar to Google Maps, UpCity factors in the distance an agency's office is from the center of town.
7. **Business Location Data:** We confirm that contact information in local listings sites like Yelp!, Google My Business, and Facebook is consistent with an agency's UpCity listing. We currently track 10 data points for 33,000 service providers to understand how well they are representing themselves at the local level.
8. **Domain Authority:** UpCity uses a trusted domain authority metric as a predictor of how much authority a provider's domain has in the eyes of Google and others. We then take this metric and statistically normalize across our marketplace.
9. **Website Speed & Experience:** The speed of a provider's website can have an impact on prospects' first impression of the business. Tools like Google's PageSpeed scoring can provide businesses with information on how to improve this score.

Why Does the UpCity Rating Matter?

As a measure of a service provider's recommendability, the UpCity Rating is a key indicator to success, given the importance of word of mouth and online reviews in purchasing decisions.

According to HubSpot's State of Inbound, 63% of business cite "generating traffic and leads" as their top marketing challenge.

The UpCity Rating is a benchmark of how well marketing service providers are leveraging digital assets to drive word-of-mouth and ultimately, grow their business and presence.

88% of people **trust online reviews** written by other consumers as much as they trust recommendations from personal contacts.*

And **74%** of consumers identify **word of mouth** as a key influencer in their purchasing decisions.**

But **only 33% of businesses** are actively seeking out and **collecting reviews**. ***

*BrightLocal
**Ogilvy Cannes
*** iMPACT

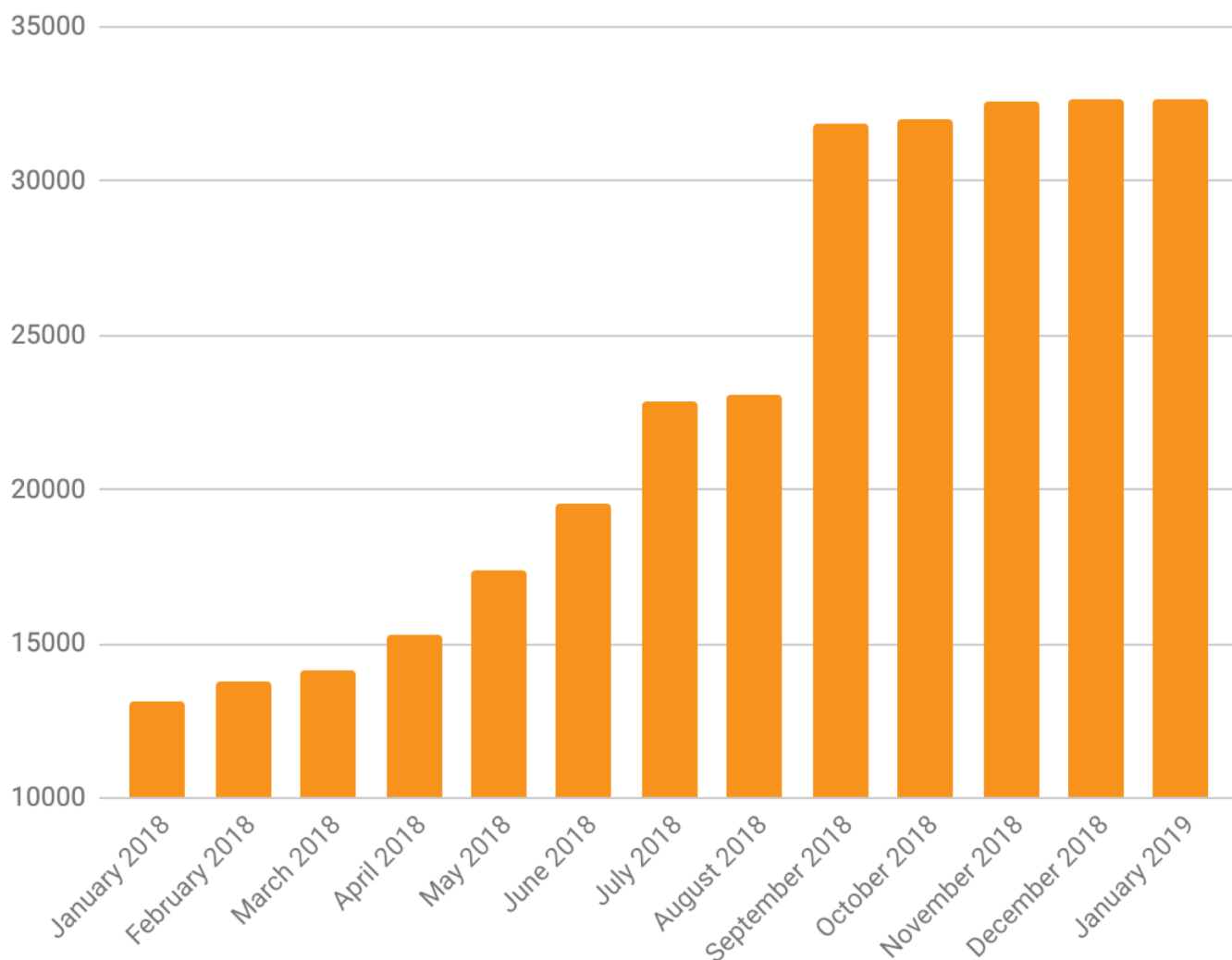


Insights Marketplace



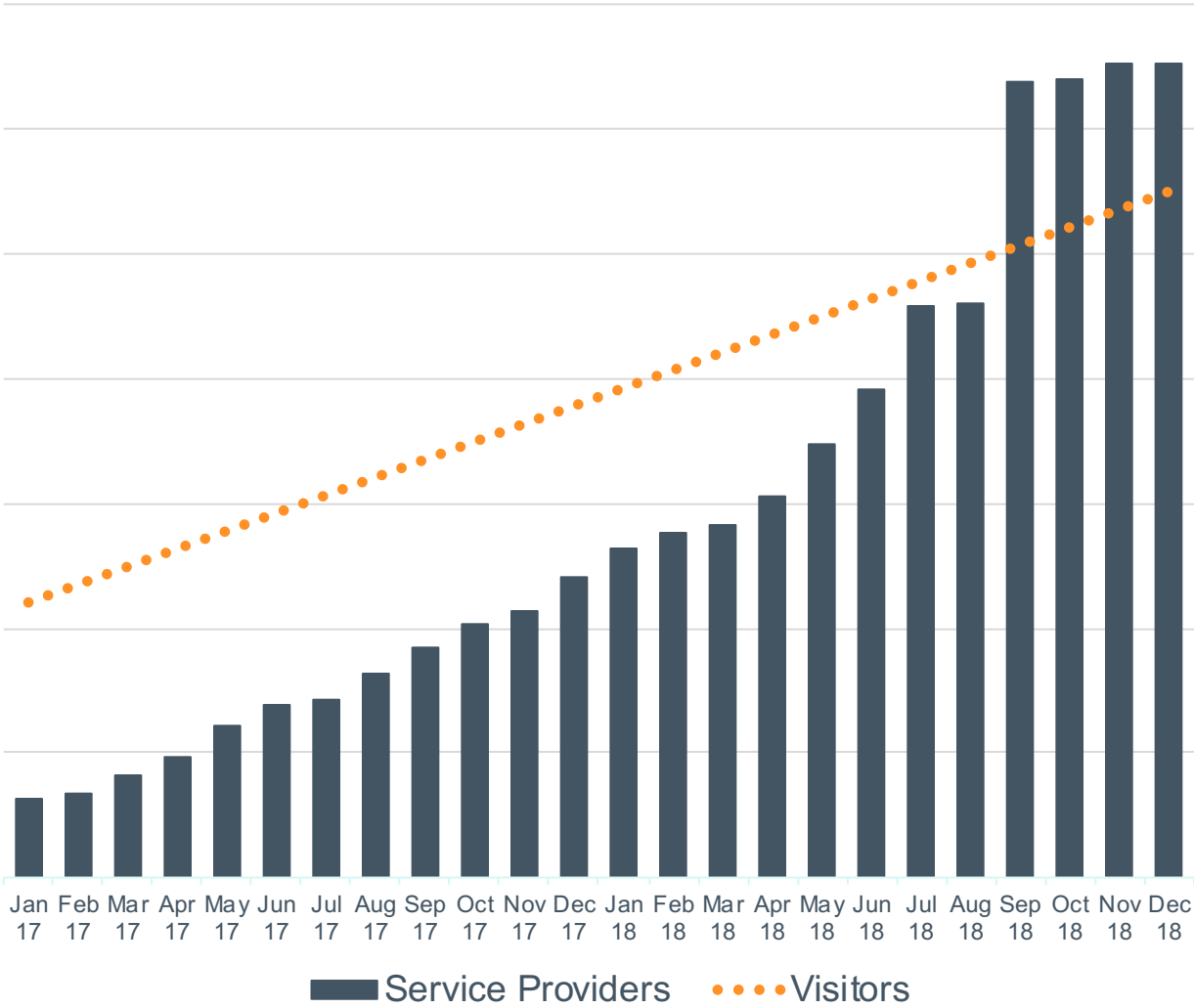
Marketplace Growth: Marketing Service Providers

The number of agencies represented in the UpCity Agency Marketplace has more than doubled in 2018, as we've expanded to serve more markets in the United States and Canada. Today, our marketplace represents more than 33,000 agencies throughout North America.



Marketplace Growth: Businesses Seeking Services

Paramount to a successful marketplace is growth on both sides of the transaction; for UpCity’s marketplace, this means that as more marketing service providers join the community, businesses seeking marketing services grow as well.





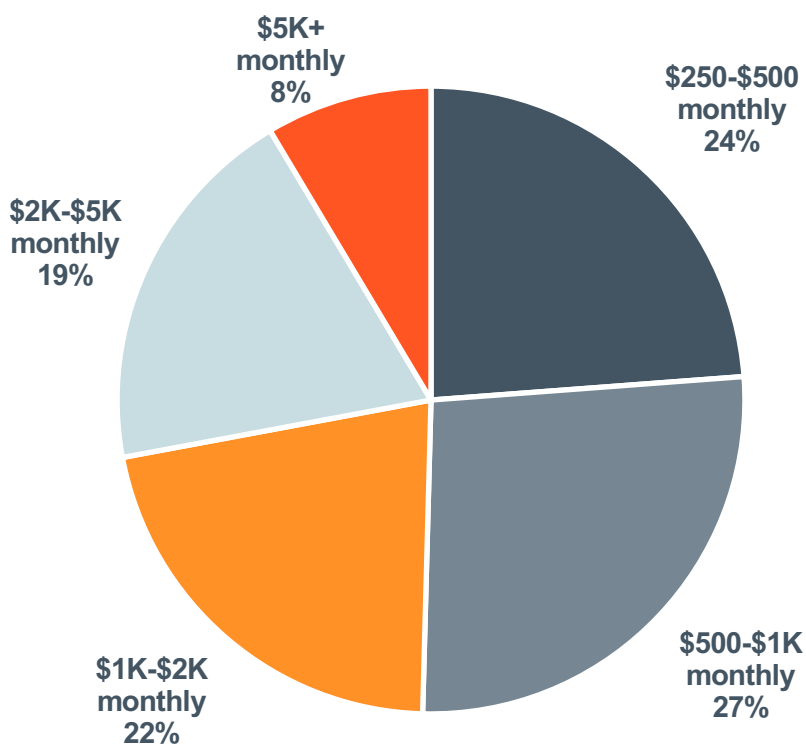
Insights

Marketing Service Providers



Average Project Budget

In 2018, the average budget size for marketing projects, as reported by service providers in our marketplace, ranged from \$500 to \$1,000 monthly. The Top 1% of agencies had a slightly higher average project budget as compared with the rest of the marketplace at \$1,000-\$2,000 monthly.



Average Budget Size

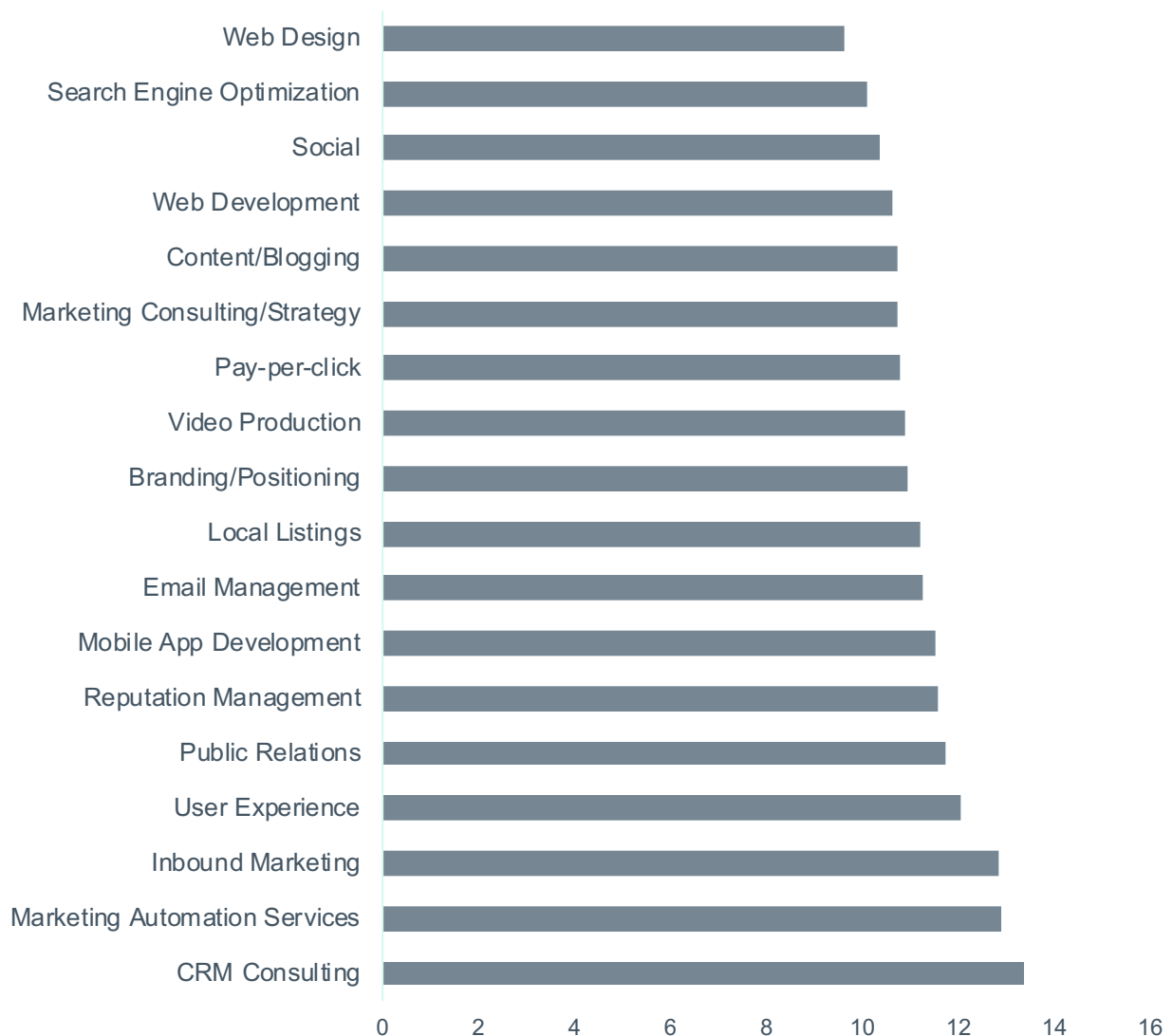
**\$500-\$1K
Monthly**

Average Budget Size (Top 1%)

**\$1K-\$2K
Monthly**

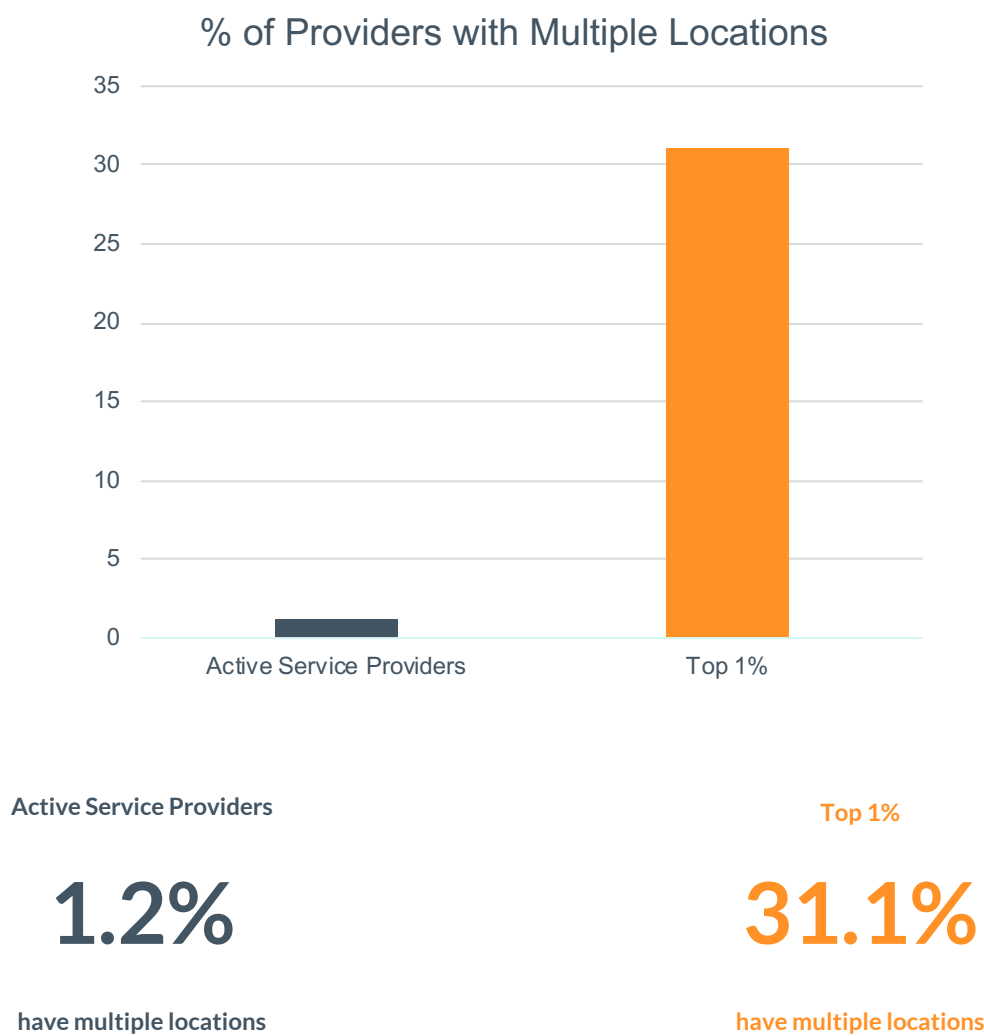
Multi-Service Agencies in 2018

Service providers are diversifying the services they offer at an increasing rate, and 2018 was no exception. The average provider of marketing services offers 9 unique services. The Top 1% of providers offer 12 unique services on average. Of each of the service types, CRM Consulting and Marketing Automation Services are the most likely to offer more unique services than other disciplines.



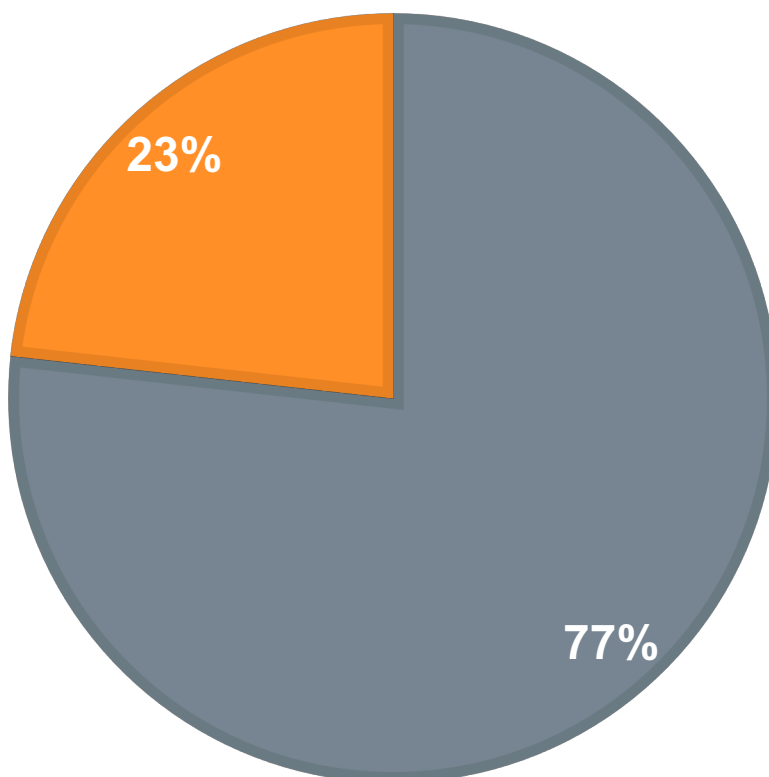
Multi-Location Service Providers

Marketing service providers that serve more than one geographical market and have multiple offices across North America tend to perform better than providers that have one location in a single market. Over 31% of the Top 1% have multiple locations, compared with just over 1% of all active service providers in the marketplace.



First Party Profile Data

In addition to basic data about a marketing service provider like location, services provided, and client reviews, the Agency Marketplace allows agencies to provide rich data like budget size, industries served, client/project preferences and more. Over two thirds of service providers that actively participate in the marketplace list additional rich profile data.



Service Providers Participating in
Marketplace

77%

have provided additional
rich profile data

Top 1% of Service Providers

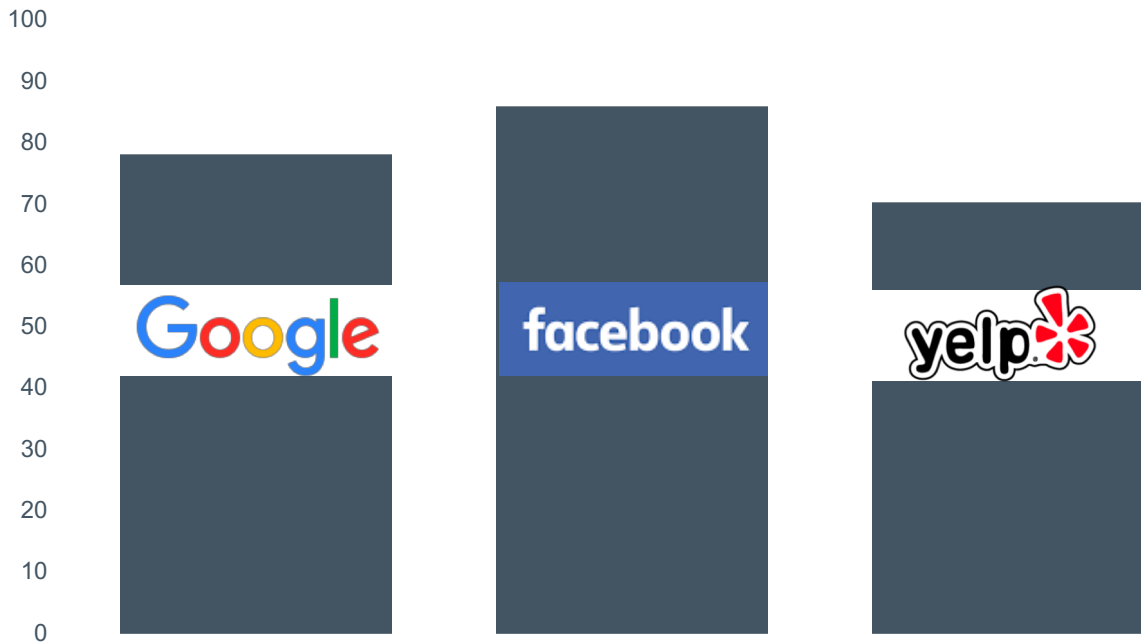
98%

have provided additional
rich profile data

Location Data & Listing Consistency

Consistency across online business listings & location information are important for a service provider's online presence and local search performance. This metric compares information consistency on the most prominent online listings like Yelp, Google My Business, and Facebook.

Percentage of Active Service Providers with Listings



Marketplace Average

56.44%

Percentage of providers
with consistent data across
all listings

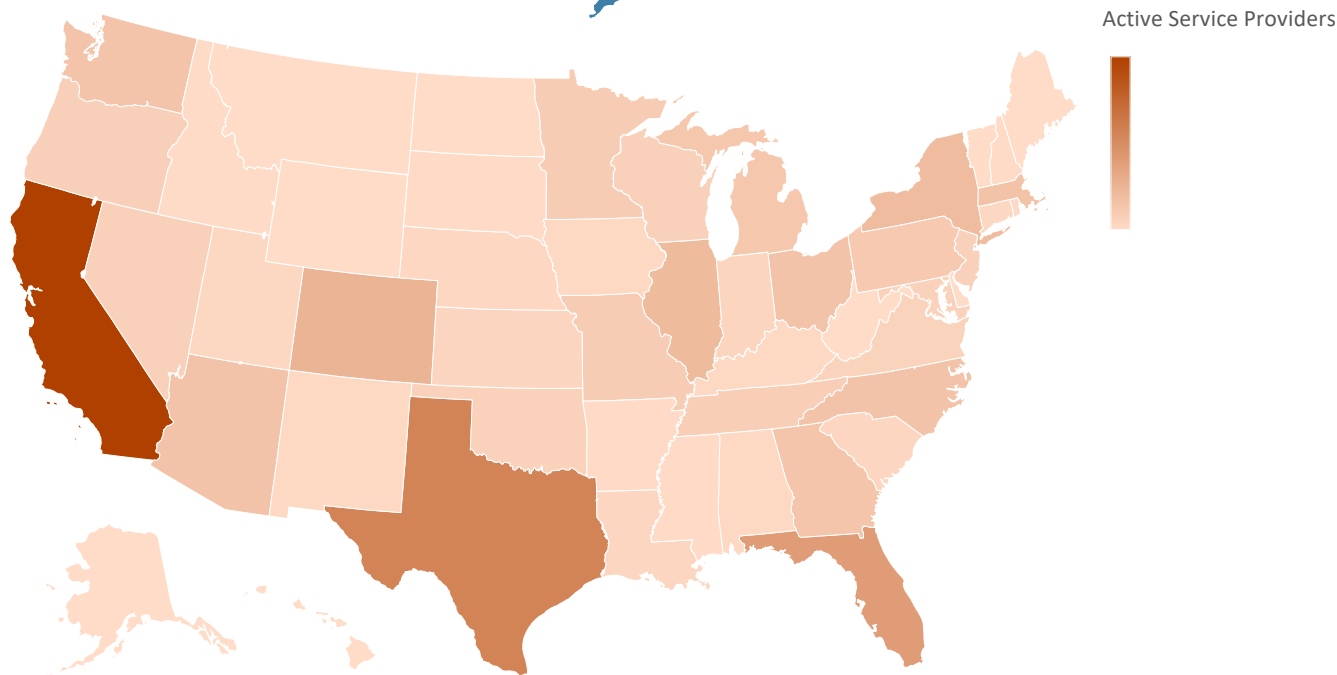
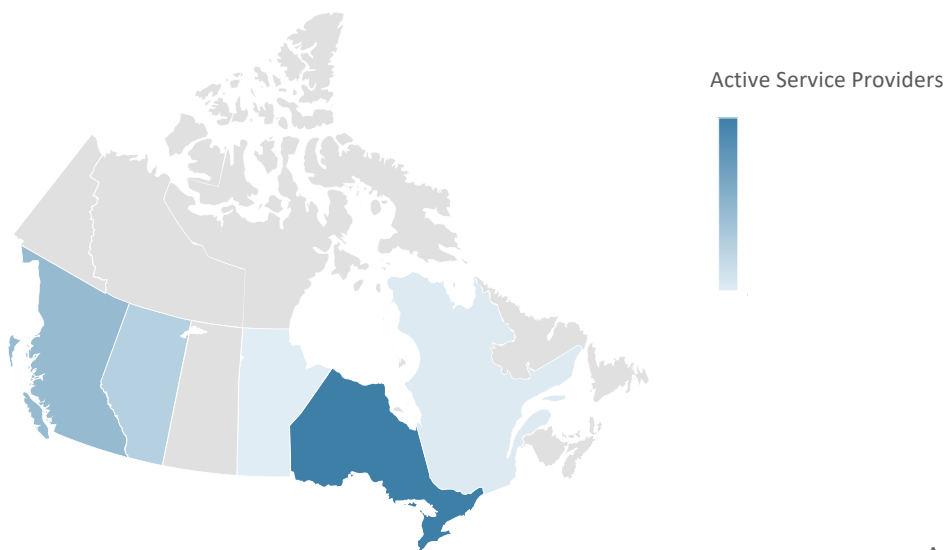
Top 1% Average

81.67%

Percentage of providers
with consistent data across
all listings

Engagement by Market

California has the most engaged marketing service providers in the United States and Ontario has the most engaged service providers in Canada. Texas, Florida, Illinois, Colorado and New York also have very active communities in the UpCity marketplace.





Insights

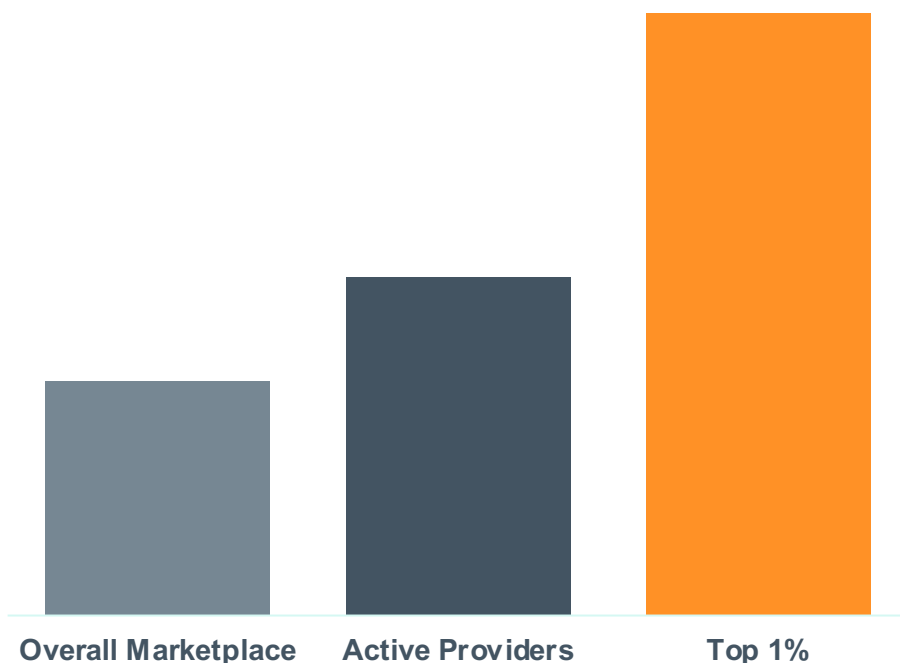
Reviews



UpCity Reviews

Marketing service providers who participate in the UpCity marketplace are strongly encouraged to request that past & present clients provide their feedback and insights about their relationship with the provider to help other buyers make informed purchasing decisions. Active service providers in the marketplace typically get higher reviews as compared with the overall marketplace. Unsurprisingly, the Top 1% of marketing service providers have average higher review ratings than other providers.

Average Ratings

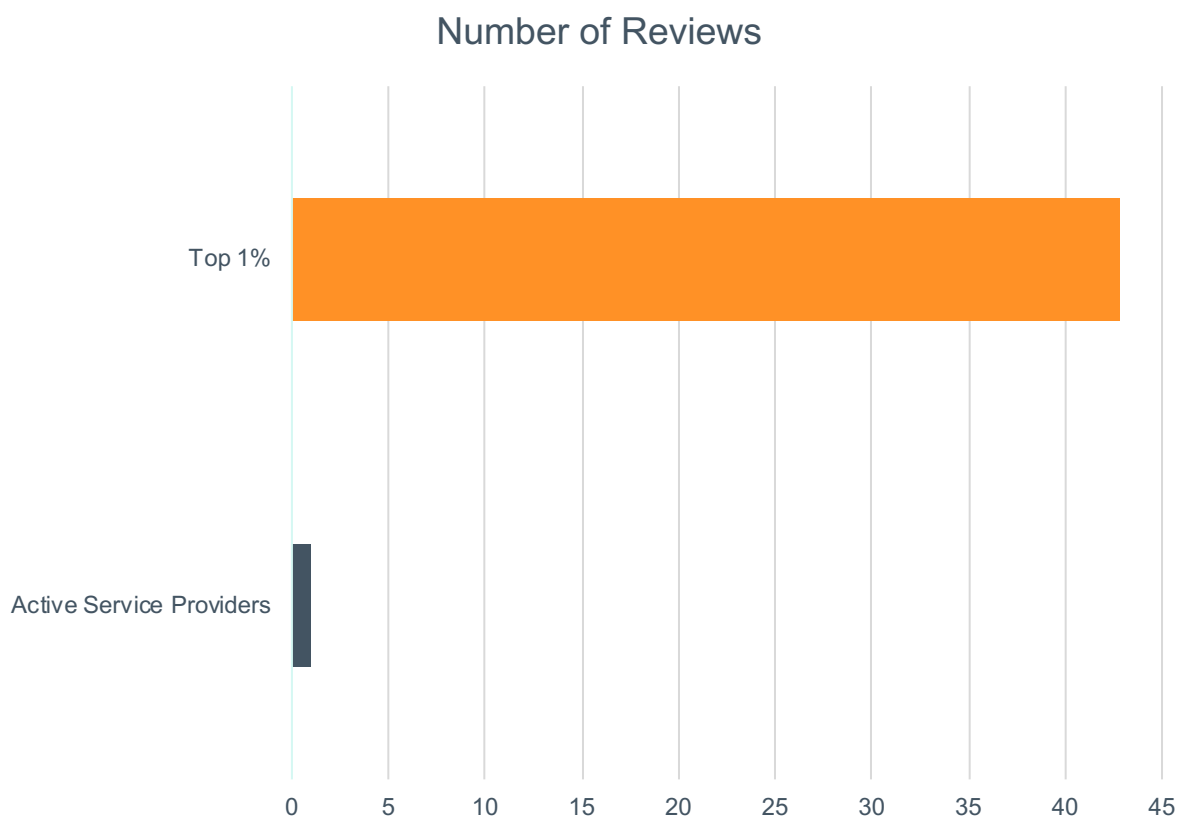


6,000

Clients provided agency
insights & feedback in
UpCity marketplace

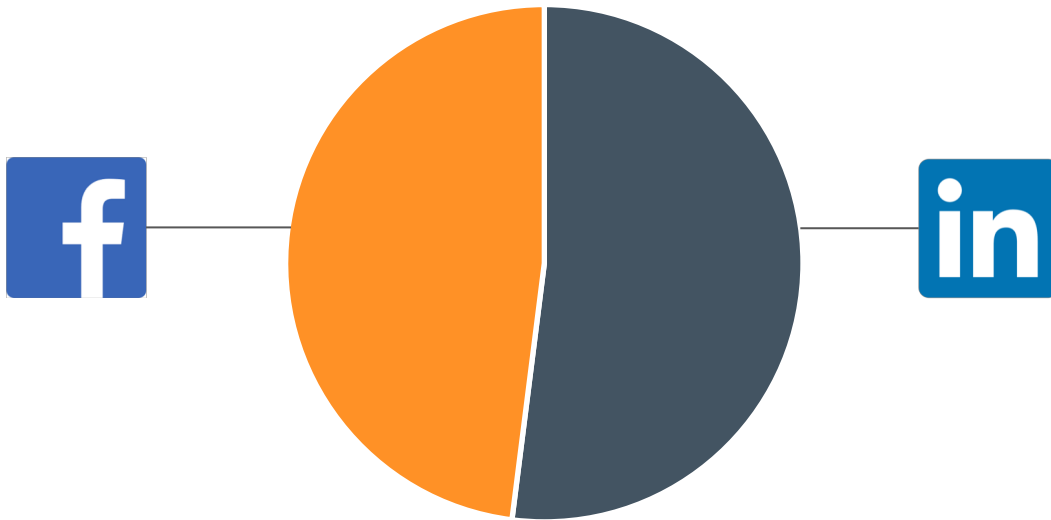
UpCity Reviews


In addition to enjoying higher review rating than other active service providers in the UpCity marketplace, the Top 1% also has a larger *quantity* of reviews as well. The average number of UpCity reviews for the Top 1% is 42.8, compared with other active service providers in the marketplace at an average of 1 review.



Verified Reviews

The UpCity marketplace requires reviewers to authenticate their identity in order to leave reviews for agencies. This helps to reduce erroneous and false submissions, and provides a degree of confidence in the accuracy of review content. Over 6,000 reviews have been manually verified by UpCity's quality team. 52% of reviewers authenticate through LinkedIn and 48% of reviewers authenticate through Facebook.







WebFX
New York City, New York
Claimed
★★★★★ 5.0
126 Reviews

[WRITE A REVIEW](#)

[Visit Website](#)

[\(646\) 961-3131](#) [Contact](#)

Certifications
 UpCity Certified Partner



Karla Marquez
Felix

★★★★★ 01/19/2019 [Read More](#)
[Manage Review](#)

What did you like best?

The team over at WebFX was friendly, efficient, and very professional. Our correspondence was quick and very effective. They answered all my questions and walked me through the entire process. And what's not to love of the results, we've seen an increase in traffic and more customer loyalty. Overall phenomenal team to work with.

What did you like least?

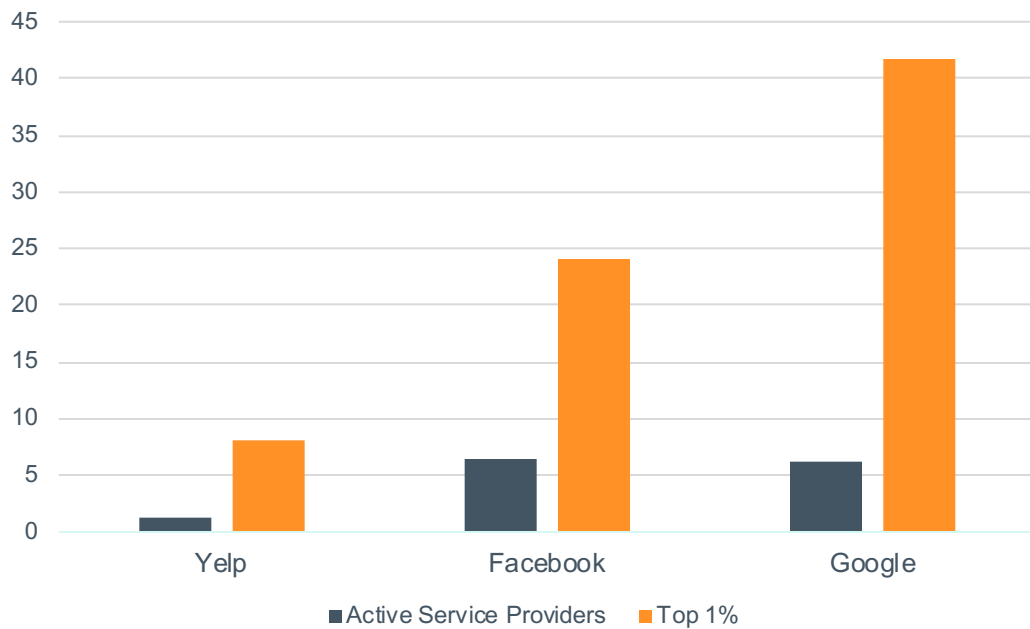
Honestly, we had no issues with WebFX at all. If I ever felt confused or had any questions they were quick to answer me and help guide me along.

Describe your overall experience.

Overall, they were a joy to work with. We are very happy with our experience and would recommend them to anyone who might be thinking about partnering with them.

Third Party Reviews

In addition to our own first-party insights, our algorithm leverages data from trusted third party sources to further strengthen our insights, and allow service providers to garner recognition for efforts made outside of the UpCity Marketplace. The Top 1% receive a significantly larger number of reviews on Yelp, Facebook, and Google than other active service providers.





Insights

Web Presence



Organic Search Visibility

Online search is the largest single channel of new customer growth in the marketing segment. UpCity's search metric takes a blended score across up to 10 keyword phrases relevant to a marketing service provider. Our algorithm takes this importance into account by analyzing how agencies perform for relevant searches in three major categories:

Location-based keywords

Service-based keywords

General industry keywords

55,597

Individually tracked
keyword phrases

61% of marketers say **improving SEO** and growing their organic presence is their top inbound marketing priority.*

*HubSpot

Marketplace Average

60.1

Blended Organic Search
Visibility Score

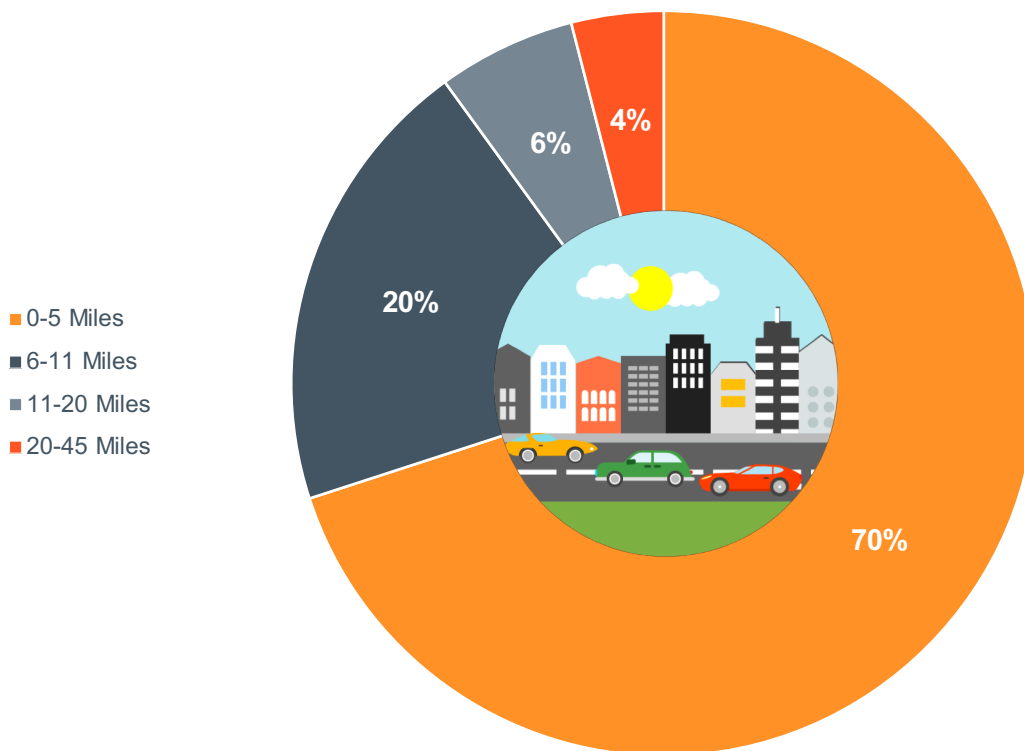
Top 1% Average

72.5

Blended Organic Search
Visibility Score

Location, Location, Location.

Most businesses prefer the ability to meet face-to-face with service providers when working on projects. That's why 7 out of every 10 service providers in our marketplace are located less than 5 miles from the center of their city market.



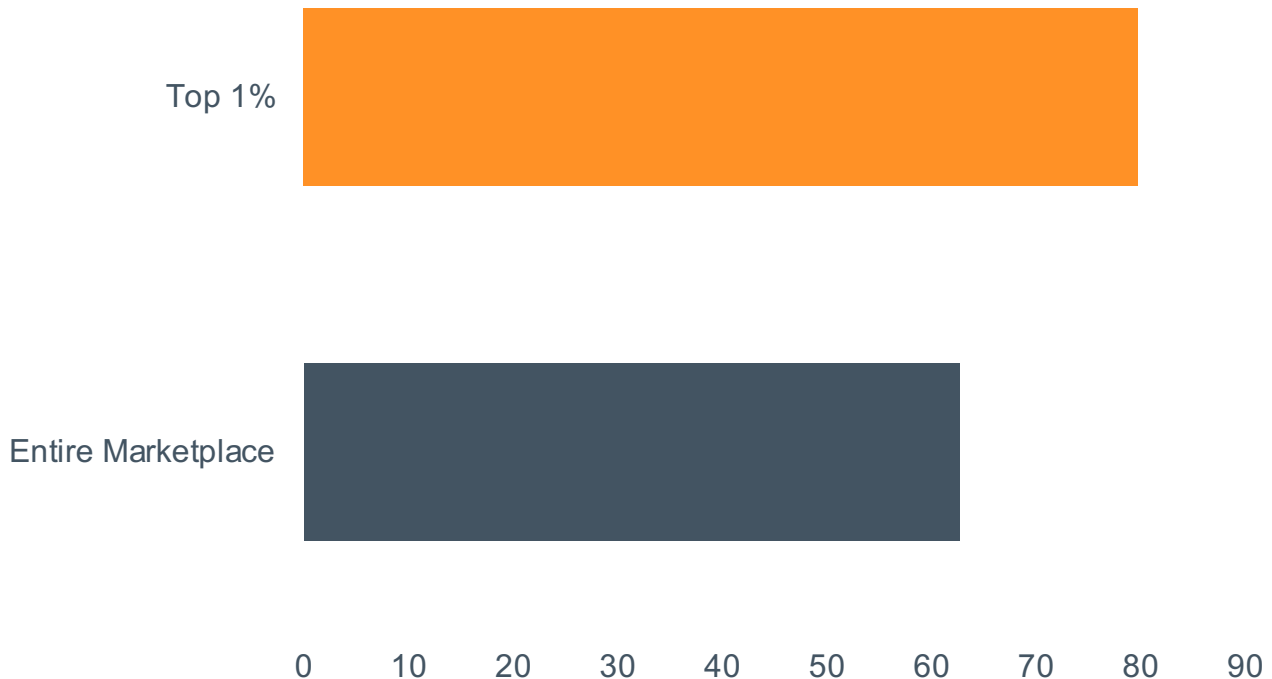
Average Distance from City Center

7.9 miles

Website Experience & Load Performance

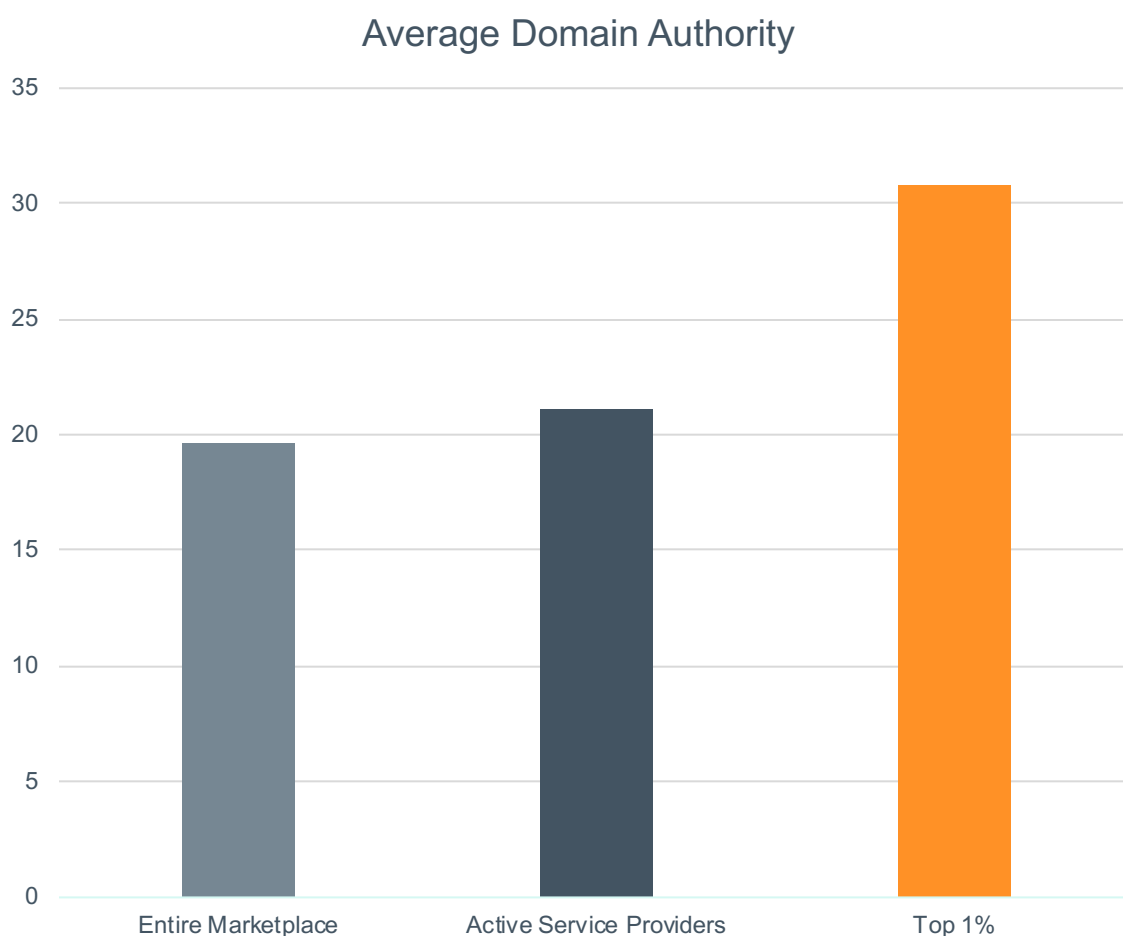
Slow loading is the most common cause for user bounce on website entrance. Google recommends a site take no longer than 3 seconds to render & load. The average PageSpeed score across the entire marketplace is 62.7. Top 1% have the highest average score of 79.8.

Average PageSpeed Score



Website & Domain Authority

Having a robust backlink portfolio is a huge factor in organic search performance. On average, the Top 1% of service providers have a domain authority that is 36% higher than the rest of the marketplace.





Conclusions



Conclusions

Getting noticed as a marketing service provider can be challenging; in a crowded industry, differentiating your business can be difficult. Identifying the signals that make you recommendable and bring you new business can be the key to your success.

At the same time, with the plethora of choices for businesses seeking a marketing service provider, it's hard to know who to trust to deliver the best work for your business.

UpCity's rating algorithm utilizes signals and indicators (like number and quality of reviews, website performance and domain authority) to gauge a service provider's recommendability – and, ultimately, help businesses find the best fit for their needs.

The UpCity Excellence Research Study had statistically shown what top marketing service providers are doing differently to become recommendable. Key highlights include:

The Top 1% of the UpCity marketplace performs better than the average marketing service provider....

...by **7.8x** in the number of reviews collected.

...by **44%** in listing consistency on Google, Facebook & Yelp.

...by **21%** for organic search visibility.

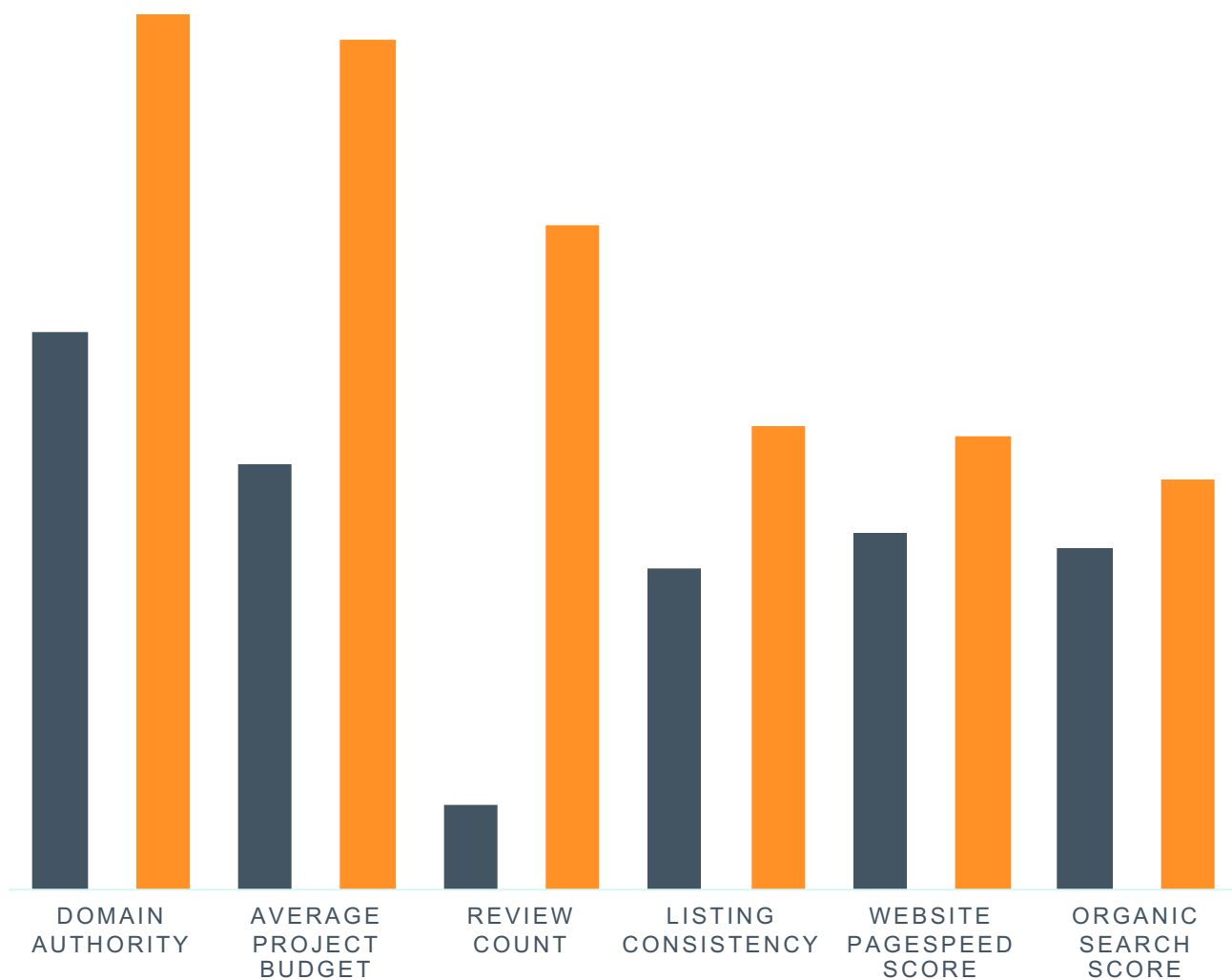
...by **27%** for website PageSpeed score.

...by **57%** in domain authority.

Conclusions

Examining what makes the top marketing service providers more recommendable than the average provider can provide a blueprint for building a successful marketing service business, and also help businesses seeking marketing services identify the best provider for their needs.

■ Marketplace ■ Top 1%





Thank you.

