

# The Marketing Plan

The most important part of a business plan is the Marketing Plan. To keep one's business on course this plan must be geared toward the business's mission—its product and service lines, its markets, its financial situation and marketing/sales tactics.

- The business must be aware of its strengths and weaknesses through internal and external analysis and look for market opportunities.
- The business must analyze its products and services from the viewpoint of the customer—outside-in thinking. What is the customer looking for and what does the customer want (benefits)? The business must gain knowledge of the marketplace from its customers.
- The business must analyze its target markets. What other additional markets can the business tap into and are there additional products or services the business can add?
- The business must know its competition, current and potential. By identifying the competitor's strengths and weaknesses the business can improve its position in the marketplace.
- The business must make decisions on how to apply its resources to the target market(s).
- The business must utilize the information it has gathered about itself, its customers, its markets, and its competition by developing a written Marketing Plan that provides measurable goals. The business must select marketing/sales tactics that will allow it to achieve or surpass its goals.
- The business must implement the plan (within an established budget) and then measure its success in terms of whether or not the goals were met (or the extent to which they were). The Marketing Plan is an ongoing tool designed to help the business compete in the market for customers. It should be re-visited, re-worked, and re-created often.



# The Marketing Planning Process































# Review and Simplify the Process!

Now that you've completed the "front end" of the marketing plan outline, you have a wealth of information at your fingertips including:

1. "Who are we as an organization?"
2. An outline of verticals and buyer-persona targets
3. Documented previous year's marketing activities
4. Identified strengths, weaknesses, competition, and competitive advantages
5. Market, audience, and pricing trends

Next, your plan will:

6. Outline the big-picture growth goals and develop marketing objectives and strategies
7. Define activities, budgets, timing
8. Outline tracking, reviews and analysis

## Marketing Objectives, Strategies and Tactics Should Relate to and Support Business Goals

An overarching business plan goal is a broadly defined and desired end result. Goals are focused on the big picture. They are "whats," not "hows." Example:

- Improve profits by promoting higher-margin products.

### Supporting Marketing Objective:

Objectives are measurable and focus on the "whats", not "hows". Example:

- By June 1st, show a 35% increase in "additional information requests" on website for our three identified higher-margin products.

### Marketing Strategy:

Strategies focus on the approaches you will use to persuade prospects to take action. It is the vision for the tactical actions you will take, and guides the plan to achieve the objective or goal. A strategy is a "how," or a "why", not a "what". Example:

- Develop a multi-channel awareness campaign for each of our three high-margin products that will drive traffic to custom landing pages with unique personalized offers.

### Marketing Tactics:

Each tactic is one single action you will take. Tactics can change based on trends, needs, available resources etc., whereas a strategy tends to stay the same. Tactics answer the question "what will you do?" Examples:

- Shoot six customer testimonial videos featuring our three high-margin products.
- Design personalized landing pages to host customer testimonial videos and special "request more info" offers.
- Design a direct mail campaign to drive traffic to personalized landing pages.
- Write posts for sales executives to publish on their personal LinkedIn pages linking to customer testimonial videos and "request info" landing pages.

# Marketing Plan Outline

Use this form to outline each marketing objective, related strategy, and tactics. Combine to create an overall outline of your annual marketing plan. Share with executives and employees to gain buy-in and understanding of your marketing vision and goals.

Business Goal:

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Supporting Marketing Objective:

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Marketing Strategy:

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Marketing Tactics and Estimated Budget for Each:

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Timeline: 

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Expected Outcome/What Are We Measuring? 

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Marketing team leader responsible for this objective? Who else is on this team? 

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