

Marketing Plan Template

Introductory Notes

- The main purpose of the Marketing Plan is to clarify how you intend to market and promote your product or service. In other words; what you are going to sell; who is going to buy it; why they will want to buy from you as opposed to your competitors; how you are going to tell people about it and how much do you aim to spend on marketing.
- Do you need a Marketing Plan? Our opinion is - yes. Planning is *not* a time-consuming luxury, as so many business owners believe, but hugely important if you want to stay in business for the long term and grow profitably.
- This Template provides an example outline of how to structure a Marketing Plan. If you are also writing a Business Plan, you can summarise the conclusions in the marketing section of your Business Plan or you can append the Marketing Plan to the Business Plan (although this may be a bit daunting for the people who have to read it).
- There may be sections in this Template which will not be relevant to your business, for example some issues are relevant for a service-based as opposed to a product-based business and vice versa. If it's not relevant, take it out.
- This Template focuses on traditional off-line marketing (we'll get round to the on-line one eventually).

<Company Name>

<Company logo>

Marketing Plan

Version: [Day, Month, Year]

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2 Product/Service Analysis

2.1 Mission Statement:

- Some people like the idea of having a “mission statement” . This outlines, in a nutshell, what is it your business aims to achieve e.g. “To be recognised as the leading provider of filo pastry to the catering industry”. (This was the actual mission statement from one of our clients, operating in the cut-throat pastry world).
- We have slightly mixed feelings about mission statements. They're usually pretty vacuous, full of words like 'best', 'class-leading' (don't you just love that one), 'foremost' and so on. These things are easy to say. The hard bit is actually achieving them, which is what the rest of the plan is about. We suggest you spend most of your time on that.

2.2 Product/Service Features and Benefits

- Features describe the details of the product or service you are offering.
- Benefits describe how those features improve the life of the user.
- It's important to clearly outline the benefits as these are the reasons consumers will buy your product or service.
- Take, for example, the Dyson Vacuum Cleaner. The feature is the bag-less cleaner, the benefit is the fact that having no bag leads to *improved cleaning performance* which leads to *a cleaner house*.
- Another example is provided below;

<i>Product</i>	<i>Feature</i>	<i>Benefit</i>
Sony Vaio Laptop	High resolution screen	Easier on your eyes
	500 mhz processor	Able to deal with a large number of software applications simultaneously.
	Long-life lithium battery	Enables you to work longer without recharging the battery.

- Use a table of this type to outline the main features and benefits of your product or service.

2.3 Pricing Strategy

- You will need to explain the method used for pricing your products/services.
- For example, influences on your pricing will include;
 - Cost of production (or the cost of delivering the service).
 - Market expectation (what you feel the market can bear)
 - Competition (where your pricing sits alongside your competitors)
 - Distribution channels (if you are selling through a third party e.g. supermarket or agent, you will need to take their mark-ups into account).

2.4 Product/Service Pricing Analysis

- Once you have established your pricing strategy, it is useful to provide details of the pricing structure of your primary products/services. Below is an example of the Service Pricing Analysis for a public relations firm;

<i>Service</i>	<i>Feature</i>	<i>Pricing</i>	<i>Costing / Notes</i>
Premium Service	Complete management of all public relations activities	£8,000 to £10,000 per month	Account Director's time; 3-5 days per month. Account Exec's time; 7-10 days per month.
Support Service	Regular promotional PR	£2,000 to £5,000 per month	Account Director's time; 1-3 days per month, Account Exec's time; 5-7 days per month
Initial Launch Service	PR for initial launch	£5,000 to £8,000.	Account Director's time; 3-5 days, Account Exec's time; 5-7 days.

2.5 Branding Issues

- Establishing clear brand values can help you to be identified and accepted by your target customers/clients.
- In order to do this, you need to clarify the way you want your business and its products/services to be perceived. This can be in terms of the;
 - Image you want to portray i.e. a corporate design with which your target clients can identify.
 - Style of delivery e.g. formal or informal
 - Customer services and management i.e. how you deal with customer/client enquiries and requests.

2.6 Product/Service Protection

If you are considering protecting your product/service brand through trade marks or patents, you should outline the method and timescale of achieving such protection.

3 Customer/Client Analysis

3.1 Client Segmentation

- You are likely to have more than one type of customer.
- Identifying the different client groups enables you to consider their individual needs and how best to promote your services to them.
- For example, one of our clients is a light manufacturer and his clients were segmented as follows;
 - Private (individual consumers)
 - Architects
 - Shop fitters
 - Resellers e.g. shops selling light fittings.
- (These clients segments could be sub-divided further into the size and location of each group).

3.2 Market Size

- Once you have identified the different client groups you need to find out the number of people in each segment. This will give you an idea of your total market size.

3.3 Targeting

- Having identified the total market for your product/service, you can identify which groups you intend to target.
- You will not necessarily devote most of your promotional resources to the largest client group. Instead you may want to target smaller, niche client groups.
- (For example, initially the light manufacturer decided to target small firms of architects in the South-east of England).

3.4 Client Market Research

- It can be useful to explain the methods you have used to research the potential market.
- This can be in terms of;
 - Desk Research. Using directories (Yellow Pages, Thompsons Direct), trade journals, websites etc.
 - Field Research e.g. Quantitative or qualitative research.

4 Competitor Analysis

4.1 Competitor Market Research

- You will need to find out who your direct and indirect competitors are.

4.2 Competitor Segmentation

- Once you have established who they are, you can compare your competitors on specific issues e.g. price, location, style, primary services offered, promotional material etc.
- To get information on your competitors, there's nothing more useful than a bit of industrial espionage e.g. pretending to be a prospective client or customer. Just try not to get found out.

4.3 Unique Selling Points

- Having found out information on your competitors, you need to work out how you can be better than them.
- Identifying your USP serves to answer the question "why will people buy from you as opposed to your competitors?". Remember this is based upon benefits not features.
- This can then be used to develop your promotional strategy.

4.4 Positioning

- It can be useful to clarify your "position" in the market, in other words how customer/clients will perceive your product/service alongside your competitors.
- For example, are you going for the cheap and cheerful approach or a premium-priced service. Try to avoid the naive "high quality at low cost" approach as this does nothing to clarify your market positioning.

4.5 Competitor Reaction

- If you are launching a new product/service onto the market, you may need to pre-empt the reaction from the competition.
- This may be the case, particularly, in a small, niche market. Your competitors are unlikely to sit by and watch you gobble up market share.

5 Promotional Strategy

5.1 Promotional Strap Lines / Slogan

- It can be useful to come up with a promotional strap line or slogan to sum up your offering.
- This can be based around your Mission Statement (if you decide to have one) and can then be used in your promotional material.

5.2 Promotional Material

- You should outline what material you will use to promote your business e.g.
 - Stationery. Business cards, letterhead, comp slips etc.
 - Post cards
 - Promotional flyers
 - Folders (in which to place promotional material)
 - Brochures
 - Information Leaflets
 - Stickers.
 - Merchandise e.g. pens, mugs, silk ties, baseball caps, notepads, Palm Pilot leather holders, laptop briefcases, screen guards, umbrellas, t-shirts, bomber jackets, calculators, executive toys, mouse mats etc.

5.3 Direct Mail

- If you plan to promote your business using direct mail you could provide details of how you intend to do this. This should be in terms of;
 - Clarifying the objective of the direct mail campaign e.g. to raise awareness, to invite response (in which case include a pre-paid envelope or response slip) or to promote a specific product or service.
 - Distributing the direct mail e.g. building your own database or purchasing a mailing list.
 - Deciding the format of the direct mail e.g. sales letter, A5 flyer, postcard etc.
 - Planning the style and content of the direct mail (perhaps providing examples).

5.4 Public Relations

- If you are planning to promote your business through PR, you should outline whether you plan to;

- Do it yourself i.e. write your own press release and distribute it to the appropriate media (in which case it would be useful to provide an example) or
- Hire the services of a PR Agency or Consultant who, for a charge of between £1,000 to £10,000 per month, can achieve exposure in the media).

5.5 Advertising

- If you plan to advertise, you will need to
 - (a) identify through which media you plan to advertise e.g. newspapers, trade journals, billboard, posters on side of taxis, local radio etc. and
 - (b) provide examples of the design and style of you adverts.
- These will then need to be fully costed (see [Marketing Budget](#) below).

5.6 Other Promotional Tactics

- In addition to advertising, PR and direct mail, you could identify a number of ways you aim to promote your business e.g.;
 - Telesales
 - Point-of-sale material
 - Product promotions
 - Competitions
 - Trade shows
 - Events and sponsorship.
 - Promoting through agents or strategic partners.
 - Viral marketing through networks and referral.

5.7 Timings of Promotional Activity

- You should provide details of the timings of promotional activity throughout the year. For example, you should avoid sending out material to businesses in August or December when they have other things on their mind e.g. holidays or Christmas.

5.8 Systems for Monitoring Success of Promotional Activity

- Rather than blindly sending out promotional material, you need to show how you plan to measure the effectiveness of all promotional activity.
- Usually this is done by monitoring the referral source for each new customer/client. This will enable you to focus resources on the most effective types of promotion.

6 Finance Issues

6.1 Marketing Budget

- Having outlined what promotional activity you aim to undertake, you need to provide details of how much it is all going to cost (see example below);

<i>Promotional Activity</i>	<i>Supplier</i>	<i>Costs</i>
Public Relations	Grant Butler Coomber	Initial Launch; £10,000 Monthly retainer; £2,000
Corporate Design	Crumpled Dog Design	£6,000
Promotional Flyer Design	Crumpled Dog Design	£1,000
Promotional Flyers Printing (10,000)	Abacus Printers	£500
Etc.		

6.2 Sales Forecast

- You will need to provide estimates of the level of sales you expect to achieve, at least for the forthcoming year and probably the following year also. This should be done on a monthly basis.
- You will need to take into account any seasonality throughout the year.
- You can either base the Sales Forecast on sales per customer segment or sales per product line.
- For a more detailed Marketing Plan, you should aim to forecast sales for at least the next three years.

The information from the Marketing Budget and the Sales Forecast can then be incorporated into your business plan and financial forecast.

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