

Planning for Marketing Success

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When many people hear the term “marketing”, they get confused because marketing can mean many different things.

Marketing is an umbrella that covers the activities of advertising, market research, publicity, public relations, promotions, graphic design, copy writing, and so on. However, for simplicity’s sake, I’m going to use the definition given by marketing expert CJ Hayden, author of *Get Clients Now*: “Marketing is telling people what you do over and over and in a variety of different ways.”

The purpose of marketing is to:

- Increase awareness and visibility of your company, product or service.
- Establish your identity or “brand”.
- Generate response that leads to sales that lead to profits that lead to success for your business.

Before I go any further, let me clarify for you the difference between marketing and sales.

Marketing is the tool used to bring people to your door, but it is the responsibility of sales to bring those people through the door and to the cash register. *KaChing!*

Or, for a more effective illustration of the process, let me put it another way, marketing is the quarterback who hands the ball to the receiver (salesperson) who then scores the touchdown (makes the sale).

To score that goal, you’re going to need a plan.

A marketing plan will help you focus on:

- Reaching the right target markets (the people who are your ideal clients)
- Using the right marketing tools
- So you get the best return on your investment
- While meeting your deadlines and budget constraints.

Without a marketing plan, your marketing may fail because it is too scattered, too little, too shallow, or too late. Or you might use the wrong tools with the wrong message directed at the wrong target markets.

How do you develop a marketing plan?

Keep in mind that an effective marketing plan is one that is short and simple. It can be a one-page plan that you stick up on the wall and look at every day. Let’s look at the elements of a marketing plan right now.



1. Start with your positioning statement.

A positioning statement is not the same as a slogan or tag line. A positioning statement provides direction or focus to a business or organization. It is a no-nonsense statement of how you want your company to be perceived in the minds of your target market.

A good positioning statement generally has four elements:

1. The target market
2. The need of that target market
3. The name of your product
4. The statement telling how your product satisfies the need and is different from the competitors.

For example, Volvo might have a positioning statement like this: *For (1) families concerned about (2) safety, (3) Volvo builds a vehicle with (4) state-of-the-art safety features that give you peace of mind when driving.*

2. What is your marketing objective?

What kind of numbers do you need to generate to reach your sales goals? What kind of marketing do you need to do to be successful? Develop 100 new leads a month? Generate 100 web hits a day? Cultivate 10 new clients in the next 3 months?

3. Who are your target markets?

The more detailed you can get in describing your ideal clients, the easier it will be to market to them.

Ask yourself: Who is most likely to buy your product/service? Who can afford to buy your product/service?

Who has the authority to buy your product/service? Defining your target market or ideal client will take some time and some hard thinking. Not everyone will want or need your product or service. And there are some people that you don't want as customers!

Figure out who your target markets are by using demographics. Demographics, or demographic data, are the characteristics of a human population as used in research. Commonly used demographics include gender, race, age, income, disabilities, education, home ownership, occupation, and location. In business, there are demographics for industry, location, number of locations or branches, annual revenue, number of employees, and so on.

There are also psychographic variables. These are any attributes relating to personality, values, attitudes, interests, or lifestyles.

A description of a target market would look like this: 25-35 years old, married without children, professionals, homeowners, combined income of \$75,000+ and avid motorcyclists.

4. What is your message?

Define the basic message that you would like to send to this market about your product/service by asking yourself: Why should people buy from me? What problem does my product/service solve? What are the challenges of my target audience? What are the problems my target market is having that I can and want to solve? What are my target markets hot buttons? How am I different from my competitors?

This section is important because you want to build your business around the needs of the market. Don't build your market around your product or service.

5. The tools you can use.

What is the best way to contact your target market? How do you know which marketing tools to use? In CJ Hayden's book *Get Clients Now*, she describes six basic marketing tools that build credibility and visibility and how to use a combination of these tools to fill your pipeline with prospects.

The basic marketing tools:

- Cold Calling & Personal Contact
- Networking and Referral Building
- Public Speaking
- Writing & Publicity
- Promotional Events
- Advertising

The key to using these tools successfully is to limit yourself to two or three tools that will reach your target market consistently and continually. This is not the place to try everything at once.

6. What strategies will you use to meet your objective?

List the strategies and schedules to keep yourself on track. For instance: If networking is one of your main marketing tools, you can write down that you will attend a business meeting at least twice a month and introduce yourself to five new people.

7. Don't forget to set aside a budget!

You won't get far if you don't have a budget. Think of marketing as an investment, not an expense. Marketing generates sales; sales generate profits; and profits determine the success of your business. If you're not sure what your budget should be, start by using the industry average of 5% of your annual operating budget (15% for startups). Of course, this depends on your industry.

8. Wrap it all up with an evaluation.

Does the marketing activity get you closer to meeting your objective? Can it be done better? Would another activity do a better job? Test, tweak, drop, expand. Look for the ROI (return on investment). If you are not getting a positive ROI, it's time to change your plan. And you can because your marketing plan is a living document. You can change it as needed.



Make marketing a priority

Marketing and sales are the most important functions of your business. If there is no marketing, there are no sales. If there are no sales, there is no revenue. If there is no revenue, there is no business.

The first step to marketing is getting a marketing plan on paper. Once you do that, the rest will fall into place.

About the Author

Cindy Marshall is a marketing consultant with 25 years experience working with corporate marketing departments, ad agencies, printing companies, graphic design firms and non-profit organizations. Her wealth of experience in account management, marketing, advertising, copy writing, and design provides clients with the insight they need to market their products and services efficiently and effectively.

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My Marketing Plan

Positioning Statement: _____

Objective: _____

Target Market(s): (*Occupation, title, age, gender, education, income, location, home ownership, industry, annual revenue, number of employees, values, hobbies, lifestyle, etc.*)

Message: _____

Tools: (*Pick 2 or 3*)

- Cold Calling
- Networking and Referral Building
- Public Speaking
- Writing & Publicity
- Promotional Events
- Advertising

Strategies:

Activity

Schedule/Deadline

Budget: _____

Evaluation: _____

Acme Promotional Products, Inc.

Sample Marketing Plan

Positioning Statement: Acme Promotional Products, Inc. works with business owners and marketing managers who need to attract the attention of their target markets in ways that are unique, engaging, and long lasting to generate a greater return on their marketing investment.

Objective: Increase web site hits to 2000 per month and new clients to 15 per month.

Target Market(s):

- Business owner or Marketing Manager
- Healthcare, Finance, Manufacturing, Education, Non-Profit
- Revenue \$250,000-\$10 million
- 5+ employees
- Metropolis area (30 miles)
- Active marketing program

Message: We help your clients remember you when they need you.

Tools:

- Networking and Referral Building
- Promotional Events
- Advertising

Strategies:

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Schedule/Deadline</u>
BNI, Toastmasters, Chamber, Business Associations	2 meetings/week
Trade Shows, Business Conferences	1 exhibit/quarter
SEO/Google AdWords	1 update/quarter
Direct mail promotion	1 mailing/quarter
Email newsletter	first of month

Budget: \$7500/year

Evaluation:

First month: Joining chamber welcome committee garnered 6 new prospects. Attending women's networking group garnered 3 requests for quotes. Gave presentation for local HR association group and made appointment with 2 prospects for follow-up meetings. Sent email newsletter to 50 prospects with discount coupon and received 4 orders. Result: 8 new clients and a total of \$12,500 in new business.