

How to Write a Marketing Plan

Every business needs to have a formal marketing plan. A marketing plan is designed to assist you in developing strategies to improve your business. The purpose of this plan is to determine where your business is now, where you want it to be, and how are you going to get there.

Admittedly it can take some time to sit down and write your marketing plan, however it is vitally important that you make the commitment to do this and to regularly review your progress in line with your plan. What should I include in my marketing plan? Below is a list of important aspects of any marketing plan.

WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

1. Introduction

Briefly describe your business, what is it that you do, for whom. You need to outline your business so that if someone picks up your plan to read they instantly have an understanding of your business. This will also assist them in understanding the rest of your plan.

2. Statement of purpose

Why did you set up this particular business? What are your dreams and aspirations for your business? The statement of purpose can be very elaborate and detail your visions or mission for your business, or alternatively it may be a more conservative look at the purpose of your business, it is up to you.

3. Strategic analysis

As part of your strategic analysis you need gather information on the following areas:

A. Product and services

Outline details on the current products or services that you provide. (Example questions to ask yourself)

- ♣ What products and services do you offer?
- ♣ What is the range, options available?
- ♣ Who are the suppliers?
- ♣ How are they packaged, presented?
- ♣ How are they sold?
- ♣ Are they easily to understand / use?
- ♣ Are their other services that you could offer?

B. Customers and prospects

Identify the current groups of customers that you attract, or are available to you, and those that you wish to target.

- ♣ Who are your customers, what age, demographics, sex etc?
- ♣ How much do they purchase from you?
- ♣ What are they paying- what are the implications of change in pricing?

- ♣ How do they find out about your product or service?
- ♣ What do they like / dislike about your product / service?
- ♣ Why do they choose your products and services?
- ♣ Who do you want to attract / target?

C. Competitor Analysis

What your competitors are doing now and in the future has an impact on the successful operation of your business. Therefore it is important to have an understanding of how your competitors are operating. However, it is also very important NOT to base your actions solely on those of your competitors.

- ♣ Who are your competitors?
- ♣ What do they offer?
- ♣ What have they got that you haven't?
- ♣ What do you offer that they do not?

D. Information about your Business

SWOT Analysis

An analysis of your internal strengths and weaknesses, and your external opportunities and threats. This section may include detail on past performance, your present strategy, current resources and capabilities etc

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

WHERE DO YOU WANT TO BE?

4. Set Goals and objectives

Now that you have a greater understanding of your business and your business environment you are able to make informed decisions on the strategy that you wish to take to improve your marketing performance, both in the short and long term. What do you want to achieve within the next year, or perhaps over the next 3-5years. What are the critical success factors that will permit you to achieve these objectives? Your goals should have a realistic timeframe.

- ♣ Identify Critical Success Factors
 - Reducing costs?
 - Improving customer service?
 - Increasing sales?

- Increasing retention?
- ♣ Set Your Objectives
 - Short and long term
- ♣ Complete a Sales Forecast

HOW ARE YOU GOING TO GET THERE?

5. Develop Marketing Strategy

You have set your goals and objectives, you know where you want to be... now how are you going to get there. How are you going to improve the marketing of your facility to achieve the goals that you aspire to?

- ♣ Set Strategy Alternatives
 - Brainstorm the alternative courses of action to market your facility.
- ♣ Consider the practicalities associated with each method
 - Eg. Time, cost, staff resources etc
- ♣ Select the Best Strategies (for your objectives and resources)
- ♣ Create an action plan
 - How / when are you going to implement your strategy?

6. Budget

Unfortunately, no business has an unlimited budget for marketing, therefore you need to set a budget for the current marketing strategies that you are looking to implement. Incorporate all costs that you anticipate incurring with a particular strategy / campaign. This includes staff time, stationery, printing etc. This will give you a better idea of the success or otherwise of your campaign during your review process.

7. Implementation and Review

Implement your market plan and strategy. It is important that it is referred to and reviewed regularly to maintain direction in the ongoing marketing of your club.