

The Marketing Plan

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Executive Summary

A one to two page statement of the key actions to be taken, the major reasons for those actions, the anticipated results and the associated risks. The executive summary presents an abbreviated overview of the marketing plan.

Market Analysis (Company)

An intensive evaluation of the businesses' objectives, capabilities, vulnerabilities, and status.

This section addresses these questions:
What are your goals and objectives?
What products and services do you sell?
What key concept(s) differentiate your firm?
What are your firm's strengths and weaknesses?

What is unique about your firm and its products?

What kind of image do you want to portray?

What position in the market do you want to hold?

What is your current or projected market share?

Is your market share increasing, decreasing, or static?

Market Analysis (Customer)

A thorough analysis of customers and potential customers in terms of their needs, product related behaviors, attitudes, and lifestyles.

This section addresses these questions:

Who is your current target customer?

- What their primary sources of information?
- Why would a customer buy your product or service?
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- What unique or exclusive products and services do you provide your customers?
- How often do they buy your product?
- How might you impact them to buy more?
- Are there other products or services they would like to be able to buy from you?

Market Analysis (Conditions)

An analysis of the economic, social, governmental, and technological environments that might influence customers, company, competitors, or suppliers.

(Porter's Five Forces Model may serve as an approach to present the latter information in this section.)

This section addresses these questions:
What is the state of the markets' economic environment?

Does government regulation have any impact?

Do social or ethical issues play a factor?

What is the rate of technological change?

What is the risk of entry of new competitors, where might they come from and who might you anticipate them to be?

What degree of power do suppliers possess?

What degree of power do buyers possess?

Do substitute products pose a threat?

What is the degree of rivalry within the market?

Market Analysis (Competitor)

A complete analysis of the capabilities and likely future moves of key competitors.

This section addresses these questions:

Who are your major competitors?

Where are they located and what are their markets?

Why do customers buy their products?

What are their strengths and weaknesses?

Is their market share increasing, decreasing, or static?

Marketing Strategy

A presentation of the broad strategic marketing approach to meet the plan's stated objectives.

This section addresses these questions:

Based on the firm's goals, their resources, and the market, what are the key strategies the firm should implement?

How much of a departure is this strategy from what has been done in the past: Does it represent a continuation of an existing approach, a radical change, or fall somewhere in the middle of this spectrum?

How will this strategy differentiate the firm from competitors?

What are key factors in the implementation process?

Will your facility, processes, and systems enable you to efficiently meet the needs of this strategy?

Target Market Selection

A description of the various targeted segments and their unique needs with justification for targeting these groups.

This section address these questions:

Who is the specific target market(s).

Why were these groups selected?

How would you describe them in term of geographic, demographic and psychographic factors.

Do they fit into recognized market lifestyle descriptions?

What are the general profiles of these target markets?

Product and/or Service Positioning

This presents a clear statement of how you want your total offering to be perceived by each target segment. Your product positioning must offer your target customers superior value.

This section address these questions:

How would you describe your product or service position within the market?

What is unique about this position?

What are the key differentiating factors?

Market Mix Decisions

This section addresses the actions and tactics regarding price, promotion, product, distribution, and services issues.

Price

The pricing strategy includes the approach, expected margins, discounts and terms.

- This section address these questions:
- How do you establish the prices for your products and services?
- What margins—broken down by product if margins vary— does this pricing strategy offer?
- How does that compare with your margin objectives?

- Do you offer discounts and in what cases do they apply?

What payment/credit terms do you offer your customers?

How do your prices and terms compare with competitors?

Promotion

- *All aspects of promotion are to be described and coordinated with the promotional aspects of the strategy including:*
 - *advertising*
 - *packaging*
 - *public relations*
 - *sales force structure*
 - *media*
 - *sales presentations*

- This section address these questions:

Will you outsource these activities, such as using an advertising agency, or will you do this work in-house?

What is the goal and focus of your promotional campaign?

What public relations activities will you pursue?

What forms of media are the most effective for your target market?

- What role does packaging play in your marketing efforts?
Is there a sales force and what are their needs?
What role will the quality of the promotional, presentation and training material play?

Product and/or Service

- *Product features, capabilities, and benefit-based statements describing how they will provide value to the customer.*

This section address these questions:

What features does the product and service provide?

Are there advantages these features offer compared to other alternatives available in the market?

What are the benefits—tangible and intangible—that the customer will experience?

How would you assess or quantify the level of value this offers the customer?

Distribution

The various ways the product will be made available to consumers. If applicable, this section will include a clear statement of the benefits that will motivate intermediaries to carry and effectively support the product line.

These are examples of the questions this section may address:

How will consumers—the end users—purchase the products or services?

Will this go through some form of distribution?

Who are the intermediaries involved in the distribution channel?

What are their expectations?

Are there exclusive agreements or other contractual considerations?

What discounts will they receive?

What type of training is involved?

How will they be supported and incented to perform?

What responsibilities does each entity have regarding product support, repairs, and returns?

Does this appear to be a “clean” distribution channel or is channel conflict expected?

Service

All aspects of service that will be provided to customers and an identification of who is responsible.

This section address these questions:

What service considerations exist?

What are the expectations of the customers regarding service?

What processes, systems or procedures need to be in place to support these service expectations?

What expenses may result from service provided before and after the sale?

Financial Projections

A summarization of the expected financial implications of the plan based on the projected costs and revenues. This may include initial investment requirements, sales and revenue projections, profit and loss statements, and cash flow projections as they relate to the marketing plan.

What are the initial investment requirements for implementation of this strategy?

What are the ongoing costs?

Has a breakeven or other return-based analysis been conducted?

What are the expectations based on this analysis?

What are the forecasted revenue projections broken out by period?

What are the pro-forma profit and loss statement expectations by period?

What are the cash flow projections by period?

Marketing Plan Assessment (Controls)

Measurement systems will assess progress throughout the implementation process toward achieving the plan's stated objectives. "Milestones" can be incorporated into this system, particularly in the early stages of execution. Contingency plans will be enacted if key goals are not realized.

How is the effectiveness of the strategy going to be measured?

How will it be quantified and are there other considerations?

At what intervals or at what time will we conduct these assessments?

Who is going to perform this function?

What contingency plans are in place and what viable options exist?

Marketing Plan Assessment (Competitor Responses)

Competitors may be negatively impacted if we succeed. It is important to anticipate how they may respond and how our strategy will withstand their response.

What potential responses might we anticipate from which competitors?

Will we need to modify our strategy or address these responses?

What is a worst-case scenario and what would we do if this became a reality?

Marketing Plan Assessment (Anticipated Results)

The most likely financial and marketing results as well as the results under other probable scenarios.

All things considered, what do we realistically expect from this marketing plan in terms of:

- financial gain;
- increased market share;
- enhanced market position;

- increased awareness for the future;
- avoidance of negative circumstances; and/or,
- other significant benefits the marketing plan offers the firm?