



Marketing Plan Outline

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For new businesses requiring little or no start-up financing, or existing businesses looking to increase sales, marketing plans are often used in place of detailed business plans. There are a variety of styles and formats for such plans. The following will help you organize your marketing, although keep in mind that the content of the plan is much more important than rigid adherence to a specific format.

I. Executive Summary

The Executive Summary highlights the main goals of the marketing plan and the strategies for achieving those goals. It should also briefly address budget requirements and how success will be measured.

II. Business Overview

This section identifies and describes the products and/or services that your business will market to customers along with a description of what makes them special or unique. That description of your uniqueness is also sometimes referred to as your “competitive positioning.”

To put your positioning strategy into perspective, there should also be an analysis of competing businesses, including the strengths and weaknesses of your direct competitor’s product/ service mix, pricing, place/location and positioning. There should also be information on products, services and businesses that may be indirect competition.

Some marketing plans organize their analysis of competitor information into a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis. Such an analysis looks at the overall weaknesses of your competitors to see what opportunities they create for your business, and also looks at their collective strengths to see what threats they pose to your business.

III. Target Market

This section identifies your target market in terms of potential customers and the geographic area to be served. It should include as much detailed information as possible about your customers in terms of demographics, such as income, age, gender, etc.

In addition, analyze the potential customer information to see if it is possible to divide your target market into major segments so that you can tailor marketing strategies to a particular segment's problems, needs or wants. Finally, based on those segments and customer demographics, there should be some estimate of number of potential customers in your target market area.

IV. Marketing Goals

This section should include your sales and market share goals for the next three years based on the information in the previous sections (see Appendix A for examples).

V. Marketing Strategies

This section should outline your strategies for product/service mix, pricing, promotion, place/location, and positioning (see Appendix A for examples):

1. **Product/Service Strategy** – what mix of products and services will you sell and how does that best meet customer needs and how does it compare to your competitors.
2. **Pricing Strategy** – how will you price your products/services relative to competitors, and what impact will that have on your volume of sales.
3. **Place/Location Strategy** – how will the proposed or current location of your business best meet the needs of your customers and/or create an advantage over competitors.

4. **Promotional Strategy** – how will you promote your business and how will that make customers aware of your business and motivated to buy your products/services.

5. **Positioning Strategy** – what values do you want potential customers to associate with your business, and how will they set you apart from the competition.

VI. Implementation Activities

This section should list the tasks required to implement each marketing strategy. For each task should include a detailed description, identify a person responsible for its completion, and set a target date for completion. Having a plan of action with specific tasks ensures that the details are clear and that specific persons are accountable (see Appendix A for example of format).

VII. Budget & Sales Forecasts

This section should contain an expense budget for the implementation tasks and a forecast of the sales revenue expected as a result of the marketing plan. In addition, there should be an explanation of the assumptions on which the sales forecast is based, including how it relates to the number of potential customers in the target market.

VIII. Evaluation of Results

This section should include a description of what are the criteria for success of the plan, and how you will measure that success. By regularly monitoring progress, you can determine when what strategies are working, and implemented needed changes to insure the goals are met.

Appendix A – Marketing Plan Outline – Examples of Plan Details

Sample Marketing Goals

1. First Year Sales of \$250,000
 - \$25,000 sales in first quarter
 - \$50,000 sales in second quarter
 - \$75,000 sales in third quarter
 - \$100,000 sales in fourth quarter

2. Average Revenue of \$100 per Customer Transaction

3. First Year Customer Sales of 2,500 Transactions
 - 250 transactions in first quarter
 - 500 transactions in second quarter
 - 750 transactions in third quarter
 - 1,000 transactions in fourth quarter

Marketing Task List Format

Task	Description	Person Responsible	Completion Date



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Illinois
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