

Single Sheet Marketing Plan™

Why You Need a Marketing Plan:

- Keep the business going
- Find growth opportunities
- Control costs (less impulse spending)
- Better day-to-day decision-making (provides context)
- More return on the money you invest
- Better results from marketing tactics (advertising, promotions, etc.)
- Identify what's working, fix what's not

Business Review

What's going on? Is the business healthy? What problems are we facing? What is influencing our business—good or bad? Who are our competitors, and how/what are they doing? What outside forces are/will impact our business?

Target Market

Who do we want to serve/are serving? Don't just know them, understand them. What are their characteristics? How can we segment them? What are their needs? Why do they buy/what benefits do they seek? What problems do they have? How can we serve them better? How do they make buying decisions? What influences them? What are their media habits?

Self Analysis

How well are we currently serving our target market? Are we adequately filling their needs/wants? What do we do well? What do customers compliment us on? What don't we do well? What complaints do we get? What's keeping us from doing better? What outside forces might help or hinder our business?

Objectives

What, specifically, do we want to accomplish as a result of our marketing activities? (Some examples: Attract new customers. Generate more business from existing customers. Adjust to a competitive threat. Increase awareness among key targets. Introduce a new product/service. Carve out and dominate a new market niche). How do we measure success of each goal?

Positioning Statement (Unique Selling Proposition)

Why should they buy from you? This is the image you want customers to have about your business. Usually the most difficult part of the marketing plan, it's also the most essential, because it forms the basis of your marketing message, and should be reinforced in all your marketing and promotional tactics. Sharply focused, unique to you (or first claimed by you), and rooted in customer benefits, needs, and wants (not product focused), it's what sets you apart.

Strategies

What's the best way to achieve our goals? Do we need to make product changes, fix deficiencies, or find a way to add value? Which categories of marketing tools will be most effective? What media reach our targets? Set a budget. Does our current pricing system deliver both customer value and fair profit? Is current distribution system (how we get product/service to market) adequate?

Action Plans and Measurements

With strategies decided upon, list specific projects to be completed. Too many businesses put this implementation step first. Without going through the above thought process, the odds of wasting money are high, and success low.

Action plans may include selecting communications media, writing copy, scheduling promotions or events, newsletters, publicity initiatives, website work, research, new product introductions, etc. Equally important is setting up measurement systems so we can track the results of our initiatives and make adjustments along the way as necessary.