



Small Business Marketing Plan Template

The Marketing Plan Template is designed specifically to meet the needs of professionals and small and home business owners.

We've included many aspects of a marketing plan, but please note that **it's *not* important to complete every section now**. Start with the basics then, as your business grows, evaluate the plan and add more information. We suggest that you **review your plan regularly** and revise it where necessary.

1. Executive Summary

The executive summary should describe all your marketing objectives and plan in one to three pages.

Be sure to keep the marketing plan in line with your [vision](#) and the [mission statement](#) you've created for your company

2. Market Research/Assessment

Gather and organize as much information as you can about the market that is currently buying the products or services you sell or intend to sell. For example, you might include:

- Purchasing patterns, including seasonality
- Similar products/services available in the marketplace
- Current sales in your industry or profession
- Potential growth in this market
- Competitors' strengths and weaknesses, successes and failures

You may also wish to illustrate your comments here with graphs or pie charts.

Talk to clients, vendors and others in your field to collect this information. Use the Internet; visit your local public library to study relevant directories and other publications that give the data you need.

You may also wish to include graphs or pie charts to illustrate your comments here.

3. Your Target Market

Identify your target market segments -- be as specific as possible -- and answer the following questions:

- What is the size and demographics of this market
- What are your target clients' greatest needs that your product or service meets?
- What other needs do they have that you might consider addressing?
- What other similar products or services are they currently using? What would they gain by switching to what you offer?
- What are they currently paying for services or products similar to yours?
- Are there any market trends you're aware of
- What is the forecast for this market? Is there potential for growth here?

4. Your Products and/or Services

Describe each of your services and/or products, and how each one compares to similar offerings from competitors.

- How do your current and potential clients perceive your products or services?
- What position do your products/services hold in the market?

SWOT Analysis of your business, or products/services

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Opportunities:

Threats: (For example there could be potential related cost increases that are outside your control, such as gas prices.)

5. Your Competition

Describe your competitors and their respective positions in the market.

What are their plans for the future? Check their website, collateral materials, press clippings, talk to others in the industry, etc. to find out.

What is their market share? (You might compare their sales figures with the total market, as you understand it to be.)

If they have one, what is their [Unique Selling Proposition](#)?

Have they [branded](#) themselves? How?

What is your [Unique Selling Proposition](#) that makes you stand out from your competition?

6. Marketing Goals

How much do you want to increase your market share and/or revenue over the next 12 months? How many additional customers will this require?

Where do you plan to [position](#) your company (products/services) in this marketplace?

What [position](#) do you plan to hold in the market?

How do you anticipate [branding](#) your company and products/services?

Will you need to change prices?

6. Tactical Marketing Plan

List and describe the specific marketing strategies you will employ to reach these goals. (See the list of marketing strategies at the end of this exercise.)

Make a note of the necessary preparation, timing and costs required for each strategy.

Discuss the costs of any related supporting materials you will need.

Include sales projections here, based on your sales history.

Estimate, to the best of your ability, the anticipated ROI for each strategy you plan to use. You may do this for the company as a whole, but it's ideal to also consider each product or service separately.

Other Questions to Consider:

Do you intend to introduce any new products/services?

Do you plan on changing any products/services or how customers perceive them?

Identify any ‘weak’ products/services and consider changing or discontinuing them.

Will the prices of your products/services be changed? If so, why and by how much?
Will you match competitors’ prices? Use special or discount pricing?

Will you “bundle” products/services to increase sales?

7. Marketing Budget

Decide on your marketing budget and stick to it. Make it as detailed as possible, but allow for some flexibility due to unexpected circumstances.

Decide which strategies you can afford to implement. What you can do in house and what you should outsource.

Include sales projections with your anticipated ROI for each strategy planned.

The amount spent on marketing may vary, depending on the industry and the age and stage of a business. For example, a new company or a business launching a new product may have to increase their marketing budget. Typically, the amount is between 7% and 12% of your gross revenues.

8. Monitor the Results

Set up a method to track your results and review them on a regular basis. A simple Excel spreadsheet may be all you need. Later, you may want to design and use a Gantt chart. If you do, keep it up to date, so as to easily see the effectiveness of different strategies.

Always track leads and referrals. Be sure you know exactly where your sales come from.

Identify which strategies are working well for you and continue with them, even if they eventually seem mundane and boring to you. *Never* change a strategy that is producing good results! If a strategy isn’t working, ask yourself, or your team, why. Can it be modified to yield better results? If not, stop using it and put your marketing dollars where they *will* bring you a better return.

9. Summary

Summarize the highlights, the actions you plan to take and why.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of some of some often-used marketing strategies:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Market to Current Customers – Ask for referrals, host a ‘raving fan’ event, keep in touch with them via notes, emails and cards, testimonials, using coupons to upsell or announce special offers.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Referral and Affiliate Programs – Design a plan that will appeal to your clients and work well for you, team up with another business owner (who serves the same target market) to joint-market.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Become Known as an Expert in Your Field – Write a book, ebooks, articles, a regular column in a local or industry/professional publications, send a letter to the editor. Offer educational seminars etc. on topics that will help your target market.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Networking – Join a Chamber of Commerce and attend their events, join a leads group, attend professional and trade association meetings, serve on a panel. Become known as an active, valuable member of the group who benefits the organization and its members.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The Internet – Optimize your website, participate in banner exchanges, affiliate programs, online chat groups related to your field, use pay-per-click, start a blog.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Relations – Write and send out press releases for newsworthy events, plan newsworthy events for your company, get interviewed by the media (radio, TV and print).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Newsletters – Paper and electronic.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Involvement – Volunteer for a non-profit organization that fits your values, host contests, sponsor events or awards, donate products/services to an auction for charity, sit on a committee.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Email Marketing – Build a permissions based list for email campaigns and email notices about sales or special offers.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Trade Shows – Have a booth or table at events attended by your target clients. Don’t sit back when you’re there – meet and talk to as many people as possible. Have a drawing and collect information from participants and follow up on these.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Special Events at Your Location – Host events such as a grand opening, open house, customer appreciation evenings, charity fundraisers, special holiday celebrations.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Educational Seminars and Workshops – These can be free or paid.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Telemarketing – Make cold calls, warm calls to leads generated from mail responses and/or referrals and to lists of your target customers.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Direct Mail – Letters, postcards, coupons, announcements, invitations, fax-on-demand, reminders of sales, events, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Advertise – Print ads and classified ads in dailies and in industry specific publications, billboards, adds on public transportation etc., radio and TV, coupon packages, door hangers, inserts, Yellow Pages, business or professional directories.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Promotional Products – Identify meaningful, memorable products that your target clients will <i>want</i> . Have a clear plan as to how you will distribute them.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Power Partnerships – form alliances with other non-competing providers who also address your target market.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

To download a copy of this document on line, go to: <http://make-it-fly.com/marketing-template.pdf>.