

# **Small Business Marketing Strategy Preparation Workbook**

**2009**

This Preparation Outline will usher you through each of the sections that will become your Strategic Marketing Plan. This is not the easiest work, but stick with it the payoff is worth it. If you market your business well you don't have to sell. Selling isn't typically at the top of most people's list of favorite things to do, usually right up there with public speaking. Successful businesses acquire customers at the lowest price and keep them as long as they can

You may become a little overwhelmed, but keep working through each section. There are a lot of quick fix marketing solutions; but crafting an effective plan is not one of them. A good plan is the foundation of all of your marketing and will help keep you on track and make profitable marketing decisions.

Is this process easy? Not necessarily, that's why so many businesses don't do this work. That means you have a distinct competitive advantage when you create a strategic marketing plan.

Perry Marshall says, "There are three kinds of work that you do". . . .

- 1) \$10/hour work - stuff like mailing letters and answering trivial emails and making coffee and filling your gas tank and cleaning your desk and making copies and running errands.
- 2) \$100/hour work - talking to customers on the phone, answering important email, fixing stuff on your website, researching new products; delegating.
- 3) \$1000/hour work - strategic planning and prioritizing vital tasks; writing persuasive copy; split testing elements in your Google campaigns and website; refining your Unique Selling Proposition; automating your business; developing customer follow-up; nurturing important relationships; actively sharpening your gifted skills.

The plan follows a progression. Expect to spend more time working on the first two sections. This is the foundation, and the most difficult. It takes the most time, but it is also has the most important. As a result of building a well defined, strong foundation the rest of the plan will flow more easily.

Be sure to get feedback from colleagues or a mastermind group. It is sometimes difficult to see your own business fully and objectively - the classic syndrome of not being able to see the forest for the trees? Copywriters often outline their own work and have another copywriter do the actual writing.

Is this process easy? Not necessarily, that's why so many businesses don't do it. That means you have a distinct competitive advantage when you create a strategic marketing plan. Remember you are doing the \$ 1000/hr work.

## **Section 1 – Define Your Business**

### **1. A. Business Identity & Vision- The Purpose & Future of Your Business**

***Task #1 write out a statement that best describes the overall purpose of your business and where you want to take it.***

Don't over think this step or be too vague. Be clear and specific. Your business might be multi-faceted and complex, but you should still be able to state in one sentence its overall purpose for being.

Write this in one, clear sentence that anyone reading could understand, even if they are being introduced to your business for the first time. Write second statement that describes how you want your company to evolve.

### **1. B. Your business goals – How you're going to get there.**

***Task #2 write your goals for 2009.***

Define the steps you need to take to fulfill your business vision as:

***Goals that provide a clear end point to work towards.***

Your business goals are the basis of your marketing strategy. Your goals serve as a guidepost to making decisions regarding your marketing and business activities.

You will have a variety of short and long term goals.

You should be able to read it and be able to imagine what it will feel like to reach that goal. It should both stretch and empower you. In addition, they should be specific, realistic, actionable and measurable.

### **1. C. SWOT Analysis**

***Task #3 look at external and internal factors that impact your business.***

SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. The purpose of this section is to consider how your business is affected by both internal and external factors.

In this section you identify what you're good at and see how to leverage those advantages (Strengths). Given your strengths relative to the things happening in the marketplace locally or nationally do you have some unique Opportunities.

Also consider where you have soft spots that need attention, and perhaps need some help with (Weaknesses). You also identify the external factors that affect your business giving you a "heads up" on issues that need to be addressed or monitored throughout the year (Threats).

As you complete the different quadrants you will often find that your Strengths and Opportunities often offset your Threats and Weaknesses. Where they do not you know which areas need your attention.

<b>Strengths-</b>	<b>Weaknesses-</b>
<b>Opportunities-</b>	<b>Threats-</b>

## ***Section 2 – Define Your Market, Customers, and Value Proposition***

### **2. A. Market - Your Target Market**

#### ***Task #4 define your Target Market***

Marketing is all about getting a group of people, who stand to benefit from what you offer, to know, like and trust you and take action. It's about communicating a core message through many different mediums to this particular group of people over and over again. Before you can do this well, you must articulate, as clearly as you can, the characteristics and qualities that define this group of people.

*Good advertising builds brand awareness; good marketing builds relationships.*

You can't send a message out there to a group of people that is so general no one feels like you are speaking to them and expect to build relationships. You must be able to craft your message like you are writing it to a specific person.

To do this, you must first define your Target Market and then drill down deeper by defining your Ideal Customer or Client in section 2.C..

## 2. B. Market Niche – Your Position in the Market

**Task #5 define what your current position is, and defines what position you want to be in.**

It's important that you have a clear picture of where point A is, so you can create a good itinerary (your marketing strategy) to get you to point B.

It is known that airplanes are “off course” 99% of the time. They are constantly checking where they are and readjusting. This is your task as a marketer. Even if you are “off course” 99% of the time, if you know it, you can readjust and still get to your destination.

### **Know your point of difference:**

It is very difficult to be all things to all customers. By identifying your niche in the marketplace and the unique value you bring to your customers you can create focus. Creating focus helps you clearly define your marketing message(s) and strategically select your marketing strategies.

### **How can you be different?**

**The truth of the matter is this: you can match your competition in every which way, as long as you differentiate on one thing that matters to your ideal client.** Find something that matters a great deal to your ideal customer, that no one else is delivering well, and then you will know how to differentiate.

In fact, you may match a competitor on every dimension of value **except one**; but you do need to excel in at least one element of value. In this way you become the best choice for your ideal customer.

## 2. C. Customers - Your Ideal Client or Customer

**Task #6 define your customers.**

What are the qualities that make up the kind of person that energizes and inspires you? What type of person allows you to do your best work? These are people within your Target Marketing and are your ideal customers/ clients.

For example, your Target Market might be “small business owners”, or “young adults”, or “baby boomers”. Your Ideal Customer or Client is a small specific subset of your Target Market.

The fact of the matter is that there are people you were meant to serve and those you are not. Your ideal client has a face and a name. They have hopes, dreams, wants, needs, desires and attitudes that distinguish them from the "everyone else" that make up your not-so-ideal clients. They also have a distinct lifestyle, distinct pain, and a distinct amount of money they are willing to spend to deal with that pain (level of motivation).

## ***Task #7 - Articulate what benefit your customers will receive from doing business with you.***

When describing what your ideal customer/ client gets from working with you or purchasing from you, focus on results. You are looking at the difference between features and benefits. Don't describe what **you** do (features); describe what **they** get (benefits); What's In It For Them (WIFT). Go even further and describe what **primary benefit** your product or service provides your ideal customer/ client.

### **2. D. Value Proposition – Your Marketing Message**

***“94% of marketing failures are due to poor messages.  
6% are due to poor advertising methods or vehicles.”***

Getting the message right is the foundation to a successful marketing program and where all of the information you have identified in the sections above comes together. At the center of meaningful conversations there is a core message.

- A value proposition is THE core message you want to deliver in every medium to your prospects and influence them to become your customers/clients.
- It is a statement that summarizes why a consumer should buy a product or use a service.

This statement should carry a message compelling enough to convince a potential consumer that your product or service will add more value or be more effective at solving a problem than other similar offerings.

**Section 3 – Define What You Offer Your Clients or Customers**

**3. A. Products/Services – What Are You Selling/Offering**

**Task #8 define your products/services and competitors.**

Product/Service Description	Price	Target Market	Ideal Customer	Problem It Solves	Customer Benefits	Value Proposition/ Marketing Message

In this section use the table above to list your products/services. While this cart defines your products/services **it is really all about your customers**. Often we get submerged in what we have to offer looking inward, but your focus is less on what you have to offer and is more what your customers need and how they benefit from what you have to offer and why they want to purchase from you.

Use the work you’ve done in the previous sections to identify more specifically which products are offered to your target market(s) and customer(s). The target markets and customers may overlap for your different products/services.

Pay special attention to the Customer Benefits and Value Proposition categories. You want to put yourself in your customer’s shoes and refer to the ideal customer section to help here. You will also use the information in these two categories / to select your marketing strategies/tactics and create your marketing copy.

### 3. B. Competitive Analysis – What Are Your Competitors Doing

In this section you will have to do a little research. The internet and your local library are invaluable tools to gather this information. By looking at the other choices your customers have you can create a better Unique Value Proposition.

Be sure to consider products/services that compete indirectly and well as directly. For example, if you offer tax accounting services consider other services offered by tax accountants but also tax accounting software and other online tax services.

<b>Product/Service Description</b>	<b>Price</b>	<b>Target Market</b>	<b>Problem It Solves</b>	<b>Customer Benefits</b>	<b>Value Proposition/ Marketing Message</b>

**Section 4 – Marketing Strategy – Define Your Marketing Tactics and How They Will Be Implemented**

**4. A. Marketing Tactics**

**Task #9 consider appropriate marketing tactics.**

Make a comprehensive list of potential marketing tactics, what works for each tactics and the necessary success factors. Also consider:

Is this is something I am already doing?

Is this something I can implement quickly?

Is this something I want to do in the future?

Does this fit in my budget?

Can I get the message to my customers?

Marketing Tactics	Favorable Factors	Success Factors	Lead Generation	Repeat Customers/ Upsell	Retention	Referral

#### 4. B. Marketing Strategy Implementation & Tracking

Marketing Activity	Product	Marketing Message	Budget	ROI/Tracking Method

Match up your marketing tactics with each product. You will likely have multiple tactics for each product.

Determine the costs for each activity, including general and overhead costs as well as one-time and ongoing costs. For example, if decide to send email to your customer list be sure to include the cost of your email service provider. Or you may need to invest in the creation of a website as a one time cost, but have a monthly hosting fee.

One area of marketing most often overlooked is tracking your results, the ROI (Return on Investment). The Achilles Heel of most marketing plans is the failure to make adjustments through out the year and spending money on ineffective strategies/tactics.

Identify how you will measure whether or not your activities are helping you reach your sales goals. Online marketing strategies are the easiest to track as there are great detailed statistics available. Some tactics may be harder to track such as Public Relation activities, however, the creative use of promotion codes, special phone numbers, email addresses and other unique identifiers can provide the data you need to determine the value of your marketing tactics.

## 4. C – Marketing Budget, Sales Goals and ROI Tracker

Create an excel spreadsheet to forecast your sales goals and marketing costs for each month. Use this data to calculate your gross and net profit estimates. This will give you the chance to make sure that you are making enough profit from the products and services you have planned for the year.

## 4. D – Marketing Calendar

The calendar is where you pull all off your information together into an action plan and see how your tactics work to together. Create an excel spreadsheet calendar and schedule your marketing all of your tactics by month. This will help you meet important deadlines and develop resources you may not already have in place. Identify what you are already doing, what you can do quickly, what you will need to develop over time. This way you can stay in action marketing your business and stay on track developing the activities you are going to add in as you develop them later in the year.

This is important because there are so many marketing tactics to choose from and new opportunities that arise throughout the year. By putting your plan on a calendar you know how to prioritize your time, how to organize in your various tactics, and how to pick and choose what new opportunities you will take on. It is easy to get off track with everything there is to do and become overwhelmed when new ideas and opportunities present themselves. The calendar is your roadmap and decision making tool.



### ***Overwhelmed? Need help & guidance?***

Get It Done Marketing offers both group and individual workshops that help you get your marketing plan done.

### ***How do the workshop help you?***

The workshops are designed to give you not only guidance, ideas and structure but also a new way of thinking about how to use marketing in your regular business routine. Marketing is not a one time exercise. Good marketing requires targeting, tracking and tweaking, regular care and attention.

### ***Get It Done Marketing***

The workshops help you create a plan today and teach you how to keep using marketing strategically to determine what works and how to duplicate those tactics to achieve profitable results over and over.

For more information on the next group workshop or to discuss and individual workshop contact: Corrinda Campbell (303) 249-4615, [Corrinda@BusinessConnectionNetwork.com](mailto:Corrinda@BusinessConnectionNetwork.com) or Rebecca Blackwell, (303) 907-3941, [Rebecca@YourMarketingLab.com](mailto:Rebecca@YourMarketingLab.com)