

# Marketing Plan (how to write one)

A simple marketing plan that outlines all the important pieces needed to successfully and consistently market your business is something every small business should create. Whether you want to focus solely on inbound marketing or you want to integrate online with off-line marketing activities, there are 10 important reasons why your small business needs a realistic but simple marketing plan

1. To specify a vision for your business
2. To solidify your mission
3. To outline what you want to accomplish
4. To describe your ideal client
5. To articulate what makes you different
6. To provide a road map for achieving your goals
7. To help you focus on what is important
8. To create an action plan for what you need to do and when
9. To track your progress
10. To remind you that this is your business and not a hobby

Let's take a look at the key parts of your marketing plan that needs your attention:

## Your business vision

Your vision statement is a vivid description about what you want your business to be such that it inspires and motivates you and helps you create a mental picture of the business you want.

There are benefits to having a clear vision statement:

- Serves as a compass to keep you heading in the right direction.
- Enables you to assess the many opportunities that are presented to you and make decisions based on whether the opportunity helps you get closer to your vision.
- Helps you measure your progress, set goals, establish priorities, and know when to say no.
- Enables you to focus on what needs to be done to get there and eliminate anything that wastes time and takes energy away from what is valuable to achieving your dream.

## Your mission statement

Your mission is a concise statement of what your business does, developed from the *customer's perspective*, and aligned with the vision for the business. It should answer these three questions:

- What do we do? Specifies what you deliver to your customers, not in terms of process, but by the real needs that are fulfilled for your customers when they do business with you.
- How do we do it? Defines the type of products and services you sell and deliver to your customers.
- For whom do we do it? Identifies the target market that is most likely to buy your products and services.

Knowing the answers to these questions provides focus for your business and helps you move from the present into the future.

## What you want to accomplish

Research has shown a direct link between setting goals and the probability of success. By setting goals and writing them down you are forced to be specific about what you want to achieve, how you will get there and by when. Your marketing goals should be:

- Focused on achieving your vision.
- Prioritized and tackled 2 or 3 at a time.
- Monitored and measured.

It's common to reassess goals quarterly and adjust the time frames and priorities based on what is happening around you. Life happens and you need to give yourself room to change.

## Your ideal target client

Defining the unique group of people or businesses that you want to work with, who want or need what you have to offer and are willing to spend money to satisfy that need have several benefits, such as:

- Identifying whether there really is a market need for your products and services.
- Clearly communicating the value you offer and why your target should work with you.
- Discovering opportunities to provide additional services that have been overlooked by others.
- Establishing yourself as an expert in serving that market.
- Providing a target for all of your marketing efforts.

Being focused on one particular market enables you to make better choices for all of your marketing efforts, saving you time and money on activities that don't make sense for your business and the clients you serve.

## What makes you different

The Internet levels the playing field for small businesses, but in turn, it creates a very crowded market place. Those who can describe how they are different have a competitive advantage over those who cannot.

So how do you make your business stand out from the rest?

The secret to defining what makes your business different is to understand what your ideal client really wants and make sure you deliver it better than anyone else. What do you uniquely offer that your clients find amazing? Do you:

- Find simpler ways of doing things?
- Serve a niche market better than anyone else?
- Bring a new perspective to challenges that offer unique solutions?
- Package your services in a way that appeals to your ideal client?
- Create systems that help clients learn how to do things more effectively?

Usually what makes us different may not be a complicated process or service but in fact, it may be something that is simple but has the effect of wowing our clients. We are taught to believe that things of value have to be hard or complex. Just because these things we do are easy for us does not mean they are easy for others. You need to become consciously aware of this value you provide and use it to your benefit.

## Your marketing road map for achieving your goals

You wouldn't take a trip without planning your route. Marketing your business is no different – you need a plan to guide you towards your destination. This plan defines the marketing strategies and the tactics within each strategy that you will use to achieve a particular goal. Marketing strategies and their associated tactics to consider are:

Blogging / guest blogging	Develop and publish search-engine friendly, quality content regularly – schedule based on your resources
Social media marketing	Determine which social networks are relevant to your business then develop a plan to build your visibility and expert reputation
Content Marketing	Define your content marketing plan for topics then use email marketing, blog comment strategy or blogging to communicate your expertise and message to your target audience. Repurpose your content using different media – eBook, podcast, video, presentation, infographics
Search engine marketing	Define your top 10 keywords and optimize your website, directory listings, and social media profiles to increase visibility in the search engines. Sign up and take advantage of the <b>Google Authorship</b> program to increase visibility for our original content.
Event marketing	Host webinars, tele-clinics or virtual conferences. Publicize the event through your blog and social media outposts. Consider using sponsored posts on Facebook & Twitter
News / media /Public Relations	Become an expert resource for the media, gain visibility through newsworthy activities. Send out press releases, write bylined articles, write and publicize a book
PPC advertising	Create and manage pay-per-click advertising on Google, Bing, Facebook or Twitter.

## To create an action plan for what you need to do and when

A marketing action plan eliminates random activities that create haphazard results. It takes your road map one step further and assigns dates, topics and other activities to each activity so that it eliminates the guess work – you always know what you're doing and when you're doing it.

## Masterful Marketing® Monthly Inbound Marketing Action Plan

	Target Date	Topic	Tools / Resources Needed
<b>July 2013 Action Items</b>			
Email newsletter	Tuesday, July 2, 2013	Content Marketing	
Blog	Wednesday, July 10, 2013	Web Presence - Why You Need One	
	Wednesday, July 17, 2013	Keywords - Don't Market Without Them	
	Wednesday, July 24, 2013	Importance of a Fast Loading Website	
Webinars	Thursday, August 8, 2013	Building a Visible Web Presence	
Include in Email Newsletter	Tuesday, July 2, 2013		Signup form on website
Signup form on website	Tuesday, July 2, 2013		Join.me account
Post event on Facebook	Monday, July 8, 2013		
Post event on Google+, Twitter	Monday, July 8, 2013		
Finalize presentation	Wednesday, July 31, 2013		
Practice presentation	Friday, August 2, 2013		
<b>August 2013 Action Items</b>			
Email newsletter	Tuesday, August 6, 2013	Search Engine Optimization	
Blog	Wednesday, August 14, 2013	Why You Need a Responsive Website Now	
	Wednesday, August 21, 2013	Review of the WooTheme's Canvas WordPress	
	Wednesday, August 28, 2013	On Page SEO Tips	
Ebook	Monday, September 23, 2013	Building a Visible Web Presence	
Draft	Thursday, August 15, 2013		Ebook template
Update	Thursday, September 5, 2013		
Format	Monday, September 16, 2013		
Final Review	Friday, September 20, 2013		
Publish & Promote	Monday, September 23, 2013		

Marketing Action Plan defines the details needed to complete a marketing activity

### To remind you that this is your business and not a hobby

Most of us built our businesses around our passion and in doing so enjoy our work every day. However, if you are in business to be successful, then you need to view **marketing as an investment** and take the proper steps to ensure you are maximizing your resources. A simple marketing plan that is well defined with an action plan to help you be consistent ensures you are focusing on the success of your business.

### Have you created your simple marketing plan?