



INTERIOR
PLANTSCAPE
ASSOCIATION

Marketing Plan in a few Basic Steps

A Marketing Plan is a vital document to the success of your business but in saying that try and not to make the development of your plan a laborious, drawn out task. Make sure you set aside uninterrupted time to develop and research your marketing plan. This could very well be the most important document to which you will always refer to.

Before you begin researching & writing your marketing plan answer the questions below. You may already have completed these questions in your business plan.

Vision statement

What is your business' vision statement? It should briefly outline your future plan for the business and include your overall goals.

Mission statement

What is your business' mission statement (i.e. how will you achieve your vision)?

Goals/objectives

What are your short & long term business goals?

What activities will you undertake to meet these goals?

Step 1 – Understand your Competition

To gain a more informed understanding about your competitors answer the questions in the table below.

Competitor details - List at least 5 competitors in the table below.

| Competitor | Established date | Size | Market share (%) | Value to customers | Strengths | Weaknesses |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| <i>Competitor name</i> | <i>When were they established?</i> | <i>Number of staff</i> | <i>Estimated percentage of market share</i> | <i>Unique value to customers, e.g. convenience, quality, price or service?</i> | <i>What are your competitor's main strengths?</i> | <i>What are your competitor's main weaknesses?</i> |
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- *How do you rate against your competitors?*

- *How can your business improve on what they offer?*

Step 2 - Understand your Target Market

A big mistake that many small business owners make is to market a cool product or service without first understanding the market and what it wants NOT what it needs. If you try and sell something that your customers don't want, they won't buy it. It's that simple!

People are looking for solutions (products or services) that meet their demand. A profitable market can be compared to a lake with a thousand fish. All you need to do is throw in the bait and it turns into a feeding frenzy.

Market research

- What research if any have you completed to help you analyse your market?
- Did you use a survey/questionnaire? If so, attach a copy of your survey/questionnaire and findings so you have copies close at hand.

Market targets

- Outline your planned sales targets i.e. How many (\$'s) sales or turnover are you expecting to make over the next 12months or monthly.
- What quantity of your products/services do you plan to sell in a planned timeframe?

The Market (Answer questions about Unique Selling Position)

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Unique selling position | How is your business unique in the market? What differentiates your product/service from others in the market? What makes your business stand out from your competition? |
|--------------------------------|--|

Step 3 – Understand your Customer

Knowing your customer intimately is the first step to easy sales. Until you know (1) who your customers are (2) what they want (3) what motivates them to buy you can't prepare an effective marketing plan. Don't confuse 'wants' with 'needs'. People don't necessarily buy what they need, but they will most always buy what they want.

For instance, have you ever known someone that went into Bunning's to buy a garden tool they needed and come back with garden tools, fertilizer, soil, containers? Or how about every day shopper who goes into the supermarket to buy some milk and eggs and come out with a frozen pizza, cheese cake and other goodies.

People will buy what they want (even if they don't have the money!) not what the need, to get to know our customers you will need to ask yourself questions.

| Your customers/clients | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Customer demographics | Define who your target customers are and how they behave. You can include age, gender, social status, education and attitudes. What are their lifestyles, activities, values, needs, interests or opinions? Where are they located? |
| Key customers | Identify your key customers. (These can be large consumers of your products or individuals whose satisfaction is key to the success of your business.) How will you target your products/service to them? How will you deliver your product/service to them? |
| Customer management | How will you maintain a good relationship with your customers? What techniques will you use? How will you keep your customers coming back? Have you introduced customer service standards? Do you follow any particular code of practice? |

Step 4 – Pick a Niche

If you say your target customer is ‘everybody’ then nobody will be your customer. The marketplace is jam packed with competition. You will have more success jumping up and down in a small puddle than a big ocean. Carve out a specific niche and dominate that niche, then you might consider moving on to the second niche but not before you have dominated the first one!

Make sure to choose a niche that interests you and that is easy to contact and service, I can’t stress this point enough, there is nothing more destructive than to pick a niche that you can’t communicate with or that costs you a ton of money to contact and service.

Describe your Specific Niche:

Step 5 – Develop your Marketing Message

Your marketing message not only tells your prospect what you do but persuades them to become your customer. You should develop two types of marketing messages.

Your first marketing message should be short and to the point. It’s your response to someone who asks you, “So, what do you do?”
Your second type is your complete marketing message that will include all your marketing materials and promotions.

To make your marketing message compelling and persuasive it should include the following points:

1. An explanation of your target prospects’ problem
2. Proof that the problem is so important it should be solved now, without delay
3. An explanation about why you are the only person/business that can solve your prospects problem
4. An explanation of the benefits people will receive from using your solution
5. Examples and testimonials from customers you have helped
6. An explanation about process, fees and payment terms
7. Your unconditional guarantee

What is your marketing message from the points above write an ad that you would put in your local paper?

Step 6 – Determine your Marketing Strategy & Medium (s)

What is your overall marketing strategy?

What steps or activities will you undertake to achieve your goals/objectives? Choose from the marketing activities below or add ones you feel you will be able to manage successfully.

| Marketing activity | Person responsible | Date of expected completion | Cost (\$) | Success indicator |
|---|---|---|------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Print advertising newspaper ads Posters Contests Newsletters Networking Signage Flyers Business cards Window display Online advertising, Mail-out, Giveaway, Media release, Events Website Blog/social media, LinkedIn, Instagram Word of mouth Referral system Branding and artwork or publications and catalogues Agents – home styling</i> | <i>Who is responsible for completing this task?</i> | <i>When do you expect to complete the marketing activity?</i> | <i>Estimated cost of activity.</i> | <i>What indicator/ measurement result will need to be met before this activity is considered a success?</i> |
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Advertising and promotional strategy

| Planned promotion /advertising type | Promotional strategy | Expected business improvement | Cost (\$) | Target date |
|---|--|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| <i>e.g. Print media advertising, online advertising, mail-out, giveaway, media release, social media campaign or event.</i> | <i>Why have you decided to use this promotion/advertising type? How and when will you use it? What is your strategy behind this? Who will upkeep your social media presence?</i> | <i>How do you expect it will improve your business success?</i> | <i>Estimated cost of activity</i> | |
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The trick is to match your message to your market using the right medium. For example it would be no good to advertise to aged pensioners using loud radio spot on a hip hop radio station. This is a complete mismatch of the market, message and medium. Success comes when there is a good match of these elements.

Social media strategy

What do you want to achieve/communicate (brand awareness, online sales etc) by using social media?

What social media tools do your customers use (e.g. Blogs, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook etc)?

What strategies can you use to network and communicate effectively with these customers?

Who will upkeep your social media presence – do you have the internal staff or would you need to engage an external organisation?

Step 7 – Set Sales and Marketing Goals including your Marketing Budget

Goals are critical to your success; A 'wish' is a goal that hasn't been written down. If you haven't written your goals, you are still just wishing for success. When creating goals use the **SMART** formula:

SPECIFIC

MEASURABLE

ACHIEVEABLE

REALISTIC

TIMELY

Your goals should include financial elements.

Q1. What are your short term goals? (Goals within 1month)

Q2. What are your Medium term Goals (Goals within 3-6 months)

Q3. What are your Long Term (Goals up to 3years or longer)

Marketing budget

| Item | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|-----------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Marketing/promotion | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Marketing agency | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Radio advertising | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Television advertising | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Print advertising | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Online advertising | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Social media | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Web search optimisation | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Mailouts | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Giveaways | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Events | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Branding & artwork | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Merchandising | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Publications | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Catalogues | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| More... | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Marketing/ promotion total | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 |
| Other | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Research | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Travel | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Postage | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Administration | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Incidentals | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| More... | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Other total | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 |
| Total | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 |

Monitoring/measurement activities

Reviewing the impact of your marketing should be a periodic activity. List the details of each review in the table below.

| Marketing activity | Date of review | Monitoring methods | Review outcomes |
|---|----------------------------|---|---|
| <i>Print advertising, online advertising, mail-out, giveaway, media release, event, website, blog/social media, public relations, branding and artwork, or publications and catalogues.</i> | <i>e.g. Month/Year</i> | <i>What tools did you use to measure/monitor the impact of your marketing activities?</i> | <i>What were the results for the promotional period? What were your sales/profit figures? How many new/repeat customers did you receive? How many customers visited your website?</i> |
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