

Digital Marketing Strategy

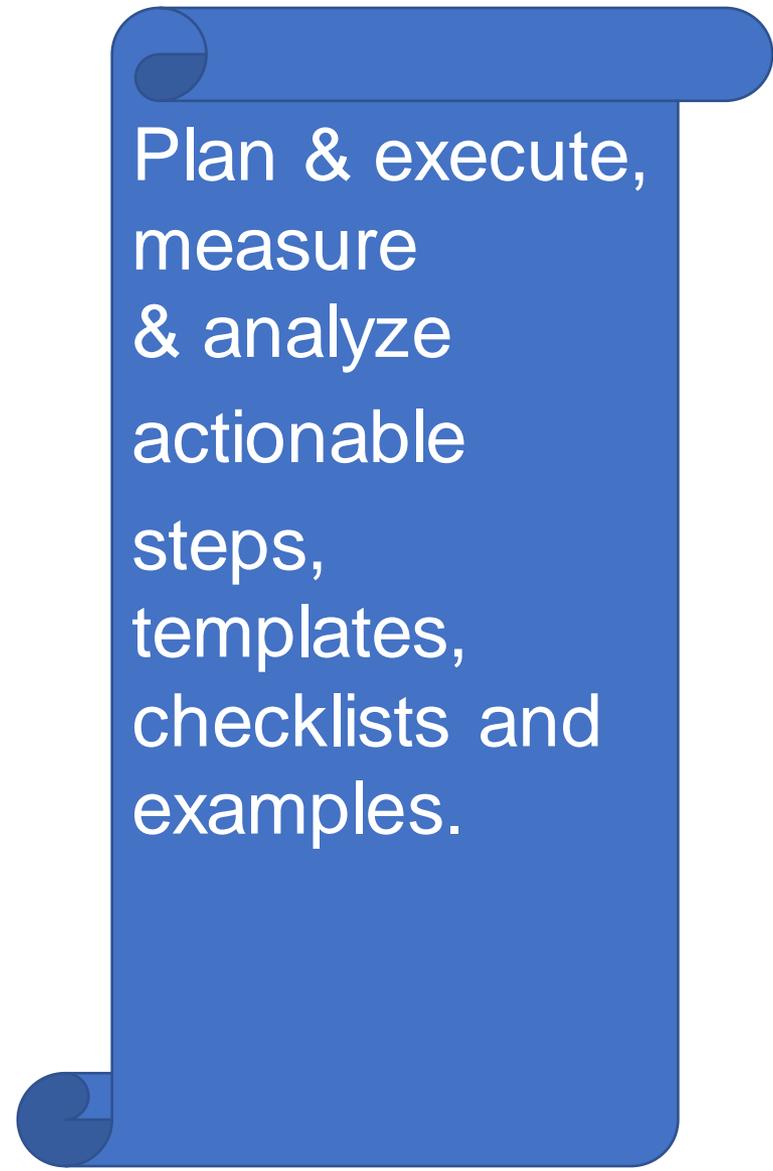
Planning Guide

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This guide will help you create a well-defined marketing plan for your business.



Plan & execute, measure & analyze actionable steps, templates, checklists and examples.

Introduction

A digital marketing plan is like a program for action for your digital marketing strategy. It should cover the steps and tactics to achieve your overall goal defined by your strategy. Your plan should provide information on all the digital channels you will or are using. It should cover social media, email, public relations, advertising and your website.

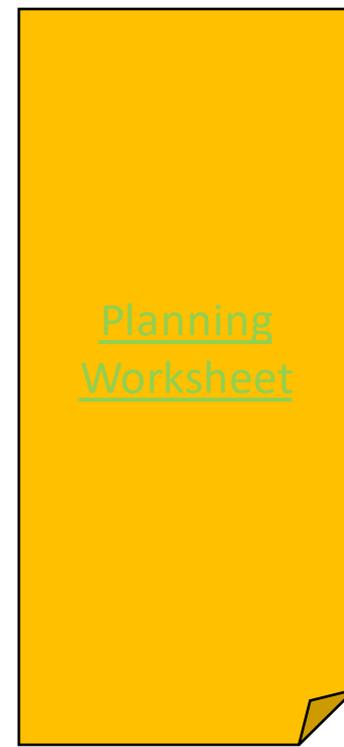
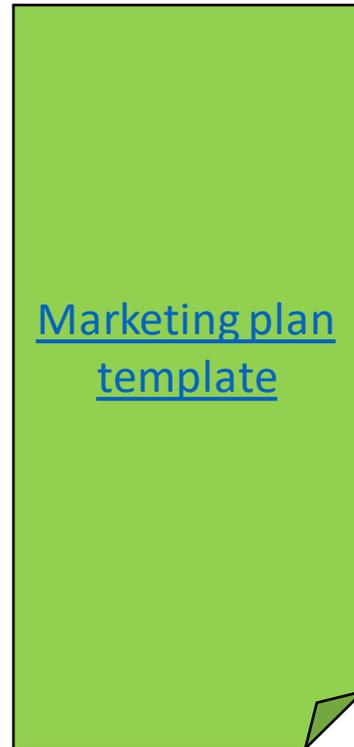
Digital marketing plan is a document where you map out your digital marketing objectives and the actionable steps that will help you achieve the objectives. It is like a roadmap. It shows you where you are, where you want to go and the specific route to follow.

Without a well-defined plan in place, your digital marketing efforts will not be fruitful. You will most likely lose your money and not make your desired impact for your business.

The steps to creating a digital marketing strategy include;

- Define your digital marketing goals and digital objectives.
- Establish resources.
- Review current activities in your business.
- Do market research. (market share and competitive analysis).
- Set SMART goals and metrics.
- Map your message.
- Create a mission statement.
- Make a timeline. (Create a marketing calendar).
- Calculate your budget
- Assign tasks.

Get the free marketing the marketing plan template and a planning worksheet.



What is a Marketing Strategy

According to a report, [75% of marketers](#) receive a higher ROI from digital marketing as compared to traditional advertising.

A marketing strategy is your business' plan for reaching your target market and turning them into customers. Your marketing strategy should show the values that your business promises to deliver.

It's a communication to your customers. They get to know what your business stands for and it's operation style. Moreover, they get to know why they should choose your brand over your competitors'.

The business' marketing team also gets to be equipped with a template to inform them on their initiatives at work. It allows you to set specific tasks and objectives. Your team is also fully involved in the plan and will be able to work towards achieving goals for specific periods.



Elements of a Marketing Plan

When designing a marketing plan, you need to consider several elements. These elements are the pillars on which most businesses build their marketing strategies. They include;

Product: Either tangible or intangible service that meets a specific customer demand. The benefits and unique features of the product need to be understood. Also the customer that will benefit from it needs to be identified.

Price: What the end user is expected to pay for the product. The price of the product will directly affect how the product sells. The price is linked to how the product is perceived by the customer. Price can also be influenced by competitors, value chain costs and markups.

People: Who are your customers? Consumer insights will help you understand customer behavior, attitude and other important aspects.

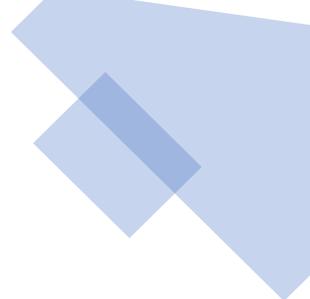
Promotion: This is marketing communication strategies and techniques. These may include offers, public relations, sales promotions, online blogs, emails, events, social media. It is the general communication of the marketing function.





A successful marketing strategy will result in;

- Winning new customers.
- Increase sales.
- Encourage your existing customers to spend more.
- Support the launch of new products and/or services.
- Better establish your brand on the market and increase market share.
- Confirm your tone of voice and brand identity.
- Reduce churn and strengthen customer loyalty.
- Support the launch of advertising, PR, PPC campaigns.
- Guarantee your business stays focused and current.



To build an effective marketing strategy that will support future marketing plans, you need discipline, time and focus. The process is challenging. But, you don't have to start with a blank sheet, here is help for you.

Why you need a marketing Strategy

- 1.Helps you set clear business guidelines
- 2.It is your best weapon against competitors
- 3.It helps you clearly define your products
- 4.It allows you to better understand your target audience
- 5.It is a roadmap to various markets and targets
- 6.It allows a better division of roles.
7. It allows you to allocate resources.
- 8.All professional businesses implement marketing plans
- 9.Marketing and business storytelling go hand-in-hand.
- 10.Your marketing plan is your reality check.

It will help you do extensive market research. You will be able to find the best product mix and focus on it. Your marketing strategy is pretty much the foundation of all your future marketing plans.

Developing Your Marketing Strategy

In the next step, sum up the essential part of the marketing strategy. Here is a step by step process to draft one and what you want to do afterwards. Keep in mind that your strategy, if done well, will be the long-term backbone of your marketing plan. However, you should be open to changes and improvement. For instance, when trends change, you have to be flexible enough to embrace the change.

Here are the specific steps to follow while creating your marketing strategy.

1. Establish the preliminary goal, the wish. What is the reason behind your wish to create a marketing strategy? Do you want to launch a new product?, more traffic to your website?, more funding for your marketing activities?
2. Establish the resources available. Resources may include Podcasts, YouTube channel, blog and social media profiles.
3. Review your current digital marketing activities. You will be able to know what's working and the loopholes.
3. Market research (Including competition). Find a competitive advantage for your business.
5. Set specific goals and metrics. They must be SMART. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound).
6. Map your message. Write down statements about your business. The statements can later be incorporated into your business' press release, mission statement and other marketing materials.
7. Create your mission statement. It is a quote that shows what your business is set to do. It states what the business wants to achieve, who they are supporting and why they want to support them.
8. Make a timeline. This will help you determine what will be done and when.
9. Your budget. Creating your budget can help you know what you can or can't afford.
10. Assign tasks Once you've identified tasks, created a timeline and budget, you need to divide the tasks and assign them to the team members. If your team is small, you may need to outsource.

Presenting Your Marketing Strategy

Presentation skills are very important when creating your marketing strategy. You need to be able to convince people, the decision makers. Therefore, it has to be presented well. Busy executives will read into your marketing strategy. It has to be well written and presented.

You have to be honest in your presentation. Be honest about strengths and weaknesses. Show your value proposition, your competitive advantage and your target market. Do your research and prepare notes for the following;

- What are the core statements that describe the current situation of the business, what you offer and the future of your business.
- Critical performance metrics such as tracking subscribers, site traffic, email engagement rate and churn rate.
- What is the business selling? Who is your ideal customer? What's the ideal customer experience? And how will you achieve it?
- What are the current and future trends and conditions in your industry? Also, what are their implications to the brand?
- How much of the company's profits can be used to expand the business? Then, how much will be spent on the marketing effort?
- What is the competition like?
- How will you get your target customers to know of the product/service. How will you appeal to the audience?
- Who will you work with to help implement the strategy?
- Is there a clear decision making process? Who will be making the decisions during implementation?

You need to build a good foundation for your marketing strategy. It is one of the most important things for the success of your marketing efforts. These questions should be answered to prevent failure in future.

Structuring a Digital Marketing Plan

Now that you have agreed on the strategy, it's time to work on the marketing plan in 5 Steps:

- Reporting on last year's marketing plan
- Generating Ideas
- Defining the marketing strategy
- Setting your goals
- Planning next year's marketing plan.

STEP 1 REPORTING ON LAST YEAR'S MARKETING PLAN

Your end of year marketing plan reports could prove your results and provide marketing data to make necessary improvements. Your EOY will help you finish your year on a high note. You get to see what is done and where there's need for improvement.

EOY reporting can be a bit challenging. You need to know where to get the data for the report from. However, defining your KPIs can make it easier. Monitoring and keeping track of the KPIs and performance metric can help you understand better where you are and where you need to be.

Get data for what worked and what didn't. These are resources for decision making for the next year. Focus on engagement metrics (engagement rates, churn rates) rather than vanity metrics (audience size, site views).

Knowing how to present your report is also very important. Present your report in ways that can be easily understood by different stakeholders. For different stakeholders you need different formats for your report.

- For your team - In-depth and more detailed report that you can use to compare performance and KPIs.
- For your departmental Leadership - A report that shows the major impact that the marketing team has been making. A demonstration on how your marketing strategy has been bringing in the leads and sales.
- For your executive leadership - They don't need the nitty-gritty details about everything the marketing team does. They are generally concerned with; how much was spent, how many people were reached, how effective the marketing effort is and the ROI.

Importance of EOY

- You get to account for how your business has developed throughout the year.
- Helps you assess your performance throughout the year. Provides performance statistics to benchmark against.
- You get to set new and accurate goals for the next year. You get to review and update your KPIs.
- The report can be used for micromanagement or for a view of the whole business' performance.
- The report can be used to build the team member's confidence. Showcases your wins.
- Helps you identify which marketing channel works best for your brand.

Examples of what you'll understand

- One of your blog posts is ranking on page one in SERPs and one is languishing on page five. Why is this so?
- Our latest custom case study has a ton of traffic but isn't converting. What is going on?
- Tweets for our latest social media marketing campaign aren't engaging. What's happening?
- The churn rate/unsubscribe rate for our newsletter is increasing. Why?

Your end of year marketing report should include;

- Your marketing strategy
- goals and projected outcomes.
- Audience and market research.
- Promotions and events.
- Paid social media advertising.
- Email campaigns.
- Goals
- Expected outcomes.

A good report gives you all the necessary information to make a decision and take action. A report doesn't have to include all the data you have. The purpose of your marketing report should lead you to the kind of data you are going to include. For example:

- You may want to justify the marketing expenses.
- Ask for more money.
- Find out which marketing channels work so that you can focus on them.
- Figure out the loopholes.

Presenting Your EOY

How you present your end of year marketing report is very important.

1. Data visualization.

People process images [60,000 times](#) faster than texts. Your audience will get a clear understanding of the current situation, past events, conclusions and recommendations for the future.

Data can be in the form of expenses, revenues, cashflow and profit. It will help your audience understand the meaning of the numbers presented.



[Image Source](#)

2. Actionable insights.

You have presented your visuals and have highlighted the spikes and dips. Now you have to be ready to explain why somethings happened.

- What caused a rise in churn rate.
- Why has there been a higher churn rate?
- Customers are talking more about our brand following an online challenge we did concerning environmental conservation.
- The website had a lower traffic rate.
- 20% of our customers mentioned our competitor as having better and cheaper products.
- What didn't work in your paid ads.

These kinds of questions will be asked. You have to be able to answer. Why? Is the actionable insight. Your superiors are expecting you to be able to recognize your failures and avoid repeating them. Also be able to replicate the successes.

Example;

Non-actionable plan	Actionable plan
The paid Ad has a conversion rate of 60%	The paid Ad had a conversion rate of 60%. This is higher than what we achieved in the previous period. Our Ads have received a high amount of conversion this period.
Our annual churn rate is 7%.	Our annual churn rate is 7%. Our customers are not appreciating having to talk to bots on our website. They need to talk to an actual person. We have poor customer service

3. Performance benchmark

When you have results, you need to compare them with competitors'. This will tell you where your business actually stands. You will be able to find necessary insights that will help you understand your business in comparison to another. It will help you identify areas or processes for improvement.

Benchmarking can be classified into [competitive and technical](#)

Examples;

- “When comparing our business’ channel efforts. Instagram is driving the most brand engagement.”
- “The amount of engagement on our brand compared to brand B who deal with the same product suggests that Instagram should continue being the main social media element for the future.”

STEP 2: Generating Ideas

Use different sources to generate ideas. Thereafter, create a customer needs list based on the information you gather. You should try to identify existing weaknesses in your products, gaps in your product range and areas for improvement.

Here are areas where you can gather information from;

1. Brainstorm product issues

Your team can help you brainstorm product issues. Your sales and customer service staff interact with your customers daily, hearing feedback about your products and the customer's needs. Capture these feedback and product ideas.

2. Use your research and development (R&D) processes.

R&D can help you identify areas where modifications should happen to existing products. The discoveries from R&D can even lead you to create a new product. These ideas will be consistent with feedback from your market and customers.

3. Review your Quality Assurance Processes.

Note issues and potential ideas. Ensure the work you put out there is always spotless.

4. Review Customer Complaint Records.

Weakness in existing product range. What is causing the gap between what you are promising and what the customers get?

5. Review your research

Customer research - to help you identify customer motivation, behavior and tendencies. Market research - to help you know how to maintain competitiveness.

6. Talk to your suppliers and other business partners

Manufacturers, retailers and sales representatives. They can help you identify new opportunities. Data from these sources can help you scrutinize a new market.

7. Understand your competition .

Understanding what your competitor is doing will help you keep up with trends in the market. Your competition may also have a product or idea that could be a potential threat to your business.

8. Study catalogues and product information

Understand existing products that are available in your market.

9. Idea screening

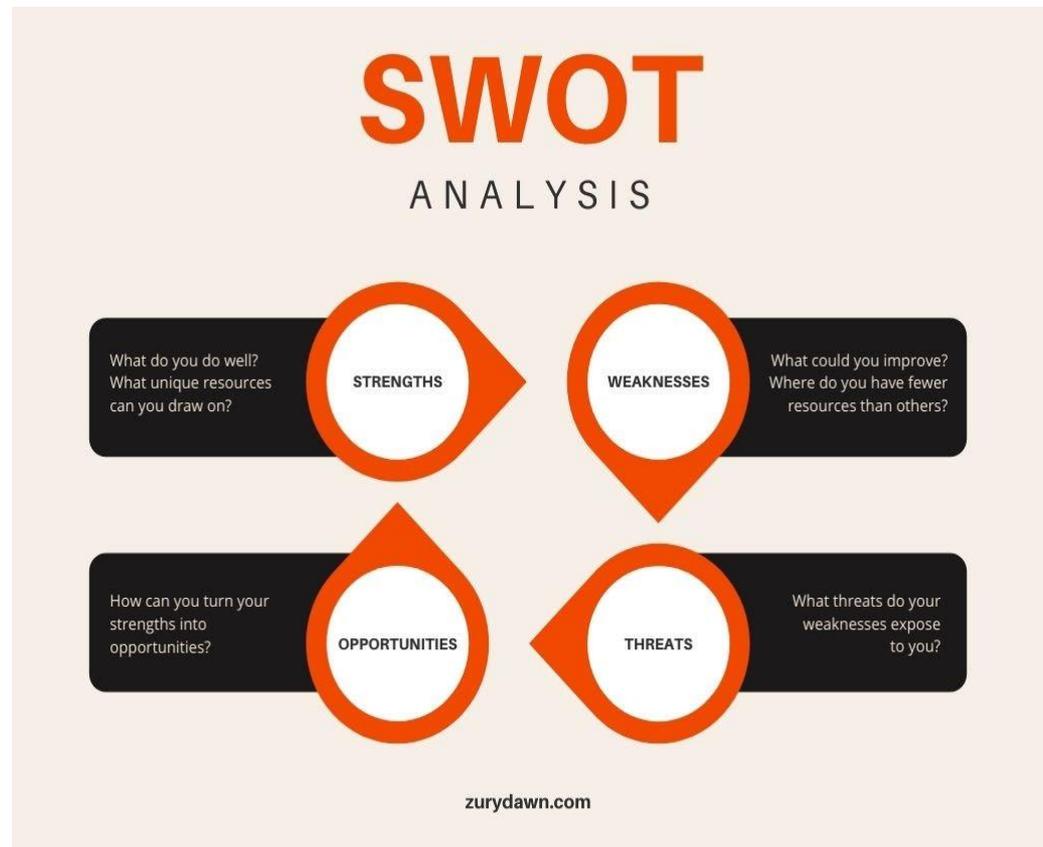
This is a stage for potential new products or services. Use idea screening to ensure its success. Develop a set of criteria to evaluate your ideas against.

Your criteria must include;

- A). How many ways your customer can benefit from this product or service.
- B). What benefits your product or service will bring to your target audience.
- C). The technical feasibility of the idea.
- D). Simplicity/Complexity of developing the new product/service.
- E). The profitability of the idea.
- F). Market saturation.

10. SWOT analysis

This will help you evaluate your business' competitive position and develop strategic planning.



11. Innovation support.

Generating innovative ideas should be encouraged for the growth of your business. Support and encouragement can also come from business partners, suppliers and business networks.

Your business should create an innovative environment and encourage creative thinking. Also, find ways of funding your growth through innovation.

Step 3. The Marketing Strategy

From generating ideas from all areas above. It's time for you to formalize the plan. The document that shows the efforts of a business for the upcoming year. It is an outline of the plans for the next year for the market strategy, promotions and advertising activities. The following is an outline you can use to document the digital marketing strategy.

- Marketing objective of the business.
- Current business market positioning.
- Market research.
- Metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs) to be tracked.
- Marketing mix.
- Understanding the competition. (SWOT analysis).
- Marketing strategies.
- Marketing budget.
- Monitoring and performance analysis.



The assets that you have been using that have made your previous marketing plan work. You may need to remove, improve/update, or get more assets for your next year's marketing activities. Below are some examples of assets that you may have;

Identify Your Assets

-Social media profiles.

-Websites.

-Data-Email list

- Videos

-eBooks

- Newsletter

- High page ranking in search engines.

-Your team

Action Plans

Document how your business will execute your marketing strategy. What your team is going to do to achieve the goals. Each plan has to specify;

- What will be done?
- Timeline.
- Who is responsible for what?
- Budget.
- Measurable projected outcome

The Team's Priorities for the next year.

You will need to create an execution template. This will help you show how you are going to implement your marketing plan. Have a list of your assets with last year's performance. Then, demonstrate how you will achieve your vision.

Example.

Plan	Asset	Action
Advertising plan for 2022	Creative advertising plan 1	Strategy- Advertise our new product. Creative idea - showcase empowering women stories to bring an emotional response from customers. Tagline. "Women Empowerment".
Social media search plan for 2022	Social media activity 1	Strategy- Communication and social listening.. Creative idea - create daily empowering stories to create an engagement group of fans. Search. 100 keywords.
Promotion Plan for 2022	Promotion activity 1	Strategy- Drive trials. Creative idea- Give incentives to those who visit your business. Tactics- Give coupons - (Promo22)

Structure of a Marketing Plan

The structure can include the following sections;

1. Marketing plan objectives.
2. Marketing research - Market analysis.
3. Target Market
4. SWOT Analysis.
5. Marketing strategy
6. Marketing budget.
7. Performance analysis.

STEP 4 Setting Goals

Set your goals in a way that you are not struggling. Sometimes you may feel like you are working hard but your efforts are not bringing the desired results. When you struggle to fulfil your goals over a longer period than it has to be.

You've gone through what you did the previous year. You have generated ideas through this knowledge of what worked and what failed.

It can be very hard to reach your goals without focus. Set a SMART goal. This is a goal that satisfies five criteria. Your goals must be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely.

Specific S	Measurable M	Achievable A	Realistic R	Time-bound T
What exactly do you want to do?	How will you know when your goal has been accomplished?	Break your big dream into small achievable ones. Is it in your power to accomplish it?	After breaking it down, it may become possible to accomplish.	Give your goal a deadline. When exactly do you want to accomplish your goal?

Setting goals for the next year will be exciting now that you have details from what you did the previous year. List your assets, the platform you will use and the key performance indicators. Like in the example below.

Assets	Platform	KPIs
Socials	Facebook	Reach/Impressions, video views, social shares, link clicks.
	YouTube	Reach/Impressions, video views, social shares, link clicks.
	Pinterest	Reach/Impressions, link clicks, conversions.
	Instagram	Reach/Impressions, video views, social shares, link clicks.
Paid Ads	Google	Reach/Impressions, video views, social shares, link clicks, downloads, conversions, unique visitors, page visits.
	Facebook	Reach/Impressions, video views, social shares, link clicks, downloads, conversions, unique visitors, page visits.
	Content Distributors	Reach/Impressions, page visits, link clicks, unique visitors, downloads.
Email	Newsletters	Link clicks, conversions, video views, page visits, downloads.
PR	Press Release	Reach/Impressions, Page visits, unique visitors.

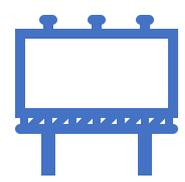
Decide and choose the goals that you care about. This will mainly depend on where your business is at.

Step 5. Planning for the next year

It's time to plan for next year. With all the above in place you have the knowledge you need to plan for the next year. You have the backbone for a solid plan for your coming year. Your marketing plan can be very different from the previous year's.

It's time to meet the board for the presentation of the marketing plan. Your plan should be supported by the marketing strategy. Ensure you have allocated enough resources that will help you achieve your goals.

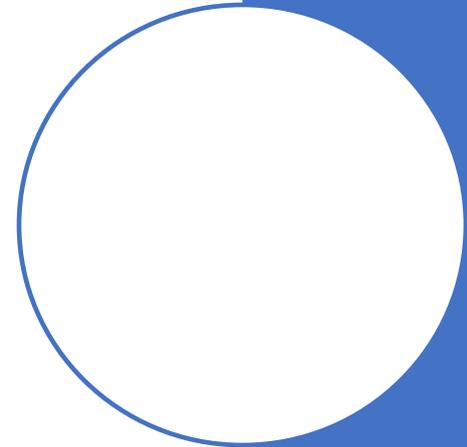
The plan should be broken month by month. Your budget should be in place. Also, your team and the people who will help you implement the plan.



Conclusion

Your marketing strategy is your game plan for reaching potential consumers. You want to turn them into customers for your good/service. A plan has to be created to help you focus and achieve the goal. A marketing plan will help you advertise and sell your business' product/service. It will show who the target customer is, how to reach them, with what prices?, and the metrics and KPIs for your performance.

The steps provided will lay your groundwork for creating a successful marketing plan. You can use project management software such as [Asana](#) or [Slack](#) to help you and your team implement your plan. Below is a marketing plan template. It's broken down into sections and chapters.



Section	Chapter	Why It Matters
Executive summary		It's a simple overview of your plan. It should be not more than two pages. Should be done last.
Market and situation analysis	Marketing Vision	Reminder of an agreed on vision and product positioning.
	Recent business results overall	How is the business, social, technical, competitive and industry environment? What's working and what's not?
	Business challenge	The challenges facing the business. Should align with what didn't work in the previous section.
	Market segment and customer analysis	Each segment offers growth and profit opportunities for your business. Also, provide an overview of your market research in this section.
	Marketing strategy and objectives	Objectives
	Strategy and tactics	How will you get there? Prepare measurable strategic initiatives that will help you achieve your objectives. Also, prepare a set of tactics that support the strategic initiatives.
	Priorities and responsibilities	Assign responsibilities to yourself and your team. Set timelines to ensure people understand what actions need to be done and by when.
	Budget and controls	Financial profit and loss statement
	Risks	Consider potential risks to your business. For example; Risk 1 - \$5 million impact Risk 2 - \$ 6 million impact
	Mitigation strategies	Prepare contingency plans to address the risks. For example; Risk 1 - set of tactics to mitigate them. Risk 2 - set of tactics to mitigate them.