

# **Writing a Successful Campaign**

**Marketing is a collection of strategies designed to identify the customer, keep the customer, and satisfy the customer. Any enterprise should have a clear understanding of what marketing entails before opening their doors for business. Many businesses waste time and resources on cheap gimmicks because they failed to create a formal marketing plan from the start. This article describes how to write an effective marketing plan and offers various tactics used through the implementation process.**

**When writing a marketing plan several steps should be taken to ensure any and all details have been covered. First, the enterprise should define the project scope. Defining the project scope sets the stage for developing a project plan. Project scope is a definition of the end result or mission of your project, a product or service for your client/customer. The primary purpose is to define as clearly as possible the deliverable(s) for the end user and to focus project plans. As fundamental and essential as scope definition appears, it is frequently overlooked by project leaders of well-managed, large corporations (Gray-Larson, 2006).**

**Part of defining the project scope is establishing SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, reliable, and timed) goals through market research. While your business may already have their goals in mind; an evidence supported plan should be written to enable them to reach and exceed those goals. Marketing research is the process of defining a marketing problem and opportunity, systemically collecting and analyzing information and recommending actions (Kerin, 2006). The goal of marketing research is to identify both marketing problems and opportunities and to generate and improve marketing actions. According to Barron & Targett (2007), a marketing manager should closely observe the interrelationship between the decisions that have to be made and the information which influences those decisions. The first principle simply recognizes that the world is an uncertain place and that the uncertainty persists with or without information. Managers typically know what alternative events may occur, however, what they need to know is what events are more likely and less likely to arise. The second principle is that information must be judged against a realistic level of knowledge and not against complete ignorance. An organization's management should consider these two principles to help generate innovative ideas to maintain the leading edge.**

**Once the project scope has been defined and goals have been laid out, the next section of the plan can move into development. What products and services is the business selling or promoting? It is important to inventory what services/ products you are offering and to have a clear understanding of what it will take to offer those products and services; time, financial support, staff, research and additional resources.**

**Most importantly, establishing the target market should be the next step in writing and executing a successful marketing plan. The target market is the sector of consumers in which all efforts will be aimed. Most target markets are defined by race, gender, socio-economic status, and geographic region. For example, Michelob Ultra has targeted female beer drinkers advertising**

**pictures of fit and healthy women who exercise and watch their diets. Michelob portrays this product as a "good time" staple for the American woman. Evidence of their success comes from a study conducted by Simmons Market Research Bureau (2005). In a consumer market heavily dominated by males, Michelob Ultra was the only beer with a higher female consumer base. The study shows Michelob has a 53.6% female consumer base. This percentage is exceedingly high in comparison to the average 39.9% consumer base shared amongst the other 9 light beers included in the study.**

**How do we know if we have identified the correct market for various products and services? If the four elements of the marketing mix fit with the identified target market, there is an excellent chance the correct market has been narrowed down. "Marketing mix" is a term used by marketing professionals to describe the different factors that affect a company's attempt to reach customers. To sell a product successfully, a company must do many things in addition to developing the product. Chief among these tasks is determining the target market's needs and wants. Based on this understanding, a company must determine the appropriate marketing tactics for the product. The details about how to encourage people to buy a product can be broken down into decisions regarding the four factors that together make up the marketing mix. These factors, often referred to as the "four P's of marketing," are product, price, place, and promotion (GaleVirtual, 2008).**

**Another important element in writing a successful marketing plan is to study and research direct competition. Fortunately this doesn't have to be difficult or expensive. With the technological advances and availability of information, much of this can be done via the web. When you are gathering information on your competition, you will want to know the following information: their pricing, what they do well and what they do wrong, and what services and products they offer. Once you have gathered this information, you can put together a SWOT analysis. According to Gray & Larson (2006), SWOT assesses the external and internal environmental organizational factors (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). From this analysis, critical issues and a portfolio of strategic alternatives are identified. These alternatives are compared with the current portfolio and available resources; strategies are then selected that should support the basic mission and objectives of the organization.**

**So what are basic and cost-efficient marketing strategies growing businesses should explore? Consider the following:**

- Network (online or in person); Join groups like your local Chamber of Commerce, Better Business Bureau, social organizations, or business groups such as Business Networking International (BNI). Participate in online discussions where your target market will assemble**
- Offer to speak at local student-centered events**
- Send out press releases to print and local online news sources**
- Send sales letters, brochures, e-newsletters or special offers on a repeated basis to the same group of potential clients**
- Write professional articles that pertain your field**

- **Advertise in local business directories such as Yellow Pages, Yahoo Local, or Citysearch**

**The last phase of writing your marketing plan should be devising a strategy for evaluation. To accurately complete this section, go back to the beginning. What SMART goals did you lay out at the start? Have you reached or exceeded those goals?**

**Also, it's important to understand what you are measuring. Did you reach those goals because of your marketing campaign or were outside factors responsible (increased referrals, employee accomplishments, etc...)? You may want to consider benchmarking yourself along the way. Example: If a goal was to increase customers by 8% in 6 months, track sales by unique customers and report those findings once every 2 months so you can follow your track record. Monitor the number of unique visitors to your website each month or simply ask customers where they heard about you. Depending on your goals your strategies will vary—either way you should find ways to measure progress.**

**Remember that writing a solid marketing plan before you explore new tactics and opportunities is strictly advised for any business. By following the suggestions embedded in this article, you are taking the first step in executing a successful marketing campaign.**

#### **References**

**(2005, July 1). The demographics of beer The Free Library. (2005). Retrieved May 25, 2010 from [http://www.thefreelibrary.com/The demographics of beer.-a0134384833](http://www.thefreelibrary.com/The+demographics+of+beer.-a0134384833)**

**Barron, M. and Targett, D. (2007). Sales forecasting, market research, and the value of information. Marketing intelligence and planning; Volume:4 Issue: 3; 2007. Retrieved May 25, 2010 from University of Phoenix library EBSCOhost database**

**Gray, C., & Larson, E. (2006). Project management: The managerial process. New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies.**

**Kerin, R. A., Hartley, S. W., Berkowitz, E. N., & Rudelius, W. (2006). Marketing. New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies.**

**Overview: Marketing Mix: Product, Price, Place, Promotion. Everyday Finance: Economics, Personal Money Management, and Entrepreneurship. Vol. 2. Detroit: Gale, 2008. Gale Virtual Reference Library. Web. 19 May 2010.**

**Written by: Ashley McDonough  
AMAC Solutions © 2010**