

Summary

A marketing plan is a written document that details the necessary actions to achieve one or more marketing objectives. Here's a sample template to help you to get started with your next marketing plan. Once you have filled out each section, delete the explanatory notes, and this summary, and you will have a bright shiny new marketing plan.

Target Market

Identify your target market. Take time to research the demographics (age, gender, geographic location and household income, etc) as well as the psychographics (buying habits, beliefs, wants, needs, and cultural characteristics) of your target customers. Establish numbers of potential customers in your service area based on those criteria.

Objectives

Establish objectives. What do you hope to accomplish through your marketing? Be SMART, Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic and Time-bound. "Increase sales" is too general to be helpful, but "Increase sales by 10% by the end of Q2" is both specific and measurable.

Strategies

Define your strategies. These are the methods that you will use to accomplish your objectives. A strategy can be a broad overview, such as "Utilize social media" or "Implement an email marketing campaign." There are dozens of different strategies that can be employed for any given goal, so it may take some time and research to determine those that will help you accomplish your objectives.

Tactics

List your tactics. Tactics will be the specific methods within your strategy that will help you accomplish your goals. Working from the social media strategy already mentioned above, you might list, say, “Offer exclusive coupons via Facebook and Twitter”.

Metrics

Establish metrics. This is your scorecard. In order to determine if your objective has been met, you will need to establish a benchmark for tracking your success. This can be the number of new Facebook friends, the response rate of your email campaign, or the number or dollar amount of sales from new customers.

Return on Investment

Before you implement any strategy or tactic, it is important to calculate the approximate cost of a campaign and the income that is required to break even. Wherever possible, you will want to use figures that relate to the metrics that you established above.