

designasylum: *Eight Steps to a Working Marketing Plan.*



Run don't walk

As most banks assert, a business plan is one of the most important factors in business success. And one of the most important parts of a business plan is the Marketing Plan.

It needn't be a 300 page manual. It could be just a 2-3 page outline to lead you to business growth and sales success in the coming year. The most important thing is to have a plan. Just the act of planning can aid in defining your business.

Here are some steps to help you hit the ground running.

1 Stop and think

To keep from feeling overwhelmed, take some time (like a weekend or a personal retreat) to really think about your business **goals** as they pertain to sales, growth and earnings.

Determine a clear picture in your mind of what you would like marketing and sales to accomplish for your business. **Write down your main goals.** Don't try for too many. (ie: greater profit, expand market, increase sales by 10%)

2 Then strategize

Now that you have **goals and objectives** clearly in mind, start identifying **strategies** that will help you achieve specific goals. Greater profit may come from online ordering (think \$4.00 a gallon) to decrease sales costs. Expanding your market may mean contracting a broker from another city. Increasing sales strategies may include price adjustments, new packaging or new presentation materials for your sales staff.

Analyzing your goals and **planning** a strategy can make a huge difference in your bottom line.

3 Be honest, honest, honest

Know your **strengths and weaknesses**. Don't expect sales staff to increase sales when you need to improve your product line, or be more competitive. Don't plan programs you can't afford and be realistic about how much you can do.

4 Count your pennies

Construct a budget for each project. Get **actual quotes** and watch your costs. You need to know if each project is worth in sales what it costs you.

5 You can't manage what you don't measure

To know which programs are most successful, you need to set up ways of **measuring results**. What are your sales figures now? What is your projected goal? How will you measure the results? Measure often so you can fix problems, but be patient and let things work.

6 Mind your P's please.

Marketing 101 - the 4 main ingredients in marketing:
Promotion - Advertising and sales promotion
Positioning - How you compare in the market place: (low cost alternative, quality leader, innovative etc.)
Place - How a product or service is distributed
Product - What it is that you sell

It isn't all just advertising and sales activity. It could mean changing your **positioning** if that spot is too crowded, changing your method of distribution or improving a product line. Pay attention to all four aspects.

7 Keep your eye on the ball.

The best laid plans count for nothing if you don't **follow through!** Set up regular meetings to check on the progress of each programs implementation. Write it on your calendar and don't skip it to put out fires. It is a fire.

8 Make it happen



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Crazy 'bout good design!