

Small Business Marketing Toolkit

A free, easy-to-use tool to keep your
business growing.

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The Importance of Marketing for Businesses

WHAT IS MARKETING?

Marketing is the process of getting people interested in your company's product or service. This happens through market research, analysis, and understanding your ideal customer's interests. Marketing pertains to all aspects of a business, including product development, distribution methods, sales, and advertising.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Simply put – marketing can help you grow your business and keep your existing customers satisfied and coming back.

Want to learn more? Here's a good article that provides additional details: <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/what-is-marketing>

HOW DO YOU GET STARTED?

To build a marketing strategy, it's important to understand the competitive landscape and consumers' needs and interests.

Industry SWOT Analysis

Use this SWOT Analysis as a planning tool to understand the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats involved in your industry or business.

Here's how:

- (1) Specify the objective of your business or industry
- (2) identify the internal and external factors that are supportive or unfavorable to achieving that objective.

S

Strengths:

Positive attributes of your business within control.

W

Weaknesses:

Areas within your business' control that may negatively impact the customer.

O

Opportunities:

External factors that will propel your business forward.

T

Threats:

External factors beyond your control that could place your business at risk.

Identify: Who is Your Target Customer?

Your target market is the specific group of people you want to reach with your marketing message. They are the people who are most likely to buy your products or services, and are united by some common characteristics, like demographics and behaviors.

Select all options that you think define your target customer.

AGE (circle all that apply):

18-24 years	55-64 years
25-34 years	65-74 years
35-44 years	75+ years
45-54 years	All ages

GENDER (give a percentage):

Male _____ %

Female _____ %

INCOME (circle):

Less than \$25k	\$100k-124k
\$25k-34k	\$125k-149k
\$35k-49k	\$150k-199k
\$50k-74k	\$200k +
\$75k-99k	

OTHER:

- They have children
- They are employed full-time
- They are educated
- They own their home

They live within a _____ mile radius from my business.

Identify: Who Is Your Target Customer Continued ...

Now that you have the basic demographic information, (1) identify what motivates and challenges your target customers so you can better meet their needs and (2) use the information from the previous page and this page to write a short summary describing your target customers.

List common interests and behaviors among your target customers that drive them to your business:

-
-
-
-

SUMMARY

Define Your Unique Value Proposition

Use these next few pages to define your Unique Value Proposition to determine how your offering/service is differentiated in the marketplace and provides a competitive advantage.

STEP 1: WHAT'S YOUR VALUE?

WHAT PROBLEMS DO YOUR OFFERINGS/SERVICES SOLVE?

Market Problems	Your Solution (features)	Benefits to Customer

Define Your Unique Value Proposition Continued ...

STEP 2: CONNECT THE DOTS FROM CUSTOMER TO BENEFIT

	For:	Services are:	Ideal for:	Better than:	Because:
Key Criteria	Identify ideal market segment.	Provide concise description.	Describe best use or application for service.	Identify primary competitor or competing approach.	Cite differentiation and other evidence to back up your claim of superiority.
Example: Restaurant	<i>Middle-class, family-oriented consumers.</i>	<i>Providing a family atmosphere with good food and service.</i>	<i>A family who is on-the-go, doesn't have time to cook or wants a night out.</i>	<i>Other local, affordable restaurants.</i>	<i>The quality of food is superior and adapts to family needs such as dine in or carry out.</i>
Your Services					

Define Your Unique Value Proposition Continued ...

STEP 3: SUMMARIZE

Pull together your conclusions from the past exercises to summarize your unique value proposition.

Remember, it should be a succinct expression of your market position that is externally focused, describes the target customer, primary benefit, references the competition and answers the question: *"Why should someone do business with you?"*

UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITION:

Checklist: Marketing Must-Do's

- ❑ **CREATE AN ELEVATOR PITCH:** What can you tell people about your business, products and services in 30 seconds or less that keeps them interested and wanting more? "Refer back to your Unique Value Proposition."
- ❑ **SET UP AND CLAIM YOUR BUSINESS LISTINGS ONLINE:** Consumers no longer flip to yellow pages to find a business. Instead, they go to the web. Your basic business profile is free and easy to set-up. Do a search on different browsers to see what information you see about your company and then claim or create a listing for your business.
business.google.com/add
- ❑ **GET A RESPONSIVE WEBSITE:** Not only do you need a website in today's technology-driven world, but you need a responsive one. Customers will be searching for your business using various methods, so it's essential that they find a site that's easy to navigate on all devices.
- ❑ **SEE WHERE YOUR TRAFFIC IS COMING FROM:** Use Google Analytics, a free tool, to see each referring website or forum that is sending traffic to your site. This will help you see where you should be investing your efforts in the future.
- ❑ **LEVERAGE SOCIAL MEDIA:** More and more customers engage with businesses and brands on social media. Businesses without a social presence can be at risk for losing credibility. You don't have to do them all - select a social platform that best reaches your target audience.

Checklist: Marketing Must-Do's Continued ...

- ❑ **USE GOOGLE ADWORDS:** Try utilizing Google AdWords to specifically target the types of products or services you offer. Remember to focus on the quality of a few keywords instead of choosing too many.
- ❑ **ADVERTISE:** Advertising is not a one-size fits all solution. Find what works for you, but whatever you do, you must advertise. More than anything, focus on consistent, repetitive branding.
- ❑ **COMBINE ONLINE AND OFFLINE STRATEGIES:** Don't put all your eggs in one basket. Combine online channels like blogs and social media with traditional, offline marketing practices such as direct mail and radio advertising to help extend your reach as far as possible.
- ❑ **EMAIL MARKETING:** Email marketing has long been a simple, cost-effective way to drive revenue for small businesses. Every time you add a new subscriber to your email list, they are a potential paying customer and therefore time and effort should ideally be put into developing email marketing campaigns.



TIP: Low-cost (or free) email marketing tools include: MailChimp, MailerLite, Sender, HubSpot.

Best Practices: Social Media

There's so much to do on social media and sometimes it seems like there's not enough time or resources to do it all. Here are some tips and best practices to help you navigate the world of social media:

- ❑ **CHOOSE THE RIGHT PLATFORM:** You may not need to be on every single social media platform. Research and evaluate where your customers are spending most of their time and engage on those social platforms to get the most out of your efforts.
- ❑ **KEEP AN EYE ON COMPETITORS:** By doing this, you will (1) ensure you are keeping the upper hand and (2) learning from some of the tactics they are utilizing. Competitors can provide inspiration for your posts.
- ❑ **SOCIAL LISTENING:** Know what people are saying on your social media channels. Why? If you do this—you can track, analyze, and respond to those conversations. If you don't—you're missing out on valuable insights for your business.
- ❑ **RULE OF THIRDS:** Use this as a guide when figuring out what type of content to share – $\frac{1}{3}$ share posts to promote your business, convert readers, and generate profits; $\frac{1}{3}$ share posts of ideas from influencers in your industry (or like-minded businesses); $\frac{1}{3}$ share posts of personal stories to build your brand.
- ❑ **RESPOND TO MESSAGES:** Being responsive builds trust with your readers and potential customers. It also shows that you care and your efforts to engage create a relationship with your social community.

Best Practices: Social Media Continued ...

- ❑ **DON'T POST THE SAME CONTENT:** Reposting the same content across all your social platforms makes your brand look lazy. Your readers will also stop engaging with your social posts because they will become fatigued from seeing the same posts.

- ❑ **DON'T OVERPOST:** Platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn only need one post per day whereas Twitter it's common and important to post several times a day. Evaluate your content for each platform and post accordingly.

- ❑ **USE FREE TOOLS TO HELP ENHANCE YOUR SOCIAL EFFORTS:** There are several different tools to help you do social media right. From scheduling tools to creating videos, these tools can help you take your social media to the next level for the most engagement:
 - Planoly – a visual planner for Instagram to see your grid before you post.
 - Canva – an app to easily create beautiful images for your posts. No graphic design experience required.
 - Story Slicer – cut, edit then post videos. It's easy to use, for the novice or pro videographer.
 - Buffer – allows you to schedule posts ahead of time.
 - Bit.ly – shortens long links to make your URLs more user friendly.

Myth Busters: Marketing Edition

The world is full of myths, from fake news to faux facts. Mount Everest is not the world's tallest mountain and The Great Wall of China can't be seen from space. Marketing is no different. Our field is laden with misunderstandings and misconceptions. Here are a few myths and their realities that you need to be aware of.

MYTH

MARKETING IS AN UNNECESSARY BUSINESS COST

ADVERTISING AND MARKETING ARE THE SAME THING

REALITY

MARKETING IS AN INVESTMENT: It should earn you more than you spend, and what it earns you should be measurable in monetary terms. Make sure you set clear, measurable goals to evaluate the success of your marketing initiatives.

MARKETING IS A LONG-TERM TACTIC FOR GROWTH: Marketing is inclusive of the 4 P's (product, price, place and promotion). Advertising is the activities you do within "Promotion."

Myth Busters: Marketing Edition (Continued)

MYTH

SOCIAL MEDIA DOESN'T WORK FOR OLDER TARGET MARKETS

YOU MUST POST MULTIPLE TIMES A DAY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

IT'S OK TO IGNORE NEGATIVE FEEDBACK AND COMMENTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

REALITY

68% OF ADULTS 50-64 USE FACEBOOK: According to a 2019 Statista report, Baby Boomers are embracing social media platforms with Facebook being the most used by this demographic.

Source: "Percentage of U.S. Baby Boomers who use selected social networks as of February 2019" Statista, Published June 2019

YOU NEED TO POST CONSISTENTLY: Some social platforms need more posts in one day than others. However, more isn't always better. The key is consistency. Posting once a day is better than posting whenever you remember.

IT'S ESSENTIAL TO ENGAGE AND RESPOND TO ALL FEEDBACK: It's not about making the upset customer happy (although that would be nice) – it's about making sure your brand is on record as listening and caring.

Marketing is complicated and ever changing. Unfortunately, there is no "one-sized-fits-all" approach.

We can help.

We know that each business is different, so we create custom solutions designed to generate the results you want. Here's how we do it.

We give you the freedom to focus on what you do best – running your business.

We put you first - diving into your business goals and creating an engaging marketing strategy designed to achieve them.

We make it easy – using our solutions to take the guesswork out of reaching your customers, by generating awareness and engagement across screens.

We deliver your message to the right people - eliminating waste and maximizing your marketing budget.



Want to learn more? Visit www.coxmedia.com to connect with us or to request assistance.