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Academic marketing plan template

Companies draw up a marketing plan based on the products they provide. It also depends on the size of the business and the resources at their disposal. Companies begin this process by collecting data about their customers in the market, such as shopping and spending patterns. There are different types of marketing plans, including those for new products, a product category or a segment of the market. There can be many different products within a large brand. For example, a company that manufactures cleaning materials may have window cleaners, dishwasher detergents and laundry soap products under one brand. For each specific item, a separate marketing plan is developed. This means that the team is brainstorming sales targets and forecasting the success of each one. These plans are then put under the umbrella of the plan that has been laid out for the category, or brand, as a whole. The brand marketing plan is the overall focus of an entire group of products under one brand. These focus and combine the brand's products during an annual marketing strategy, which is outsourced by the brand manager. When a new product marketing plan is laid out, the focus is on outlining the overall concept for the product. The concept chosen must be carefully laid out, restructured by the team and then tested on the market. One of the most important elements of this plan is the very introduction of the product to consumers. Each step of the product's introductory period is defined in great detail. The geographic marketing plan is aimed at a specific area, such as a country, neighborhood, city, or region. A particular area may have a specific need, based on a particular economic activity or event, that would help to market a product successfully to that area. Many times the same product will be sold to several targeted segments of the market. These segments are specific groups in the general population that are most likely to buy the product. The marketing team lays out a different plan for each group based on their different characteristics and needs. It is important that the team knows the market segments well, as this can provide an important advantage when selling to that group of consumers. Customer marketing plans are even more specific, targeting different customers who provide a business with a lot of business. These are each done on an individual basis and presented by the national account manager. A marketing plan is a document describing high-level marketing objectives and the step-by-step approach to achieving them. These marketing plans typically include sections such as buyer personas, a unique value proposition, and distribution channels. Marketing plans help companies in all industries ensure they have a path to achieving clear goals and measuring marketing success. Both planning and implementation of a small business marketing plan can be time consuming. When time is limited, consider a complete marketing marketing like Hibü for help. Hibü specializes in small business marketing, helps build brand awareness and build a customer base for a start-up fee starting at \$400, then \$100/month thereafter. Click here to get started with Hibü. Visit Hibü 4 Free Marketing Plan Templates A marketing plan template contains all critical sections of a marketing plan, with the ability for companies to fill in information specific to their budget, goals and strategies. This includes sections for the company's strengths and weaknesses, target markets and costs. The plans offered below cover all the key elements of a marketing campaign, plus additional plans tailored to different distribution channels. General marketing plan template For general marketing purposes, a company should use the template below as a starting point for mapping strategy, objectives and delivery methods. Costs and target markets are also included. Social Media Marketing Plan Template A social media marketing plan sets out the initial objective steps of a general marketing plan, but focuses on shorter, more media-forward content and distribution on social channels. Email Marketing Plan Mail Email Marketing one includes promotions, as well as drip marketing and auto-responders. Content will be an important differentiator in this template, focused on longer form video content (short and long-form) on a regular cadence. This template will give marketers an opportunity to map that content and track its success. Basic sections of a general marketing plan A marketing plan begins with general information about your marketing and research into it, including your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis; your unique value proposition (how your products and/or services stand out from the competition), and your goals, and then fold into specialized distribution channels to target a specific type of marketing or audience. SWOT Analysis A SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis determines which strengths and weaknesses can lead to opportunities as you work towards your marketing goals. To collect relevant SWOT information, interview both your customer service team and your customers. Start by contacting your customer service department and collecting information about customer complaints and general feedback. Together, these indicate potential business deficiencies, as well as customer preferences for competing brands (threats to your business). Some questions you can ask your employees are: In your opinion, what are our company and product strengths? How can we improve them? What are the weaknesses of our products or company? How can we eliminate them? Which competitors do you think offers better products or services and why? How do you think can improve our products or services to outshine them? Similarly, use survey tools like Freshmarketer to gather insights into your strengths, including why customers prefer your products over competitors' and which products or services they find most useful. Some questions you can ask your customers are: Why do you prefer to buy from our company? What problems do our products or services solve for you? Which of our products or services do you find most useful? Which of the following companies have you purchased from? (List competitors.) What types of products or services do you buy from them? (List product categories.) Why did you buy their products over ours? When you record your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, document them in the template above. Examine each of these to help determine your greatest opportunities – both to address weaknesses/eliminate threats and to double down on strengths. These will help you create concrete goals later in your marketing plan. Marketing Plan SWOT Analysis Template Unique Value Proposition (UVP) A Unique Value Proposition (UVP) is a statement that defines what makes your business stand above competition when it comes to resolving customer spending points. This should be a key component of all your marketing campaigns and so should be written to deal with your customers, not simply as an internal goal. Use your SWOT analysis information and the questions below to help determine your UVP. To help you determine your UVP, answer the following questions: What makes our company as a whole better than the competition? What makes my company and its products and services better able to solve customers' pain points? What evidence do we have that we can better meet customer needs? Using your answers to the questions above, create a two to three-sentence statement you can use for marketing. For your reference, below is Hibü's value proposition as it appears on its website. Make sure your customers are very familiar with your UVP by in most, if not all, advertising and marketing materials. Hibü Unique Value Proposition Buyer Personas A buyer persona is a profile you have created that covers all the characteristics of your ideal customer. It is based on research on your current profitable customers. Most companies have between three and five buyer personas, each of which highlights a different potential target audience for your products/services. If you want to create your buyer personas, review your website's analytics and customer data, then describe demographics, likely behavior and motives. Buyer Persona Research Most small to medium-sized businesses take advantage of three to five customer personalities to ensure they are adequately speaking to all customer interests and needs. You can start researching your general buyer personas in your website's analytics audience report, then answer the questions below. To learn more about the most popular analytics tool, check out our guide on Google Analytics. You can also use your customer relationship (CRM) software or ask your sales people for a detailed customer list that addresses these issues. B2C Buyer Personas When describing an individual consumer buyer persona for business-to-consumer businesses, include characteristics such as their demographics, behavioral patterns, and motives for buying. These will frame a profile that you can use to create effective marketing campaigns. Here are questions you should ask to define your B2C buyer personas: Demographics: What are their ages, genders, places, educational background and income classes of your ideal customer? Behavior Patterns: How often does your ideal customer buy your products and what channels do they use to buy from you? Justifications: What are the pain points that drive customers to buy from you? What do they hope to achieve with your products or services? B2B Buyer Personas If your company sells to other companies, consider their professional motives and characteristics, including their industries, individual expertise, professional roles, pain points, company size, budget, and decision-making power. Here are the questions you should answer to define your B2B buyer personas: Industry: If you serve multiple types of businesses, in what industries does your target personas belong to? Expertise: What are their areas and skill levels? Professional roles: What titles/roles do they currently have? Pain points: What types of problems do they deal with in their professional roles? Company size: Are they a one-person show or do they have 10 or 50 employees? Budget: How much money do they have for your products or services? Power: What is their level of professional decision-making power? Who can they have to convince to do business with you in the long and short term? After answering the questions above, enter your details in the appropriate boxes in the template. Each box is designed for a buyer persona. It is recommended that you use all three, and label each persona with a name for clear identification. Buyer Personas Mail S.M.A.R.T. Goal Now is the time to compile your data to help create marketing goals. Based on the data you've collected — specifically, your strengths, opportunities, and buyer scans — create two to four specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (S.M.A.R.T) goals that you want to achieve as a company in the coming year. Make sure they are viable by answering the questions below for each. Answer these S.M.A.R.T questions to confirm each target is feasible and possible: Is it specific? Use actionable words to describe exactly what to accomplish. Is it possible to achieve? Describe how it is possible, given your resources, expertise and general state of your business. Is that relevant? Does it make sense when it comes to what your business has to offer and does it benefit your business in any way? Within what time frame do you expect target completion? Specifically, what dates or time frames do you expect to meet your S.M.A.R.T. goal development is an important part of creating a marketing plan because it will put concrete goals in place for your business to achieve. To learn more about S.M.A.R.T goals, read our article on the best S.M.A.R.T. target example for small businesses. Smart Goals Explained Distribution Channels Your distribution channels are marketing content publishing platforms to help you reach your goals. The basic channels for small businesses are email, social media and blogs. Each has different use cases and is valuable for different content types. Think of all three below to determine what best suits your goals, then map out content to suit your chosen distribution channels. Social media Pew research shows that social media marketing reaches a large audience — from 18 to 50-year-olds. And because social media is an organic sharing medium, it works best to help businesses build brand awareness. Once this awareness is built, companies can introduce buyers to other marketing channels, like a blog or website. To build brand awareness, consider teaching videos, user-generated content, and learning posts. Pew Research Social Media Demographics Here are popular content types for social media marketing: Teaching videos: Teaching videos help you turn your strengths into something your audience can incorporate into their lives to solve their own problems. They can also clear up misconceptions about your brand or help you showcase new product features. User-generated content: User-generated content — which shows how your products or services have already solved buyer issues — serves as a demonstration of what you can do for your followers. Learning posts: With training posts, you can showcase your industry expertise and educate your followers about industry trends and developments. With the authority that comes from these ongoing posts, you can show how your products fit in with new trends. All in all, your social media content should aim to educate potential customers about your products or services so that they can develop an interest in them. When they're interested, you can push them to other platforms with more information about what you offer — including your website or blog. Email According to Hubspot, 73% of millennials prefer to receive business communications via email and 99% of consumers check their emails daily. Since email marketing requires subscribers to choose in, it is best for companies that have already generated interest in their business among buyers and want to encourage a sale. For this reason, email content types that create that focus on lead nurture, like welcome emails, product updates, and drip campaigns. Here are the most popular types of email content: Welcome email: Welcome email should be triggered once someone has subscribed to your email campaigns. To keep people it should directly address why they signed up and what you can offer. For example, if signed up to get a free e-book through a website landing page, you can send them the e-book link. Product updates: These emails share information about how your company is improving your products or services, and addressing vulnerabilities noted by users. Digital newsletter: If your visitors have signed up for your newsletter through your blog, they likely expect blog content in return. Send them your latest blog posts that showcase your brand's strengths or expertise. Event invitation: If your goal is to increase store sales, an event invitation allows you to include mailing list subscribers in store. However, these are not the only types of invites you can send. By inviting people to online webinars or q&A with staff experts, you can increase brand awareness and encourage sales. Co-marketing email: Co-marketing emails are email campaigns you've partnered with other brands to create and promote. These help you reach new audiences and increase brand awareness. Leads, and/or sales by getting your content ahead of another company's customers. Drip/lead-caring campaigns: Lead nurturing or drip campaigns are usually a way to guide people from an interest/evaluation stage of the sales cycle to a purchase. These types of campaigns help people learn why your company's products and services are superior to others in the market. If your marketing goal is to increase sales, this type of campaign is appropriate. Seasonal promotions: If your goal is to increase sales at certain times of the year, seasonal promotions with unique, time-limited offers are a great option. The urgency of these offers forces subscribers to take action and buy. Product recommendations/orphaned shopping cart emails: When customers enter their email during an online checkout process, you can use this to promote products related to the person(s) they purchased. Similarly, if they have started checkout but do not proceed with making a purchase, you can remind them by email. This increases the likelihood that they will return to the site and complete the checkout process. Generally, email marketing content should nurture leads with welcome emails, campaigns and drip campaigns to increase product awareness and encourage a purchase. Done correctly, email marketing can lead potential customers from the awareness stage through the evaluation stage and into the buying stage seamlessly. Blog Blogs are best used to share in-depth content to showcase a company's expertise or help customers explore products or services. 99Firms reports that 77% of Internet users read blogs regularly and 70% of consumers prefer to receive business information via a blog article rather than an ad. This makes blogging a critical component of any marketing plan. Consider producing blog content like case studies, roundups, and leadership to achieve your goals. Here are the content types that generally get high involvement on company blogs: Case studies: Case studies show an instance of a company's product or service being used, and how that instance provided insight into the product/service value to a potential customer. Consider talking to happy customers to see if they would be willing to help you with a case study to showcase an example of your product's success. Roundups: Roundups gather expertise from different sources on a single topic. For maximum engagement, it's best to discuss content that hasn't been published anywhere else. Roundups showcases a company's deep connection to government agencies in its industry, demonstrating its own authority through association. Thought leadership: Thought leadership pieces are written by professionals who discuss popular topics or concepts, who offer their own assessment of them and how they should be applied to customers' lives or the industry as a whole. Although these articles rarely showcase original concepts, they allow show business founders to be leaders who are ready to change their industry for the better. Original concepts: Original concepts are new ideas companies are creating that have not yet been discussed. When a company can show customers that they not only have a firm grasp of current best practices or knowledge, but generate new ideas, they become a high-profile standard-bearer for an entire business sector. Original research: Original research is a compilation of data collected on a particular subject that is often the result of a study conducted by a company. Compiling research and publishing it offers a resource customers would have to work hard to collect on their own. This is not only of value to the consumer, but it nourishes the ongoing research and development of the company. To a large extent, content that hasn't been published anywhere else is the most successful for blogs. With this original content regularly featured on a company's blog, customers know they have to refer to it frequently to get valuable content that isn't found anywhere else. Many companies also use this content to engage followers on social media; in fact, 66% of marketers use blog content in their social media content. Tracking Your Marketing Success Once you have set up your distribution channel plans, you need to decide how you will track the success of your efforts. Many tools are available to help, including customer relationship management (CRM) software, heatmaps, funnel analysis software and analytics software. Review the tracking tools for each distribution channel below to help you set up accurate analytics. Social Media Actions k∓ Tracking Measurable Actions for Social Media Marketing can include filling out a landing page form, becoming a new follower, or clicking on a link to learn more. Start by reviewing your core goal — brand awareness, lead management, or sales—then determine the corresponding action and choose the best tracking method. Here are the main social media goals and actions, as well as tracking guidance: Brand awareness: Building brand awareness means increasing the number of people people know your brand and its products and services. To increase brand awareness, partner with influencers in your niche to create a how-to video or contest. Promote it on your profile and on influencers's. Track how many new followers you earn when your campaign runs. Lead nurturing: Lead nurturing means moving people who are likely to buy closer to a sale. For example, you can run a campaign on social media asking people to click on a link then enter their email address to get a free product. Make it fun by giving a price to the participants and making sure it's a price your buyers would appreciate. Then use a website tracking tool like Freshmarketer to track records. Sales in person: You can get more people in-store to buy products or services by promoting an in-store event, discounts, or special offers on social media. To track this correctly, just provide information on a single social media channel, then track how many people show up. Collect their email addresses in store, then add a CRM for future lead nurture. While there are a lot of tools that can help you track social media campaigns, you will definitely need a CRM to help you collect email addresses and measure engagement. Learn more about how CRM software can help you track customer interactions with your brand as a result of your social media marketing efforts in our ultimate guide on CRM software. Email actions k∓ tracking As with social media marketing, you need to highlight your key email campaign goals, pair them with a set, measurable action, then track engagement to determine campaign success. Email tracking software shows how visitors interact with campaigns. Here are some common email marketing goals and the metrics for tracking them: Brand awareness: You can track brand awareness through open rates, clicks, and social media link clicks. This tracking information should be available in your CRM, or a separate email marketing platform like Constant Contact. Lead generation: You can track lead generation by deciding how many users complete forms you submit in email campaigns and which fields they completed in those forms. Purchase/upsells/abandoned cart redemption: You can track the purchase of how many people click on a Buy Now button. Just be sure to verify these people followed up with the purchase by using a tool like Freshmarketer to determine if they went all the way to the purchase confirmation/thank you page. Review searches: If you've sent an email asking people to review a product or business as a whole, you can track how many people clicked on a Write a review button in your email. Event attendance: Track how many people clicked on an RSVP or Sign Up Now button, then compare it to actual AOA information. Any deviations may indicate problems with your / RSVP form. For a deeper look at how to track your email marketing efforts using software like Constant Contact, read our guide on using Constant Contact for email emails Also, don't forget to use a tool like Freshmarketer to track actions on the site that are performed as a result of your email marketing campaigns. Blog Actions k∓ Tracking As with Social Media and Email, a marketing plan that focuses on blogs will need to set goals, actions and tracking methods. Set your goals and actions, and then set up tools like Google Analytics and Freshmarketer, which can show how visitors interact with your content and whether they're doing a final conversion action as a result. Here are some common steps and metrics to track around your blog posts: Social shares: By understanding where and how often people share your posts, you can get a better feel for the types of posts that help build brand awareness, then create more of them. This information is publicly available through Google Analytics. Traffic sources: Once you know where your blog traffic is coming from, you can run campaigns to promote your content on those channels to drive more traffic to your blog. Because many blog posts help you launch people from the brand awareness step to the stage of interest and evaluation, this metric —also available on Google Analytics—is great for tracking customer engagement in these stages. Top viewed posts: This metric helps you understand the content that drives the most traffic to your site. By posting which of your posts are most popular, you can create more like it to increase website traffic and ultimately sales. New customers: Ultimately, companies conduct marketing campaigns to increase sales. A funnel analysis tool like Freshmarketer can help you determine popular posts people read before they buy a product on your site. By knowing this, you can promote that content more and create more like it to increase sales. While you can set up funnel analysis using Google, non-tech savvy small businesses will find it easier to set up and understand the results using a paid funnel analysis tool like Freshmarketer. Marketing Plan Tools Digital Marketing requires various tools to research, distribute and track the performance of your marketing campaigns. Consider acquiring or signing up for the tools and services most commonly needed to implement a digital marketing plan, including website hosting and email hosting plans, search engine optimization tools, website tracking and analytics software, and email marketing automation programs. Technology Choices Marketing Plan Template section Here are the main marketing plan tools to help you get started: Bluehost: For \$2.95/month, Bluehost offers 50GB of storage space to store your website files, as well as a free domain name, one-click WordPress installations, and a free SSL certificate to ensure your site can securely process customer data. Constant contact: Constant Contact email marketing software that allows you to create website contact forms, collect customer contact information, promote them through drop campaigns, and track your campaign performance. Its small business plans start at \$20/month. Seo Seo This is a free search engine optimization tool that allows you to analyze important web page SEO statistics so that you can increase your website rankings in search engines. Metrics you can research and track include internal and external linking, Google's search engine search engine search page (SERP) rankings, domain comparisons (for competitor analysis), keyword difficulties, and social media engagement. Freshmarketer: Freshmarketer is a conversion rate optimization (CRO) tool you can use to understand how website visitors interact with your content and what leads them to convert. Tools offered include A/B testing, heatmaps, visiting session recordings, funnel analysis capabilities, website visitor polls, and form analysis. Plans with limited features are free but more robust plans that include all these tools are \$99/month. Google Analytics: A leading analytics tool used by both individuals and businesses, Google Analytics easily plugs into your website and allows you to gather information about users and their browsing behavior while you are on your website. Google Analytics is free for all users, but you need a Google Account to use the platform. 3 Pro Tips to Make the Most of Your Marketing Plan Marketing Plans offer a clear path to achieving business as a goal. To succeed, a marketing plan should start with a clear profile in your target markets with distribution channels and content that meets their needs. We reached out to marketing professionals to collect tips to help you do just that. Here are three tips from the pros to create a successful marketing plan: One of the pitfalls I see so many small businesses succumb to is the routine of just adding new content to the same old marketing plan they've been using over the past decade. They can change a number here or a campaign idea there. However, the channels and tactics remain unchanged. The most successful companies challenge themselves every year to try new tactics, explore new channels and push the boundaries with their marketing efforts. When you create a marketing plan, the most important thing is to understand that all media components work together. To get the most out of your marketing dollars, you need to have a defined audience so you can find the right media channels for your message to appear. An effective marketing plan always includes an SEO plan alongside it because SEO overlaps many important areas of marketing. SEO can help increase the quality of an online presence, improve performance and growth tactics, address speed and mobile optimization, and be part of a technical audit. If the SEO plan and marketing plan are not aligned, their true potential cannot be reached. Bottom Line – Free Marketing Plan Mail A small business marketing plan documents a company's overall marketing goals and the strategies they plan to implement to achieve them. Components of this plan include the results of an S.W.O.T.–analysis, S.M.A.R.T. target, customer persona profiles, a UVP and distribution channels. In view of the and the complexity of the document, many small business owners use templates to guide them in putting together these goals. Unfortunately, the planning and implementation of a marketing plan can be too time-consuming for small businesses with limited staff and budgets. Hibü helps to break these time and labor restrictions; for a start-up fee of as little as \$400 and a \$100/month maintenance fee, it offers a full staff of small business marketing experts who create and implement marketing plans around their customers' goals. Click here to get started with Hibü. Visit Hibü Hibü

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