

2017 Marketing Planning Guide



Directional help for you to prepare for marketing next year

Starter Questions

- ☞ 1. What are you doing to grow your business this year?
- ☞ 2. What worked best so far? What fell short?
- ☞ 3. What did you do differently compared to last year? How did it work out?
- ☞ 4. Is the economy affecting your business? How will you benefit from what you learned?
- ☞ 5. Any changes in customer demands this year? How did that affect your thinking? Is your business positioned to meet these demands? Has your marketing environment changed?
- ☞ 6. Are you learning from your competitors?

Marketing Homework

- ☞ 1. Do you have a Mission Statement? (Google “Mission Statement” to learn more). As you plan marketing activities, it makes sense to ask “Is this true to my mission?” before you invest funds in an idea.
- ☞ 2. Do a S.W.O.T. Analysis- Look internally at your Strengths and Weaknesses; then take a look outside and identify Opportunities and Threats that may affect how you do business. Actually, do the “O””T” first.
- ☞ 3. Create a basic promotional calendar. Work at least 3 months ahead. It gets you organized, minimizes knee-jerk decisions, and protects against impromptu decisions that don’t fit the plan.

Know your Prime Prospect

- ☞ 1. Divide your customer base into segments. Can you identify the group that represents the most growth potential for your business. Example: 20% of beer drinkers drink 80% of the beer. Now that's a segment to drill down on if you're a brewer!
- ☞ 2. Cultivate the "heavy user". Employ direct marketing to keep the dialogue flowing between you and your most valuable customers. Build your Brand and Mission with this key target at the forefront of your thinking..
- ☞ 3. Be sensitive to Lifetime Customer Value. A \$400 annual customer who returns for 10 years becomes a \$4000 piece of business. Think of ways to continually grow the relationship.

Know your Prime Prospect's Problem

- ☞ 1. How much do you REALLY know about the needs of the people you do (or would like to do) business with?
- ☞ 2. Always ask how satisfied the customers are with you...and follow up and find out what else you can do for them. Make Needs Discovery a way of life.
- ☞ 3. When we get down to basics, we are ALL in the Customer Service business. Unless you solve someone's problem you can't succeed. Drill down on a value proposition.
- ☞ 4. If you need to learn more about your customer's needs, admit it and do something about it. A Focus Group Panel, for instance, can uncover new customer insights.

Know Your Product

- ☞ 1. Assuming you've done your due diligence and have a better understanding of customer needsnow build a bridge
- ☞ 2. Ask yourself ...What is it about what I do that can be articulated to a customer or prospect that says to them “Hey ...I understand your problem and I have the solution for you ...and here it is!” Learn from your key partners and resources. They provide an outsider's perspective.
- ☞ 3. Get feedback. The most important opinion comes from your customer. Keeping two-way communication going is vital to the life of your business. Facebook anyone?

Make Your Message Resonate

- ∞ 1. Think of the hundreds of marketing messages you're exposed to every day...sunrise to sunset and beyond. How do you make your ad, commercial, tweet, website, etc. stand out and be remembered?
- ∞ 2. To be most effective, your actual messages require collaboration between you and the professional marketing person or team you are working with. The planning process must *always* take a consumer-centric approach.
- ∞ 3. Consumer-centric means it does the most effective job it can to communicate how your product or service solves a problem for the reader or viewer *from his or her perspective*.
- ∞ 4. Your message goal also helps you decide how and where to place it. Print? Broadcast? Social Media? Always try to build an incentive into the message. Demonstrate community involvement? PR release? Also be "touch point" sensitive. Everything that touches the public must integrate with your plan.

You are not alone

- ☞ 1. Sometimes collaboration with a marketing professional helps you focus on an effective consumer-centric approach to planning. Including objective mentoring is a good thing.
- ☞ 2. (This is the blatant commercial) . Start with a no obligation sit down discussion with Jack Cantwell, SkyLimit Marketing, You will learn from someone with many years of professional success; and who teaches 3-Credit Marketing and Sales courses for Elizabethtown College for over 14 years. I love mentoring!
- ☞ 3. Start the process with email (jack@skylimitmarketing.com) or phone 717-269-0288..
- ☞ Happy Planning!