

## Marketing plans made easy

Dean Parker

“Without a plan, you haven’t got a hope.” This message, included in a “bushfire safety” TV & radio commercial, also applies to your business. A marketing plan becomes your simple, easy to use guide that helps you attract new customers and retain the ones you’ve got. Without it... well, you know the answer.

A lengthy marketing plan of 30 or so pages is best left to big organisations. These guys have a team of marketers who can justify spending days or weeks putting it together and even longer presenting and analysing it to their managers. If you really want to use your marketing plan, don’t make it too long. For most small to medium sized organisations, 3-4 pages will be sufficient.

Now you’re ready to start. This is the hardest stage. Each marketing plan is as different as each organisation. To make it easier for you to put a workable marketing plan together, read on.

Begin with a mission statement. This is a brief [read one to two line] introduction to your organisation. A mission statement defines what your core business is, your competitive scope and who your customers are. This statement gives everyone focus and clear direction. It is also beneficial to third parties who may use your plan [ie: PR agency or finance personnel].

You’ll need to look at your external [macro] and internal and the [micro] business environment you operate within. This is sometimes known as a SWOT analysis. This analysis will help set your marketing objectives.

Macro environment covers issues you have no control over. This may include political situation, laws affecting your business, technology changes, your competition, etc. These are listed as opportunities or threats. When describing each issue, include the scenario, eg: “increased tax rates” and its impact on your business, eg: “reduced sales”. List four to five opportunities and threats. To review your internal [micro] environment, list your organisations key strengths & weaknesses. Market share, customer satisfaction, product, staff, etc are all examples of strengths or weaknesses.

What do you want to achieve? Set out your sales and marketing goals by creating marketing objectives. Your objectives can be drawn from your macro & micro analysis should include subjects such, market share, profit, sales goals and other relevant terms. Be realistic with the number of objectives set. Too many objectives means most will be un-reachable, rendering most of your plan useless.

Don’t set vague objectives like “increase productivity” or “add 50 new customers” as these objectives will not be achieved. Draft your objectives using the S.M.A.R.T principle. S.M.A.R.T objectives are easier to measure, clear in direction which means all staff clearly understand the goals you’ve set.

S.M.A.R.T objectives are created with these attributes:

- **Specific** - include precise details of what you want to achieve.
- **Measurable** – you should be able to measure whether you are meeting the objective or not.
- **Achievable** – can you really achieve it? Are you attempting too much?
- **Realistic** - do you have the resource to make the objective happen [workers, cashflow, materials, equipment]?
- **Timed** - state a specific time you wish to achieve the objective.



To achieve objectives you need strategies. Strategies form your “to do list”. This is the section of your marketing plan that you will refer to most. For each strategy, add a timeframe, name[s] of persons responsible and include a budget.

The objective might be “add 2 new products to brand X by 1 September 2011” The strategy would be “complete customer research to assess most popular flavours” person responsible John Smith, Budget \$1,000. Research completed by March 2011.

Work on your marketing plan does not finish here. Regularly review your objectives and strategies. Don’t be afraid to make necessary adjustments to plans as you go. Include progress reports in your manager’s and sales meetings. Communicate progress [or changes] to staff via a column in your newsletter. These updates will emphasise your commitment to achieving objectives.

For your first marketing plan, the help of an outside professional may reap greater rewards. A marketing consultant can guide you, even complete your first plan with you. This will save you time and money. The result will be a more effective marketing plan that will keep everyone focused and deliver results.

\* ENDS \*

Dean Parker combines 15 years of marketing experience with a Masters of Marketing degree to help small/medium business owners maximise their profit.

Four P’s Marketing Solutions assists small business with all marketing activities including planning, corporate branding, website content, trade shows, advertising and various promotional strategies.

For further information, contact:

Dean Parker MMtg

Phone: 0487 444 041

Email: [dean@fourps.com.au](mailto:dean@fourps.com.au)  
[www.fourps.com.au](http://www.fourps.com.au)