

Writing a Simple Marketing Plan

Step 1 – Understand Your Audience and Competition

A common mistake is to latch on to an idea without first understanding your prospective audience and what they want. If you try to sell something that people don't want, they won't buy it.

Ask yourself questions like:

- Are there interests that are not being served?
- Is there competition in this area?
- What can we offer that our competition doesn't?
- What makes my event different or more exciting than others?

Step 2 – Understand Your Audience

Knowing your audience is very important. Until you know who your audience is, what they want and what motivates them to buy you won't have an effective marketing plan. List demographics: age, gender, lifestyle, location, preferences, interests, etc.

Ask yourself questions such as:

- How does my potential audience normally buy similar services?
- Who is the primary buyer or the primary buying influence of this service?
- My audience has what kind of habits? Where do they get their information? (i.e. television, newspapers, magazines...) What do they read, listen to, watch?
- What is my audience's primary motivation for buying this service?

Step 3 – Pick a Niche

Don't try to include everyone in your market. You will never be able to offer a service which appeals to everyone. Carve out a specific niche and dominate it. Specializing in one area will allow you to relate more closely to a specific target group.

Step 4 – Develop Your Marketing Message

Your marketing message will tell your prospects what you do and persuade them to become your customer. Your marketing message should be compelling and persuasive. Focus on the benefits. Concentrate on what's in it for them. It should include the following:

- A suggestion that you understand your their want/need.
- A reason that the problem should be solved.
- An explanation about why you are the only one that can satisfy your their want/need.
- An explanation of the benefits people will receive from your event.
- Examples or testimonials from past participants.
- An explanation of prices, fees, payment terms.
- Your unconditional guarantee.

Step 5 – Determine Your Marketing Medium(s)

Your marketing medium is the communication vehicle you use to deliver your marketing message. It's important to choose a marketing medium that gives you the highest return on your investment (ROI). This means that you want to choose the medium that delivers your message to the most niche prospects at the lowest possible cost. It's also important to match your message using the right medium.

The following are examples of tools you may use to get your message out:

Newspaper ads	Telemarketing
Posters	Magazine ads
Local circulars	Special events
Television ads	Flyers
Signs	E-mail
Window display	Postcards
Radio ads	Doorhangers
Banners	Brochures
Trade shows	Word-of-mouth
Articles	Website
Classified ads	Business cards
Newsletters	Public speaking
Networking	

Decide which marketing strategies you will use. Brainstorm the best tactics for each of the strategies you've selected. Assign time and dollar resources for each strategy you've chosen.

Step 6 – Develop Budget and Timeline

Include a preliminary budget and a timeline of your action plan with deadlines.