

1.Overview. Marianne (42) has worked for more than 20 years in Marketing, in the last 8 years as Digital Marketing Expert for a Communication Agency. She was made redundant after her former employer merged with a global group but she received a good severance package and, more importantly, she kept good relations with her former boss and colleagues. She considers starting Interaktiv Digital in an Agile way.

She wants to be her own boss to have more freedom, higher income, and develop her skills in business and management. Initially, she considers some business involving her hobbies but she is not done with Marketing yet, and she knows that she would never make as much in an area she doesn't know so well. She decides to venture into Digital Marketing to profit from her professional network and experience.

She has a good professional reputation and she is confident that she can spot opportunities in the market because she was trusted by her clients. She hires you to manage the project to develop a startup so she can concentrate on the business.

2.Market Opportunities. Marianne could look for an executive position or venture on her own. She sees opportunities to offer some new Digital Marketing services to the market. An entrepreneur is above all a solution provider with a keen eye for problems that people would pay to get solved.

Her digital Marketing expertise includes experience in different areas (see appendix). She has no previous experience as an employer or investor. She managed teams in the departments she headed but never closed the full business cycle from product development, sales to delivery and payment collection.

She is anxious to tackle these challenges but she is confident. She has always been considered a good leader. She is unsure about her risk management capacity, as an independent consultant or an entrepreneur she knows that she will need to learn to live on a variable income and be resilient to sudden changes in the business environment.

3.Presentation meeting. Marianne wants to offer new services and products to the market but she has little management experience. She has high confidence in her skills and vision as an expert but knows she has to develop business skills to run a company. As an experienced product owner you suggest she develops her company step by step.

4.Project Strategy. This project will be run in phases, conditioning evolution to the next phase only after getting positive results in the current phase.

Phase 1 is a Proof of Concept (POC) to check that the services she intends to offer, first as an independent expert / consultant and later as a firm, find demand in the target market(s). Phase 1 is a "one-WOMan-show": she must sell, produce and deliver Marketing services.

This Phase is entirely self-financed because it is an opportunity to identify her gaps and look for support and education on themes such as risk management and business development. The level of risk is too high to involve investors at this time, she needs to show that it is feasible.

Phase 2 is for team building. Now that Marianne knows the services that she can provide, she can hire people to help her do it and start structuring a company around a solid customer base. She will be dedicated to hiring a team and developing it to produce and deliver top quality. She will keep selling to new clients while coordinating the teams to serve current clients. Funding for Phase 2 will be based on personal loans and/or equity.

Phase 3 is growth oriented. She will be dedicated to innovation and expansion. She will hire a team to develop tools to provide new services online while keeping a steady income to keep the business profitable and credible. She will be mostly coordinating and establishing partnerships. Phase 3 will be funded by investors (equity) and bank loans (credit) using client contracts as collateral. She wants to have both feet on firm ground when venturing in uncharted territory.

5.The Kick-off Meeting. Marianne meets with some key stakeholders: her husband, Marc, her friend Julia and her previous boss, Wagner. She presents the project and the strategy to start small, prove the concept and start hiring sustainably as cash flow is generated. She may need funding at some moment in time to pay wages and invest in some equipment but she is more concerned to make all the moving parts work together. She needs management experience and would like to create a sounding board to exchange ideas. Marc demands that she sets a deadline of six months and does not invest more than 50K of family savings.

6.One on one interviews with Stakeholders. Marc (46), her spouse for 18 years, is a life-long supporter. He doesn't want her to waste time on projects with a low chance of success so he needs to see that the project will be successful to be fully committed. He offers to sponsor the project but he insists on having predefined milestones (deadlines) to evaluate results before moving to new project phases or looking for a job as an executive.

Julia (32) is a long time friend that is willing to help in any way. She is a great Designer and can help develop the visual identity and the website. She is willing to work for free but Marianne believes she must get paid to separate personal from professional matters. As a friend, she accepts to get paid later or she may accept a stake (equity) in the new venture.

Donald (28) is a web developer that has provided Marianne and Julia numerous services in the past. He believes in new ideas and loves participating in small companies but he is in night school and needs to get paid regularly.

Tanja (37) is a publicist, she knows how to get free exposure in the media by turning a boring company press release into an interesting article that any serious newspaper could publish. She has a strong background in both Journalism and Publicity that makes her proficient in copywriting, preparing most of the textual content for her client's websites. As a great expert she decided to sell her skills as an independent consultant but she still struggles with the

commercial side of her job so she could be tempted to join the startup as a partner to focus on what she loves most, writing clean, polished and highly efficient text.

Wagner (58) was Marianne's boss in her last job, with whom she always had a good relation so she expects to find opportunities to work together. After having fired Marianne, he has job security concerns. He respects Marianne as a great professional and shows interest in investing in her company, maybe even joining her, if there are good business opportunities. He has an extensive professional network and has funds to invest in a good idea. Marianne likes working with him as they complement each other in key areas (e.g. sales).

Richard (34) is a former client. He is initially uncertain about working with Marianne since her former employer is a global powerhouse, able to provide a wide range of services. He knows that she is competent and thrives to provide full customer satisfaction. He wants to start with some small services that could serve as a testing opportunity.

Gerard (62) is the boss of a Marketing services company where Marianne worked as an intern. He still has a good customer portfolio but he fears competition. For now he sees no reason to join forces with her but he can be convinced to explore partnership opportunities in the near future when she will be better structured, since his tolerance to failure is low.

Marek (45) is the manager of a marketing company. Marianne proposes to exchange services and provide her knowledge but he is afraid that she might become a risk to his job so, at this early moment, he refuses any form of partnership.

7. Retrospective. At the end of phase 1 the team discussed what can be improved, here are the notes.

We don't have a work authorization system and team members complain about having been informed too late. I could have reached out to them 1 or 2 days earlier but I was so busy with other issues that I had underperformed in some tasks. We should consider adopting a tool to track the project progress.

Low PO support during client interaction: the team feels I could have been more supportive in situations involving the client. I need to be more available and support communication with the client in such situations.

Work overload. The client was supposed to generate part of the work and produce some communication material but she was overstretched in so many areas that she neglected some duties. The client should delegate more and get a personal assistant asap.

Expectations were too high. The sponsor expected too many results too soon. The minimum project duration should be defined after all the scope is analyzed in detail.

Double reporting. Client gave some specific directions that contradicted the project plans. PO should be the single point of contact for any client's news requests and inform the client about that.

Appendix. Digital Marketing Areas

Adapted from <https://www.rasmussen.edu/degrees/business/blog/types-of-marketing-specializations/>

Market Research is based on gathering information through surveys, focus groups, qualitative interviews and even social media monitoring. A key component of market research is actually interpreting the data. A/B tests are commonly used tools to test different website layouts and text. Research can answer questions such as “how do you know if a product, service or message will stand out to a particular audience?”

Content Marketing is all about creating content—basically any consumable piece of information—that serves a purpose beyond just promoting a product. Think of it as advertising by offering something that is actually useful to the consumer. Content marketing can build positive sentiment for a brand by attaching the brand to something genuinely helpful or entertaining. When done successfully, consumers won’t even realize they are being marketed to—or they’ll at least tolerate it more than a pop-up ad or commercial.

Video Marketing is related to content in video form. Many aspects of video marketing are similar to content marketing—defining goals, choosing platforms and target audiences and building a strategy. But video involves its own specific area of awareness and skills necessitating marketers who understand the strategy inside and out.

Search Engine Marketing (SEM) is paid search advertising activities to serve advertisements to people using search engines (Google or Bing). Search engine marketers bid to buy ad space on popular keyword terms related to the businesses they represent—for example, an appliance wholesaler buying ad space for the phrase “microwaves for sale.”

Database Marketing involves the creation of personalized, automated messaging for consumers. By collecting information about consumer preferences, database marketers are able to send targeted messages to consumers at each step of the buying process. Their messages can essentially “follow” their audience throughout their normal online activity.

Social Media Marketing purpose is generally to drive traffic to a company’s website while boosting overall brand awareness and customer loyalty. Social media gives brands and businesses the opportunity to interact with the public in a personalized way.

Influencer Marketing relies on the consumer presence invested in various social media platforms, but instead of establishing a company account, marketers work with influencers to get the word out about their brand. This strategy can be exceptionally powerful because it relies on social proof and taps into the trust followers already have for the people they follow.