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SECRETS TO WRITING OUTRAGEOUSLY POWERFUL MARKETING PLANS

Discover why businesses around the world fail to get the most out of their marketing plan and how you can write one to power your businesses to greater heights.

Written by Mike Halligan
Managing Director of Engage Marketing

Twitter: @MikeFromEngage





This free eBook is provided by Engage Marketing, Melbourne's small business marketing specialists.

We're experts in how to get the most out of small business. We help you, the small business owner, afford that new boat that you started your business for in the first place!

We make a big difference to your life through developing marketing plans from start to finish, or simply working on elements of your marketing.

www.engagemarketing.com.au



Plan Lab, guides small business owners through the process of creating their own marketing plan while learning valuable marketing skills. The cloud-based tool provides advice at each stage of writing your marketing plan, allowing you to create a plan that is quicker, cheaper and more educational than using a marketing consultant.

Visit the Plan Lab website to see why it's a smarter way to build a marketing plan.

www.getplanlab.com

Figure out whether you need a short, medium or long marketing plan

Marketing Plans don't have to be any particular length to be effective. We've worked with very successful businesses that started with a single A4 page of things that matter to their business and we've worked with and developed marketing plans that push 50 pages.

The level of detail required for your plan to be useful is determined by your level of confidence and understanding in marketing, as well as the complexity of your environment.

A travel agent starting in a seaside town with a population of 15,000 retirees and little competition, might only need a short 2-3 page marketing plan to confirm what their business stands for and how they are going to generate exposure.

If the same business were to launch in an inner-city suburb of 40,000 residents and compete against two established brands, a much longer and more detailed plan would be necessary.

Short	Medium	Long
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You need a marketing plan for focus• You have a strong marketing strategy• You have identified the need to stick to a few key principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You need a marketing plan to improve your understanding and work out what to do• Your plan is only for your usage• You have low-medium growth aspiration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You have a disruptive idea or something that challenges existing preconceptions• You're in a crowded marketplace• To be viewed by other marketing staff, banks or investors• Your business has high growth potential

Be realistic

Marketing plans tend to fall down after some time when business owners realise that the figures and expectations that they put together have failed to materialise and their marketing costs just aren't sustainable.

That's not to say aim low. Do what you truly believe you're capable of and remember that it's always the time-consuming marketing activities that don't get off the ground.

It is important to be realistic about your ability to carry out necessary tasks without expert help, the cost of each task and the return that you expect to generate.

Businesses with a greater understanding of both their market and their customer are best placed to predict costs, return and growth.

Focus on your Unique Value Proposition before your promotion

The number one cause of small business marketing failure is the lack of a strong Unique Value Proposition (commonly referred to as a UVP or USP).

Every single business needs a UVP. A UVP gives your marketing communication greater cut through and can make your brand more memorable and enticing. Quite simply, it gives people a reason to remember you.

Look at your business and ask yourself why the market needs to choose you. What is unique about you? What makes you valuable and remarkable?

Without a clear and obvious unique trait to be known for, good products and services can easily go unseen and unheard.

If you've fallen short of your goals, don't just do what you've always done

When writing our marketing plans, most of us experience an element of what marketing legend Seth Godin refers to as the 'the Lizard Brain'. We revert back to what everyone else is doing or what we've always done. It's safe, so why not?

How many successful small businesses are built on safe, traditional marketing? Sure, some older businesses are, but they do so having dominating with progressive marketing back when they were formulating their marketing strategy. Today, we see many of these once giants of business fade away to obscurity on the back of doing what they've always done.

Learn from what has and hasn't worked for you in the past. If you don't know what's working and what isn't, subscribe to Google Analytics. Call some of your regular customers. Train your register operators to ask customers how they heard about you.

Focus on **return on investment**, not on a set budget

A marketing budget is traditionally an important part of a marketing plan. It helps to identify and explain how much money you intend on dedicating to your marketing promotion and where that money will be spent.

The problem with developing a marketing mix centred on a set budget is that you go into it thinking about *spending* money, rather than *making* money.

By taking an ROI approach, you're in a mindset to see what promotional opportunities you have available, and can then determine which are appropriate and offer the highest return.

By instead evaluating the return on investment of individual tactics, you can determine what are likely to be most effective and deliver the best bang for your buck.

As small businesses, our marketing expenditure rarely comes to us easily so it's important to make it count.

Write your plan for **what will be**, not just what is now

Many businesses fall into the trap of marketing only for how consumers use and purchase at the present time, failing to plan ahead and recognise how they are likely to act and behave in the future.

By recognising consumer trends - whether they be use of technology, change in attitude, social standing or purchasing power - you can sell a product or communicate with the market in a way that really stands out, driving customers to your brand while your competitors sit still.

Make a habit of regularly listening to what industry leaders predict, listen to customers and form your own opinions. Hundreds of clever businesses have done this in recent years, shaping businesses in traditional industries around the emerging use of mobile technology.

The world is changing more frequently than ever. Keep an ear to the ground and plan ahead.

Don't make it all about YOU! Your customer and market are more important for planning

It always hurts to hear, but your market doesn't care about you. They'll only start caring about you when you mean something to them.

Solve a problem, introduce a way to make life easier for someone or just be a more enjoyable brand to work with than your competitors. Before looking too closely at what you want your business to be, work through your customer and market analysis to determine what the people who you want to buy from you want or need you to be.

Once you're entirely clear that the products, values and tactics that your brand will bring to the table will be received well by those who really matter, you can confidently work out how these same people will hear about you.

Focus on **benefits**, not features

“Don’t tell me how it came to be. Show me what it means to me!” When writing marketing material, the biggest mistake you can make is to talk too much about your features and not enough about the benefits that these features actually deliver.

Marketing features rather than benefits fails to provide the information that your audience really needs to make a confident purchase.

We could sell a product like Plan Lab in one of two ways:

1. FEATURE-DRIVEN - “Plan Lab is online marketing plan software full of expert marketing advice for every stage of your marketing plan development.”
2. BENEFIT-DRIVEN - “Plan Lab guides you through writing a marketing plan, offering step-by-step advice from Australia’s leading small business marketing agency to teach you marketing as you develop a plan to power your sales and marketing.”

The benefit-driven copy is much more powerful and emotionally captivating, explaining what it will do for me and why I need it.

Have a plan for how your marketing will **evolve** as your business and market evolves

You change. Your customers change and your market changes. Using the same marketing plan over time can be hazardous if you fail to update it or fail to plan ahead as your position with the market evolves.

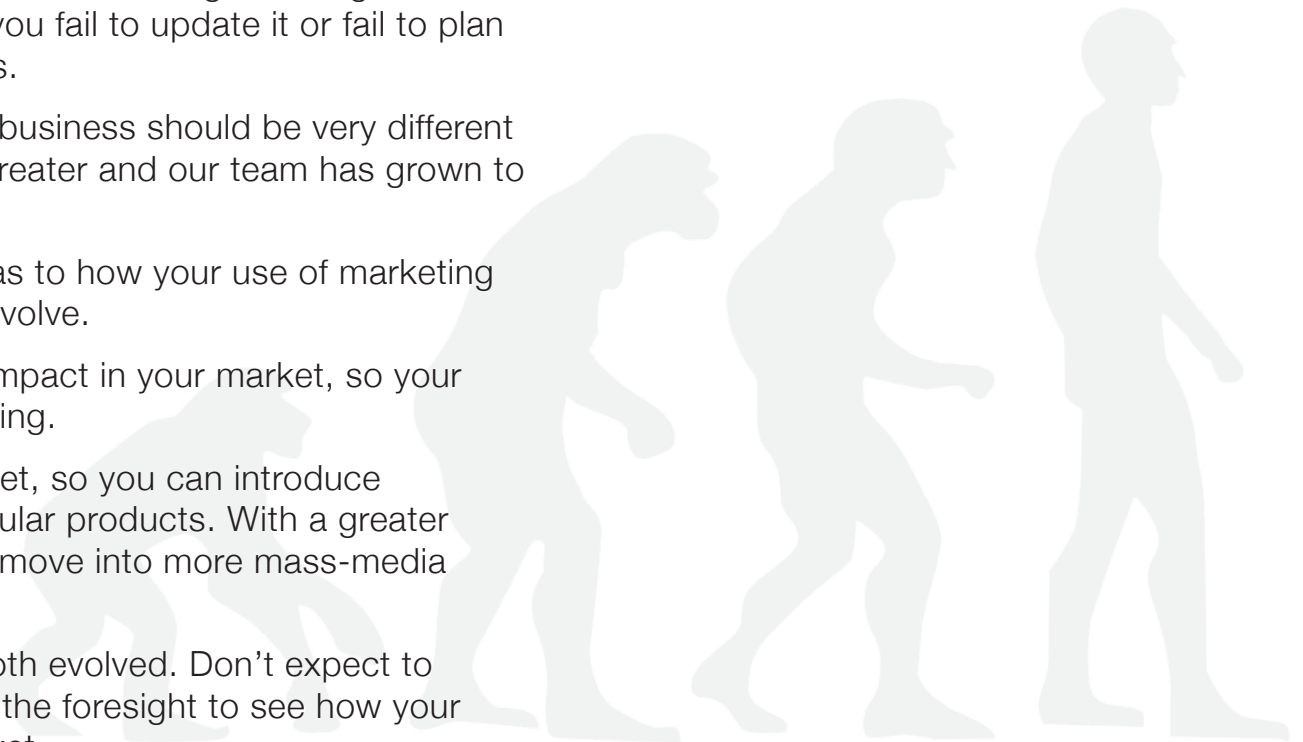
For most of us, how we market as a two-man business should be very different than three years on when our profits are 10x greater and our team has grown to six full time employees.

Most marketing plans fail to provide foresight as to how your use of marketing budget will change, or how your strategy will evolve.

Let's say that you start out trying to make an impact in your market, so your marketing revolves around your brand positioning.

Years later you're well-known within your market, so you can introduce marketing that is more closely related to particular products. With a greater budget and a larger market to target, you can move into more mass-media marketing.

Here, your marketing strategy and mix have both evolved. Don't expect to predict everything exactly to the dot, but have the foresight to see how your marketing should adapt to your changing market.



Plan to implement a proactive and reactive marketing culture

Planning is vital to successful marketing and can keep you on track in routinely carrying out tasks that are crucial to maximising brand awareness. However if there is an over-reliance on a set plan and a lack of a reactive marketing culture, you could miss out on a lot of fantastic real-time marketing opportunities.

A real-time marketing mindset is one that uses speed and agility to recognise news and current social topics that the brand can utilize to be fresh and relevant.

You can't plan real-time marketing events but you can add a focus on reacting to your environment and deliberately ignoring traditional over-analysis for fast movement to your marketing strategy.

Plan a structure for your marketing, but react to opportunity and use your advantage of being small to act far more swiftly than your larger competitors can dream of.