

MARKETING FOR JOB SHOPS: WRITING THE MARKETING PLAN

SUMMARY

This BMA discusses how to organize your research, plans and strategies into a "Marketing Plan" that can be used as a day-to-day guide for growing your business. It will become a living document that may be used to direct and monitor our efforts.

No marketing plan is ever a "final" document; markets themselves change too much and too quickly for that. Just look around you and observe what has been happening lately in some traditional markets.

Food marketers traditionally advertised to women, but now 40% of grocery shoppers are male. They don't make shopping lists, don't shop for specials, don't consider the trip to the store to be very important, and spend more per shopping trip than women.

To get an attorney, you used to need a reference. Now, lawyers are advertising their services on TV. Doctors are going the advertising route, too. Computers were once only used by banks and scientists.

Now that's changed. Orthopedic surgeons are buying CAD-CAM systems to plan surgical procedures. Cartoonists are using computer graphics terminals to draw. This BMA was written on a computerized word processor.

You have probably encountered many such changes in the markets that are most familiar to you. If your marketing plan is to fit your market, it must be adaptable. In addition, it must be written down if you are going to use it as a working document. Here are some ideas on what a marketing plan should include and how you might use it. Other ideas and different approaches might be found in books or course texts on marketing available at your local library or college bookstore.

SUMMARIZE THE PRESENT

In two or three paragraphs, describe where you are right now. Include such things as volume, profits, facilities, equipment, people, market approach, growth rate, and financial condition to describe your present situation. The fine details are not important here. But absolute honesty in your evaluations is of prime importance. If you find that this takes more than a half page, make it shorter and concentrate on things that are important to your marketing effort.

DETAIL THE FUTURE

Next, write a statement about what you most want to achieve this year and next year - what changes you want to accomplish. The achievements you desire, and the changes that you want to make are the reasons for what follows, so make them accurate statements about your present feelings. Quantify each statement.

Now write detailed statements, even elaborate ones, about each of your goals. Specify the goal, the timetable to be used, and the things that must be done to achieve it. Use real names

of those people who will perform specific tasks. Identify specific markets, cities, companies, and people. Specify in detail how each goal will be reached, and how and when progress toward each goal will be monitored. The strategy statements in your marketing file will serve as a basis for these goals.

Specify the names of publications that will be used for advertising, how big your ads will be, and how often they will run. Specify how many trips will be made to each target city. Include enough detail so that you can actually work from this document, not just refer to it once in a while.

Now prepare a summary marketing budget showing what must be spent to get the job done. The budget should be comparable to your accounting department expense reports, so you can monitor each line item in the budget easily each month and track your plan against year-to-date expenditures. If the accounting report sorts "creative costs" from "advertising space costs" then your budget should too. Wages should be separate from travel expenses; and photography costs separate from reprints of brochures or mailing expenses.

FIRST-SELL YOUR OWN PEOPLE

That completes your marketing plan. Run copies for all your key people, and put them in loose-leaf binders for them. But a major task still remains. You have involved many of your staff in developing information used in your preparation and in writing strategies. Now, with everything nicely summarized, you must go back to them and get them to “buy-in” to accomplishing the things outlined in the marketing plan.

If this is the first marketing plan you’ve prepared, the chances are that they will hesitate to commit themselves unless you do a good selling job. Plan your attack and get their commitment or the plan will surely fail, and your efforts will be wasted. Remember that it is easier to secure cooperation from people when they know exactly what they are required to do, and when they understand how to do it.

A recent article in the New Yorker magazine about Schlumberger, the giant French oil equipment company, pointed out that many companies fall in their efforts to market properly because they “forget how to learn and they quit tolerating mistakes.” Companies forget what made them successful to begin with, which frequently was action, experiments, and repeated tries. In convincing your people to work with this marketing plan, don’t forget to emphasize your willingness to make changes, to permit mistakes and to experiment. This will allow them to invest much of themselves in the plan and will help it succeed.

T.J. Peters and R.H. Waterman Jr., in their best-selling business book “In Search of Excellence:” stress the fact that

successful companies motivate people by making sure that goals are not only achievable, but that everyone knows when someone has achieved their goal. People need to be recognized when they succeed, and they like to be part of a winning team. Make sure you give credit whenever you have an excuse to do so. Catch people doing something right, and recognize it.

STICK WITH IT!

A marketing plan that is based on good information, well thought out, and properly arranged with detailed action plans and assignments, will work for you. Remain flexible about goals as they may have to change to conform to changing market conditions. But don’t give up on the overall plan itself - don’t abandon the plan just because you run into snags and blunders. Monitor it, adapt it, modify it, but above all, stick with it.

As your plan starts to show results, the temptation will be to take a successful part of it, emphasize that, and forget the rest. Be sure your monitoring system does not encourage that. You will find yourself being led down pathways that occupy a lot of time and effort, and divert you from the task.

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