The Marketing Plan

What is a Marketing Plan?

It is the plan that is devoted to getting your product or service to your customer or “target market.”

It is the 3 “R” process: 1) Research, 2) Reach & 3) Retain

In this plan you must take the time to identify your customers and find the means to make your product or service attractive and available to them.

1. Target Market

   *Who are my customers?*
   
   economic level
   sex
   age

   *What are my customers needs?*
   
   lifestyle
   buying habits
   location

   *How do I meet those needs?*

2. Competition

   *Identify and evaluate competition.*
   
   Who
   Location
   Products and services
   Methods of distribution
   Image

   Pricing
   Business history and current performance
   Market share
   Strengths
   Weakness

3. Methods of Distribution

   Is the manner in which products are physically transported to the consumer and the way services are made available to the customer.

   *Ask the following questions:*

   **If a product:**
   
   Do your customers purchase by direct mail? Do you provide in-shop service?
   Do they buy through a catalog? in-store?
   Do you sell through a rep?
   Are you shipping the product?

   **If a service:**
   
   Do you provide in-shop service?
   Do you do house calls?
   What is your response time to your customer?

   List the pros and cons of each distribution method.

   Identify cost and who absorbs it.

4. Promotion

   *Means to get the message to your customer.*

   Paid advertising
   Publicity
   Community involvement

   Directory listing
   Direct Mail
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5. **Pricing**
   Price between the price ceiling and floor.
   - What is your competition charging?
   - What is the nature of the demand?
   - What is the image you are projecting?
   - What are the costs?
     - Manufacturing
     - Variable expenses
     - Office overhead
     - Interest expenses
     - Tax expenses
     - Profit

6. **Product Design**
   Consider the taste of your target market. Consider quality, safety and technical standards.
   - Size
   - Shape
   - Color
   - Material
   - Wording
   Trademark and copyright or patent considerations.

7. **Timing of Market Entry**
   Timing of your entry into the market is critical and takes careful planning
   - Have products and services available at the right time.
   - Check trade journals and associations to determine timing patterns of your industry.
   - Example: If your main venue is the Yellow Pages and it comes out in November, time it accordingly.

8. **Location**
   Your choice of location is related to your target market.
   - Is it located to attract the target market or customers?
   - List reasons for your choice of location.
   - What is the character of the neighborhood?
   - Does the site project your business image?
   - Where is your competition located?
   - What services does the landlord provide?
   - What is the occupation history of the site selected?
   - Is it related to the location?
   - Is there a strong economy to support your business by your location?

9. **Industry Trends**
   Be alert to industry trends. A wise business owner will follow industry trends, analyze the economy, project the “best and worst case scenarios.”
   - Read trade and professional association journals and industry reports for your field.
   - Project how your industry will change.
   - What new products and services are being developed?
   - Be aware of economic and financial forecasts.