

Developing a Marketing Plan

One of the most important sections of your business plan is the marketing plan. A marketing plan ensures that you have identified your customers, your target market, and that you have developed effective strategies and tactics to reach those customers. [NH SBDC advisors](#) are on hand to help you develop your marketing plan. You can find many online resources as well.

[Inc. Magazine](#) has distilled the process of writing a marketing plan down into easy steps, outlined below. For more details, click through to “[How to Write a Marketing Plan.](#)”

The Small Business Administration provides another short list of the steps to take in developing an effective Marketing Plan. Review [these resources](#) and then build a plan that works for you.

Before undertaking the following steps, however, make sure you give yourself a deadline for completing a plan, determine who has responsibility for completing each part of the plan if others are involved, and decide what your marketing budget will be.

1) Set your objectives

Here you want to describe how your marketing efforts will achieve the goal(s) you have set for your business. This includes describing the attributes of your produce or service, as well as identifying your business’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. As a starting point, you may want to review [this article](#) from the SBA.

2) Conduct research

Conducting marketing research and a market analysis will help you determine how big your market is, who your buyers might be, why they might buy from you, who the competition is, and what changes are coming in this industry. The NH SBDC can help you find resources for conducting research, and there are many free resources online and in public libraries. [This article](#) from Inc.com may also be helpful.

3) Define strategies

Here you must describe how you are going to achieve what you outlined above. You’ll want to answer such questions as: How will you position yourself against any competition? What target markets are your best prospects? How much will you be charging? [This SBA](#) article may offer more tips on defining your strategies.

4) Outline your tactics

You need to explain exactly what you need to do to achieve the results you've outlined above. If one of your strategies is to improve customer service, for example, you should state exactly what you will do in your company to achieve that improvement.

5) Build in ways to measure each tactic

Each of the tactics you describe in Step 4, above, should be measurable. You should be able to identify at least one quantifiable thing that can show you've had success, such as a reduced number of calls to the customer service line, an increase in sales of a certain product or during a certain time period, or an increase in the number of sales calls made. You should strive to measure and keep track of everything that is measurable.

6) Develop the plan and stick to it

Implement the plan you've outlined by assigning people and/or vendors to each task. Along the way, you may want to outline a marketing calendar in which you've assigned deadlines to each task.

7) Implement the plan and stay flexible

Consider what you will do if anything you try, above, is not successful, or if there are major changes in your industry. By thinking ahead, you'll be able to adjust this marketing plan as necessary. Review your marketing calendar and your measurements at regular intervals in case you need to adjust them along the way.

Sample Marketing Plans

Here are completed marketing plans for a fictitious [Mobile Games business](#) and for [a new restaurant](#). You may be able to find many other examples online to fit your specific business.