



Marketing Planning 5 – Implementing The Way Ahead

Outline Steps for Marketing Planning

1. Analyse the changing business environment
2. Identify the options relevant to the organisation's core competences
3. Establish organisation's business strategy and define marketing objectives
4. Set marketing strategies and performance targets
5. Confirm achievable by undertaking market and client research
6. Formulate tactical initiatives and action
7. Seek individuals' commitment to implementing their part of plan
8. Create monitoring controls to evaluate performance

The one-year tactical or operational marketing plan

Having worked through the lengthy process of constructing a strategic three-year marketing plan, the marketer has the consolation that the one-year plan is relatively simple by comparison, given that all the hard work has been done. All the quantitative analyses, portfolio matrices and competitor analysis have been completed. With this solid foundation the one-year marketing plan can be put together in very little time.

1. Overall objectives - these should include financial objectives e.g. sales volume / value targets, gross margins etc. They may also state targeted increase in market share or the goal of becoming market leader in terms of share / sales etc. Some form of brief commentary should accompany the objectives.

Overall strategies - how the objectives will be achieved by targeting which customer segments and with which products / new products, communications etc (the marketing mix).

2. Detailed sub-objectives by segment, customer etc - this may go down as far as setting sales targets by client or new target clients.

Sub-strategies and action tactics - how the sub-objectives will be met - details, timing and responsibility for achievement. This should include indications of new initiatives: client seminars, hospitality, PR, newsletter or direct mail campaigns and other promotions as well as any other tools that may be employed in order to deliver the sub-objectives set.

3. Summary of marketing activities and costs - this should cover the whole marketing budget for the year and include everything from advertising to entertainment and travel costs.

4. Contingency plan - as was discussed in the strategic marketing plan paper, it is crucial to create a list of assumptions made and the implications for the business if those assumptions are not met.

Having identified key assumptions, the financial implications can be easily modelled on a spreadsheet to demonstrate two or three different scenarios. For instance what if the firm's most valued account were to be lost? What could be put in its place and how long would that take?

While comprehensive contingencies cannot always be planned for, identifying key assumptions and how the marketing department would deal with the resulting scenarios of a failed assumption, is a requisite fallback position.

5. Operating results and financial ratios - this should summarize the main financial ratios as preferred by the firm. In addition to sales, gross margin, marketing costs, and the forecast return on sales, investment or even capital can be recorded. To some extent the content of this section will be dependent on each organization's own style of financial analysis.

6. Key activity planner / schedule - A list of planned marketing activities that will take place, by month, throughout the year.

7. Other information - Any supplementary details such as sales targets by individual, realignment of marketing activities and client contact plans can be contained in this section.

Although true marketing planning requires this integrated approach it does offer many benefits including

- Ease of managing progress- you now can assess actual progress against planned/ required progress and peer pressure should ensure assigned tasks are completed.
- Ensures that the critical marketing objectives the future success of the firm may depend on actually happen because of continuous review, so the usual excuse of "too much project work" is simply not now acceptable.

Such marketing initiatives will have variable demands on a manager's time and this needs to be accommodated.

Construction marketing in the future will mean firms having the ability to present their unique offering that not only differentiates them from competitors, but is also valued by potential clients. Firms will need to innovate service products that fulfil and satisfy a client's needs but also be able to identify the client earlier to try and avoid the pressure and cost of competitive tendering.

In ten years from now, marketing in the construction industry will no longer be generally perceived as a non-measurable and intangible activity, but as a very valuable technique that wins you more profitable work. As it has been for many other industries over the past decade.

What to do next?

MarketingWorks helps its construction industry clients win new business by working with them to develop effective internal marketing systems to create and sustain a business-winning culture.

Ideally this starts at the beginning with a MarketingWorks Senior Management Perspectives Survey. <http://www.marketingworks.co.uk/business-analysis/6.html> Fundamental to buy-in,



this is also the ideal mechanism for capturing the experience, ideas and concerns of a management team into one picture of the business.

Then to fast track your strategic planning process MarketingWorks offer a one-day Strategic Planning Review using a set of tried-and-tested tools to guide you through the process.

<http://www.marketingworks.co.uk/marketing-planning/3.html>

Alternatively we also run fixed-price assignments with some clients:

<http://www.marketingworks.co.uk/marketing-planning/6.html>

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Recommended reading

Any delegate interested in reading more on marketing audits and planning are strongly recommended to refer to Marketing Plans, Malcolm H.B. McDonald, Heinemann Professional Publishing, 1990, on which this was broadly based.

Bibliography

McDonald, Malcolm H.B., (1990) "Marketing Plans," Heinemann Professional Publishing.