



## Save Time and Money with your Marketing Calendar

by Patrick Zuluaga, [PMZ Marketing](http://www.pmzmarketing.com.au)

### Why use a marketing calendar?

Most likely you would have heard or read the phrase 'marketing is everything' and as a determined business owner you have prepared your marketing plan. Now that you have your marketing plan in hand, how do you make sure it is implemented at the right time and with sufficient attention on your part?

Keep in mind that the most important tool for your success and business development discipline is your own marketing calendar! Using a marketing calendar will crystalize your focus and attention to what needs to be performed and when it needs to be done. Running with your marketing calendar will prevent a common marketing lapse that results in the 'feast and famine' syndrome of many a small business.

You have limited resources and your marketing calendar is the tool that will keep you on track and within your budget! It will allow you as the small business owner to organise, categorise and prioritise your marketing efforts to give you that foundation for success!

### What do you include in your marketing calendar?

The first thing you must do in preparing your marketing calendar is to select and use a proper calendar application. I highly recommend you use Google Calendar (<https://www.google.com/calendar>) or either Microsoft's Outlook or Apple's Calendar applications. It is possible to use an Excel spreadsheet but it will just make life more difficult for you in managing your own calendar.

With your selected calendar you must now input all public holidays including regional and local holidays where you operate as you will have to consider these days in your scheduling. Before you enter any marketing dates make sure you block out the dates that you are planning to take a break for your vacation time. Yes, that too is very important for your own well-being!

Using your established marketing plan and communication mix list down the various marketing campaigns, programs and tasks that you need to schedule on a weekly basis for the next 12 months. Some of these programs will be recurring so space these recurring tasks out over the next 12 months. Enter all your campaigns and programs into your calendar with sufficient time for preparation & testing, implementation and very importantly a review or a post-mortem for each of your marketing campaigns and programs. This is a crucial step as measuring and tracking the response for your campaigns is a key factor in learning from the experience and fine-tuning your next iteration to achieve better marketing results.

Now review your calendar and adjust for seasonal activities that you need to consider in timing with your marketing campaigns. For the consumer space these are prime retail seasons like Christmas, Easter, Valentines and Halloween (like it or not it is growing as prime retail season). Include school holidays as well. Any seasonal conditions that affect your business must be considered. The potential impact is that you either move forward or push back the dates to take advantage or avoid those dates depending on your business environment and target markets.



If you are including print or broadcast advertisements make sure you consider the deadlines for the submission of artwork and materials for these publications or broadcasters.

Make sure to include both traditional and digital marketing programs appropriate to your operations. The following list is not meant to be exhaustive only general examples that might be applicable for your business:

- Marketing events like roadshow, seminars and workshops
- Direct postal mail, letter box drop distribution
- Marketing and sales collateral (i.e. brochures, flyers, video)
- Digital push programs like email promotions, eNewsletters and SMS campaigns
- New product or service launch
- Engagement and updating your web, blog and social media channels
- Networking sessions
- Search engine marketing (i.e. organic optimisation or paid per click advertising)
- Mass media broadcast advertising (i.e. print, radio or television)
- Periodic updating your marketing plan
- Others that may be applicable to your business and target markets...

The next step is to check if there are any gaps in your calendar. If you have the capacity and resources this should be an opportunity to add an additional marketing campaign to your calendar. If not, it will allow you to rebalance activities so that you are not swamped by multiple marketing campaigns that may be bunched up during a particular period in your calendar.

Following these steps will ensure that you have a well-structured and thought out marketing calendar.

The last step in your marketing calendar is to designate responsibility for the scheduled tasks and activities. The assignment of names per tasks is necessary for accountability and responsibility to complete the task within the timeframes specified. Tasks can be assigned to the business owner, internal staff and external contractors that might be contributing to a specific program or campaign.

### **How do you manage your marketing calendar?**

You do this with discipline and strong time management as your commitment to grow your own business. Plan to have a fixed block of time every week dedicated to your marketing activities. I allocate Monday of every week for my marketing work. You can help your own efforts by using the calendar's functions to assign tasks with alerts or reminders for these tasks.

What is important is to find the system that is comfortable and works for you and your business. Perhaps you are extremely productive morning person and your marketing would benefit if you time your efforts during the morning part of the day. You have your environment, culture and resources to consider as you find the day and time of the week that works best for your vital marketing work.

Active task management per your marketing calendar will keep you on track and allow you to control unnecessary expenses outside your planned budget.



**Your marketing calendar is your foundation for success**

Remember marketing is always about business development. Your conscientious efforts in working your marketing calendar for your business is essential to grow your business revenue while at the same time saving you time and money.

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I appreciate your feedback and would like to hear from you on how you are handling these marketing challenges, send your comments to [patrick@pmzmarketing.com.au](mailto:patrick@pmzmarketing.com.au).

**About the Author**



Patrick Zuluaga has more than 20 years experience in marketing and business development roles with Australian and international companies. He is Director of PMZ Marketing, a consultancy focused on Small and Medium Enterprises to **help you succeed in business with better marketing results.**

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