



Small Business Challenges – “Fails to plan, plans to fail”

by Patrick Zuluaga, [PMZ Marketing](#)

You most likely will have heard this before “businesses that fails to plan, plans to fail”.

It is a simple truth – you need to know where you are going to get there!

Small business owners must recognise that marketing planning is essential to achieving their company’s full potential for success. I am not talking about a huge document that sits in the desk drawer never to be taken out again once it has been prepared. You need a two to three page document you can post in front of your immediate work space so you can refer to it as you implement your marketing plan.

Let us first recognise the value to your business in creating a marketing plan. There are four key benefits to small business in preparing a marketing plan:

- It allows you to focus and gives you ownership and motivation for success
- You will have a basis to define priorities and allocate your limited resources
- You will define your market and how best to reach your prospective customers
- It creates a definition for success

In small business, you need a practical and concise document that you can refer to regularly. It should not be more than two to three pages long because you need to post it in front of your work space where you can see it and refer to it frequently.

How can you put together such a marketing plan?

Here’s how to build your small business marketing plan:

1. Define and list your top three marketing objectives
2. Formulate your marketing strategies for your target markets
3. Identify the marketing programs needed to implement your strategies
4. Outline how you will track and measure your marketing results
5. Create a marketing calendar

Define and list your top three marketing objectives

Keep the time frame of your marketing plan to twelve months and list what can realistically be achieved in this period. Use the SMART guidelines to help you characterise your marketing objectives; **S** – Specific, **M** – Measurable, **A** – Achievable, **R** – Realistic and **T** – Time based.

Formulate your marketing strategies for your target markets

Prepare your ideal customer profile. This is your target market – who are they, what are they looking for and what is important to them. Next, you need to brainstorm the marketing strategies that you will require to achieve your objectives in your target markets. Give yourself a hour to write down as many marketing ideas that you comes to your mind. Once the list is complete analyse and select the five ideas that potentially will give you the best results for your business.

Identify the marketing programs needed to implement your strategies

It is most important to identify and list the marketing programs that will be part of your marketing plan. This will allow you to focus on the actions required, and to determine how to allocate the physical and financial resources available to secure success in your target markets. Keep in mind that you are looking for the best and most cost efficient way to reach out to your potential customers in the most effective manner.



Outline how you will track and measure your marketing results

The purpose of tracking, measuring and refining your marketing results is to ensure that your marketing strategies are working consistently towards achieving your marketing and business objectives. Measuring and tracking results will allow you to improve your marketing programs and drop those that are not working.

Create a marketing calendar

Lastly, specify and post the dates over the next twelve months to run your identified marketing programs and activities. In putting the calendar together take note of what resources will be required and when it will be required to make it happen for you.

A final word

To help you get your marketing plan ready, you might consider working with a mentor, a business coach or a marketing consultant. Remember, your discipline to achieve the business success you desire will ultimately depend on your taking ownership and recognition of your accountability in implementing your marketing plan.

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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.

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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