



Small Business Marketing: 10 Simple Steps to Success

So, you're a small business or entrepreneur and you know you need to develop a solid, well-thought out marketing road map for your business or product. Maybe you have a staff to help out, or maybe you're going it alone.

The following 10 steps will help you think strategically about your business/ product and put on paper a working marketing plan that will help you drive measurable growth. It sure beats just seeing what will stick, but you already knew that!

Step 1: SWOT the Small Stuff: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Analysis

A SWOT analysis is a great way to analyze your business or product with an open mind, warts and all. What are you great at or not-so-great? Is your competition better at something you prefer to ignore? Create a bulleted list under each heading; this will become a "foundation" for all your future marketing decisions.

- **Strengths:** List things you're really good at; things that make your competition jealous, like the unique flavor of your product, or your amazing customer service support, or your catchy company name.
- **Weaknesses:** Be honest and dig deep. Interview customers or ask your business advisors and/or employees. We all have weaknesses. If you ignore them, then the greatest marketing plan is likely to fail, guaranteed.
- **Opportunities:** This is often built out of your weaknesses. Perhaps a weakness is that your company doesn't offer a child-size option of product XYZ, but your competitors do. This is an opportunity for growth.
- **Threats:** Look at what your competitors are doing or could do to put you out of business. Include outside forces—the economy, weather, business climate; whatever could harm your growth.

Step 2: Peak under their Tent: Analyze your Competition

Create a hit list of 3-5 major competitors and start listing what they're doing right or wrong. If you have market size data, incorporate that too. Never lose sight of what they're up to or planning—look at their logo, website, promotions, media campaigns, get on their mailing lists, join their Facebook pages, and read their blogs.

Step 3: Target Practice: Clearly Define your Target Market

Who do you want to buy your product--everybody? That's unlikely. Clearly narrow down who you think your best customer is or will be. If it's "women", look at the age range that would buy the most. Many women buy mascara, but younger women may be your heaviest users, so speak to them first. Narrowing your target will help you figure out how to communicate to them and what media to choose as well.

Step 4: Get in Position: Create a Positioning Statement

A well-crafted positioning statement can keep you on the right strategic path. It says who you are, what you sell, why it's better, who wants it and why. All your printed and online materials should always support this positioning. It helps to compare your materials against this statement to ensure you're staying on the right strategic path. A simple example to follow is: For women age 18-24 [TARGET], who want to look their best all day long [THE NEED], XYZ mascara is more versatile than the competition [COMPETITIVE ADVTG] because it lasts for 10 hours without smudging [POINT OF DIFFERENCE], providing a full day of carefree beauty [PRODUCT BENEFIT].

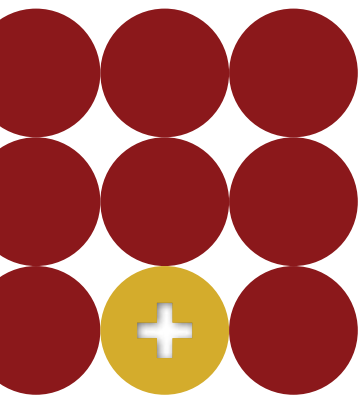
Step 5: What's in it for me? Clearly Define Features and Benefits

It's easy to get caught up in features and very easy to forget about the benefits of your product or service. But your audience only cares about what's in it for them. A feature is descriptive, like something's size, color, shape, or price. A benefit is why those things matter, like "the small, narrow bottle (feature) is easier and more comfortable for women to hold (benefit)". Create a grid with features in one column and the corresponding benefit in the next, and rank them most important to least. This will be invaluable as you begin to craft messaging, helping you to focus on the most important benefits first.



3207 TEABERRY WAY
MARIETTA, GA 30068
770.321.6372

INFO@ADD1MARKETING.COM



Follow these simple steps and you'll be in great shape to develop a marketing plan uniquely designed for your business.

If you're like most small business people, you wear many hats so you may thrive at this added responsibility. But if you're finding you just don't have the focused time to do it right, consider working with marketing professionals who can guide you through the process and help you market your business the way it should be done.

Step 6: Penny Wise: Set Aside a Realistic Budget

When it comes to marketing, sometimes smaller companies try to do a little here, a little there, without a clear road map, all while trying to spend as little as possible. But it's in your best interest to create a manageable budget, built to sustain growth and to stick to it. Marketing is often a slow build, and if you don't see "results" in the first few months, you shouldn't pull the plug. Remember, if you're not communicating to your consumer, your competition is so when she's ready to buy, she'll remember them, not you. Stay the course!

Step 7: Appearances Matter: Create a Professional Brand ID System

Even if your cousin Joe took graphic design classes, it pays to work with a professional graphic designer, one skilled in logo development. Take a good hard look at your company logo, and any brand names you've developed. Often times, logos are created and tweaked along the way as the need arises, but this is always a disaster! Create a professional logo with a well thought-out system of how to use your logo on all communication pieces. Create standard sizes, colors, elements, tag lines and don't deviate from the style guide. Sometimes it helps to have your main name and logo, along with a small "icon" that represents your company, for places where space is limited, like a web page, letterhead, or sales materials. Now make sure anyone who creates marketing communications for you follows this creative "bible" and never deviates. You'll look like a big deal, even if you're a one woman shop.

Step 8: Online is Everything: Develop a Simple and Clear Website

Your website is your online storefront. If it looks homemade, has typos or is hard to navigate, it sets a bad tone for your customers. Prospects may have already clicked away before really seeing how great your company is. Simple is really better here—create clear pages with singular messages, enhance with relevant graphics, and always have a call-to-action. Think about offering a newsletter, free white paper or tip sheet as added value. And figure out what your 3-5 main keywords are (words or phrases that are often used in online searches) and make sure they are incorporated in your copy.

Step 9: Spread the Word: Choose Media Options to Get your Message Out

With your clearly defined budget, now is the time to start looking at affordable media options designed for long term campaigns. Don't blow your budget on one-offs! Spending all your dollars on a full page ad in a big city magazine may not be the best plan. Start with smaller, more frequent ads. Figure out where your customer hangs out, and talk to them there. Look at traditional and local town magazines, radio, online banner ads, email marketing and social media. In the beginning, email marketing may be your best bet, but it takes time to build a credible, opt-in list (be careful not to spam). There are many easy-to-use email client services that are very economical, and will make you look very put together.

Step 10: Measure, Measure: Set Realistic Goals and Metrics

If you don't know what results you want, you'll never know if your efforts are working. Sales figures are a good measure, but hard to tie to marketing efforts, unless you are creative. The number of downloads (of a white paper, tip sheet), website visits, Facebook friends, contest entrants, email opens, newsletter sign-ups—these are all metrics that may help you determine which initiatives are performing best. Without this, it's difficult to re-evaluate your plan, determine what media choices are working and to improve upon it for the future.

Call **770.321.6372** for a free business assessment.



3207 Teaberry Way, Marietta, GA 30068
info@add1marketing.com
770.321.6372