

## **MARKETING PLAN WORKSHEETS**

These worksheets are designed to assist you in writing a formal marketing plan. Worksheets are a useful planning tool because they help to ensure that important information is not omitted from the marketing plan. Answering the questions on these worksheets will enable you to:

1. Organize and structure the data and information you collect during the situation analysis.
2. Use this information to better understand a firm's strengths and weaknesses and to recognize the opportunities and threats that exist in the marketing environment.
3. Develop goals and objectives that capitalize on strengths.
4. Develop a marketing strategy that creates competitive advantages.
5. Outline a plan for implementing the marketing strategy.

By downloading these worksheets in an electronic format, you will be able to change the outline or add additional information that is relevant to your situation. Remember that there is no one best way to organize a marketing plan. Our outline was designed to serve as a starting point and to be flexible enough to accommodate the unique characteristics of your situation.

As you complete the worksheets, it might be useful to refer back to the text of the chapters. In completing the situation analysis section, be sure to be as comprehensive as possible. The viability of your SWOT analysis depends on how well you have identified all of the relevant environmental issues. Likewise, as you complete the SWOT analysis, you should be honest about the firm's characteristics. Do not depend on strengths that the firm really does not possess. Being honest also goes for your listing of weaknesses.

## **I. Executive Summary**

The executive summary is a synopsis of the overall marketing plan. The executive summary is easier to write if you do it last, after you have written the entire marketing plan.

## **II. Situation Analysis**

### **A. The External Environment**

#### **Competitive Pressures**

Identify the firm's major competitors (brand, product, generic, and total budget):

Identify the characteristics of the firm's major competitors:

- Size
- Growth
- Profitability
- Target markets
- Products
- Key strengths and weaknesses
- Key marketing capabilities (production, distribution, promotion, pricing)

List any potential (future) competitors not identified in the preceding.

#### **Economic Growth and Stability**

Identify the general economic conditions of the country, region, state, and local area in which the firm operates:

Explain the economic climate with respect to customers:

- Inflation
- Consumer confidence
- Purchasing patterns (buying power)
- Business-to-business economic conditions

#### **Political, Legal, and Regulatory Issues**

Identify any political activities that affect the firm or the industry:

- Changes in elected officials (domestic or foreign)
- Industry (lobbying) groups
- Consumer groups

Identify any changes in international, federal, state, or local laws and regulations that affect the marketing activities of the firm or the industry:

- Recent court decisions

Recent rulings of federal, state, local, and self-regulatory agencies  
Changes in global trade agreements or trade law

### **Changes in Technology**

Identify ways that changing technology has affected the firm's customers:

- Searching for product information
- Place and timing of purchase (order) decisions
- Comparison shopping

Identify ways that changing technology has affected the way the firm or the industry operates:

- Manufacturing
- Distribution
- Promotion
- Customer relationship management
- Partnerships and alliances

Identify current technologies that the firm is not using to the fullest potential:

Identify future technologies that may increase the risk of product obsolescence:

### **Sociocultural Trends**

Identify changes in society's demographics and values that will affect the firm or the industry (if this becomes too broad, focus on the firm's target customers):

firm's: Explain the changes that shifting demographics and values will have on the

- Products (features, benefits, branding)
- Pricing (value)
- Distribution (convenience, efficiency)
- Promotion (message content, delivery, feedback)
- People (human resource issues)

Identify any problems or opportunities that may be created by changes in the cultural diversity of the firm's customers and employees:

Identify any environmental issues (pollution, recycling, energy conservation) that the firm or industry is facing:

facing: Identify the ethical and social responsibility issues that the firm or industry is

## **B. The Customer Environment**

## **Who are the firm's current and potential customers?**

Describe the important identifying characteristics of the firm's current and potential customers:

- Demographic
- Geographic
- Psychographic
- Product usage

Identify the important players in the purchase process for the firm's products:

- Purchasers (actual act of purchase)
- Users (actual product user)
- Influencers (influence the decision, make recommendations)
- Financial responsibility (who pays the bill?)

## **What do customers do with the firm's products?**

Purchase

- Purchase quantities and combinations
- Purchase of complementary products
- Purchase situations

Consumption

- Characteristics of heavy users
- Characteristics of light users
- Consumption of complementary products
- Consumption situations

Disposition

- Issues related to the creation of waste (garbage)
- Issues related to recycling

## **Where do customers purchase the firm's products?**

Identify the outlets (intermediaries) where the firm's products are purchased:

- Store-based retailers
- Electronic retailers (Internet, television)
- Catalog retailers
- Vending
- Wholesale outlets
- Direct from the firm

Identify any trends in purchase patterns across these outlets (e.g., how e-commerce has changed the way the firm's products are purchased).

## **When do customers purchase the firm's products?**

Under the firm's control

- Promotional events (communication and price changes)

Customer services (hours of operation, delivery)  
Not under the firm's control  
Seasonal patterns  
Physical/social surroundings  
Time perceptions  
Competitive actions

## **Why (and how) do customers select the firm's products?**

Describe the basic benefits provided by the firm's products relative to competing products:

Describe the degree to which customers' needs are being fulfilled by the firm's products relative to competing products:

Describe how customers' needs are expected to change in the future.

Describe the relative importance of transactional (short, one-time) vs. relational (long-term, ongoing) exchange processes when customers make a purchase:

## **Why do potential customers not purchase the firm's products?**

Identify the basic needs of noncustomers that are not being met by the firm's products:

Identify the features, benefits, and advantages of competing products that cause noncustomers to choose them over the firm's products:

Identify problems with the firm's distribution, promotion, or pricing that cause noncustomers to look elsewhere:

## **C. Internal (Organizational) Environment**

### **Review of marketing goals and objectives**

Identify the firm's current marketing goals and objectives.

State whether these goals and objectives are:

- Consistent with the firm's mission
- Consistent with recent changes in the marketing or customer environments
- Leading to expected performance outcomes (sales volume, market share, profitability, awareness, brand preference)

### **Review of current marketing performance**

Describe the firm's current performance compared to other firms in the industry. Is the performance of the industry as a whole improving or declining? Why?

If the firm's performance is declining, what is the most likely cause (e.g., environmental changes, flawed strategy, poor implementation)?

## **Review of current and anticipated organizational resources**

Describe the current state of the firm's organizational resources (e.g., financial, capital, human, experience, relationships with key suppliers or customers).

How are the levels of these resources likely to change in the future?

If resource levels are expected to change:

How can the firm leverage additional resources to meet customer needs better than competitors?

How can the firm compensate for future constraints on its resources?

## **Review of current and anticipated cultural and structural issues**

In terms of marketing strategy development and implementation, describe the positive and negative aspects of the current and anticipated culture of the firm. Examples could include:

- The firm's overall customer orientation (or lack thereof)
- The firm's emphasis on short-term vs. long-term planning
- Willingness of the culture to embrace change
- Internal politics and power struggles
- The overall position and importance of the marketing function
- Changes in key executive positions
- General employee satisfaction and morale

### **III. SWOT Analysis**

#### **A. Strengths**

Strength 1:

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How does this strength enable the firm to meet customers' needs?  
Does this strength make the firm different from (better than) its competitors?

Strength 2:

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How does this strength enable the firm to meet customers' needs?  
Does this strength make the firm different from (better than) its competitors?

(Repeat as needed to develop a complete list of strengths)

**B. Weaknesses**

Weakness 1:

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How does this weakness prevent the firm from meeting customers' needs?  
Does this weakness make the firm different from (worse than) its competitors?

Weakness 2:

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How does this weakness prevent the firm from meeting customers' needs?  
Does this weakness make the firm different from (worse than) its competitors?

(Repeat as needed to develop a complete list of weaknesses)

**C. Opportunities**

Opportunity 1:

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How is this opportunity related to serving customers' needs?  
How can the firm capitalize on this opportunity in the short- and long-term?

Opportunity 2:

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How is this opportunity related to serving customers' needs?  
How can the firm capitalize on this opportunity in the short- and long-term?

(Repeat as needed to develop a complete list of opportunities)

**D. Threats**

Threat 1:

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How is this threat related to serving customers' needs?  
How can the firm prevent this threat from limiting its capabilities in the short- and long-term?

Threat 2:

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How is this threat related to serving customers' needs?  
How can the firm prevent this threat from limiting its capabilities in the short- and long-term?

(Repeat as needed to develop a complete list of threats)

## E. The SWOT Matrix

<u>Strengths:</u> • • • •	<u>Opportunities:</u> • • • •
<u>Weaknesses:</u> • • • •	<u>Threats:</u> • • • •

## F. Matching, Converting, Minimizing, and Avoiding Strategies

Describe ways that the firm can match its strengths to its opportunities to create capabilities in serving customers' needs.

Can the firm convert its weaknesses into strengths or its threats into opportunities? If not, how can the firm minimize or avoid its weaknesses and threats?

Does the firm possess any major liabilities (unconverted weaknesses that match unconverted threats) or limitations (unconverted weaknesses or threats that match opportunities)? If so, are these liabilities and limitations obvious to customers?

Can the firm do anything about its liabilities or limitations, especially those that impact the firm's ability to serve customers' needs?

## IV. Marketing Goals and Objectives

### A. Marketing Goal A:

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Objective A1:

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Specific and measurable outcome:

Time frame:

Responsible unit/person:

Objective A2:

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Specific and measurable outcome:  
Time frame:  
Responsible unit/person:

**B. Marketing Goal B:**

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Objective B1:

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Specific and measurable outcome:  
Time frame:  
Responsible unit/person:

Objective B2:

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Specific and measurable outcome:  
Time frame:  
Responsible unit/person:

(Repeat as needed to develop a complete list of goals and objectives)

**V. Marketing Strategies**

**A. Primary Target Market and Marketing Mix**

Primary target market:

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This target's primary need:  
Identifying characteristics (demographics, geography, psychographics):  
Purchasing/shopping habits and preferences:  
Consumption/disposition characteristics:

Product: \_\_\_\_\_

Major features and benefits:  
Sustainable competitive advantage:  
Differentiation / positioning strategy:  
Brand name and packaging:  
Customer service strategy:  
Complementary products:

Pricing: \_\_\_\_\_

Pricing objectives:  
Description of per unit costs:  
Discount/markdown policy:

Distribution: \_\_\_\_\_

General supply chain strategy:  
Intermediaries and channels to be used:  
Elements of customer convenience:

Promotion: \_\_\_\_\_

- General IMC strategy:
- IMC objectives and budget:
- Elements of the advertising/publicity strategy:
- Elements of the personal selling strategy:
- Elements of trade sales promotion (push) strategy:
- Elements of consumer sales promotion (pull) strategy:
- Elements of the sponsorship strategy:

**B. Secondary Target Market and Marketing Mix**

Secondary target market:

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- This target's primary need:
- Identifying characteristics (demographics, geography, psychographics):
- Purchasing/shopping habits and preferences:
- Consumption/disposition characteristics:

Product: \_\_\_\_\_

- Major features and benefits:
- Sustainable competitive advantage:
- Differentiation / positioning strategy:
- Brand name and packaging:
- Customer service strategy:
- Complementary products:

Pricing: \_\_\_\_\_

- Pricing objectives:
- Description of per unit costs:
- Discount/markdown policy:

Distribution: \_\_\_\_\_

- General supply chain strategy:
- Intermediaries and channels to be used:
- Elements of customer convenience:

Promotion: \_\_\_\_\_

- General IMC strategy:
- IMC objectives and budget:
- Elements of the advertising/publicity strategy:
- Elements of the personal selling strategy:
- Elements of trade sales promotion (push) strategy:

Elements of consumer sales promotion (pull) strategy:

Elements of the sponsorship strategy:

## **VI. Marketing Implementation**

### **A. Structural Issues**

Describe your overall approach to implementing the marketing strategy:

Describe any changes to the firm's structure needed to implement the marketing strategy (e.g., add/delete positions, change lines of authority, change reporting relationships).

Describe your internal marketing activities in the following areas:

Employee training:

Employee buy-in and motivation to implement the marketing strategy:

Overcoming resistance to change:

Internal communication and promotion of the marketing strategy:

Coordination with other functional areas:

Will customer-contact employees and managers be empowered to make decisions? If yes, how will the organization ensure that empowered employees make the right decisions?

### **B. Tactical Marketing Activities**

Specific Tactical Activities	Person Responsible	Required Budget	Completion Date
Product Activities 1. 2. 3.			
Pricing Activities 1. 2. 3.			
Distribution Activities 1. 2. 3.			

IMC Activities  1. 2. 3.			
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**VII. Evaluation and Control**

**A. Formal Marketing Control**

Describe the types and levels of formal control mechanisms that should be used to ensure the implementation of the marketing plan.

Input control mechanisms

- Employee recruitment and selection procedures:
- Employee training programs:
- Employee manpower allocations:
- Financial resources:
- Capital outlays:
- Research and development expenditures:
- Other:

Process control mechanisms

- Employee evaluation and compensation systems:
- Employee authority and empowerment:
- Internal communication programs:
- Lines of authority/structure (organizational chart):
- Management commitment to the marketing plan:
- Management commitment to employees:

Output control mechanisms (performance standards)

Product performance standards:  
Potential corrective actions that can be taken if actual product performance does not match these standards:

Price performance standards:  
Potential corrective actions that can be taken if actual pricing performance does not match these standards:

Distribution performance standards:  
Potential corrective actions that can be taken if actual distribution performance does not match these standards:

**IMC performance standards:**  
**Potential corrective actions that can be taken if actual IMC performance does not match these standards:**

## Output control mechanisms (marketing audits)

Explain how marketing activities will be monitored:

What are the specific profit- and time-based measures that will be used to monitor marketing activities?

Describe the marketing audit to be performed, including the person responsible for conducting the audit:

### **B. Informal Marketing Control**

Describe the types and levels of informal control mechanisms that should be used to ensure the implementation of the marketing plan.

#### Employee self-control

Are employees satisfied with their jobs at a level that is sufficient for implementing the marketing plan? If not, how can employee job satisfaction be increased?

Are employees committed to the organization at a level that is sufficient for implementing the marketing plan? If not, how can employee commitment be increased?

Are employees committed to the marketing plan at a level that is sufficient for its implementation? If not, how can employee commitment to the plan be increased?

#### Employee social control

Do employees share the firm's values in a manner that enhances the implementation of the marketing plan? If not, how can the firm better instill its values among employees?

Describe the social and behavioral norms that exist within the organization, and in workgroups, that are either beneficial or detrimental to implementation.

#### Employee cultural control

Is the organizational culture appropriate for the marketing plan? If not, what type of

culture would be more appropriate?

Though cultural change is a slow process, what steps can be taken to change the firm's culture to become more conducive to implementing the marketing strategy?