

# How to write a marketing plan

An Integrated multichannel approach

Andrew Whalley



ANDREW WHALLEY

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# HOW TO WRITE A MARKETING PLAN AN INTEGRATED MULTICHANNEL APPROACH

How to write a marketing plan: An Integrated multichannel approach

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The advertisement features a black header with the CMO Inspired Conference logo (a green speech bubble with 'CMO' inside) and the text 'INSPIRED CONFERENCE' in large white letters. Below this, the date and location are listed: '25 OCTOBER | DE VERE BEAUMONT ESTATE | OLD WINDSOR UK'. The main image shows a large, white, classical-style building with a fountain in the foreground, surrounded by greenery. Below this is a collage of four smaller images: a panel discussion on a stage, a woman speaking into a microphone, a large audience seated in a hall, and a man presenting at a podium. At the bottom of the advertisement, the text 'Join Over 100 Chief Marketing Officers & Digital Innovators' is written in green.

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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andrew Whalley is currently a Marketing Lecturer at Royal Holloway University of London, where he concentrates on topics in Strategic and Digital Marketing, as well as mentoring less experienced colleagues. He is a teaching veteran of over 25 years with international experience in universities and executive education, as well as being a guest speaker and presenter. Prior to lecturing, Andrew was an officer in the British Army, after which he gained commercial experience as a consultant, director, interim manager and executive director, as well as co-running his own consultancy business. He holds six degrees, three masters and a DBA, alongside numerous professional and executive education qualifications.

# ABOUT THIS BOOK

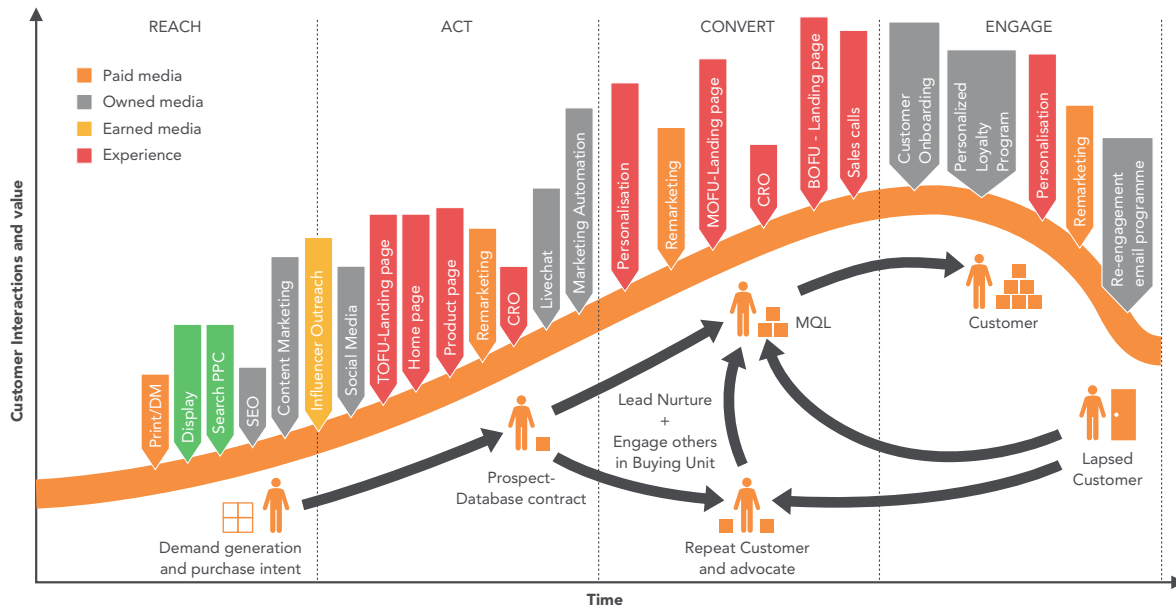
Knowing where to start, how to structure a plan, is in my experience the most difficult part of planning, especially daunting if you aren't experienced in creating plans. Most businesses have several plans in place and would be forgiven for thinking they don't need yet another plan. For example;

- The business plan
- Marketing plan
- Digital Marketing plan (may or may not be integrated into the marketing plan)
- Advertising plan
- Customer acquisition plan
- Email marketing plan
- A retention plan
- A social media marketing plan
- Conversion optimisation plan

Lots of plan, lots of complexity, lots of chances for overlap, lots of chances for disconnect – and every disconnect is at best a missed opportunity and at worst it's damaging the perception of the business in the eyes of those who matter most – customers.

There is nothing wrong with having ALL those plans, indeed having some plan for each of those areas I would view as vital. But, something needs to connect them, something needs to ensure they are coherent, cohesive and complimentary. Something that is synergistic and works from the customer backwards not the business forward.

An integrated multichannel plan centres on the customers, it begins with a focus on selecting the inbound marketing techniques, content types and communication channels which will drive customer acquisition for defined product categories. It then integrates multichannel offline and online activities, considering all the touchpoints across the whole customer journey. These are shown in our customer lifecycle chart below; of itself this shows the need for a multichannel plan - all these activities need to be planned and where relevant.



Still not convinced? Let me leave you with a quote from Scott D Cook;

**"A brand is no longer what we tell the consumer it is - it is what consumers tell each other it is."**

Perception is reality and the only perception that matters is that of your customers. Your activities will shape it; you will either nurture and develop the perception building your Brand or you will stunt its growth or even kill it.

Integrated multichannel marketing is the future of interacting with customers; it's the future of business.

# 1 WHAT IS A MARKETING PLAN?

“Before beginning, Plan carefully”

– Marcus Tullius Cicero

“Plans are useless, but planning is everything”

– Dwight D Eisenhower

A marketing plan is essentially a journey plan, it is more than just a route map, it has details of what, when, how, utilising what resources, over what timescale, with what steps, goals and results. As you may have guessed putting one together is not trivial its complicated and requires time and effort in its research and compilation – never more so than in contemporary times where an integrated approach, across media, markets, products, brands, etc is required.

A good plan allows those in a business to focus their time and energy on executing their marketing strategies, rather than wasting time wondering how else you can promote and grow your business.

The marketing plan consists of several parts, which will be explained in more detail and mapped out below;

1. First, you will outline your marketing and business goals. You need to understand clearly from the outset what you hope to accomplish, so you can align the rest of your activities accordingly.
2. Second, you will outline your marketing assets. They will likely include things like your website, a blog, social media channels, one or more individuals, and so on.
3. Third, you will determine the exact methods and techniques you plan to employ, and when. While you will not have to be so detailed as to create specific tweets or campaign topics, you *should* have some plan and idea for how often you will do such activities.

In other words – where are we? - where do we want to be? - How do we get there? This approach is summarised in figure 1.1 below, The multichannel growth wheel;

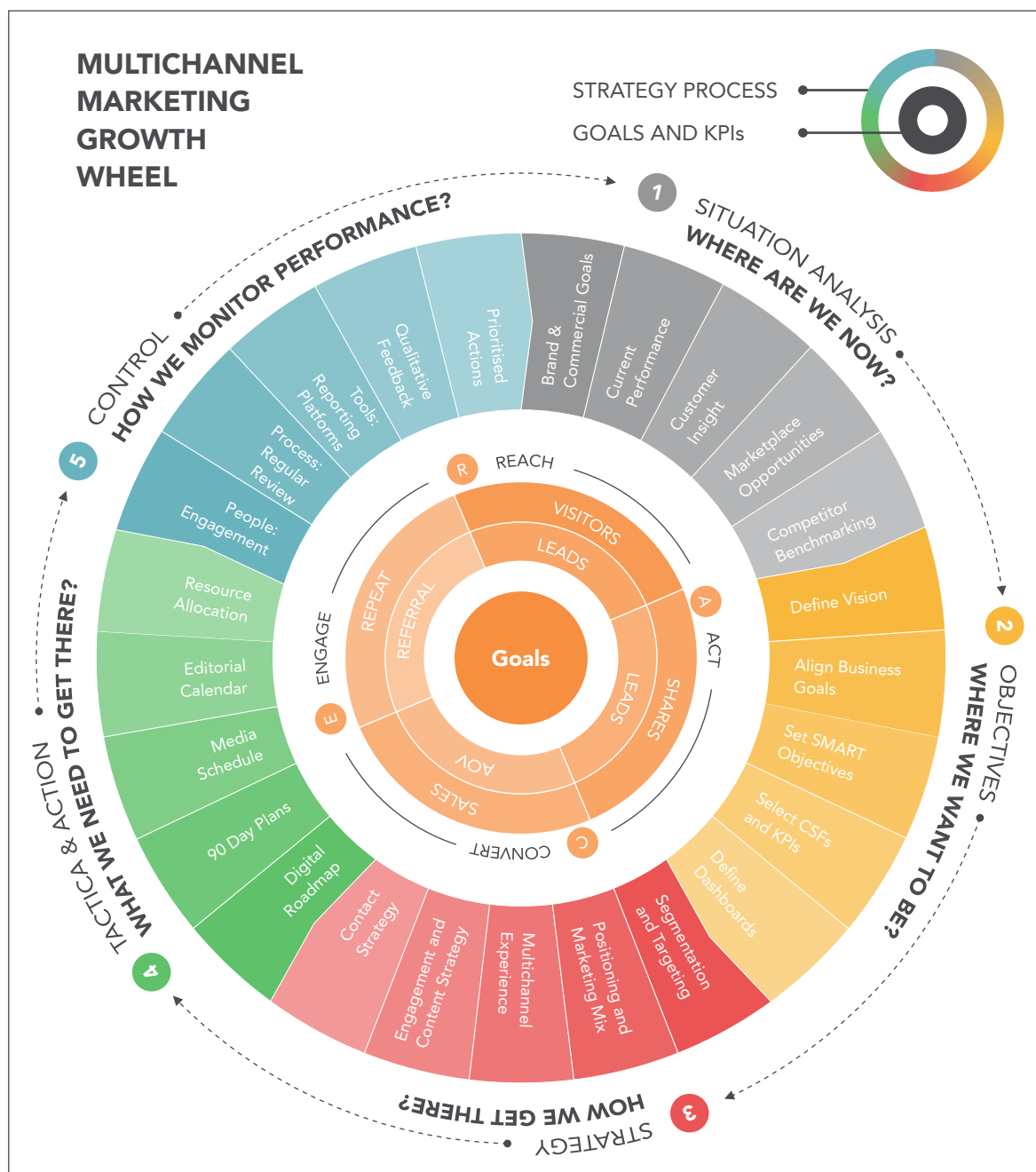


Figure 1.1; The Multichannel Marketing Growth Wheel

A final but important note is about control and measurement of the success of the marketing as its being implemented. Note that Marketing is about far more than just driving sales. Marketing establishes your brand and its authority, making it possible for a business to develop relationships with all types of stakeholders. Marketing educates potential prospects about the problems that you can solve and, in some cases, acts as your Customer Service department. As such measurement MUST be multi-dimensional and cover ALL relevant aspects of the business. In this regard smart marketers look at Marketing Analytics and Marketing Metrics as topics within marketing measurement.

In many instances contemporary businesses rely on their website as their window to the world. As such in many cases the overall goal their marketing is to drive traffic to their website, generate leads from that traffic, and convert those leads into sales. But there will be many elements to your marketing plan, and not all will have a clear impact on sales. Some initiatives may help drive traffic, while others may pave the way for leads to more easily decide to buy from you. In this area smart marketers look to Content Marketing, Business Development and Marketing Automation as topics to consider in this regard. Again look at figure 1.1. and you will see how these areas impact.

In many regards this focus on message channels cannot be over emphasised. The following two quotes are highly relevant in this way.

**“Focus on the right message for the right people at the right time”**

– Russell Glass

**“Marketing is no longer about the stuff that you make, but about the stories you tell”**

– Seth Godin

There are many ways to structure a marketing plan but in essence it has six Main areas as shown in figure 1, below;

Business Objectives	Marketing Priorities	Marketing Goals	Marketing Strategy	Key Actions	Dependencies and Risks
What the company wants to achieve	The top areas of focus for marketing leadership	What marketing will contribute to business objectives	The approach marketing takes to achieve its goals	How the marketing strategy will be executed	What must be addressed for the strategy to work
					

**Figure 1.2;** The Marketing Plan-on-a-page outline

It is these areas this book will concentrate on covering but it does not use these titles as its organisation. Rather it concentrates on a more practical based approach in terms of the areas and tools that need addressing within an integrated multichannel marketing plan.

## 2 WHY IS A MARKETING PLAN IMPORTANT?

Before we go into the details of your marketing plan, it's important to understanding and to stress the importance of *having* a plan and what it's going to mean to any business.

There is tremendous risk in *NOT* having a plan. Imagine trying to launch a business without a marketing plan in place, the time spent in exploring different marketing options and techniques and end up investing in strategies that don't necessarily work together. Also, without a marketing plan, it's far easier to neglect marketing entirely. When launching a new business, there are nonstop demands on time, attention and resources.

There is a phrase that one of the first CEO's I worked for repeated often,

"When you are up to your ass in Alligators, its hard to remember that when you set out, the goal was to drain the swamp."

If you don't have a plan and schedule of activities in place, your marketing could get lost. And without a plan, you'll likely have no way of measuring the effectiveness of anything you do manage to do. Which means you will not be learning, not to learn is unforgivable at attitude I expect you'll sympathise with, after all to learn 'how' is why you picked up this guide.

Through this book, you will learn two things:

1. How to put an integrated marketing plan in place.
2. How to measure the results so that you can learn what works and what doesn't and adapt your marketing plan to better fit your business and audience.

The point is that the value of the plan **is in the planning**; in the understanding about your customers, products and markets. It's in the learning of your strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It's about flexibility that's been anticipated and not just reacting to what you learn when you enter the market.

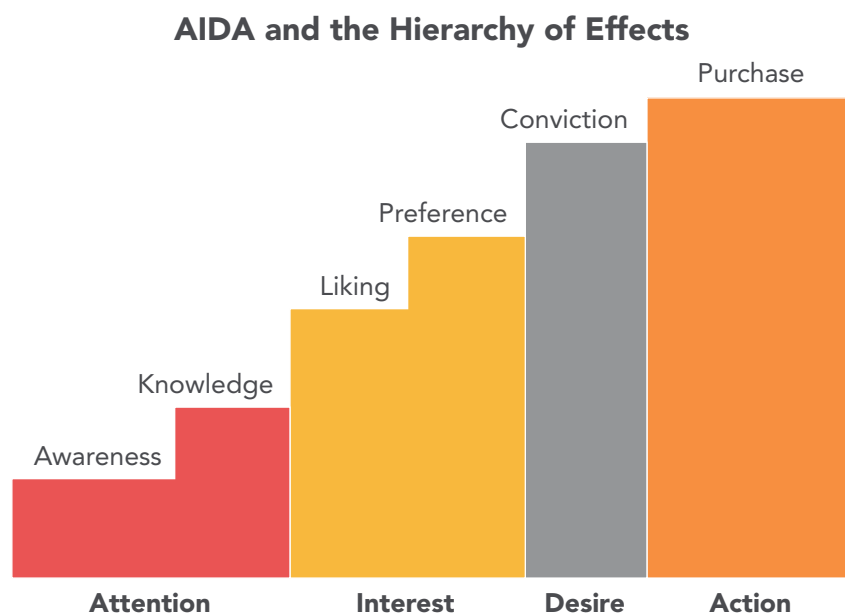
Let's get started.

## 3 WHAT IS INTEGRATED

### 3.1 NOT ALL CHANNELS DO THE SAME JOB

You are likely to be familiar with the traditional media used in Marketing Communications; Advertising, Personal Selling, Public Relations, Sales Promotion and Sponsorship. But you might not realise why such a variety of methods has been, and continues to be, used to communicate marketing messages. Well the simple answer is that not all of them do the same job in terms of communications.

You may have come across the AIDA model of communications. Whilst its not the most modern or academic of models, its easy to remember and it's a practical tool that I, and many others, use as a way of understanding what we are trying to do with communications. AIDA stands for; Attention, Interest, Desire and Action and its relates to consumer behaviour as shown in Figure 3.1.1.



**Figure 3.1.1.** AIDA and the hierarchy of Effects model

The concept is that from becoming AWARE a potential customer moves to PURCHASE through a number of stages. Those stages are influenced by marketing communications that progress from grabbing Attention through to initiating at Action – usually a purchase.

But not all communication media are equally good at Stages of AIDA. Look at figure 3.1.2.

Here we can see that the effectiveness of the different media varies substantially. So, relying on only one or two has always been ineffective. It is a mix that is required to help move customers along the sales funnel to a purchase. Remember this when you look at diagrams 4.1. and at 4.3.2.

	Attention	Interest	Desire	Action
Advertising	●	●	●	●
Public Relations	●	●	●	●
Sales Promotion	●	●	●	●
Personal Selling	●	●	●	●
Social Media	●	●	●	●

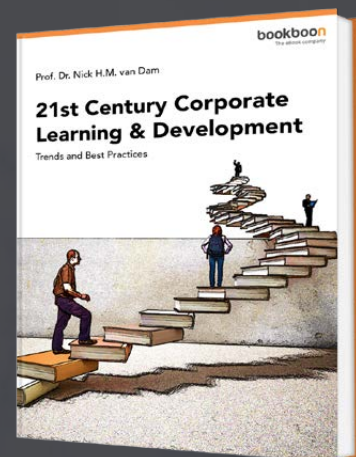
● Very Effective    
 ● Somewhat Effective    
 ● Not Effective

Figure 3.1.2 AIDA & media

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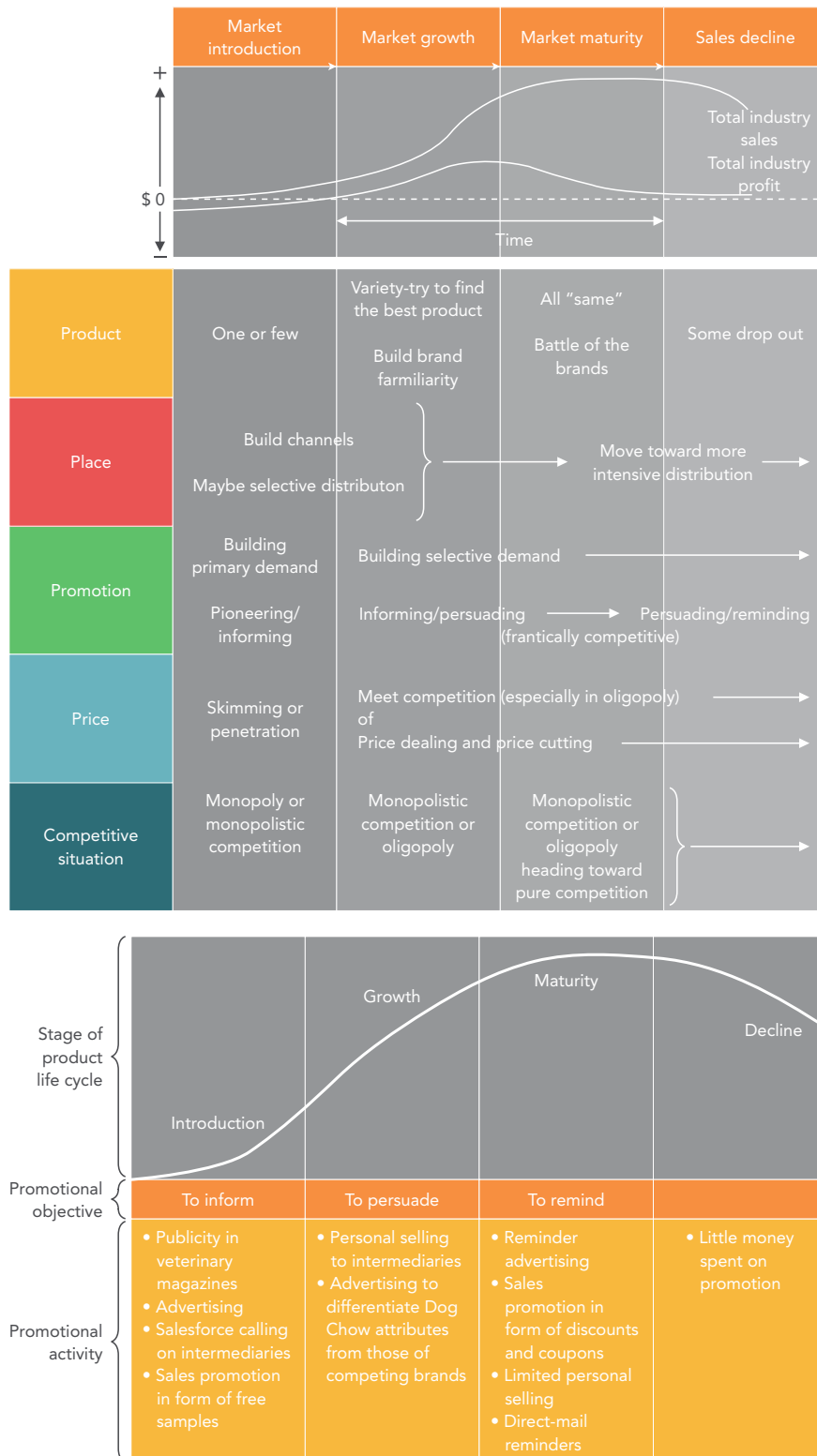
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We also need to think about the Lifecycle stages of the products we are writing the marketing plan for to. Figure 3.1.3 illustrates that the objectives for communications changes according to the lifecycle stage of the product.



**Figure 3.1.3** Lifecycle and communications mix

As you can see the promotional objective changes with the stages of the lifecycle. That means the AIDA stage also changes and thus the communication media mix also changes.

This means a mix of media is essential to be effective. That means it has to be coordinated to be synergistic – its has to be integrated!

### 3.2 INTEGRATED MEANS COORDINATED

Writing a well thought through Marketing Plan is akin to musical composition – you have many instruments at your disposal and how you bring them together through the piece of music determines its style, impact, etc. The same instruments can produce a piece of Jazz, a piece of swing, a piece of Rap, Heavy Metal etc. Indeed, this is where we get the metaphor for the Marketing Mix – its how you bring the marketing elements together in what proportions at what time that determines your success – in essence it's the recipe you develop or in musical terms the score.

Integrated is a contemporary term to emphasis that all the mix elements and all the methods employed within them must be Congruent, Cohesive and consistent;

- In other words, an integrated marketing plan is written such that all elements within it are in agreement with each other – it is congruent in its goals, aims, objectives, measures, etc.
- It is Cohesive, that the different elements, tools and techniques make sense in the way they are used together, e.g. they work synergistically on the sales process, DMU, etc.
- It is Consistent, the values, ethics, morals, measurements, goals, etc are the same ALL across the various media used, products, markets etc.

Note that in all cases the focus is on how this is seen from the marketplace, the potential customer's perspective. As such we can define Integrated Marketing as an approach to creating a unified and seamless experience for consumers to interact with the brand/enterprise; it attempts to meld all aspects of marketing communication such as advertising, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing, and social media, through their respective mix of tactics, methods, channels, media, and activities, so that all work together as a unified force. It is a process designed to ensure that all messaging and communications strategies are consistent across all channels and are centred on the customer.

Importantly this means incorporating User Experience (UX) into integrated planning, especially given the reliance by many on digital methods and media for their marketing

communications. This style of marketing is becoming more and more important because media fragmentation and exposure have begun to desensitize consumers. Every day, they are hit with such a barrage of advertisements that only the most integrated and consistent brands stand out as memorable. To be effective Integrated marketing;

- Centres around a strong, focused brand image
- Communicates through a clear, consistent voice
- Maintains a consistent look and feel across all media
- Utilizes traditional and digital media to promote the brand

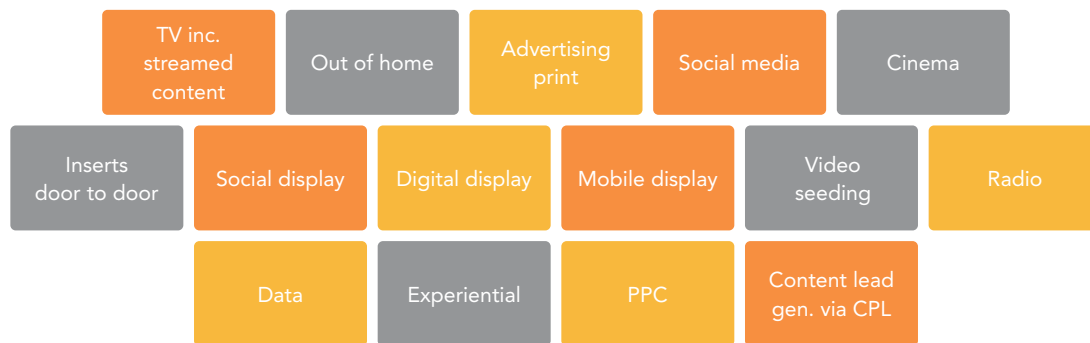
Consistency in integrated marketing does not mean lack of creativity. Slapping a single colour palate across all media or using the same tagline on a highway billboard as a product homepage is not the epitome of integrated marketing.

Instead, a marketing team must work behind-the-scenes to devise a compelling, unified voice for a brand, and transition it appropriately into every aspect of the brand's persona, from advertising to physical presence and customer service.

### ***Integrated and Omni-Channel – are cousins they are not the same***

Omni-channel is where a campaign or campaigns are run across multiple channels where the message, branding, etc are different and unconnected. This traditional approach to media is built on a client-centric view of the world. Under this model, channels are selected and segmented based on their perceived value to the client – the most impressions/cover for the least spend. At face value logical; the focus on distinct channels often necessitates that campaign messaging is retrofitted into the media plan by different teams or channel selection is limited to accommodate existing messaging.

As such they are not designed to or intended to be interlinked. Obviously, there is a real danger of incongruent, inconsistent messages that can reduce or even harm a company's brand – look up polysemy - which is why most companies try to utilise the integrated approach.



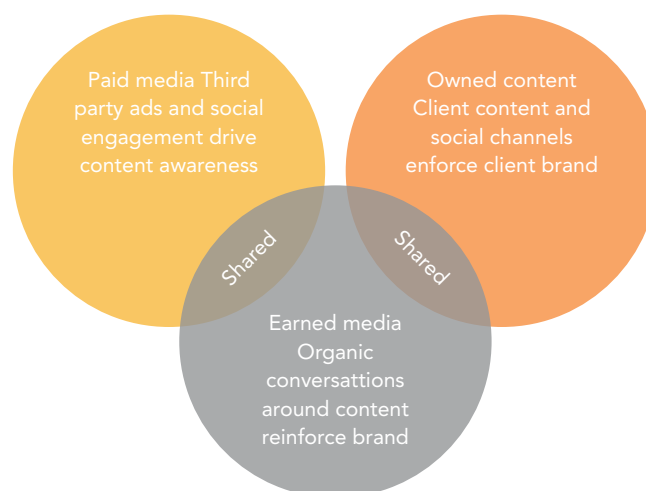
**Figure 3.1** Available contact methods

Shifting to a customer-centric view means looking at what the media does as opposed to what it is – what does it do for the customer, how does it fit in the DMU, what role does it play in conversion, micro-conversion? Suddenly things look very different, as figure 3.2 shows.

As well as the customer view, today’s media strategist needs to account for the increased value of earned and owned media.

While traditional paid media still offers an effective means to increase brand exposure, it also plays an even more valuable role by stimulating lucrative earned media and encouraging audiences to engage with client-owned content

To develop a media strategy that effectively harnesses the potential of earned media and owned content, brands should look at the various facets of social media. For example, using social to source content, promote products at specific events, and engage partner channels. Specialist agents should also be considered to manage social communities, improve customer services and raise the profile and reputation of sales teams among prospects.



**Figure 3.2.** The new media mix

Having covered the above we come to the point of; Why is this important now?

Well multichannel marketing is now THE norm, if you aren't doing it then you are behind the curve and losing competitive position. Multichannel marketing is THE toolkit for building customer engagement and that means the toolkit for building brand equity, sales and customer satisfaction.

Integrated multichannel marketing delivers;

- A fluid and memorable experience for customers across a range of media
- It retargets customers and reduces 'leakage' in the sales funnel from those who said "I'll buy it later"
- Tailored messages to the medium
- Globo-local messaging across media
- Measurement, ROMI, ROI, etc
- Push and pull demand generation; works in complex marketers both B2B and B2C

## 4 PART I - THE DIGITAL MARKETING LANDSCAPE

There are a couple of assumptions I need to make at this point, and so forgive me if either of these are untrue for you.

First, I am going to assume that as a contemporary business the issue with integrated is actually with integrating *Digital Marketing* with traditional methods. I'm actually not in favour of the term Digital Marketing; at its base it is just a fancy way of saying "online" or "Internet" marketing, as opposed to more traditional marketing methods like television or newspaper advertising. Whilst its ok to differentiate them for academic reasons, in reality almost every business uses both 'digital' and traditional. So in many ways I prefer the term contemporary marketing as a way of talking about integrated marketing using multiple channels.

Because of the integration issues most of the marketing techniques and channels I'll cover in this book are going to be digital in nature. That should not be taken to demean or diminish the role that traditional marketing techniques have, indeed you need to take advantage of ALL forms of marketing. If you will be serving a local audience, for instance, do explore some of the many other options that are available to you.

Second, I've made the assumption that the reader knows little or nothing about digital marketing. While I expect you've heard of Facebook and Twitter, I assume you don't know how to use them to promote your business.

So, before we start to craft a plan, I think it's important to get a clear picture of what the **Digital Marketing Landscape** looks like, and the key elements that we'll be discussing. The idea here will be to brief you on virtually *all* of the available digital marketing options, so that when it comes time to decide what you're going to do, you'll be familiar enough with each of them to make some initial decisions.

Do remember though that your marketing plan will be a dynamic and living document, designed to change and adapt and grow right alongside your business. If you decide to focus on, say, Facebook initially, that doesn't mean you can't shift and focus on Google+ instead after six months.

Cue measurement and learning. If we treat every marketing strategy and technique as an experiment, and open ourselves to listening to the data, we will be able to make sound business decisions and smart changes in direction. This is an important mindset to develop as a contemporary marketer and is summed up in this quote;

“Don’t be afraid to get creative and experiment with your marketing”

– Mike Volpe

There is another quote that’s also relevant in this area;

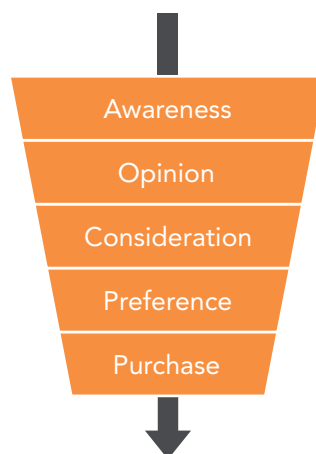
“Creativity is intelligence having fun”

– Albert Einstein

*Marketing should be FUN!*

## 4.1 HOW DOES DIGITAL MARKETING WORK?

As with most other marketers, both academic and practical, I am in favour of using a Sales Funnel approach. Note whilst in most cases it will be a funnel (Figure 4.1) – getting narrower as you move down the funnel and loose potential customers – in an ideal world the ‘funnel’ is actually a ‘pipeline’ constant diameter throughout indicating no loss of potential customers as they are move along it - this rarely happens in reality.



**Figure 4.1.** The Funnel model

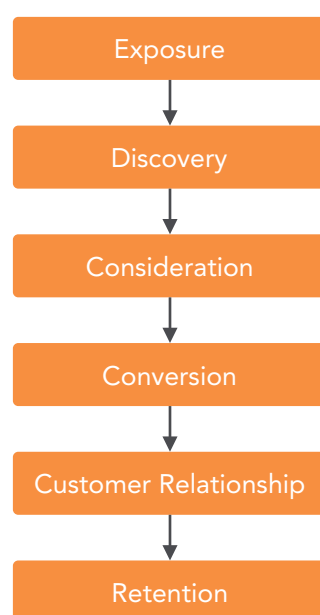
Imagine the bottom of a funnel, the narrowest part or mouth - this is the point where your prospects decide to become customers. It might be an online purchase from your website, or click through to an affiliate site, or a phone call to you. The details, of course, will vary depending on your business. This is the **conversion** point of the process. If you’ve read my series on Content Marketing (<https://bookboon.com/en/a-guide-to-content-marketing-preparing-ebook>) you will see that conversions and micro-conversions are key fundamentals to be incorporated into an integrated planning process.

As we move up the funnel, it widens to include pages within your site that educated the prospect on who you are, how you can solve their problems, and the specific products or services you offer. These are commonly referred to as landing pages, which are the **consideration** point of the process - when prospects are comparing you and your services to available alternatives.

Above that, the digital marketing funnel typically includes blog posts and other content within your site that visitors may read, leave, and come back to later on. In this **discovery** point, prospects may be educating themselves, not only on you, but about their problems as well.

And at the top of the digital marketing funnel, we have what I call outposts. These are social media profiles and channels, guest blog posts, search engine listings, email, referrals, and so on. Through these mediums, prospects are at the **Exposure** point where they may be hearing about you and your services for the first time, or perhaps they're looking for information on a topic which you've addressed.

It's also important to note that, unlike the traditional sales funnel, the digital marketing funnel continues beyond conversion. Since prospects who have become customers will continue to visit our websites, read our blog posts, and subscribe to our emails, our marketing efforts contribute to the ongoing **Customer Relationship** and **Retention**, both of which are critical components of a sustainable business and not to be overlooked. I cover these topics in detail in my two-book series on Obtaining and Retaining Customers (<https://bookboon.com/en/obtaining-and-retaining-customers-part-i-ebook> & <https://bookboon.com/en/obtaining-and-retaining-customers-part-ii-ebook>), but the basic steps are outlined below;



**Figure 4.1.2.** A basic step model of acquisition and Retention

## 4.2 WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS OF CONTEMPORARY DIGITAL MARKETING?

We've touched on a few of the elements already, like "Blog" and "Social Media." What we're going to do now is review all of the key elements in a logical order so, as mentioned earlier, you'll be familiar with each and the role they play in your overall marketing plan.

### 4.2.1 CONTENT

Content refers to information that you create and present for visitors and prospects to consume. It can be text, images, audio or video, and in a variety of formats.

Recall that at the bottom of the digital marketing sales funnel, at the **Conversion** point, you have a page or pages that allow that visitor and prospect to take a converting action. Typically, this is an order or contact page within your website.

That means that virtually all of your content needs to ultimately lead people to this single point and page. You can certainly chain content together - have a blog post that links to a page which links to another page which links to your order page - if that's what makes sense for your business and audience. It's all about understanding your audience. What are they looking for? What are their problems? What information, will they need, and in what order, to make a purchasing decision?

The two most important types of content are Landing Pages and Blog Posts.

**Landing Pages** - These are static pages within your site that are designed to educate a visitor and convert them into a lead or sale. Landing Pages can include video and images and as much or as little text as you need to be successful. Since, of course, we're only guessing initially as to what information a particular landing page needs in order to be successful, it's a good idea to routinely review and test your landing pages. Make a change that you think will improve how a page performs and then monitor the results. The success of a landing page is typically presented as a *Conversion Rate*, which is a simple equation of how many successful actions were generated (i.e. orders) over the total number of visitors for a given period.

For instance, a landing page that generated 336 orders last week, out of 4,500 visitors, has a conversion rate of 7.5%, which would be pretty good .

**Blog Posts** - Blog posts, on the other hand, are a little different. First, let's dispel the myth that blog posts are personal journal entries from you on what you've been doing since the last time you blogged. While some bloggers certainly write like that, that's not a business blog.

A business blog is a growing collection of content that helps educate visitors on specific topics. By so doing, the business introduces itself to the visitors and establishes its expertise and authority on those topics. In other words, your blog posts should demonstrate that you know what you're talking about.

Blog posts do not have to be any particular length and can include all of the different kinds of content we mentioned: text, images, audio or video.

Some bloggers create their content on third-party platforms - for example, video bloggers typically use YouTube to publish and share their content - but that's not our purpose here. We want our blog content to reside within our website, so even if we create a video or some other form of content on a third-party platform, we're going to embed that within a blog post on our own site.

*While there is some benefit to taking advantage of another platform's inherent audience and reach, the harsh reality is that anything you do on someone else's platform is not owned by you. You could potentially lose any such content. Additionally, your website should be far more effective at impacting and converting visitors due to its design and additional elements (like a sidebar), making it the preferred platform for the majority of your content.*



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Blog posts, then, are just pages of content that are designed to talk about a specific topic and make readers aware of our business. For this reason, you don't even have to have a "blog platform" - a system like Wordpress to publish and house blog posts. If you're going to blog a lot, such a system is nice, but hardly necessary. If you can create pages for your website, you can blog.

"Content is anything that adds value to the reader's life"

- Avinash Kaushik

The topics are covered in detail in my book on Content Marketing Implementation <https://bookboon.com/en/obtaining-and-retaining-customers-part-i-ebook>

#### 4.2.2 SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media refers to all of the networks and sites where people are able to create profiles and connect with one another in a social way. Not all social networks work the same, and not all are suitable for promoting a business. In fact, some networks, like Yahoo's image platform Flickr, specifically forbid using the network for business purposes, so be sure to review the Terms Of Service before you start promoting your business on a new network.

**Facebook** - Facebook is one of the largest social networks and is one that has specific features for businesses. You will need to create a "Facebook Page" that talks about your business and use that to attract interested readers and prospects. Facebook also offers an advanced and effective advertising system that allows businesses to place relevant ads in front of highly targeted Facebook users.

Businesses post status updates to Facebook that can include text, images or video. Fans of your Facebook Page who see your updates can "Like" the post to indicate interest, as well as Share or Comment on the post. Because not everyone is on social media all the time, and because Facebook tries to show content to Facebook users that they may actually be interested in, your Facebook status updates will only be seen by a small fraction of your total number of fans (generally <2%).

Broadcasting live videos that spark conversations and questions help increase engagement and reach tremendously.

Do consider allocating at least a minimal Facebook advertising budget of \$100 / month for this reason.

Facebook also offers a community feature called Facebook Groups, which allow Facebook users of similar interests to gather and hold discussions.

**Twitter** - This social network has often been described as a firehose, due to the rapid, non-stop frequency of status updates being posted. These are referred to as 'tweets.' Each tweet is based on a maximum of 280 characters of text. You can link to web pages, as well as include an image or video. Twitter followers who see your tweets can Favourite, Retweet or Reply.

Due to the nature of the activity on Twitter, it's estimated that, within 18 minutes, your tweet will have already reached its half-life, meaning that it will have been seen by most of the people it will ever be seen by.

While Twitter doesn't have a separate account or profile requirement for businesses, the network does offer a similar advertising system to Facebook, giving businesses the opportunity to put their tweets in front of a wider audience than just their current followers.

**LinkedIn** - Often seen as the professionals' network, LinkedIn certainly is focused on connecting employees with potential employers. But the network is far richer than that. LinkedIn profiles can just as easily be used to highlight the services you offer and problems you solve, and the network is fantastic for connecting with both prospects and potential partners.

LinkedIn does offer a business profile option called a Company Page, though the capabilities are quite limited. If possible, you should focus your efforts on a personal LinkedIn profile. A profile also gives you the option of publishing to the LinkedIn Pulse network which can help you reach a wider audience.

LinkedIn's community feature is called LinkedIn Groups.

**Google+** - Google's network is often overlooked as it has a higher learning curve associated with its successful use. Google+ uses a concept called Circles to help users manage their connections and status updates. It's a powerful concept and technique but is so radically different from other networks that it takes some getting used to.

Once you've learned how to use and leverage Circles though, you'll find Google+ to be extremely powerful. Google+ is uniquely suited to helping business owners connect with

other experts and prospects in various industries and niches. And of course, content and activity shared to Google+ is of great benefit to search.

Google+'s community feature is called Google+ Communities.

**YouTube** - The video platform is arguably the largest and most active social network - yet not without its limits. Clearly, the only content that can be shared there is video content. But once shared, such content can be found in search, liked, shared, commented on, and even embedded elsewhere.

Businesses can choose to leverage YouTube's popularity and other user's content through video advertisements and more importantly through 'How To' and other advice videos. YouTube can be very successfully linked via Twitter's Periscope add-in, see below.

**Pinterest** - This social network - which isn't really a social network - in essence it's a bookmarking and project management tool. Pinners can 'pin' images to specific boards that they create, resulting in collections of images and content. Businesses therefore can create boards regarding specific topics within their industry, and pin relevant articles and content. It's a great way to curate images.

**Instagram** - Is owned by Facebook and is a network aimed at sharing images. You can edit and apply filters to shared images, and followers can like and comment on images. Its usefulness is a little limited as Instagram images cannot be shared (unless you use a third-party tool), and cannot contain working links within the descriptions, making the network useful primarily for branding.

Instagram also supports a 60-second video format.

**SlideShare** - LinkedIn owns this network which is devoted to sharing slideshow presentations. Network users can like and comment and share presentations, as well as embed them. The presentations also work seamlessly with your LinkedIn profile. This is a highly underutilized network.

**Periscope** - This is a live video streaming platform that is integrated into Twitter. From their phones, users begin streaming whatever it is they're doing or seeing. It's great for behind-the-scenes looks, live events, or sending quick video messages to followers.

**Other Networks** - These represent just the top, most popular and most useful social networks. There are literally *thousands* of social networks in existence, with more being birthed regularly. Just be aware that there are far more networks out there to discover and think about, but we will review how to determine which ones to focus on in a moment.

“Social media are tools. Real time is a mindset”

– David Meerman Scott

### 4.2.3 SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO)

There are many ways to get more traffic and interested readers to your content and website, but few will rival the power of search engines. Google, and to a lesser extent Yahoo and Bing, exist to help people find the answers they’re looking for. If your site can provide those answers, you’ll rank well in search and, most importantly, bring more and more targeted traffic to your site.

And while search engines are constantly evolving to try and improve their results, there’s a lot that you can do to help Google and others understand what your site is about and who you’re trying to serve. This is referred to as Search Engine Optimization, or SEO.

SEO consists of modifications and adjustments to your site to make it more appealing to search engines. But it *also* means doing appropriate research and planning before you even begin writing your pages and posts.

### 4.2.4 SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING (SEM)

Another way that you can leverage the popularity and targeted nature of search engines is by placing advertisements above or near relevant search results. This is referred to as Search Engine Marketing, or SEM.

You may also know it as Pay Per Click (PPC) advertising or even Google AdWords.

When you know people are searching using specific search words/terms, you can place advertisements on those words such that they appear in the search results and bypass all of the competitors who are trying to rank organically within the results using SEO. Generally, you’ll only pay when someone clicks on your advert and you are likely to have to ‘buy’ the word in an auction in the first place. Its then up to your landing page to educate and convert that visitor, so its generally good practice to have a separate and optimised landing page for each word you purchase and not to use the normal one for your business. This is an error many make and then wonder why their efforts fail.

### 4.2.5 EMAIL MARKETING

The final critical element to your marketing plan is Email Marketing. Through email, you have an opportunity to regularly keep in touch with your interested prospects and customers. You can share new content with them, news, specials, and explore other ways to be helpful.

The key to a successful email marketing campaign though is to **start building your list immediately**. Be mindful however of the rules regarding data protection when undertaking this activity. Also bear in mind its about quality not quantity;

*"A small list that wants exactly what you're offering is better than a bigger list that isn't committed."*

– Ramsay Leimenstoll

### 4.3 TRADITIONAL MEDIA

Marketing at its core does not change that much because people's needs do not change—and anyone who says differently is selling something. What does change is the way in which those needs are satisfied and communicated. We tweet, text and post rather than make a telephone call and earlier still rather than write a letter about it. But we still talk about our lives, our wants, our likes, what we are doing, how we are living, with who, where etc.

Traditional live TV viewing is not “dying” and most people are not using DVRs to skip TV ads. Traditional “outbound” TV advertising is often still important enough that it retains a place. For example Pepsi Co. had a major problem and lost a lot of money; dropping to third place in terms of market share in the US when they moved their entire advertising spend from television to social media.

My point is that **NO** one marketing strategy or tactic is always best for every purpose, product, brand, or industry. In some cases TV advertising fits with the marketing environment, goals etc and should be a part of the promotion mix; sometimes not. I am a great exponent of content marketing is often is the best technique to use but it some cases is absolutely isn't. Sometimes contemporary “inbound” methods deliver the greatest value; but sometimes it's traditional “outbound” ones. The point is that at the root of marketing is an understanding of the potential customers – who they are, where they are, etc. In other words the building of Personas – I subject I've covered in depth in my Content Marketing series of books.

So as a marketer you should be familiar with the figure 4.3.1 below, the marcomms workflow;

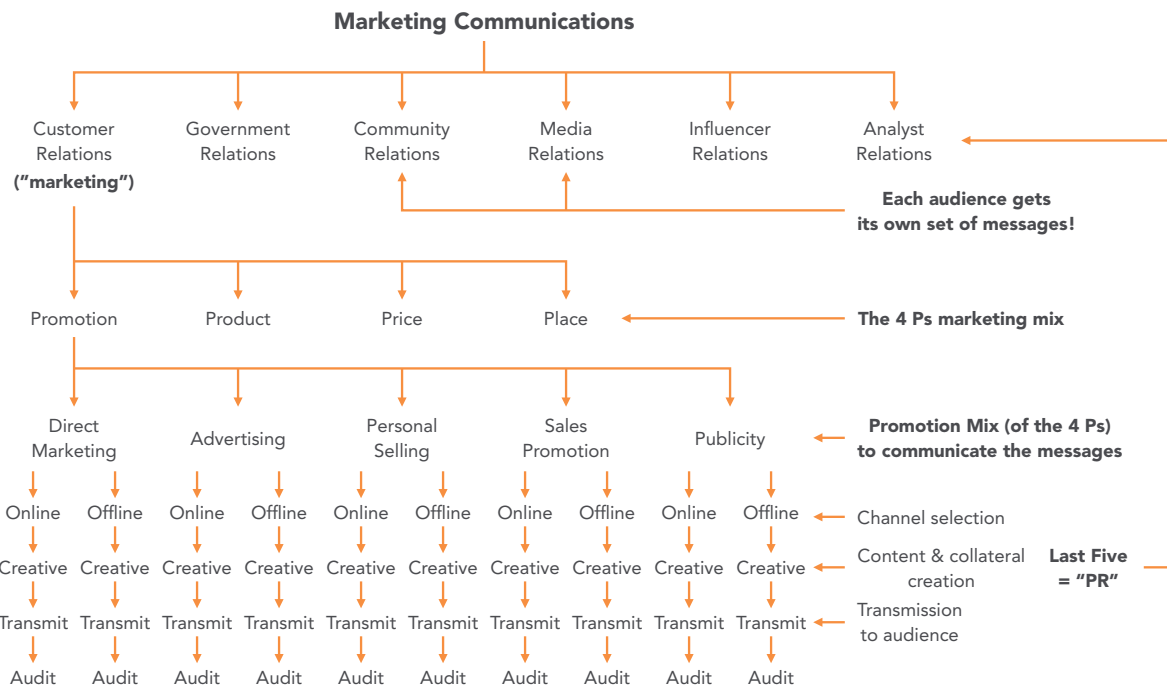


Figure 4.3.1 Marketing Communications workflow

The idea is to identify the audiences, the top of the diagram, then to work through the messages you want to communicate and select the media that best matches the audience and the message “fit”. You do this on a product or brand basis until you have a worked-up collection for the entire range of products and/or brands and *et voila* you have a communications plan. You then action this and measure and adjust according to success levels.

Each media in this diagram is defined as follows;

- Direct Marketing is “direct connections with carefully targeted individual consumers to both obtain an immediate response and cultivate lasting customer relationships.” Direct marketing includes catalogues, telephone marketing, kiosks, the Internet, mobile marketing, and more.
- Advertising is “any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor.” Advertising includes broadcast, print, Internet, outdoor, and other forms.
- Personal selling is “personal presentation by the firm’s salesforce for the purpose of making sales and building customer relationships.” Personal selling includes sales presentations, trade shows, and incentive programs.
- Sales Promotion is “short-term incentives to encourage the purchase or sale of a product or service.” Sales promotion includes discounts, coupons, displays, and demonstrations.
- Publicity is “gaining public visibility or awareness for a product, service, or your company via the media.” It includes TV interviews, news pieces, etc.

Now the Eagle eyed will have spotted already that at the bottom of the diagram the column titles Online and Offline are present for each traditional media – that’s right traditional media that’s offline has an online counterpart; direct marketing – email, direct response TV; Personal selling – customer agents on websites; advertising – click through ads, pop-ups, product placement. There are examples of each if you think about it.

That means that how you integrate traditional media with digital is actually about deciding which media ‘fits’ with the customers, the message and the market environment. Which is frankly standard marketing communications theory and has been since long before I started in marketing. Look diagram 4.3.2. below to see what I mean by this;

Promotion Method	Used For	Pros	Cons
Direct Marketing	Direct outreach to prospects in a database or sales list.	Easier to reach specific audiences and measure results.	People are overstated with marketing offers. Personal outreach brings need for customer service too.
Personal Selling	Used most often for expensive, technical, or specialized products.	Good salespeople are often the best marketing tools a company can have.	Salespeople can be expensive and take a lot of training.
Sales Promotion	Get people to use product more often. Gain competitor’s customers.	Creates excitement among audience. Can be used to test price sensitivity.	Risk of trivializing brand and product. Might be dependent on discounted promotions.
Advertising	Introduce audience to new products, features, and uses	Adds credibility & human face. Can be used at specific times. Builds brands.	High cost. Little follow-through and feedback. Consumer indifference.
Publicity	Getting attention for something that is newsworthy.	Objective news media is more trusted. Improves employee morale. Gets natural links.	High cost. Little control of outcome. Marketing messages might not reach audience.

**Figure 4.3.2** Promotional methods Pros and Cons.

The chart above presents an overview of the uses, benefits, and drawbacks of each element of the traditional promotion mix; note these apply to both the online and offline versions of each.

Answering some of the questions below can help to determine which of the following are relevant to your marketing goals and allow companies to allocate resources to each element appropriately.

- **I need to introduce a new product to a new market** (advertising)
- **I have a product that’s under attack by competitor’s products, and I need to retain my current customer base** (sales promotion)

- **I have a product that is highly specialized, technical, or expensive** (personal selling)
- **I need to correct false impressions or counter false claims made about my product** (publicity)
- **I need to create greater brand awareness of my product** (advertising)
- **I need to communicate new features to increase consumption by present customers** (direct marketing)
- **I have a product with a long sales cycle** (personal selling)
- **I need to generate more “buzz” or word-of-mouth business** (sales promotion or publicity)
- **I need to build a new image and reposition my product** (advertising)

Companies will generally allocate different weights to each part of the promotion mix based on how they answer these types of questions.

I commented earlier about my dislike of the term ‘digital marketing’, well if you understand the diagram above then you will also understand that “Digital marketing” is; direct marketing, sales promotion, personal selling, advertising or publicity via a specific collection of communications channels and apps that we call the Internet.

As such I will also state that for me there is no such thing as “social media marketing” as a thing unto itself. Why do I say that; let us think about the following;

- Posts, likes, comments, and shares are not examples of “social media marketing”; by definition, it is “publicity” (via an online channel) because it is “gaining public visibility or awareness for a product, service, or your company via the media.”
- If I extract – “export” - a list of people who mention “Widgets” on Twitter, or who join my “widget” Pinterest or Instagram posts, and then tweet or otherwise contact to each person to sell them my widgets, that is not “social media marketing.” By definition; it is doing very direct marketing (via an online channel) because I am establishing “direct connections with carefully-targeted individual consumers to both obtain an immediate response and cultivate lasting customer relationships.”
- If I respond to customers who are asking questions on Facebook or Twitter about how my company’s product works, then I am not doing “social media marketing.” Obviously, I’m doing customer support or sales development.

“Social media” is not and never will be a marketing strategy. Just like the telephone, is a communications channel via which marketing, PR, customer support, and more can all be performed. Using the telephone is a practical action, it’s a tactic, using social media is a tactic, it can be changed fairly quickly and fairly easily. You can do neither with a strategy.

So it's about a balance, choose your media mix with your market, goals, etc in mind. The media landscape is constantly changing so there is no right mix and it will be contextual, especially as traditional media tends to be more expensive and less personalised.

Sponsorship is the last traditional element of the marketing communications mix. Many academic texts place this in with advertising, alongside side product placement. In many ways it is very similar to advertising, paying 'sponsorship' to have your Brand / logo / product on a sports team shirt's, equipment, bus, balls, pitch side seats, or paying a blogger to feature your games / products in their vlog / podcast, etc are a form of advertisement. As is providing a tennis player, golfer or other star with branded equipment which is then used in sporting events – often televised internationally. Indeed, this aspect of sponsorship has led to the huge salaries and sums paid to such stars and their teams in these deals.

That said if we were to really look at difference between advertising and sponsorship they are really two sides of the same coin. Advertising is quantitative medium whereas sponsorship is qualitative; the promotion is alongside the sponsee such that both are promoted together. Indeed, it is the 'halo' effect that such co-promotion engenders in a target audience that appeals to marketers as it allows several goals to achieved concurrently; brand awareness, increased reach, sales promotion, positive publicity, corporate social responsibility, enhancing reputation amongst stakeholders, can all be done at the same time. As such integrated approaches with a central element of sponsorship are extremely common; Coca-Cola is a prime example, as is McDonalds.

In terms of integrated marketing it is yet another channel and can be assessed in the same way advertising as to its usefulness as a tool. Note sponsorship like the other elements has both an offline – traditional – and online – digital aspect.

Equally don't overlook social selling, covered in detail in my book <https://bookboon.com/en/social-selling-ebook>

## 5 PART II - CREATING YOUR PLAN

Now that you're familiar with the moving parts, it's time to consider your overall strategy, and put everything together into a cohesive plan.

As we mentioned earlier, there are four steps in this process:

- **Goals**
- **Assets**
- **Techniques**
- **Metrics**

For this next part, you're going to start making notes and plans. You can use a Word document or Evernote note or even a txt file. Personally, I recommend using an Evernote note or Google Doc - something that you'll be able to access easily from multiple devices and locations, as well as share with others. Remember, you're going to want to not only refer to this, but also revisit and change the plan over time.

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“If you aim at nothing, you will hit it every time”

– Zig Ziglar

## 5.1 GOALS

Start by identifying what your business goals are. Think about the nature of your business, and what would make it a success. And follow the reverse of our digital marketing funnel. Are you looking for sales or referrals? Leads? Traffic? Brand mentions? Social Followers?

Note and prioritize each.

Now, think about what you want as specific performance levels, and how quickly you want to reach them. How many sales do you want to target? How many leads will you need to be able to convert that many sales? How much traffic will you need to generate that many leads?

A good rule of thumb here is to use “1%.” One percent of your traffic will convert to leads, and 1% of those leads will convert into sales. Over time and through testing and experimentation (and depending on industry), you can work to rise above this. But it’s an acceptable place to start, and every plan begins somewhere.

When it comes to social media, rather than place emphasis on specific follower counts or social signals, the preferred methodology is to watch for increasing trends. We want to gain more followers each week. Get more likes and +1’s and shares, day after day. So to that end, we’ll be watching what we do and try on social media and paying attention to the techniques that yield the most fruit.

So now you should have some notes that look something like this:

1. Sales - 10 within first 30 days
2. Leads / Email Subscribers - 1000 within first 30 days
3. Traffic - 10,000+ within first 30 days
4. Increasing Brand Mentions on Social Media
5. Increasing Followers on Social Media

Of course, every business is different. Inexpensive products with regular consumers are easier to sell than expensive B2B services or Nuclear Power Stations! That said you’ll need less traffic and fewer leads to achieve profitability with a high-end offering. And remember that paid marketing and advertising can put you and your offerings in front of targeted leads at a much faster rate than what you’ll achieve organically.

The less money you have to invest in marketing, the lower your expectations may have to be.

“Whether B2B or B2C, I believe passionately that good marketing essentials are the same. We all are emotional beings looking for relevance, context and connection”

– Beth Comstock

## 5.2 ASSETS

Which brings us to assets. While you can effectively promote a business with little to no cash investment, carefully consider how you can use money to increase rates of traffic and lead generation. How much can you afford to allocate to your marketing budget today?

### 5.2.1 BUDGET: £500 / MONTH, INCLUDING SITE & TOOLS, ETC

Who can or will be assisting with your marketing? Make a note.

### 5.2.2 STAFF: DEPARTMENT, NAMES, EXTERNAL VS. INTERNAL, ETC

If you don't already have a website, that needs to be in the plans. As does a Blog WordPress site up and running affordably.

### 5.2.3 WEBSITE & BLOG: WORDPRESS, ETC

Do you have existing profiles on any social networks? If so, list them here, along with your current follower/fan base. If possible, make a note as to where those followers came from and how relevant/interested they are in your new business topic.

## 5.2.4 TWITTER: 15,400 FOLLOWERS INTERESTED IN TECH AND SOCIAL MEDIA

## 5.2.5 FACEBOOK: 1,300 FAMILY, FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES

## 5.2.6 LINKEDIN: 2,500+ CONNECTIONS AND FOLLOWERS

Finally, note all your existing marketing materials and assets. Do you have a logo? A slogan? Any brochures and other materials that you've created that you might draw from?

Pull all of that together. If you're starting from scratch, that's OK too.

At this point, consider your target audience; what you're going to say to them? You'll need to use language on your website and in your communications that immediately communicates to new visitors and readers who you are and what you do, and why they should care. You're going to need an "About" section for all of your social profiles too, which may be very similar.

And of course, for every service you provide or problem you solve, your website needs a page that talks about that.

*"Our jobs as marketers are to understand how the customer wants to buy and help them do so"*

– Bryan Eisenberg

## 5.3 TECHNIQUES

At a high level, your marketing technique will be to create interesting and helpful content that educates readers on the subject, presents you as an authority, and puts them in a position to be interested in hiring you or purchasing from you.

Here's how you do that.

### 5.3.1 CONTENT SCHEDULE

First, create a plan on how often you're going to add new content to your website. Whether it's in the form of pages or blog posts, that's up to you. But you need a publishing schedule and, initially, it needs to be inviolable. If you allow yourself to stray from this schedule early on, it will be too hard to get back on track and before you know it, you're way behind in your marketing.

Now, for a startup business and website, it's important to get rolling as quickly as you can, and that means a high rate of publication at first. Generally, I recommend **at least** three to five pages or blog posts per week for the first six months. After that, if things are going well, you can ratchet down to two to three per week, and then eventually down to one per week.

A couple of years ago, HubSpot, a marketing platform, did some analysis of business blogs and their relative search engine traffic and lead generation. On average, most business blogs began to see an exponential increase in search engine referral traffic after they'd published more than 50 pieces of content. Lead generation rose accordingly.

That means that typically, if you post just once per week, it will be a year before you begin to see real gains in referral traffic.

**Publishing Schedule:** Monday, Wednesday, Friday

### 5.3.2 CONTENT TOPICS

Next, you'll need to think about what you're going to write about. Again, this is going to be a combination of Landing Pages and Blog Posts.

Your Landing Pages should be very focused on the areas in which you are delivering authority. For each main landing page, consider two to three topics which you could write on and add as sub-pages. And then, for each one of those sub-pages, think about two to three blog posts that you can write that relate to those topics.

**Landing Page:** Facebook Marketing

**Sub-Pages:** Facebook Advertising, Facebook Insights

**Blog Posts:** How to Use Facebook's Power Editor, How to Read

Facebook Insights

When you're through, you will have all of your site's most important content mapped out. You don't necessarily have to write it all overnight, and you can certainly mix in other blog posts into your publishing schedule as topics come to mind. But now you have a plan.

One of the great uses of keyword research tools is to brainstorm content topics. You can actually see the phrases (keywords) that people are searching on and develop ideas for new pages or posts from that.

For instance, if I'd wanted to use this book as an article, I might have focused it more on social media and referred to it as a "Social Media Marketing Template" as I know from that a *lot* of people are searching for that, but there isn't a lot of competition.

Try to tell stories as you write. Whether on your landing pages or in blog posts, it is stories which bring your audience into the room with you, while you weave in details of your expertise.

"Marketing is no longer about the stuff that you make, but about the stories you tell"

– Seth Godin

### 5.3.3 SOCIAL MEDIA PRIORITIZATION

Next, think about the social networks that you're going to be active on. There's no "right" answer here. Rather, there are a number of considerations for you, such as:

- Which social networks are you already active on?
- Which social networks have an audience that seems best suited to your business?
- Which social networks favour the type of content that you prefer or are able to create?
- Do you have a personal preference?

While considering those points, what we want to do is put the major social networks into tiers. While I think you should create a professional profile on *every* social network, you only need to maintain constant activity on one or two.

**Tier One:** Facebook and Twitter

**Tier Two:** LinkedIn, Pinterest, Instagram

**Tier Three:** Google+, YouTube, SlideShare, etc.

For Facebook, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn and YouTube, you will need a "cover photo" that is a custom graphic branded to reflect your business (and tie into your overall marketing image). And for all social profiles, use a professional logo or professional-looking headshot for the profile image.

### 5.3.4 SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY

Instruction on how to use each individual social network is outside the scope of this book, as it would be extensive to outline techniques and best practices for even just the top five or six networks. Here's what you need to keep in mind, and what you need to integrate into your marketing plan.

Social Media is not an advertising medium. It's an opportunity for you to connect with prospects and readers and potential partners. It's a place where you can share content and information, offer value and assistance, and create a reputation for yourself. If you always think about how or whether a particular post will be interesting and helpful to your audience, you'll make good progress.

*"Build it, and they will come" only works in the movies. Social Media is  
a build it, nurture it, engage them and they may come and stay"*

*– Seth Godin*

First, every time you publish a new piece of content to your website, share it to social media. Once you've selected your top priority network, research best practices for sharing to that network so that your shares look and perform optimally.

For instance, when you share a new blog post to Google+, include a bolded title in your post, an introduction that gets people interested and talking, the link, hashtags and an image. Note how this fits with AIDA that we covered earlier in this book.

Every social network has its own unique set of best practices, so be mindful of them. Also, you'll only share new blog posts to Facebook once, but you should tweet them three to four times the first day, one or two the second day, and then have it in a rotation to be routinely tweeted along with your other content. LinkedIn, Google+ and Pinterest will all tolerate a second share later in the day. WordPress and many other similar pieces of software can do this automatically and if you synchronise this to your website you'll also raise your SEO through its dynamic content.

Second, when you're not sharing new blog content, you're going to want to share content and articles from other sources that will also be helpful and interesting to your audience. This is called "curated" content. The easiest way to do this is to identify several sources of information that regularly publish new posts and aren't direct competitors. You can then subscribe to their RSS Feeds using Feedly. The RSS Feed just shares new content, and a reader like Feedly allows you to see it (and even share it). Again using trusted third party website will raise your SEO but ensure these are relevant or you might get marked down – the days of link stuffing are long gone!

**Sources:** [agorapulse.com/blog](http://agorapulse.com/blog), [thesocialmediahat.com](http://thesocialmediahat.com), [mashable.com](http://mashable.com), [pegfitzpatrick.com](http://pegfitzpatrick.com), [rebekahradice.com](http://rebekahradice.com)

Third, try to find some other experts in your field and industry who are active on social media, regularly providing value, and with whom you would be interested in forming a stronger relationship. These people are “influencers” or in some texts “mavens” and represent a powerful marketing opportunity. If an influencer in your niche decides to share one of your blog posts, you might see more traffic in a day than you did all last month. So, pick a few, begin following them, and regularly reshare some of their helpful material.

**Influencers:** Guy Kawasaki, Peg Fitzpatrick, Martin Shervington, Chris Brogan, Brian Solis

Finally, prepare a series of business-related messages that you can use to remind your audience who you are and what you do. Share these sparingly – about once a week, but they must be included. It might be a sales message, invitation to subscribe to your newsletter, or just a link to follow you on your primary network.

You can now set a social media activity schedule that looks something like this:

**Facebook:** New Blog Post share, One curated content share **Twitter:** New Blog Post share x 4, 4 curated content, 2 influencers retweets, 2 archived posts

**LinkedIn:** New Blog Post share, One curated content share **Google+:** New Blog Post share, One curated content share, One influencer share

Modify as needed to reflect your own network priorities and desired levels of activity.

Use a tool like [Agorapulse](http://Agorapulse) to schedule much of this activity in advance, leaving you free to focus on your day-to-day business needs. However, you will want to spend a little time each day on your most important social network connecting with others, commenting on posts, and simply engaging with people.

Also, be sure to keep an eye out for comments and mentions from your followers and always respond and thank people in a timely fashion.

“Today it’s important to be present, be relevant and add value”

– Nick Besbeas

### 5.3.5 SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

When it comes to SEO, as was mentioned before, one of the best things you can do is research your topics ahead of time using a keyword research tool, and then create content for those topics. I recommend [SEMrush](#).

Beyond that, here are some general tips to keep in mind as you go:

1. Register your site with a free Google Webmaster Tools account to monitor your site, see how many pages have been indexed, and to submit a sitemap.
2. Use your targeted keywords as often as possible while still sounding natural. Do not “stuff” them by using them excessively.
3. Use lots of images and use keywords in image filenames and ALT tags.
4. Don't worry about the Keywords meta tag but do fill in all other meta tags appropriately.
5. Use [SEMRush](#) to routinely audit your site and note errors and issues that you may need to address.
6. Social Media and/or Search Engine Paid Advertising

Between your website, hosting, and a few other tools (like Agorapulse), so far you're probably only spending £100 or less per month on marketing. Assuming you're willing to create content and manage your social media yourself, you should be able to invest some money then into paid advertising.

While there are many options, like banner ads, Fiverr campaigns and so on, in my experience, you'll get the most bang for your buck with Google AdWords and Facebook Ads. Depending on your business and target audience, you might also consider ads on Twitter, Pinterest and/or LinkedIn. But they tend to have a higher cost (Cost Per Click, or, CPC) than the alternatives, so let's focus on Google and Facebook.

**Google** - When you decide to advertise with Google, you have a lot of options and decisions to make, but let's at least get you a high-level perspective so that you can decide if it's interesting to you or not.

We mentioned earlier that using Google advertisements, you can place advertisements above or near search results that are relevant to your business and brand; SEM. Additionally, Google serves advertisements on actual websites and you can choose to place your adverts in the “Content Network” and reach people who are, perhaps, reading about a topic and not necessarily doing a Google search.

When you place advertisements, you will set a bid amount and a daily budget. The bid amount is the maximum amount you're willing to spend per click (i.e. £0.09), and your ad then competes against other advertisers interested in reaching the same audience. Advertisements with a higher bid are displayed first.

Again, you're only charged when someone clicks your advert, so you'll want to find a balance between ranking high for your ad and getting enough clicks and leads and sales to make it worthwhile.

Your ads will continue to display until you reach your daily budget, so it's up to you how much you spend.

**Facebook** - When you decide to advertise with Facebook, you can either create a new advert, or choose to use a status update that you've already shared.

The advertising fee structure is similar Google's in that you can set a click daily budget. But you don't set a bid per click. Instead, Facebook will begin showing your ads and the more interest people show, the less per click you'll be charged.

So, it's in everyone's best interests to create Facebook advertisement posts that are interesting and compelling.

I typically recommend a 45/45/10 split in your Facebook advertising budget. Put 45% toward an advertising campaign that links to a specific landing page, 45% toward promoting new blog posts and status updates throughout the month, and then just 10% toward attracting new Page Likes for future marketing.

You can also set up a remarketing pixel - a snippet of code that's installed on your website - so that Facebook can track users who have been to your website and allow you "re-market" to those individuals with an advertisement. Some areas call this retargeting.

Thus your marketing budget might now look like this:

- Website, Hosting, etc.: £75/month
- Buffer: £10/month
- Hootsuite: £10/month
- Google AdWords: £100/month
- Facebook Ads: £250/month

That still leaves you some room to buy stock images for blog posts and social media activity, and so on.

## 5.4 METRICS

In line with the goals we determined earlier, you will need to be able to track the success of your marketing efforts.

**Traffic** - We'll start with traffic because this is where everyone should start. Simply sign up for a free Google Analytics account and make sure it's connected to your website. Once that's in place, you will be able to use the account to see not only how much traffic is coming to your site, but where it's coming from, how long they're staying, and what they're doing.

**Conversions** - The easiest way to track conversions is to make sure that you have a Thank You or Confirmation page once the conversion action has been completed by a visitor. You can then set up a Goal within Google Analytics to track that.

**Leads** - There are lots of options when it comes to lead management and email marketing, and one may work better for you and your business than the others. My preference is usually to use [MailChimp](#). You can insert a signup form or page with whatever offer you want and track how many people choose to subscribe. And for new businesses with small lists, MailChimp is free.

**Social Media** - What you can track and how you can track it will vary depending on which network(s) you're starting with. Some, like Facebook, offer built-in analytics with their business accounts. Others, like LinkedIn, really don't tell you much at all. If you need more than what a particular network is offering, consider a third-party tool like Agorapulse or [Tailwind](#) (Pinterest and Instagram).

## 6 PART III - MAKING COURSE CORRECTION

Well done for getting through this far! All those marketing concepts and strategies is quite intense and daunting; especially if you are new to this. Hopefully though, you've been taking notes and working through the process, and that should make it a lot easier than if you'd just attacked this on your own.

You'll also find a Marketing Plan Worksheet in the final section that you can use as guide or even print out and complete.

So why course corrections – well nothing ever goes quite how you plan it. Forgive me for borrowing from a well-known military strategist of some repute;

*"Those who are victorious plan effectively and change decisively. They are like a great river that maintains its course but adjusts its flow"*

– Sun Tzu

What if you could build your future and create the future?

The innovation accelerator

One generation's transformation is the next's status quo. In the near future, people may soon think it's strange that devices ever had to be "plugged in." To obtain that status, there needs to be "The Shift".

.....Alcatel·Lucent 

[www.alcatel-lucent.com/careers](http://www.alcatel-lucent.com/careers)

Helmuth Von Moltke put it succinctly too;

**“No plan survives first contact with the enemy.”**

Steve Blank the American business guru responsible for the Lean Start-up movement adapted the phrase to read, “No marketing plan survives contact with the customer.” A little dramatic but I hope you get the idea – planning is everything! But you then must be versatile and adapt as the circumstances change. Its not in the scope of this book to look at environmental scanning but I recommend you look at my strategic marketing book (<https://bookboon.com/en/strategic-marketing-ebook>) for an understanding of the analytical tools required to track and grasp changes in the competitive landscape.

## 6.1 CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

One of the best ways to learn about your business and target audience is to... wait for it... **talk to them!** As Steve Blank put it, “Get out of the building.” That means ensuring that you’re leaving time and space to talk to your customers, target market, other stakeholders and anyone else who can provided a perspective on your business and market or even on business in general. This could be in the form of interviews, focus groups, surveys, etc. It doesn’t really matter what format you use, so long as you do it and then use it – take action based on what you hear.

By talking to other people, we give ourselves and our business the unique opportunity to learn and adapt quickly, rather than waiting for monthly, quarterly or annual reports to see that something’s wrong, but still not quite knowing what it is.

## 6.2 READER FEEDBACK

Along the same lines, make sure that you give your readers an opportunity to comment on your blog posts and content if possible. Comments may sometimes be harsh, if your content is lacking, but sometimes a jolt is needed to dispel our myopia. Comments are also an opportunity to further help our readers and establish a real community and audience.

Inviting email subscribers to reply to you with questions and comments works along the same lines. Indeed, when I began my own specialist blog on Netnography many years ago, I joined a group of other fledgling bloggers. We read and shared vlogs then critiqued and suggested amendments etc. Whilst some exchanges were painful overall it made my blog much better.

## 6.3 ANALYTICS

Reading and comprehending the various analytics reports that are available is more art than science. Why? Because they contain nothing more than data, and it's up to the reader to apply context which is what turns data into intelligence. Data without context is relatively meaningless; 200 visitors is data. 200 visitors in a week versus in a minute is completely different, 200 visitors a minute when the competition get 3000 is also completely different. Context is King and is key to analytics.

For instance, what if I told you that a certain blog post received 200+ social signals last week and over 240 visitors, and that out of those visitors, there were a dozen new leads. Is that good or bad? The conversion rate might seem good, yet the overall traffic might seem poor. Just 240 visitors? But if you learned that the site itself was just **3 weeks old** and that this was the **first blog post ever promoted** from the site, the traffic now seems more reasonable. Perhaps even great!

That's context, it has to be applied to everything we read and see but, it's equally challenging to know exactly what context to apply and when. Often, there's context and variables at work on the data that we're unaware of.

This is incredibly important whenever you're reading about other people's blogs and websites and they start sharing real data with you. They'll talk about XX,XXX visitors a month but what you need to keep firmly in mind is how long they've been up and running, how much content *they've* created, and all of the other marketing methods they've employed over that time.

With that perspective, watch your daily, weekly and monthly statistics. Over time, which pages are getting more traffic than others? Can you improve them? Do you need to do something about your other, less popular pages? Where's your traffic tending to come from?

You want to look for opportunities to capitalize on what you're getting and improve the areas that can be improved. Months, even years, after you've published a piece of content, it might begin to rank well and get more traffic. And in the meantime, your business focus may have shifted. So be mindful of what people are doing and reading on your site, and always be looking for ways to improve the experience.

The same holds true for social media metrics. It's easy to be caught up in the vanity of large numbers. Don't be. Instead, work to create relationships with people on social media. Social networks exist to make that as easy as possible, but it's still a one-at-a-time process.

"Our job is to connect to people, to interact with them in a way that leaves them better than we found them, more able to get where they'd like to go"

– Seth Godin

## 7 CONCLUSION

So now you're on your way to promoting your new business! We hope this book has been useful to you and offered some insight into how digital marketing and a marketing plan can help you grow.

Your next step is to put these plans into action. Along the way, you're going to have questions. Lots of them. And that's OK. Fortunately, when it comes to marketing at least, there are lots of great resources out there. Take advantage of them. But always keep in mind that the single greatest marketing method for your business is to provide a great product or service. Your customers will appreciate it and tell others.

*"Great service is like giving your customer a big hug"*

– Ken Blanchard

# APPENDIX 1 ; THE CLASSIC EIGHT STEP FRAMEWORK

## Step 1: State your marketing objectives

Perhaps you would like to increase awareness of the product or service you provide, increase sales and revenues by a certain percentage, and/or increase the number of customers who purchase your product or service. For example, your objective(s) could be to increase sales by 10 percent by the end of next year, sell 50 more boxes of your product, sell 10 percent of what you produce directly to consumers, or participate in at least one trade show.

- **TIP: Be realistic about your marketing objectives; make sure they are specific and quantifiable so you can measure your progress toward achieving them**
- **TIP: Your marketing objectives can be expressed in terms such as sales dollars, sales units, market share, distribution levels/channel, and awareness**
- **TIP: Try to limit the number of marketing objectives to less than four; two is ideal for most companies**

## Step 2: Identify demographics of your target market

One way to determine your customer demographics (e.g., age, sex, profession, income level, education level, residency, individual or business, etc.) is to write a description of your target audiences. Once you have done so, focus on only those customers who are most likely to purchase your product or service. As your business and resources grow, you can focus on a wider segment of the overall market.

- **TIP: The target market is a group of customers (people or firms/packinghouses) for whom your marketing effort is intended; your target choice will determine your production and marketing practices, not vice versa**
- **TIP: A target market is not simply whoever is buying, or will buy, your products; rather it consists of the individuals or businesses you identify as your *most desirable customers***

### Step 3: Identify your competition

There are several ways to go about identifying the competition. One way is to identify other farm businesses that are offering somewhat similar products or services to the customers you are targeting and within your price range. Once you have identified your competitors, analyze two to four such businesses by answering the following questions. How are these businesses doing in terms of sales and demand for their product/service? What are the similarities and dissimilarities between your product/service and theirs? What are some of your competitors' strengths and weaknesses? What do the customers think about your competitors' product/service? Can you capitalize on some of your competitors' weaknesses? How can you create better value for your customers? What pricing strategies are your competitors using? Can you improve on their strategies?

- **TIP: Select a set of competitors and identify their strengths and weaknesses. How do they promote their product? What is their pricing strategy? Is there anything unique or special about their products?**

**Step 4: Describe your product/service** A product may be a commodity or service, or both. What products/services are you offering? How is what you offer different from your competitors' product or service? How do customers perceive the benefits of the product/service you are providing? What do customers perceive as the special features of your product/service?

Other questions to keep in mind when defining your product/service include the following: Can you appeal to environmentally conscious or health-conscious customers? How are you going to present your product/service to customers? Is there an increase or decrease in the supply of your product/service on the market?

- **TIP: Remember that without customers your business is out of business; it is important that you give your customers a reason to buy your product and to remain loyal (long-term, repeat customers)**
- **TIP: Always aim to produce what you can sell rather than sell what you can produce**

### Step 5: Define place (distribution strategy)

When we talk about place, we are thinking about more than just the physical location of a business; place also includes how you plan to get the product/service into the hands of your customers (the place they need it). To do this, you need to answer the following

questions: How widely do you plan to geographically distribute your product/service (e.g., locally, in-state, multi-state, nationally, internationally)? Are you going to be selling directly (direct marketing) to customers? (Direct marketing includes community supported agriculture (CSA), home delivery, farmers' markets, mail order and internet sales, pick your own (U-pick), and roadside stands.) Are you going to be selling indirectly (intermediary marketing) to packing houses or retailers?

- **TIP: Consider your product distribution plan and determine the best type of packaging**
- **TIP: Packaging serves to protect and preserve your product and to advertise and differentiate your product**

### **Step 6: Choose your promotion strategy**

Promotion refers to the entire set of activities that inform people about your product/service. Promotion induces customers to prefer your product/service over those of your competitors. Promotion is simply how you get people to know about the product/service you provide. It deals with how and what you want to communicate to customers/ buyers. Several tools can be used, including mass media (radio, television, internet, newspapers, magazines, yellow pages, billboards, etc.), direct mail, personal contacts, trade associations, and social media (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest).

You also need to identify the amount of resources (human and capital) you can set aside for your promotions.

- **TIP: Social media is one of the most cost-effective means of promoting your business**

### **Step 7: Develop a pricing strategy**

There are several pricing strategies such as cost-oriented pricing, flexible pricing, and relative pricing. Cost-oriented pricing strategy involves setting your price at a certain percentage level, say 25%, above your production cost. Flexible pricing strategy is where you vary the price depending on the buyer or time (e.g., time of year). Relative pricing strategy is simply using the prevailing market price to set your own price whether it is above, below, or at the same price. No matter which pricing strategy you use, you need to be aware of

the following: What are the pricing strategies used by your competitors? What is your cost of production?

Typically, your price should be based on the prevailing market prices and your costs. It should cover your full cost of production and include a profit. You can do simple market research to learn about what prices customers would be willing to pay and what prices your competitors are charging.

- **TIP: To get the maximum price, try to schedule production when there is limited competing supply**

### **Step 8: Create a marketing budget**

Since you do not have unlimited resources, it is best to identify how much time and money you want to allocate to marketing.

- **TIP: Estimate how much it will cost for any marketing strategy you propose in your marketing plan and stick to your budget (e.g., if you plan to participate in a trade show, estimate the costs for traveling, marketing materials, and booth rental)**

# APPENDIX 2; MARKETING PLAN MEDIA WORKSHEET

Complete the following fields:

## My Business Goals

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

## My Business Assets

Total Budget:

Total Staff:

Website:

Social Profiles:

Materials:

## Content

Publishing Schedule:

Landing Pages:

Sub-Pages:

Blog Post Topics:

## Social Networks

Tier 01: \_\_\_\_\_

Tier 02: \_\_\_\_\_

Tier 03: \_\_\_\_\_

Sources:

Influencers:

### Activity

Network: \_\_\_\_\_ Frequency: \_\_\_\_\_  
Network: \_\_\_\_\_ Frequency: \_\_\_\_\_  
Network: \_\_\_\_\_ Frequency: \_\_\_\_\_  
Network: \_\_\_\_\_ Frequency: \_\_\_\_\_  
Network: \_\_\_\_\_ Frequency: \_\_\_\_\_  
Network: \_\_\_\_\_ Frequency: \_\_\_\_\_  
Network: \_\_\_\_\_ Frequency: \_\_\_\_\_  
Network: \_\_\_\_\_ Frequency: \_\_\_\_\_

### Targeted Keywords

01: \_\_\_\_\_  
02: \_\_\_\_\_  
03: \_\_\_\_\_

Google AdWords Budget:

Facebook Advertising Budget:

[Other] Advertising Budget:

Tool: \_\_\_\_\_ Cost: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tool: \_\_\_\_\_ Cost: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tool: \_\_\_\_\_ Cost: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tool: \_\_\_\_\_ Cost: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tool: \_\_\_\_\_ Cost: \_\_\_\_\_