

Preparing a Marketing Plan? Think About a Few Things Before You Write It!

Your Company

What makes your company, product or service better than the competition?

Define your company and its customers:

- Are you the newest in town?
- Are you the oldest and best established in town?
- Are you the most experienced and well traveled?
- Do you sell high quality products, mass market or low cost product?
- Do you sell a niche product?
- Other?

Your Goals

Define your long and short-term goals for your company.

Where do you want to be in:

- 1 year _____
- 2 years _____
- 5 years _____

Customers

Define your *best* customers:

- How did you get them?
- How can you retain them?
- How can you get the same good customers?
- What media most effectively reaches that type of customer?

If you have a list of customers but cannot define the best, how can you find them?

1. Use personal interviews?
2. Send a questionnaire with a free offer for responding?
3. Telephone research of existing customers?

Your Service

Are you providing "Knock Your Socks Off" service?

- How can you better serve your customer?
- Informative Newsletter?
- Service skills staff training?
- Product training?
- Ask your customers?
- Ask your employees?
- Evaluate the entire sales process from the first contact to follow up?

Educate Your Customers

You need to educate your customers about the good and “not so good” features of your product. For example, if you have researched check-in procedures at your gateway airport, what are they to expect?

- Destinations- pros and cons
- All inclusive vacations vs. independent
- Check in procedures
- Differences in certain Cruise and Tour operators
- Other?

Prompt Your Customers

- Tell them what you do
- Tell them where you are; provide a map, where to park or directions.
- What hours are you open?
- Will they need to have payment ready?
- Do you have a Web Site you want them to visit?

Tracking

You must analyze every promotion to determine the profit or loss!

- Design a worksheet; paper or electronic
- Who keeps track? Bookkeeper, agents, Manager?
- Data tracking outside firm?

Advertising

You can't open the doors and wait for customers. You need to go out and get 'em.

- Make your ads convincing to the customer
- Every ad should demand a direct response. (Call to action)
- The more you tell, the more you sell!
- Don't be too funny or pompous
- What are your ads like now?

Reselling to your Customers

Once you have a customer it's easier to re-sell them than find a new one.

- Newsletters
- Database target marketing (Know their travel preferences, birthdays, etc.)
- Email blasts
- Focus groups
- What else?

Distribution

Define your markets and distribution channels. Look at your market in terms of clients and geography.

- Are you focusing primarily on a local or limited area?
- Are you able to distribute nationally?
- Are you marketing via the Internet?
- Do you distribute through independent contractors to national markets?
- Does your product limit itself to a particular geographical area?