

Marketing Plan that Drives Sales Worksheet

M. H. “Mac” McIntosh

Introduction

This worksheet is a companion to the how-to guides entitled, “How to Boost Your Company’s Sales with Marketing” and “Business-to-Business Lead-Generation Tactics: A Recipe for Success,” available at www.sales-lead-experts.com/tips/tools/. It is designed to walk you through the steps required to develop a marketing plan that drives sales.

Your primary marketing objective should be to bring in new business—to stimulate prospects and customers to “raise their hands” and declare themselves interested in your products or services. This “marketing-for-leads” approach drives sales, and it should be the core strategy of your company’s marketing plan.

The marketing communications tactics used to market for leads are bottom-line oriented; they focus on generating, nurturing and qualifying sales leads. Your goal is to identify real sales opportunities that your salespeople can transform into new or incremental business for your company.

Although branding and awareness activities are important, they should be integrated with your marketing-for-leads programs rather than conducted independently from them. In other words, focus your efforts first on activities that result in sales leads, letting brand building and awareness come along for the ride.

This worksheet has two parts. The first part, “Where to Start,” walks you through a series of questions designed to help you determine the goals, strategies and tactics your marketing plan should include. The second part, “How to Write Your Marketing Plan,” walks you through the steps involved in putting your written marketing plan together.

Part I: Where to Start

The objectives of your marketing plan are to:

- Establish clear, measurable sales and revenue goals.
- Identify the best strategies for meeting those goals.
- Identify the tactics to be used to implement the strategies for meeting the goals.

The following series of questions will help you determine the goals, strategies and tactics required in your marketing plan. After you have answered these questions, you will be prepared to craft your own marketing plan, as explained in Part II of this document.

Marketing Plan that Drives Sales Worksheet

Goals

1. The first step is to determine your company's goals for sales revenue in the coming year:
 - a) What is your company's minimum sales revenue goal? _____
 - b) What is your company's target sales revenue goal? _____
 - c) What is your company's stretch sales revenue goal? _____

2. What percentage of revenue needs to come from new business, keeping in mind the amount of new business you will need to grow to the desired level as well as the amount of new business required to replace business you will lose during the targeted period? Use the following method to calculate this figure:

Your company's current year's sales revenue \$ _____

The percentage of business you expect to lose during the next year
x _____ %

The sales revenue from new business your company must generate during the next year just to stay even = \$ _____

Additional sales revenue from new business needed to meet the new sales revenue goal + \$ _____

Total revenue needed from new business to meet the sales revenue goal = \$ _____

3. What percentage of new business revenue needs to come from marketing-generated leads? For example, if your sales force typically generates 40 percent of the new business opportunities required to meet your company's sales revenue goal, your marketing-for-leads program will need to generate the other 60 percent.

Marketing Plan that Drives Sales Worksheet

4. What is your company’s definition of a “qualified lead”? This should be a definition agreed upon by marketing, management and sales.

5. How many qualified leads from marketing do you need to meet your revenue goals? (To do this calculation, please refer to the Marketing Lead Calculator located at the www.salesleadexperts.com/tools link.)

6. How many new inquiries do you need so you can identify enough qualified sales leads? (Refer to the Marketing Lead Calculator to determine this figure.)

7. How many marketing touches do you need to make in order to generate enough inquiries? (Once again, refer to the Marketing Lead Calculator to determine this figure.)

Strategy

8. What specific business problems do your products and services address? What kinds of problems is your company qualified to solve?

9. What are your company's competitive advantages?

To help answer this question, you can perform a SWOT analysis. SWOT stands for: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. SWOT analysis can help you understand how your company's abilities (internal) fit into the broader market environment (external). Strengths and Weaknesses are internal issues, and Opportunities and Threats are external issues.

Internal Issues: Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths include your expertise, employees, financial security and reputation in the marketplace. Your company's competitive advantage springs from its Strengths. They are your company's competitive assets.

Weaknesses are the things your company is not good at doing or doesn't have available. They are the flip side of your strengths. After looking at your weaknesses, you may find some that are so obstructive to success that they must be remedied. Weaknesses are your company's competitive liabilities.

External Issues: Opportunities and Threats

Changes and events in the marketplace—the external environment—can and should affect your company's strategy. When looking at opportunities and threats, consider both current and future environment.

Opportunities include changes in the environment from which your company could benefit.

Threats include changes in the environment that could put your company at risk.

Marketing Plan that Drives Sales Worksheet

For your own company and for your two leading competitors, list pertinent Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats in the table below.

Strengths			Weaknesses		
Your Co.	Competitor 1	Competitor 2	Your Co.	Competitor 1	Competitor 2
Opportunities			Threats		
Your Co.	Competitor 1	Competitor 2	Your Co.	Competitor 1	Competitor 2

Marketing Plan that Drives Sales Worksheet

- b) Evaluate the other characteristics of the companies on this list. How large are they? Where are they located geographically? What are the titles or job functions of their decision makers? What applications do they have for your products or services? Analyze your answers to identify common traits and use that information to find companies with similar traits.

Start by evaluating what industries these companies represent and what products or services they buy. Are you targeting vertical markets, such as real estate, construction or electronics manufacturers? Or do you serve horizontal markets, those that cross industry lines, such as general manufacturing, professional services or retail?

Complete the table below by inserting the number of customers you have per product line and industry. Each column represents a vertical or horizontal market.

	Market																	
Product or service																		
Total																		

Tactics

11. Where will you find the best companies and contacts? You will need a solid marketing database to execute your marketing-for-leads programs. To obtain mailing lists you can use to populate your database, make a list of mailing-list sources.

a) List providers:

- www.srds.com
- www.onesource.com
- www.harrisinfo.com
- www.zapdata.com
- www.infousa.com
- www.hartehanksmi.com (Formerly Computer Intelligence)
- www.scottsinfo.com (Scott's Canadian Directories)

b) Professional associations to which your target contacts belong:

c) Conferences and tradeshow they attend:

d) Websites they visit for professional information:

e) Newsletters or business publications to which they subscribe:

Marketing Plan that Drives Sales Worksheet

12. What marketing resources are available to you?

There are two categories of resources. The first is your in-house resources, including existing marketing materials and your company's employees. The second category is third-party resources, such as designers, copywriters, temp firms and ad agencies. List what resources are available to you in each category.

In-house resources:

Third-party resources:

a) Marketing communications experts

To perform the following activities:

b) Graphic designers

To perform the following activities:

Marketing Plan that Drives Sales Worksheet

c) Event coordinators

To perform the following activities:

d) Telemarketing companies

To perform the following activities:

e) Temporary or contract workers

To perform the following activities:

f) College interns

To perform the following activities:

Marketing Plan that Drives Sales Worksheet

g) Others

To perform the following activities:

13. What is the best way to communicate with your target companies and contacts? Check the activities you plan to use, providing descriptions where indicated:

a) Direct marketing

- Direct mail letters
- Direct mail postcard
- Telemarketing
- Fax
- E-mail
- Newsletter

b) Online marketing

- Use your company's website
- Use third-party websites
- Search engine optimization

How: _____
Which ones: _____
What services: _____

c) Events

- Tradeshows
- Live seminars
- Webinars
- Speaking engagements

Which shows: _____
Topics: _____
Topics: _____
Which: _____

d) Print advertising

Which publications: _____

Marketing Plan that Drives Sales Worksheet

14. What offers will you use to elicit inquiries from these companies and contacts? To appeal to prospects at various stages of the buying process, you should use multiple offers in your marketing-for-leads programs. Check those you intend to use, and describe.

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> How-to guides | Subject: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Buying guide | What products/services: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White papers | Subject: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Information kit | Contents: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Live demos | What products/services: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Invitations to events | Format and subject matter: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | _____ |

15. How will you identify qualified sales leads? Create your direct marketing response forms with questions that elicit the information you need to determine whether or not the respondent fits your definition of a qualified lead as articulated in Step 4. Make sure all your response channels ask the same qualifying questions, which may include variations on the following:

- Does the prospect have a need or an application for your product or service?
- Does the prospect have an established project in play?
- What is the status of the prospect's budget?
- What is the size of the opportunity?
- Does the prospect plan to purchase within a reasonable amount of time, with attention to what your company considers to be a reasonable time frame?
- What is the prospect's role in the decision-making process?
- Can he/she get you in front of the appropriate decision maker when the time is right?

16. What types of relationship marketing techniques will you use to move your not-yet-qualified leads through the sales cycle? This requires keeping in touch with prospects on a regular basis. Check those you intend to use, and describe.

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletters | Topic and frequency: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Events | How often: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Direct mail letters | Frequency: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Phone calls | Frequency: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> E-mails | Frequency: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faxes | Frequency: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | Frequency: _____ |

Marketing Plan that Drives Sales Worksheet

Sales Tools

17. What sales tools will you develop to help your salespeople sell? The goal is to help your sales team articulate the advantages of selecting your company rather than a competitor, and to propose and close sales. Check those you intend to use, and describe.

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PowerPoint® presentations | Content: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Online demonstrations | Product: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leave-behinds (e.g., brochures, ad specialties) | Which ones: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Templates (e.g., letters, proposals) | Which ones: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Case studies | Which ones: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reference stories | Which ones: _____ |

Metrics

18. How will you determine the effectiveness of your marketing programs?

a) How will you measure inquiries generated?

b) How will you measure qualified sales leads identified?

c) How will you measure ROI of the marketing-for-leads program?

d) How will you track the source of your inquiries/leads? Check those you intend to use.

- Special e-mail addresses
- Unique URLs
- Codes on reply cards, coupons, labels, etc.
- Unique product numbers in your catalogs
- Extension numbers in your phone numbers
- Department codes or mail stops in your company's addresses
- Reports from your CRM or inquiry-handling software

Marketing Plan that Drives Sales Worksheet

- Reports from your outsourced inquiry-handling service

19. How will you communicate the results of your marketing programs to management? In addition to reporting to senior management on the results of your marketing programs, how will you make your managers aware of all the marketing tasks you are working on?

Budget

20. How much funding will you need?

For blank-page budgeting, write down or create a simple spreadsheet of all the activities you selected in Steps 13 and 14, listing the costs associated with each. Include human resources (in-house or third-party), materials, postage, printing, lists, rentals, and transportation. Do the calculation three times, based on the minimum, target and stretch goals you wrote down in Step 1.

Budget to meet minimum goal	=	\$ _____
Budget to meet target goal	=	\$ _____
Budget to meet stretch goal	=	\$ _____

Implementation

21. What will your marketing schedule be?

Create a simple spreadsheet that lists each marketing activity down the side and each month of the year across the top. This provides an overview of your marketing-for-leads program for the entire year. Determine the best schedule of marketing activities to generate short-term results and to create a steady stream of qualified sales opportunities over the long term.

22. Who will be responsible for which activities? Assign responsibilities to employees and outsourced workers, with due dates for each step of each activity. As part of the master spreadsheet you created in Step 21, create a sub-sheet for each marketing program that includes every step required to create, launch and track the program. The sub-sheet should indicate who owns each step and include due dates for each task.

Marketing Plan that Drives Sales Worksheet

23. Communicate to the sales team about your lead-generation campaigns, so they can do their part when the leads start coming in. Provide your salespeople with details such as:
- How many leads you expect the campaign to generate.
 - When the campaign will hit.
 - When they will need to follow-up on the leads.
 - What codes to use when entering orders.
 - The campaign's offers.

For further detail on each of the steps included in this document, please refer to “How to Boost Your Company’s Sales with Marketing” and “Business-to-Business Lead-Generation Tactics: A Recipe for Success.” These guides are available free at www.sales-lead-experts.com/tips/tools.

Part II: How to Write Your Marketing Plan

Now that you have completed Part I, you have most of the information you need to write your marketing plan. In Part II, we will address your marketing plan's format and contents.

Format

In general, the format of your marketing plan isn't important. Typical formats range from a simple PowerPoint® presentation to an elaborate Microsoft Word® document with numerous graphics and attached Excel® spreadsheets.

As a general rule, if you will be using your marketing plan to raise funds from bankers or investors, it should be more detailed and possibly more elaborate in design and format. However, if it is to be used as a working document internally, simpler is usually better.

Every business is different; therefore, the look, feel and contents of every marketing plan are different. Software is available through the Internet to help you quickly and easily plug the information from Part I into a marketing-plan template (simply search on the key words “marketing plan software”). Or, follow the suggestions below to create your written marketing plan.

Contents

A typical marketing plan contains the following sections, in this order:

- Executive summary
- Mission statement
- Situation analysis
- Goals

Marketing Plan that Drives Sales Worksheet

- Marketing strategies
- Marketing communications tactics
- Resource and budget requirements
- Implementation plan
- Exhibits

Let us examine what to include in each section.

Executive Summary

The Executive Summary is a summary of key points. In this section, you will distill all the information from your marketing plan into a one-page overview.

Although the Executive Summary will appear at the beginning of your marketing plan, be sure to write it last.

Mission Statement

The Mission Statement expresses the overall objective of your marketing plan. Here is an example:

“The mission of this marketing plan is to identify the best marketing strategies and tactics to increase our company’s sales revenue 25 percent in the next 12 months.”

Situation Analysis

The Situation Analysis section describes the current situation your company is facing. This includes the state of the competitive, economic and regulatory environments. Use the results of your SWOT analysis and the SWOT analyses of competitors to flesh out this section. (See Part I, Step 9.) The results of the SWOT analyses can be useful to determine the gap between your current strengths/weaknesses and required or acceptable strengths/weaknesses. In the Situation Analysis section, you may also review past marketing activities, define the range of products you are marketing, and address changes in the customer base (e.g., a major merger or acquisition).

Goals

In this section, you will use the information from Part I, Step 1, to describe the three levels of goals you are targeting with your program:

- Minimum Goal
- Target Goal
- Stretch Goal

Marketing Plan that Drives Sales Worksheet

Explain in the Goals section the relationship between the marketing plan's three goal levels and the corporate goals you discovered when interviewing your senior managers. You may also include in this section:

- Percentage of revenue that needs to come from new business. (See Part I, Step 2).
- Percentage of new business revenue that needs to come from marketing-generated leads. (See Part I, Step 3).
- Definition of a qualified lead. (See Part I, Step 4).
- Number of qualified leads from marketing that you need to meet your goals. (See Part I, Step 5).
- Number of new inquires you need so you can identify enough qualified leads. (See Part I, Step 6.)
- Number of marketing touches you need to generate enough inquiries. (See Part 1, Step 7.)

Marketing Strategies

This section explains the strategies you developed to meet the goals articulated in the previous section. Here, you should discuss the business problems your products and services address and your company's qualifications for solving those problems (Part I, Step 8). In the Marketing Strategies section, you should identify the companies, contacts, and vertical or horizontal markets you identified as the best targets for your marketing programs (Part I, Step 10).

Marketing Communications Tactics

Use the Marketing Communications Tactics section to explain how you will communicate with your target audiences. Specifically, describe your:

- List sources. (See Part I, Step 11.)
- Communications media. (See Part I, Step 13.)
- Offers. (See Part I, Step 14.)
- Response form. (See Part I, Step 15.)
- Relationship marketing techniques. (See Part I, Step 16.)
- Sales tools. (See Part I, Step 17.)

Resource and Budget Requirements

In this section, describe the human and program resources available to you, as well as additional resources you will need to put your tactics in motion. Include in-house and third-party resources. (See Part I, Step 12.) In addition, describe any skill development that will need to occur, such as technical or vertical-market training.

Marketing Plan that Drives Sales Worksheet

Also include in this section:

- Your budget requirements, with a budget figure corresponding to each of the three goal levels identified in the Goals section. (See Part I, Step 20).
- How you intend to measure the effectiveness of your marketing programs. (See Part I, Step 18).
- How you will communicate the results of your programs to management. (See Part I, Step 19).

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan section should include a proposed schedule of marketing activities as well as an indication of who will be responsible for which activities. (See Part I, Steps 21-22). In addition, explain how you intend to communicate with the sales team about your marketing programs. (See Part I, Step 23).

Exhibits

The Exhibits section of your marketing plan includes any auxiliary items that support your plan and its objectives. Here are some examples:

- Spreadsheets of budget and calendar information.
- Information on tradeshows you are considering attending.
- Samples of your competitors' ads or other marketing materials.
- Samples of your own brochures and other marketing materials that need to be updated.
- A survey of your salespeople that shows what kinds of sales tools and/or marketing programs they need to be more effective in the field.

Summary

If you follow the steps outlined in this worksheet, you'll find that your marketing plan almost writes itself! And next year it will be even easier, as you can simply update this year's plan, making necessary changes or additions to bring it up to date.

M. H. "Mac" McIntosh is described by many as one of America's leading business-to-business sales and marketing consultants and an expert on the subject of sales leads. He is president of Mac McIntosh Incorporated, a sales and marketing consulting firm specializing in helping companies get more high-quality sales leads and turn them into sales. For more information, or to request a free subscription to his newsletter, Sales Lead Report[®], please visit www.sales-lead-experts.com

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