

Marketing Planning Workbook

MBA in a DAY®

STRATEGIC MARKETING PLANNING TEMPLATE



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Marketing Objectives & Current Position

Strategic Business Review - Situation Analysis

1. Long Range Plan

What is your organization's Mission?

List the Objectives/Goals outlined by your Long Range Plan

What "Product(s)" / Offerings does your organization provide?

2. Industry Analysis - Nature of Competitive Environment

It is very important that you clearly understand your market(s). For example, United Airlines is not simply in the airline industry but in the transportation industry.

Describe your industry (education, historic preservation, etc.)

What is the current structure of the industry?

Number of other organizations (2 vs. 2000) - List them if possible

Sizes of competitors (budget size, size of market share within certain segment, etc.). Size can be measured in many ways - # people served, # employees, percentage of total market

Competitor Name	Budget	Share of Market	Other Comments

Financial resources of competitors

Competitor Name	Operating Resources	Marketing Resources	Program Resources

Marketing resources of competitors (try to get a picture of their marketing plan)

Competitor Name	Financial	Skills	Other

Production/operational resources of competitors (what is their network like?)

Competitor Name	Financial	Skills	Other

Is there a “comp” organization that you can compare with (perhaps in another geographic area)?

Name	What makes it appropriate?

What are the anticipated responses of other organizations to moves by us?

Name	Possible Response

Are there partnering opportunities with complimentary organizations that can address some of the issues raised here?

3. Environmental Evaluation

What are the relevant social, political, economic and technological trends?

Do these trends represent opportunities or threats?

Trend	O or T?	Why?

4. Market Segmentation

Market segmentation is the most important element of a successful marketing plan. Ultimately, your goal is going to be to select a segment or segments to which you want to appeal. Think carefully about the market. Consider those people or organizations that both use and don't use your offerings. Often this section is the one which requires the greatest amount of research. In order to create an effective marketing strategy, you must know to whom you are talking to and why.

Product Markets (Who do we serve / who might we serve)

Segment (name it)	What differentiates this segment? What makes it unique from others?

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5. Distribution

Here, you are considering how your offering is or could be distributed. This may mean physical distribution of a product or it may refer to distribution of a service. Do not limit yourself to thinking only of how you currently distribute your offerings but think of how you might do it. If you run a newspaper, you may consider using electronic delivery rather than doing bulk mailings.

What methods of distribution exist (includes distribution of information and ideas)?

What is the cost/benefit of each method? (you will need to consider how you measure costs and benefits but try to quantify - speed may be a benefit, for example)

Method	Cost	Benefit

6. Problems & Opportunities

Internal capabilities - strengths & weaknesses

Do we have the skills necessary to function in this business?

What is lacking, what can be done about it?

How do our skills compare with our competitors?

External environment - strengths & weaknesses

Is the environment capable of supporting us?

Are there significant changes in the environment?

How well do we understand our market(s)?

SWOT Analysis

EXTERNAL Threats:

EXTERNAL Opportunities:

INTERNAL Weaknesses:

INTERNAL Strengths:

Marketing Strategies

Marketing Planning

The marketing plan should be organized from very general to very specific. Begin with the objective outlined in your long range plan. What are you trying to accomplish? This may mean going back to your mission and possibly revising that statement. Remember that a marketing plan is a living document. Changes to any part may lead to changes of the entire focus of the plan. Do not fall into the "It's written, I have to do it" trap. From the general objectives move into strategies that describe "How" a specific objective will be accomplished. From the strategies, move into the individual tasks that need to be accomplished. It is not until this point that you should be asking such specific questions as what media to use and how much money do we need.

1. Strategic Objectives (Based on Long Range Plan)

Must be challenging but attainable, have specific time frame, and be measurable

What objectives have been outlined by your organizations Long Range Plan?

Objective	Time Frame	Measurement	OTHER

2. Marketing Objective Strategies

Marketing objectives are measurable, actionable and specific. Strategies are qualitative statements about how the objective will be accomplished. There are generally many strategies per objective.

Organize per objective (From section Marketing Plan Section 1)

Objective	Time Frame	Measurement	OTHER

3. Target Market

Your objective in this section is to identify from within your segmentation strategy the most beneficial market segments.

Define target market methodology (**Behavioral Characteristics**)

Market Segments	Behavioral characteristics of interest

For each target market segment, who will generally be the decision maker? Who will generally be the influencer? Who will generally control your access to the decision maker and influencer (gatekeeper)?

Target Market Segment	Decision-Maker	Influencer	Gatekeeper

4. Product development

A marketing approach to any business proposes that an organization exists to identify and meet the needs of the customer. No where else is this more evident than with NPO's. In developing product strategies, your objective is to identify and meet the needs of your market(s).

Target Market Segment	What are the needs of that market?

Describe your offering

Does your offering meet those needs?

Is our target correct? Should you alter your offering or alter your target?

How can we better meet the needs of your target market segment(s)?

5. Positioning

Positioning is the term used to describe your role in the market place. It will describe your product, to whom you are providing your product, and how those people will perceive your product. Generally, you are asking the question "how do we want our constituencies to perceive us?" Your positioning will be base on what you provide and how you provide it. For example: You may be positioned against a strong competitor as an "alternative" or you may be positioned as the leader in providing quality arts education. Ultimately, you should be able to present your positioning as a single statement or "positioning statement."

Positioning will be the common thread holding your marketing plan together. It will be specific to an offering and a target market. That is not to say that it must be different across offerings and target markets but that can and, in most cases will be. For example, you may have a program that reduces drug use among teenagers but also reduces teenage pregnancy. You may present two different positioning statements for different markets that emphasize these two different benefits of your program.

Describe the positioning of other organizations with your target market.

Organization & Offering	Target Market Segments	Positioning

Now, think about what your target market segment(s) are looking for in an offering. It may help to look back at the needs of the target market outlined when considering your product.

Target Market Segment	What is important to this target market segment?

Compare your competitors positioning with the target market segment. How can you differentiate your offering from that of your competitors? What attributes of your offering are more or less appealing to your target market segment?

Positioning Statement:

Based on your evaluation of the market and your competitors position within that market, consider how you will describe your positioning. It is OK to position yourself exactly like a competitor but it is often easier to look for a hole or niche in the market that is under served.

Target Market Segment	Positioning Statement

Branding:

Branding is the term used to describe the associations that are made with a specific offering (including the logo, image, personality, positioning, etc.). Branding will help your customers differentiate your offerings from that of a competitor. A well branded product is one which has a strong image that comes readily to mind.

Coke, for example, is the most recognized brand on earth. Currently, the brand is valued at over \$23 million. NPO's have similar brands. United Way, for example, has a branded image that people recognize. Problems within the organization hurt that image and change the nature of the brand. An organization that wants to develop a specific image, is concerned with developing a brand. In essence, branding is the act of implementing your positioning and giving your offering a life of its own. In many ways, developing a brand is the objective of many marketing programs.

6. Pricing

There are many methods to develop a pricing strategy. One common method is "cost plus" which begins with the cost of a product and simply adds an acceptable, pre-determined mark-up (the technical term for this is Contribution Margin). Some organizations use a comparative pricing method that bases a price on that of a competitor. This strategy is very useful when you are positioning your product with respect to another product. Many retail establishments do this when they say, "we'll beat anyone's advertised price." Another method is to determine how much the market is willing to pay and charge that amount. This method is the most strategic and allows for your pricing strategy to be an integral part of positioning within your target market. While your organization may use many different pricing methods, we will focus on a market based pricing strategy.

Many organizations find themselves wondering what people will pay. This is where it is often very useful to find another organization in a similar market that you can use for comparisons. If you know of such an organization, try to find out how your markets compare and what their pricing strategy is. Your goal is to find out what your target market is willing to pay.

There are other methods for finding this information. You can scan your competitors, you can look at your pricing history, or you can conduct some research - talk to your customers. Research is often the most effective method as it allows you to interact with your target market directly. Researching pricing is a bit tricky, however. Many people will low ball their answer or will simply say "I'd rather spend nothing at all." Be careful how you ask your questions when researching price as the wording of your question may often lead to certain answers, be it survey questions or interview questions.

What is your market willing to pay, are there different pricing "strata" within your market?

Target Market Segments	Willingness to pay (or amount)

Part of your pricing strategy will have to include an understanding of how to cover your costs. Revenue from providing your offering may help but you will most likely have to look elsewhere. It is important to know how much more you will need before diving in on funding campaigns.

What will all of this cost? You may find much of this information in your budgets.

Offering	Direct Costs	Indirect Costs (overhead)

Remember that in providing an offering, the NPO is a cost minimizer not a profit maximizer. Your objective is to break even.

7. Operations, Distribution and Sales

Provide specific operational needs (these can often be found after the budget has been adequately determined)

This section can be divided into parts based on your objectives.

1. You will have objectives with regards to distributing your offering(s)
2. You will have objectives with regards to managing your offering(s)
3. You will have objectives specific to charitable giving.
4. If a capital campaign is required to accomplish your long range goals, it should be considered an independent objective, as it does not pertain directly to your short term operational goals.

In developing an overall business plan, you will have a separate section covering your operational planning. For the purposes of your marketing planning, your operational plans will pertain to how you are going to distribute your offerings. Depending on the type of offerings you provide, you may find this section of your marketing plan very "light." For example, if your objective is to promote a specific congressional bill, you may find most of your operational/distribution planning in the promotion section as your overall objective is promotion.

Don't be concerned if you cannot address many of the issues raised in developing a distribution plan or if you need to redefine some of the terms used to describe distribution.

Above all, when considering your operational plan and distribution, be realistic. Do not inflate your numbers. You will only be deceiving yourself. You may have to do some research to identify your organizations specific needs.

Offering	Target Market Segment(s)	Use Characteristics

The needs of your target market segment(s) should help you identify the distribution methods and indicate possible product development ideas. For each target market segment, how is it best to distribute your offering(s)?

Target Market Segments	Primary Distribution Method	Secondary Distribution Method

8. Promotion

The promotion plan will include your sales plans and promotional plans which in turn incorporates the media plan and PR. Again, organize these sections by objective and strategy. Here is where you will become specific regarding who, what, when, where, and how. You should already have outlined the why.

Always refer to your positioning strategy and target market when considering your promotional plans. Do not fear promotion. It does not necessarily mean advertising but incorporates all communication between you and your constituencies. Your goal is to create a unified communication strategy between you and your customers. You should be able to ask your customers to describe the organization and they should be able to tell you your positioning. Remember that positioning may be slightly different for different target markets. Therefore, your promotional plan may have to be different for different markets. For example, a government agency may be mostly concerned with your organizations ability to reduce drug use among high school students and another may be interested in your organizations ability to increase graduation rates. While these may be related, you need to present them differently across target markets.

➤ **Promotion: Message**

Consider your positioning statement and strategy. What message do you want to use for each specific target market segment(s)? (This may simply be a restatement of your positioning statement)

Target Market Segment	Positioning Statement	Promotional Message

Be consistent with your message. People easily get confused when messages change frequently. Consider all aspects of your message. 80% of communication is non-verbal. What message is being sent by using a certain type of paper? A certain format? Computer generated labels?

➤ **Promotion: Media**

How can you best reach your target market? How should you best distribute your message? (This often requires some research)

Target Market Segment	Media Habits

Is there a demographic profile that can be used to identify your target?

Target Market Segment	Demographic Profile

Within each media, which vehicles claim to reach your target market? (You may get some of this information from your "Media Habits" evaluation but you will often need to contact certain media or do some library work to identify specific media). Consider alternative means of communication as well including e-mail, WWW, direct mail, telephone contact, billboards, fliers, posters, etc. This is not just about advertising but about communication in general.

Target Market Segment	Media	Vehicle
Generation X	Television	MTV House of Style
	Print	Comic News
	Radio	Alternative Radio (KFMA Sunday night DJ's)
	Internet	Yahoo, Dogpile, e-mail

What are the projected benefits of a certain media vehicles? - It is often easier to think in terms of dollars but often the benefit is not quantifiable. How will you measure the benefit? (Number of people exposed from your specific target market, Number of target markets exposed, increased revenue, etc.)

What are the projected costs of a certain media? - Consider everything that might be appropriate for your target market from cold calling to Super Bowl ads.

Consider your positioning statement and positioning criteria. Are there certain media and/or vehicles that communicate the wrong message? For example, if you are promoting a congressional bill to decrease clean water standards, is it appropriate for you to promote your bill on an alternative radio program called "Earth Watch"?

Consider the budget ramifications and cost/benefit consequences after you have identified appropriate media and messages.

What are your best alternatives? What messages are best sent through these media?

➤ **Promotion: Public Relations**

Always have a press kit ready and up to date. This is both as a promotional tool and as a risk reduction tool. A press kit should include:

- **A brief description of your organization and its mission**
- **A brief description of your organization's positioning (be abstract here, you don't need to give a detailed description of your marketing plan)**
- **A list of key contacts and up to date contact information**
- **A list of topical areas organized by contact: for example, indicate if you have a single person responsible for media contact**
- **A list of your Board of Directors, indicating offices held**
- **A brief description of your offering(s)**
- **A detailed description of your offering(s)**
- **Samples of your outgoing media (current press releases & promotional materials)**
- **Samples of past media coverage (newspaper clippings, television references and excerpts, magazine articles, etc.)**
- **Any items that give you legitimacy (letters from a governing organization, awards you have received, large grants won, etc.)**
- **A list of key funding sources**

- **ALSO - for specific media events, write the story as you would like it to appear in print (Television may often use it as a script). Many reporters will use your copy as a starting point. If there are specific things you want emphasized, this may be your only chance to do so.**

You should always be keeping your press kit up to date. It is an invaluable marketing tool, and generally an extremely inexpensive one. Consider a clipping service or allocate time to an individual within your organization to scan media. Keep "Master" copies of all collected media. Do not limit yourself necessarily to just your organizations press. References to your organizational mission may be just as useful, particularly when trying to convince a large donor that your mission is legitimate.

While you cannot control the media, you can take advantage of their services. They exist, at least in part, to inform their readership of goings on. If their readership is part of your target market, they may be both an outlet for advertising as well as press.

What public media outlets provide contact with your target market?

Target Market Segment	Public Media Vehicles

How do you gain access to these outlets? - who is the editor of specific sections, who manages the calendar, etc.

Vehicle	Type of Information	Key Contact

What internal strengths exist in your organization that might give you access to these media? How can you develop these strengths over time? (What networking possibilities exist - who is responsible for managing them)

Consider your positioning statement, what kinds of information can you make public through the use of PR?

Consider keeping certain people in the media constantly abreast of your organizations "goings on."

Use press releases in addition to other promotional strategies.

➤ **Public Relations: Risk Reduction**

Many organizations have a crisis mode. You should be prepared for a crisis. An organization that deals with crisis well will come off looking better and can often make at least some positive result come out of crisis. Here are some things to consider for a Risk Reduction Plan.

What is the chain of command in crisis mode?

Who is responsible for providing information in a crisis?

How is that person provided with information?

How does that person disseminate information?

Who has the authority to act?