**A Marketing Plan for Your Business**

Your marketing plan should work with your business plan, giving your business a strategic, long-term approach to growth.

It should be a practical working plan to give you targets and timescales to work towards, to measure your performance and help generate the revenue your business needs to succeed.

It should ideally cover a 12 month period to achieve the objectives set in your business plan for the same timeframe. Refer to it regularly to ensure you are carrying out all activities at the right time and to determine if they are working. The plan should also be flexible in case you need to change tactics during the year.

Remember: Many businesses are so focussed on making immediate sales that they fail to put even the most basic marketing plan in place. With a bit of planning and direction, you will be able to develop a straightforward and practical marketing plan and help to secure ongoing revenue for your business.

1. **Executive Summary**
2. **Background & Context**
3. **Current Situation**

What products/services do you currently offer?

What are your current sales?

Who are your competitors?

Any emerging trends/opportunities you can see?

*Market research can be helpful here to understand the wider current situation*

1. **SWOT Analysis – you should have this from your Business Plan**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **STRENGTHS** | **WEAKNESSES** |
| **OPPORTUNITIES** | **THREATS** |

1. **Target Markets**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **CUSTOMER 1** | **CUSTOMER 2** | **CUSTOMER 3** |
| Demographic information |  |  |  |
| Interests |  |  |  |
| Current needs as a customer |  |  |  |
| Decision making process |  |  |  |
| Emerging trends/needs |  |  |  |

1. **Key Marketing Messages**

* Start by forming your overall message – what is your idea about?
* Keep your language clear and relevant to your target markets
* What do you want to tell them - about you, your organisation, your reputation, your track record etc?
* Build your message to respond to their needs – consider what matters locally, fit in with the local literary conversation and tourism development agenda.
* Keep yourself informed of what is happening across your locality and regionally – so you are not duplicating effort.

1. **Strategic Marketing Objectives of your Marketing Plan**

From the work you’ve done on your business plan and marketing plan so far, you know both your current position and where you would like to be in the future. Now, set marketing objectives for your business that will help you fill the gap between the two positions.

Marketing objectives usually involve increasing volume of sales (bookings) or value of sales (profit). Objectives should be clear and SMART:

**Specific**  Increase event bookings from 100 to 120 a week in booking season

**Measurable**  This can be measured from the online booking system reports

**Achievable** Do you have capacity to handle this increase in sales?

**Realistic** Business growth and plans show this is possible, and looking ahead, there are no known future factors that might prevent this growth

**Time bound** A realistic timeframe has been allocated to this objective

1. **Marketing Action Plan**

Using the 5Ps - Product, Price, Place, Promotion & People, now draft a Marketing Action Plan that will reflect the image you want to present for your business, meet your marketing objectives and help you achieve your business goals. (See Appendix 1)

Set a budget for your activities and work within this budget. It’s always important to leave a contingency figure in your budget – great opportunities can arise at short notice.

1. **Review & Evaluate**

Regular review is the best way to check your marketing plans are working. Are you achieving the results you hoped? If not, is there something you can change to help? (See Appendix 2)

Market research is a great help here. When you take a booking, receive an enquiry, ask the customer where they heard about your business, and why they are booking. Over time, this is a great insight. Check your Google and Facebook Analytics for a wealth of information about the people visiting you online.

**Appendix 1 – Marketing Action Plan**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Activities** | **Timeline** | **Budget** | **Responsible** | **Outcomes** | **How to measure this** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Appendix 2 – Marketing Action Review & Evaluation**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective** | **Outcome** | **Measurement** | **Result** | **Issues** | **Actions taken to address issues** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |