

Marketing.

Cohesive thinking

Measuring and maximising marketing performance

A guide to marketing success.



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A lot of businesses find it difficult to measure the contribution their marketing makes and wonder what its real value is.

There are some very complex and potentially costly metrics available. However, there are also some really simple ways to plan for and measure success.

In this guide we'll include some of our top tips, but here's a big one to think about before you start: consider marketing an investment, not a cost, and, like all investments, real commitment is required to realise the full potential.

Plan

- 1** Map out clearly what you need to achieve with your marketing, and plan exactly what you need to do to achieve it, and when you need to do it.
- 2** Be realistic in your planning. You need to be able to deliver the plan, so consider what resources you have, both financial and human. Obtain quotes as part of the planning process if you need to.
- 3** Set a budget and allocate it up front, leaving just a little contingency for those unexpected opportunities or costs. It will really help you prioritise what is important if you have to cut something from your plan to add something else in.
- 4** Don't guess: be objective. Plans should be based on facts and evidence combined with experience and good judgement. If you need to source or outsource any of those things it will be a sound investment.
- 5** Make a proper evaluation of the 'before picture'. If you don't know what your starting point is you cannot evaluate how far you have moved.

Commit

- 1** If something was worth planning for then it should be worth doing. Otherwise don't put it in the plan.
- 2** Make marketing a priority on your "to do" list, not the first thing that gets shelved if you get busy or cash flow gets tight. Marketing should be a business driver not a "nice-to-have".
- 3** Be patient. Results are very rarely instant. Allow time for your overall strategy to start working and avoid knee jerk reactions if at first you don't get the desired results.
- 4** Don't be tempted by the last minute cheap deal if it doesn't truly support your objectives - the wrong cheap deal is sometimes an expensive waste of precious resource.

Measure

- 1** Only ever undertake marketing activities that can actually be measured in some way. That sounds a bit over simplified but being quite brutal about it, if you don't know what something is going to accomplish, is there any point in doing it?
- 2** Set achievable, measurable and clearly defined targets for all your activity before you start. Refer back to these objectives regularly.
- 3** Put in measurable points throughout the plan not just at the end so you can identify quickly if you are straying from targets.
- 4** Look at the reasons why you might be deviating from targets and see if this is a long term issue or something that can be influenced.

Adjust

- 1** Your marketing plan shouldn't sit in a file somewhere never to be seen again. It should be an active and useful document that you regularly refer to.
- 2** Really use the periodic measures in your marketing plan to provide guidance on what activity might need some modification, a refocus or even to be stopped.
- 3** A plan can and should evolve over time as new opportunities arise, you learn from experience, your business develops or the market changes. Revisit it and keep it up-to-date.
- 4** Don't meddle too much or too soon with your marketing activity or you may find that nothing ever gets a chance to gain momentum.
- 5** Your business will change, as may your goals, so don't forget to reflect this in your marketing plan.

If you can't see what your marketing is achieving, it most likely hasn't been evaluated and set up correctly from the outset. Taking some time from the beginning to think about the longer term could save you money, make your marketing schedule easier to deliver and improve the effectiveness of your activity.

Don't forget though, it isn't usually any one activity that will lead to an insurgence of new business enquiries but a sustained and co-ordinated approach that should provide you with a positive return in both new business generation and overall brand awareness.