

A large blue location pin icon with a white circular center. Inside the circle, the text 'GPS' is written in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. Below 'GPS', the words 'GROWTH • PROFITS • SUCCESS' are written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.

GPS

GROWTH • PROFITS • SUCCESS

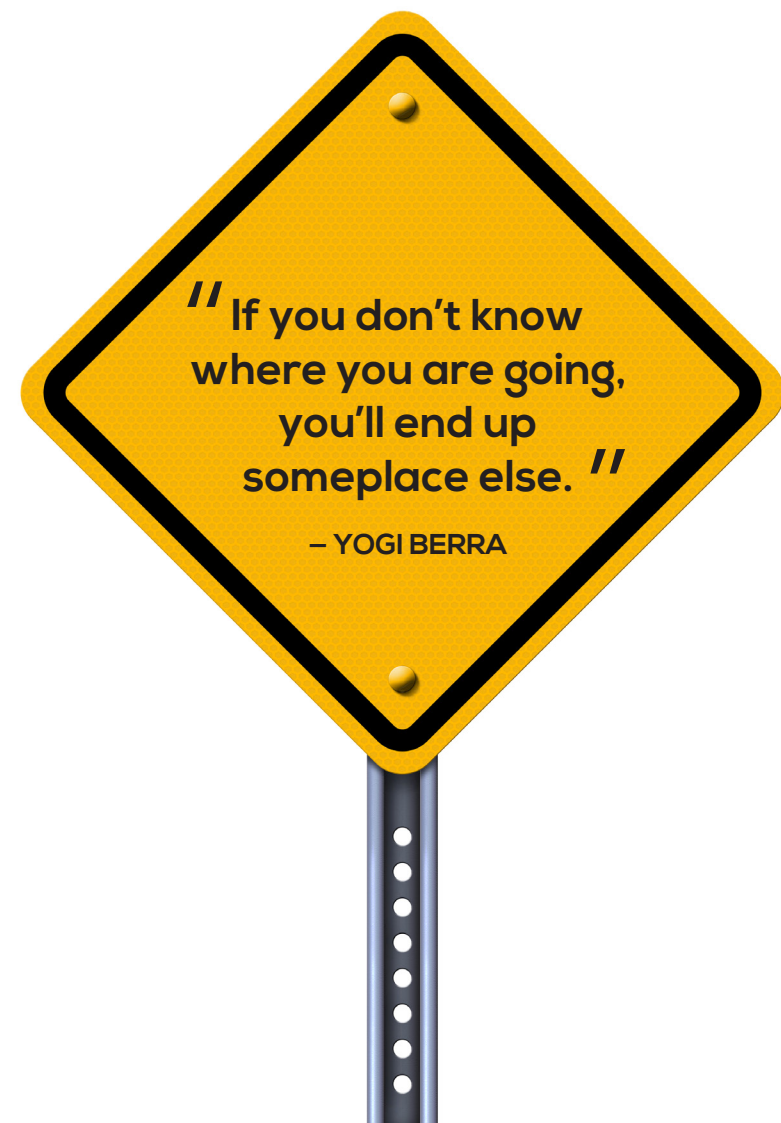
A SIMPLIFIED APPROACH TO CREATING A MARKETING PLAN THAT YOU WILL USE – NOT LOSE.

INTRODUCTION

While everyone in business recognizes the importance of creating a marketing plan to grow their company, very few actually create a plan let alone use it. Most often, these plans while thorough in content are massive documents that prove unruly for everyday use.

Our goal with our GPS Marketing Plan is to show you a quick and efficient way to create a plan that contains all of the essential information you need to achieve success. Admittedly we have eliminated many valuable (and detail-driven) areas included in a traditional marketing plan, but we have done so in order to achieve our goal of providing a plan that is easy for you to create, implement and update as your business grows. In this instance, we truly believe "less is more."

We want this to be the one marketing plan you will use – not lose.



ABOUT OUR GPS MARKETING PLAN

Throughout the development of our GPS Marketing Plan, we kept one important goal in mind – simplicity. As we said earlier, we want this to be very simple for you to use. To accomplish this, we had to distill a great deal of information (and resist our natural inclination to add more content) into five primary areas (or destinations as we're calling them). These "destinations" represent the key areas of focus in our GPS Marketing Plan and are the five tasks you need to complete in order to create a marketing plan for your business.

The content for each of the five areas is presented in small, digestible chunks of information to make it easier to understand what you need to do and why. These include:



DESTINATION

Explanation of the purpose and intent of the area being completed.



COURSE

A list of the specific actions you need to take or tasks you need to complete.



RETURN

Expected outcome(s) for this destination.



ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE

Tools you can use to help complete the required tasks in the given area.



In addition, we have included a number of travel-related callouts to provide additional tips and insights to help you complete the task at hand. These callouts range from a STOP SIGN (things not to do) to a CAUTION SIGN (suggested alternative actions) to a WAYPOINT (clear direction on actions to take), all designed to provide clear instructions and added value.

TRUE NORTH



DESTINATION



Before you begin your journey of creating a marketing plan for your business, you first need to conduct an honest assessment of where you are today in terms of your market, customers and competition. Remember, you need to know “where you are” before you can plot a course to “where you want to go.”

COURSE



Questions to consider when completing this section include:

- ☐ Who are my target customers and what do they need?
- ☐ What is happening in the marketplace that will impact (good or bad) my business?
- ☐ Who is my competition and how do we measure up against what they offer?
- ☐ What can I offer that my competition does not?
- ☐ What (if anything) makes my company stand out from all the rest?
- ☐ Where is the greatest potential to grow my business?

RETURN



If done correctly, this section will provide you with a good idea of where you are and where you need to go in order to grow your business.

ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE



S.W.O.T. Analysis – Use this simple grid exercise to determine your company’s STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES and THREATS. (See below)

Competitive Analysis – Similar to the S.W.O.T. Analysis, do the same thing only analyzing your competition. You can use the same grid for each of your major competitors or one overall grid that summarizes your competition as a whole. (See below)



Do not complete this exercise in a vacuum. To make this analysis the most effective, consider including key members of your team, valued vendor partners and trusted customers to provide the most accurate assessment possible.

S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS



COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS



NOTES

ROUTE



DESTINATION



Now that you have established your True North, or where you are as a company today, the next step is to determine where you want to go in order to grow your company and increase profitability. This is the section where you establish your S.M.A.R.T. goals to achieve success.

COURSE



Questions to consider when completing a S.M.A.R.T. goal:

- ☐ What do I want to accomplish?
- ☐ How will I measure progress and/or success?
- ☐ Do I have the time and resources to achieve this goal?
- ☐ Why is this goal important to me and my company?
- ☐ When will I complete this goal?

RETURN



If done correctly, this section will provide you with one to two clear and concise goals that you will focus on achieving throughout the rest of your marketing plan.

ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE



S.M.A.R.T. Goals – Use the acronym below to develop goals that are SPECIFIC, MEASURABLE, ATTAINABLE, RELEVANT and TIME-BASED.

S.M.A.R.T. Goal Template – Use the “fill-in-the-blank” S.M.A.R.T. goal template below to assist you in completing two to three goals for your company.



Be sure that your completed goals meet the S.M.A.R.T. criteria. If they do not, go back and make the necessary adjustments. You DO NOT want to move on from this section if the goals you’ve established are not S.M.A.R.T.

S.M.A.R.T. GOALS



SPECIFIC

- Define the goal as much as possible with no unclear language.
- **WHO** is involved, **WHAT** do I want to accomplish, **WHERE** will it be done, **WHY** am I doing this – reasons, purpose, **WHICH** constraints and/or requirements do I have?



MEASURABLE

- Can you track the progress and measure the outcome?
- How much, how many, how will I know when my goal is accomplished?



ATTAINABLE/ACHIEVABLE

- Is the goal reasonable enough to be accomplished? How so?
- Make sure the goal is not out of reach or below standard performance.



RELEVANT

- Is the goal worthwhile and will it meet your needs?
- Is each goal consistent with the other goals you have established and fits with your immediate and long-term plans?



TIMELY

- Your objective should include a time limit. Example: I will conclude this step by month/day/year.
- It will establish a sense of urgency and prompt you to have better time management.

NOTES

S.M.A.R.T. GOAL TEMPLATE

Our goal is to

(insert what you want to achieve)

by _____
(insert how you measure success)

within _____
(insert timeframe to complete your goal)

by _____
(insert specific actions you will take to achieve your goal)

_____ .

NAVIGATION

(STRATEGIES/TACTICS)



DESTINATION



You know what you want to achieve. The question now is: how do you get there? In keeping with our GPS theme, getting there comes in two views: a **MAP** view (Strategy) which offers a broader perspective on how to get to your final destination and a **TURN-BY-TURN** perspective (Tactics) which provides the specific details you need to follow to complete your journey.

COURSE



Questions to consider when completing this section include:

- ☐ What are the best ways to reach my target audience?
- ☐ Where does my target audience learn about the services that I provide?
- ☐ What are the features and benefits of my company's offering?
- ☐ What can we do to get our message out in support of our goals?
- ☐ What can my company afford to get our message out to our target audience?
- ☐ Who on my team is best suited to support these marketing efforts?

RETURN



When completed, this section will provide you with the necessary details regarding the specific actions you will take to achieve your goals.

ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE



(See Below)



WAYPOINT

The difference between strategies and tactics is often confused, even by those well-versed in the marketing discipline. Keep the following saying top of mind as a quick way to remember the difference between the two:

"A strategy is about doing the right things – a tactic is about doing the things right."

STRATEGY EXAMPLES

In the world of marketing, a strategy is the approach you take to achieve your goals. Like a Map View on a GPS system, a strategy is the thinking aspect of the plan you will implement to produce a desired outcome.

Use the following examples to help guide the development of strategies for your business:

- Communicate with clients at least 12 times per year to engage clients and encourage new business referrals.**
- Attend a minimum of four networking events per month to promote my company and build a network of influence.**

STRATEGY 1 _____

STRATEGY 2 _____

STRATEGY 3 _____

TACTIC EXAMPLES

Where a strategy provides a Map View of the approach you'll use to achieve your goals, tactics are more like Turn-By-Turn directions, or the specific actions you will take, to achieve your strategy and ultimately your goals.

Use the following examples to help guide the development of tactics for your business:

- Email a monthly newsletter to clients featuring blog articles. Include links to the blog, social media sites and upcoming events.**
- Attend events sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, Better Business Bureau and local Restaurant Association.**

TACTIC 1 _____

TACTIC 2 _____

TACTIC 3 _____

NOTES

SYSTEM DISPLAY



DESTINATION



Your goals are set, your strategies and tactics are in place and you're ready to go, but what do you say when reaching out to your target audience? The messaging you craft and the mediums (newspaper ads, direct mail, social media, etc.) you use to disseminate your messaging are critical to your plan's success. The time to get your content and distribution plan in place is now and not later on when you're ready to set things in motion.

COURSE



Questions to consider when crafting your messaging include:

- ☐ What are the benefits that my company offers to my target audience?
- ☐ Does my messaging add value to the recipients i.e. do I convey "what's in it for them?"
- ☐ Does my messaging demonstrate that I understand my audience's wants, needs and problems that need to be solved?
- ☐ Is my messaging free of industry jargon and does it contain a "call to action" to prompt response?

Questions to consider when selecting the dissemination mediums for your messaging include:

- ☐ Do I know the mediums that my target audience uses the most to access information on services like what my company offers?
- ☐ Have I considered both traditional (newspaper, television, direct mail, etc.) and non-traditional (word-of-mouth, billboards, special events, etc.) mediums for my outreach efforts?
- ☐ Am I evaluating potential mediums based on ROI and not only cost and overall appeal?
- ☐ Can I sustain the development of content for the mediums I select?

RETURN



When completed, this section will provide you with the specific messaging and mediums you will use to communicate with your target audience.



MESSAGING TIPS

In this day and age when consumers are inundated with advertising and marketing messages, it's important that you capture their attention as quickly as possible with a message that adds value to their lives. Use the following guidelines to help create effective messaging for your business.

- Grab the recipient's attention with information that is interesting and relevant to them
- Clearly state what differentiates you from the competition
- Communicate the desired result of your audience
- Keep your messaging short, simple and benefits-focused
- A picture is worth a thousand words
- Stake your claim – your position in the marketplace
- Be true to your brand – reinforce what your brand is about
- Include a call to action and ALL of your contact information

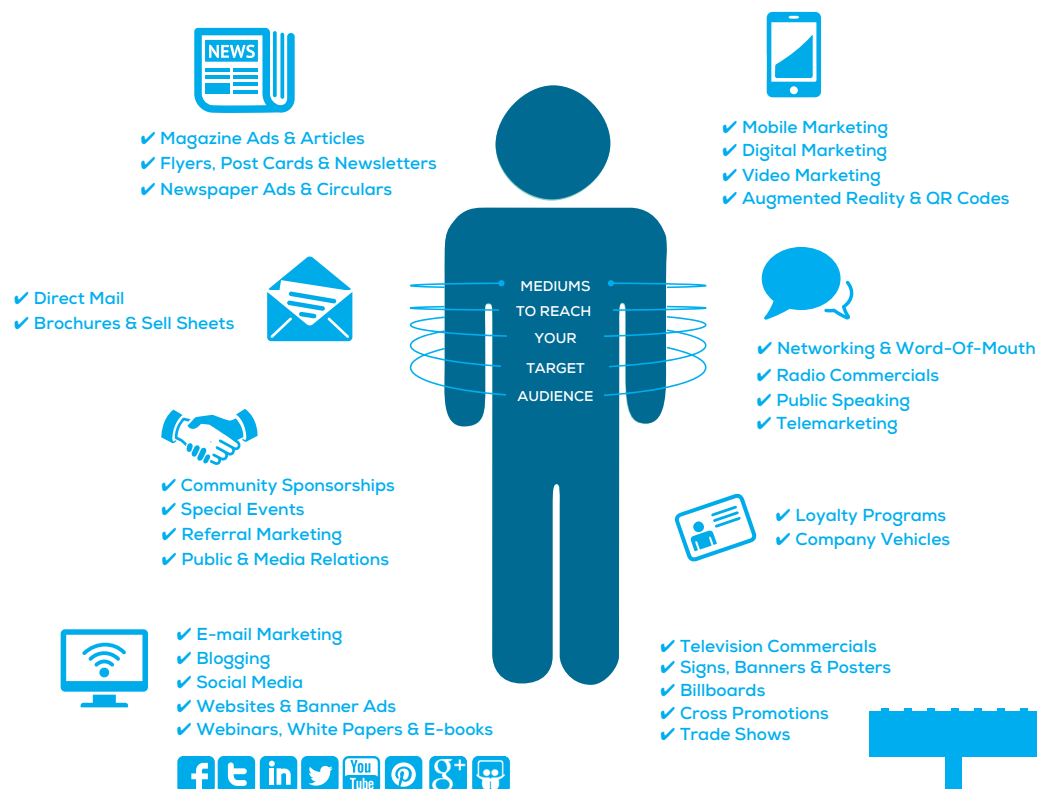


With so many new "cool" ways to reach out to your target audience, it's easy to get lured into spending money on the "latest and greatest" method and not necessarily the most cost effective. Resist doing something simply because that's what everyone else is doing. Base your decisions on ROI and what best works for your business. Remember, "Never confuse effort with results!"

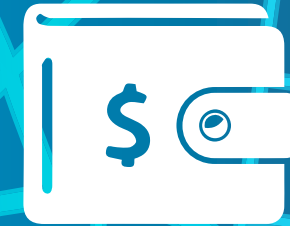
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MEDIUMS FOR CONSIDERATION

The various ways to reach your target audience continue to evolve as new and innovative mediums to engage consumers are being created what seems like every day. Use the following list as a starting point when considering the best mix of mediums to use for your business.



EXPENSE REPORT



DESTINATION



You're in the home stretch of creating a marketing plan that you will use and not lose. But there remains one final section that you must complete, and it's an important section that deserves as much of your attention as all the rest – developing a budget. No marketing plan in the world is worth the paper it is written on without a realistic budget in place to pay for the activities you are about to pursue.

COURSE



Questions to consider when developing your marketing plan budget include:

1. What is my company's revenue goal for the year?
2. How many new customers per month do we need to reach this goal?
3. What is the number of sales leads we need to land one customer?
4. How many leads do we need per month to reach our revenue goal?
(The answer to question 4 is the result of multiplying the answer to question 2 by the answer to question 3.)
5. What marketing activities are most likely to give us this amount of leads?

RETURN



When completed, this section will provide you with the necessary details you need to develop a simple, yet effective marketing plan budget.

ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE



Budget Template – In keeping with our GPS theme, following is an easy-to-use template that will help you develop a marketing plan budget that will support your efforts to achieve your goals and grow your company.



A question that is often asked is how much should I spend on marketing? How much do other companies like mine spend on their marketing efforts? A quick answer often cited is 3%-8% of a company's overall sales – with 5% cited as the "norm." The truth of the matter is it is what you can afford without jeopardizing your company's financial health. Developing a marketing budget is just like any other operational investment decision you will make – do your homework, consider all options and choose wisely for the greatest return.

Marketing Budget Calculator

Overall Budget

Annual Sales	
Percentage of Sales for Marketing	5.00%
Marketing Budget	-

Progress

Your Overall Budget Is	-
Your Costs to Date Are	\$ -
Remaining Marketing Budget	-

Allocation of Overall Budget

Percentage		
20%	Website/Branding	-
30%	Online	-
10%	Advertising	-
5%	PR	-
30%	Event Marketing	-
5%	Other	-
	Other	-
	Other	-

Total Budget -

NOTES: Enter notes regarding your allocation decisions/rational

Enter each month by category your total spend - this amount will deduct from your overall budget so you can monitor spending

Category	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Setp	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Website/Branding		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Online	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Advertising	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
PR	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Event Marketing	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Toals	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

Visit gemworx.com to download this template.

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RESOURCES



Following are a number of additional resources you can reference when creating a marketing plan for your business.

Marketing Plan

<https://www.sba.gov/content/developing-marketing-plan>

US Small Business Administration

<http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/43026>

Entrepreneur Magazine

The Ingredients of a Marketing Plan

<http://www.inc.com/guides/writing-marketing-plan.html>

Inc. Magazine

How to Write a Marketing Plan

<http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/>

Content Marketing Institute

<https://www.ama.org/Pages/default.aspx>

American Marketing Association

Marketing Budgets

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/davelavinsky/2013/06/07/three-steps-to-a-solid-marketing-budget/>

Forbes.com

Three Steps To A Solid Marketing Budget

<https://www.legalzoom.com/articles/cost-of-marketing-what-is-the-average-budget>

Legalzoom.com

Cost of Marketing: What Is the Average Budget?

<http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/205412>

Entrepreneur Magazine

10 Ways to Stretch Your Marketing Budget

<http://www.inc.com/guides/2010/05/conducting-competitive-research.html>

Inc.com

How to Conduct Competitive Research



GPS MARKETING PLAN TEMPLATE

GOALS



STRATEGIES



TACTICS



MESSAGING



MEDIUMS



BUDGET





A SIMPLIFIED APPROACH TO CREATING A MARKETING PLAN THAT YOU WILL USE – NOT LOSE.



www.gemworx.com | 570.609.5650 | info@gemworx.com