

Marketing Plan

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Getting Started

Creating a marketing plan will help you to understand the concept of marketing. Select a product, service, idea, or nonprofit cause that you would like to market. This could be an existing product, service, idea, or cause, or an original one that you will market in an original way. Choose what you wish to market carefully, as it will be the basis for your marketing plan throughout the course, and you will be asked to add to it at the end of each chapter. When the course has been completed, the marketing plan will be your major assessment task.

Take the First Step ...

The first step in creating your plan is to select and describe in detail your product, service, idea, or cause. When presenting your idea to others, this will be the first thing they see, so try to make it as clear and as exciting as possible. Illustrations of what you intend the product to be, the kind of customer base you would target, as well as a clear description of your product and its uses, should be outlined here. Visual aids are always useful, so give some thought as to what visual material you could use to create interest in your ideas.

Set Goals

Next it is important to set some realistic goals. Three possible goals of a marketing plan are

- to increase the sales of a product or service
- to increase consumer awareness of the value of the product or service in anticipation of future sales
- to fundraise for a nonprofit cause.

Then it's time to start thinking about what steps you will take to achieve your goal...

Outline Strategies

Next, you will need to outline some strategies for achieving your goals. Kellogg's cereal, for example, might have more than one means of achieving its marketing goals. It could

- increase the consumption of cereal for breakfast (through a promotion of the health benefits), which would increase the sales of all cereal brands, including its own
- increase consumer awareness of the personality of one of its cereal brands. Special K, for example, might wish to stress its low fat content to make dieting consumers aware of its healthy qualities.
- directly increase the sales of one or more specific brands. Rice Krispies are often used to make dessert squares. Kellogg's colours Rice Krispies red and green at Christmas time to encourage family members to make squares as a Christmas treat.
- introduce a new product within the category. Kellogg's has a very strong identity as a breakfast brand and could easily create a new cereal for the ready-to-eat cereal market.
- create a new category. Kellogg's could use its strong brand identification to carry over into other breakfast-related products, such as bagels or juice.

Tell Someone About It!

Once you have decided what product, idea, or cause you would like to market—and you have set some goals and strategies for achieving them—the next step is to communicate your ideas to others. This can be in the form of a report or a verbal or multi-media presentation. No matter how you choose to present your ideas, always remember that you want to create interest and excitement in them. Think of the kinds of things that would attract your attention—your audience will likely be excited by the same things you would be. Remember to use visuals to your advantage, either on paper or in an electronic presentation. Also, remember to tailor your presentation to the kind of product you are working with—clowns might be good to communicate the excitement of a circus performance, but would have a very different effect in a presentation designed to promote the services of a law office or a research consultant.