



How to Assess Your Marketing Consultant

Whether using an inside team or an outside consultant, your Marketing team should be following the Strategy and executing on the Tactics as established by your Marketing Plan, as well as assessing the results.

The rest of this article will only be valuable if you know the different roles of Marketing, Advertising and Sales. If you truly understand them, you won't have a position entitled "VP of Sales & Marketing." If you want to understand more about the roles, you can read our article at http://www.ideaDistillery.com/Great_Marketing_Information.html.

Before we get to the details of what to expect from your Marketing Team, whether in-house or an out-sourced consultant, review this checklist to see if all these elements are part of the responsibilities and deliverables from your Team:

- Clear understanding of your business goals
- Clear understanding of you marketing goals
- Clear understanding of your messages to markets
- Organization and execution of a marketing schedule, which should include measurement mechanisms
- Execution of test marketing for any new campaigns, messages, or markets
- Regular review of performance metrics for the campaigns, and any adjustment
- Regular reports to management of the efficacy of each campaign and the progress of the marketing plan.
- Update of the Marketing Plan and marketing schedule to reflect performance metrics analysis

Marketing Plan (Strategy)

Your marketing plan should define your Strategy, which is based upon overall business objectives and the competitive environment.

Strategy should include target markets, including demographics, and the message(s) you wish to convey, as well as the anticipated Return on Investment) ROI or (Return on Marketing Objectives) ROMO. You should be careful to understand these are significantly different. Read on for a discussion of the differences.

If your Marketing Team has an understating of your business and marketing goals, they should report on the progress of these metrics on a regular basis.

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Execution (Tactics)

Execution is the actual implementation of the Plan, which will include the Advertising campaigns – based upon the timeline and messages to markets established in the Marketing Plan. This may include direct mail, Radio, Print, and Television.

Measurement

Measurement is essential to evaluating the success of your campaigns, and is a requirement of Metrics analysis.

This includes tracking mechanisms to determine where and how your message is received. This is achieved through a number of methods, including using unique DID numbers, different P.O. Boxes for response cards, or alternate URL tracking based upon banner ads, among others.

Your Marketing Team should be able to communicate these mechanisms to you. If you are not including measurement in your marketing, you have no idea what part of the marketing budget you are wasting.

Metrics (Analysis)

Return on Investment

ROI is usually linked to the income generated by a particular campaign, or even the entire Marketing Plan. This is not an accurate measurement of the marketing campaign because it will include Sales efficacy (ability to close deals) and your product's strengths or weaknesses compared to your competitors'.

Return on Marketing Objectives

While ROI is important, ROMO is a more accurate measurement of the performance of the Marketing Plan. If the plan's objective is to generate more leads, this should be simple to track, *provided the measurement mechanisms are properly planned and tracked*. If the plan's objective is Brand Awareness, this will typically require survey data for the target market(s).

Baselines

It is important, if possible, to utilize the same measurements on ROI or ROMO before implementation of your plan, if just starting, in order to accurately measure the performance of your Plan in the initial stages. Later, the Plan will most likely be measured against past performance, once past metrics are available. It is important to change your measurement criteria whenever the Marketing Plan changes, particularly if the changes are based upon changing Business Objectives in order to obtain true numbers and information.

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Summary

An effective Marketing program should include all the elements discussed above, based upon research of your target market(s), competitors and industry trends.

Of course, the proper Marketing Team should already be providing this to you. We suggest you discuss these items with your Team at the next Marketing review to ensure you are receiving the best results for your budget.

About the Authors

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About The Still

An intellectual property creation, marketing, and media consulting firm, The Still handles all aspects of your company's branding and positioning efforts. The Still provides media metrics analysis, marketing audits, and market research, as well as marketing execution and idea creation. See http://ideadistillery.com/Concentrating_Marketing.html

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