



**Shetland Islands Council
Economic Development Unit**

MARKETING PLAN TEMPLATE

The marketing plan is a sequence of activities and assessments that every business should do annually as a part of its management process. Reduced to its basic level, the marketing plan assesses the market's needs and allocates the company's resources to meet them.

This template has been written with established businesses in mind; however, it is equally relevant to start-up businesses. It takes the form of a sequence of questions relating to your business. In answering them you will end up writing a logical and consistent marketing plan with an estimated budget for promotional activity.

Many of the questions you will only be able to answer with a guess or a hunch. If you have no evidence but have a hunch or belief put it down and just write in the margin next to it 'best guess'. In doing this you will probably highlight areas that you need to or would like to know more about.

If you think that a question is not relevant, say so and put why you think you do not need to consider it.

Please bear in mind that this template is a simplified method of arriving at a marketing plan and, for anything more than a simple straightforward business, should be regarded merely as a first step in establishing a more comprehensive and robust plan.

What will this plan do for you?

It will help by providing a logical framework to develop a marketing plan that, with the information and resources you have, best matches your customers' needs against your capabilities.

Most importantly the plan should become a working document which sets out the marketing activities for your business in a logical way to achieve identified outcomes. It is something to compare your progress with throughout the year ahead and a reference point against which to change direction.



MARKETING PLAN

1. Basic Details

Name of business:	
Contact Name:	
Business Address:	
Phone:	Fax:
Mobile:	e-mail
Web site:	Year of establishment:

2. External Factors

What factors external to your business and beyond your control are impacting already or are likely to impact in the next three years, and how are they doing or going to do so?

Political Factors (e.g. taxation, government intervention, transport improvements, access to government contracts):

Economic Factors (e.g. likely interest rate changes, general level of economic growth, exchange rate levels, local economic changes such as planned development or new transport links):

Social (e.g. lifestyle changes, demographic trends, spending patterns):

Technological (e.g. IT changes, technical innovations in your own business/industry):



3. *Your Market*

a) Defining the benefits that you are selling

How do you define your market? What benefits do your product(s) or service(s) offer?

Product(s)/service(s) and the benefits they offer potential buyers:

b) Growth

Is the market for the benefits that you offer growing, static or declining? If you do not have exact information can you make an informed guess? What is the basis for your guess?

Growth – where do you think it might be coming from (if at all)?



c) Segmentation

Can you define into groups the type of people who are buying your products now? Select criteria that are meaningful in your marketing, which you can target a common marketing strategy at. Consider both actual purchasers and those that might be potential buyers. Consider also the reasons for buying, are they customers who may be buying for someone else or for himself or herself (customer/consumers)? Are there other important groups in the market who might not buy but would still influence the decision (Specifiers or advisers)?

Category	Defining characteristics	Actual or potential/ growing or declining?

d) Distribution Channels

What are the main channels for distribution operating in your markets? Do providers sell direct to consumers or do they use intermediaries, e.g. wholesalers or retailers? How much of the final price do those intermediaries actually take in return for their distribution of your products?

Distribution channels



e) Competitors

Whom do you see as your main competitors? How does your product differ from theirs (e.g. price/value, benefit mix)? How much of the market share do you guess your main competitors have, compared to you? How close to you are they really, are they aiming at a different type of customer(s) or one(s) very similar to you?

Competitors – near and not so near – what do you know about them?



4. Business Performance

a) Sales and Profit

How has your business performed in the last two to three years? What are your best selling products?

Year	Year before last	Last Year	Current
Total Sales £			
Total Sales Units			
Total Profit £			
Profit/unit sold			
Best Seller £			
Best Seller Unit			
2 nd Best Seller £			
2 nd Best Seller Units			
3 rd Best Seller £			
3 rd Best Seller Units			

4. Business Performance Continued

b) Customers

List you top 5 customers and the % of your total business that they account for. What type of customer are they, buyer, consumer or intermediary?

Customer	Rank	% of your sales
The rest		



5. SWOT Analysis

Consider all of the above and look at them in the light of your business. From them list the strengths and weaknesses that you see in your own business. From the external factors, the size and shape of the market, and the competitors you will be able to define the opportunities and threats that face your business.

Strengths	Weaknesses



Opportunities	Threats

6. Objectives

a) Marketing Objectives

Given your analysis above, what do you consider should be your marketing objectives for the future (say next 1-3 years)? In which of the four squares do you intend to grow your business?

	New Market	Existing Market
New Product	Diversify	Market Extension
Existing Product	Product Extension	Market Penetration



b) Financial Objectives

What are your financial objectives in the next three years?

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Total Sales £			
Sales by geographic market £			
Total Sales by Distribution Channel?			
Trading Profit (or gross profit) £			

7. The Marketing Mix

In order to reach your objectives there are four main variables that you can use to influence the direction you go and how you get there. They are, your product offer (PRODUCT), the price you sell it at (PRICE), the promotion that you do in the market (PROMOTION) and the distribution channel that you use to get the product to the final consumer (PLACE).

Develop a strategy under each of these variables and try and estimate what costs you will incur in effecting them.

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Possible activities & costs in each category are going to be:

Product	Research & development, equipment/tools, packaging development etc.
Price	Price lists, computer programmes.
Promotion	Web site, advertising, direct mail, sales promotion, brochures, exhibitions, sales conferences and sales staff (salaries/commissions & training)
Distribution	Physical – storage, working capital and freight Channel – Margins, discounts or rebates given, interest forgone on credit terms.

a) Product Strategy

b) Pricing Strategy



c) Promotion Strategy

What image and messages do you want your product to have? Are you going to develop a brand(s)? If so, where will it be 'positioned' in terms of quality and price. Whom are you going to tell about your product; what benefits are you going to raise; what image or values are you hoping to convey and what medium, in what quantities are you going to use?

Advertising Plans & budget



Web Site Plans



Direct Mail and Publications Plans & Budget



PR Plans & Budget

Sales Promotion Plans & Budget



d) Distribution Strategy

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8. Promotion Budget

Activity	£
Advertising	
Direct Mail	
Sales Promotion	
Web Site/ Internet	
Printed Brochures & Publications	
Other	
Total	