

Drive Your Growth Using a 7-Step Marketing Strategy Framework

Measure/Optimize

Measure how marketing is performing against KPIs and benchmarks. Then, optimize to improve results and performance.

Tactical Plan

Develop a tactical implementation plan to guide who does what, when and how, as well as tools, processes & best practices.

Channels

Discover and focus on the most effective channels to engage, educate, entertain and nurture customers.

Your Story

Create value propositions, boilerplates, elevator pitches, vision and missions statements to tell and share your story.

Goals

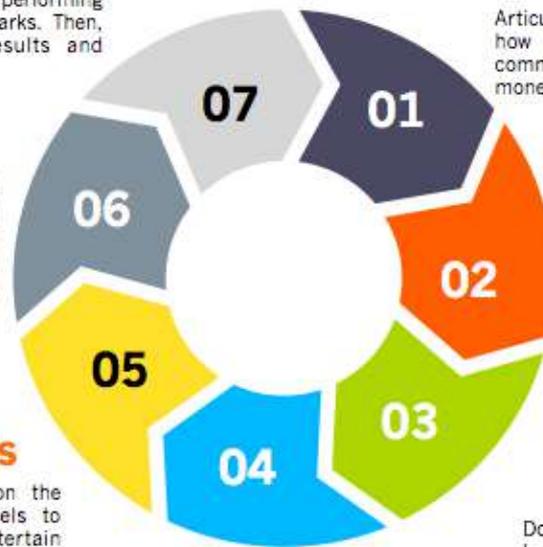
Articulate what you want to achieve, how and when. How much of a commitment will it take - time, money, people?

Target Audiences

Focus on who matters. Create buyer personas to get knowledge of customers: their needs, problems and buying behaviour.

Competitive Landscape

Do a situational analysis to assess how your marketing is performing. Do a competitive audit to assess rivals' strengths and weaknesses.



Do you have a marketing strategy?

Surprisingly, many fast-growing companies don't have a marketing strategy. Their marketing takes a shot-gun approach, which means doing a variety of things and crossing their fingers that some of their efforts are rewarded.

Unfortunately, this marketing approach often fails.

Without a well-articulated roadmap for success, their marketing wastes time and money and doesn't generate expected results.

When this happens, companies are disappointed and lose their appetite for marketing—another big mistake!

The good news is creating a marketing strategy is a straightforward exercise. An investment in time and effort will create well-defined marketing strategy to drive growth and rally the troops.

A marketing strategy gives fast-growing companies a document that lets them, structure and plan their marketing. As important, it establishes priorities and internal alignment.

Here is a seven-step process to create a marketing strategy:

Goals: Clearly identify what you want to achieve, how and when. How much of a commitment will it take in time, money and people?

Your goals can be basic: higher sales. But they can be more granular: media coverage, conference invitations, marketing qualified leads, sales qualified leads, etc. Well-defined goals create targets so marketing can be tracked, measured and improved.

Target Audiences: Focus on who matters to you. Who's your ideal or core customer? What are their needs and interests? Why would they buy from you?

That's step one.

Then, create buyer personas to identify different types of customers. Within a target audience of 25-to-35 women, for example, there are consumers with different needs and interests: single women living in a large city, married women, and women with children. They're interested in the same product but embrace it for different reasons.

Tools: To help with the creation of buyer personas, check out tools such as HubSpot's [MakeMyPersona](#), and [Personapp](#).

Competitive Analysis: Do a situational analysis to evaluate your marketing and how it is performing. Look for ways to optimize or change approaches, channels, campaigns, and activities.

Explore the competitive landscape. Who keeps you awake at night? What companies have no profile but interesting products? Who gets talked about on social media and covered by the media? A competitive analysis identifies challenges and threats before they become problems.

What's your story?: Good storytelling are compelling. They engage, inspire, motivate and break through the noise. Create strategic messaging: value propositions, boilerplates, positioning statements, elevator pitches, vision and missions statements to tell and share your story.

Good stories establish a rock-solid foundation for a company's marketing and sales efforts. It delivers clarity and consistency so employees, partners, investors and key stakeholders speak from the same page. A good story makes it easier to connect with target audiences and eliminates confusion about what you do, who you service and why it matters.

Tools: To develop value propositions, Strategyzer's [Value Proposition Canvas](#) is a user-friendly tool.

Channels: Discover and focus on the most effective channels to engage, educate, entertain and nurture customers. I'm a big believer in a "less is more" approach.

Marketing success happens when a fast-growing company focuses on a few channels or activities rather than spreading themselves too thin.

To facilitate this approach, I use a "list, rank and prioritize" framework. It begins by listing all relevant marketing activities or channels to reach your target audiences.

Then, rank everything based on cost, effort, and expected success. Then, divide the list into three buckets: now (things will quickly move the needle), soon (three to six months out) and later (six to 12 months).

Tools: To determine the best channels, I developed a tool called the [“Next Step Framework”](#) to guide you through the process.

Tactics: Develop a tactical implementation plan to guide who does what, when and how, as well as tools, processes, and best practices.

Create an editorial calendar to structure marketing activities—social media, content marketing, advertising, conferences, etc. As important, develop a budget to establish how much money will be spent on different channels.

Measure/Optimize: Measure how marketing is performing against well-defined KPIs and benchmarks. Then, explore ways to optimize to improve results and performance. If a particular channel or activity isn’t working, tweak or change what you’re doing, or reach into the “Soon” bucket to take a different approach.

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Tools: To determine how well your marketing is working, use a tool such as [Qoints](#), which compares your digital activation campaigns against competitors.

These seven steps will deliver a marketing strategy that will provide your marketing with structure and focus. It allows everyone involved to know where you want to go and the most important elements.

That said, your strategic needs evolve and adapt as your product changes, customers ask for different things and new competitors emerge.

