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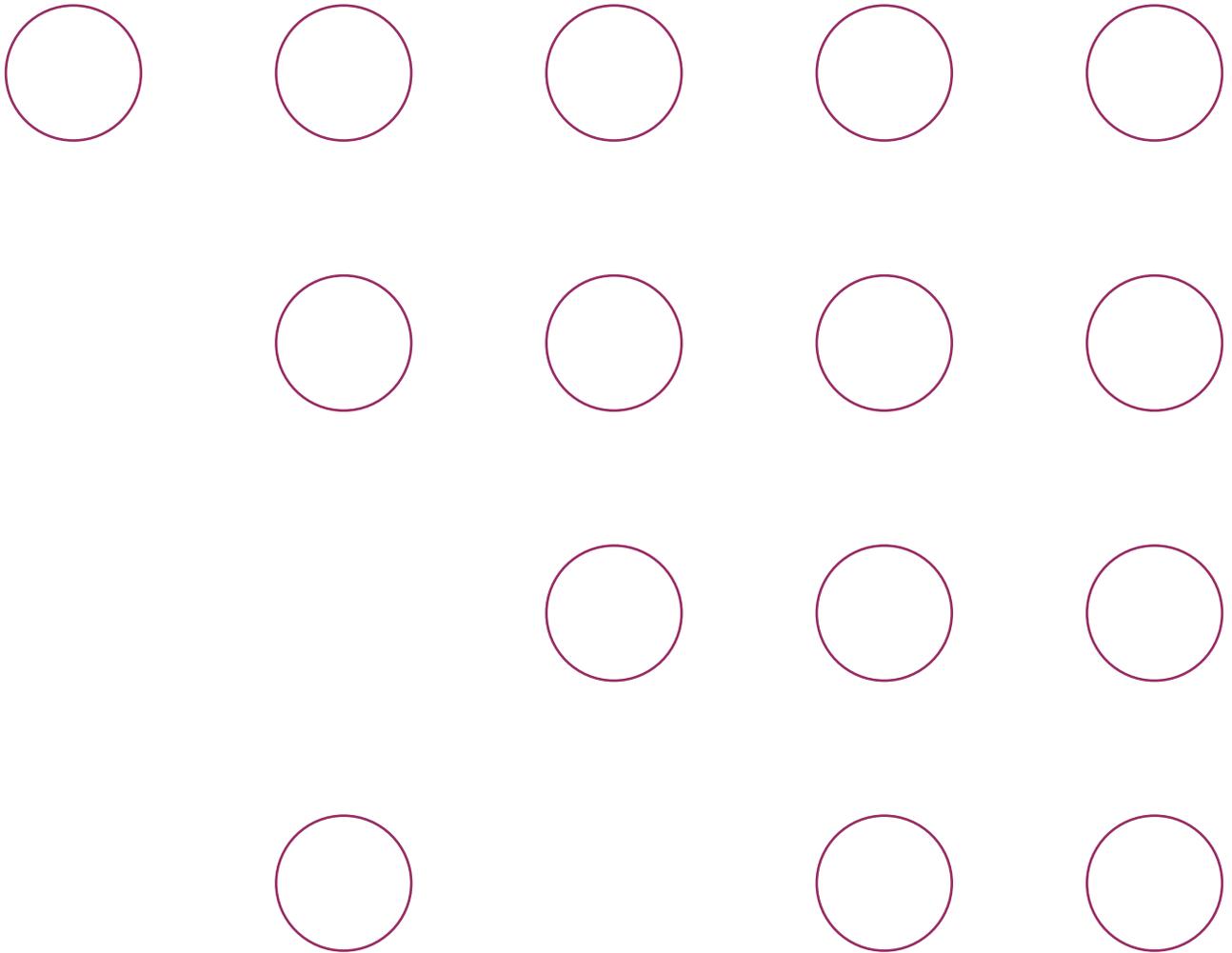
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1. What is Marketing?

The Basics

Marketing is about reaching your customers and showing them why they should buy your product or service. It is about giving customers what they want, not what you think they want.

Marketing is the total process of identifying what the correct product or service is for your customer – what is it, where should it be offered, when should it be offered, and how much should you charge for it – and then figuring out how to inform consumers about all these advantages.

Marketing can be perceived as being a high-pressure way of selling a product or service. Companies should accept that they must choose a marketing approach, which is consistent with their business approach. If you do this, people will keep coming back. Developing and maintaining customer loyalty is the most important goal of marketing.

Tell Me More

Marketing is a basic part of doing business correctly. In order to grow your business – either in sales or in profits – you need to follow certain steps of the marketing process.

Step 1: First, you must correctly identify who your target market customer is and what are the unmet needs of your customer. This process is called market research.

Step 2: Develop a product or service that meets that unmet need. This process can take a lot of time and can be expensive. The reason most new products or services fail is because the entrepreneur has not developed a product or service that offers at least one – and ideally more – points-of-difference over existing offerings. A “unique characteristic” is a benefit that only your product or service can offer. For example, maybe you can deliver faster internet service to your customers (AWCC providing 4G) or maybe your product can deliver a better/clearer picture (Samsung HD TV). One of the keys to marketing success is developing a product or service that meets unmet customer needs and offers multiple points-of-difference.

Step 3: You must figure out the process to get that product or service into the hands of your future customer in a way that makes it easy for them to buy. There are usually three ways to do this – in person (for example, through retail stores), by phone or using the internet.

Step 4: Identify the right price for your product or service.

Step 5: Determine how you will communicate the existence of your product/service to your target audience. To do this, you will use advertising and promotion.

Step 6: Create a process to track if your marketing is successful. This will be part of your marketing plan.

Glossary Terms from this Section

Advertising - Communication used to convince your target audience to buy a product or service.

Market Research - The activity of gathering information about consumers’ needs and wants.

Marketing - The process of reaching your customers and showing them why they should buy your product or service.

Marketing Plan - A document that outlines a company's marketing goals and all the business activities that will be done to reach those goals.

Promotion - A short term action designed to change a consumer's purchasing behavior, such as a sale or discount coupon.

Target Market - A specific set of potential customers that a company focuses its marketing and sales efforts upon. Often the most likely customers to buy from a company.

Unique Characteristic - A benefit that only your product or service can offer. This is also recognized as a "point of difference" that only your service or product provides which is different from your competitors.

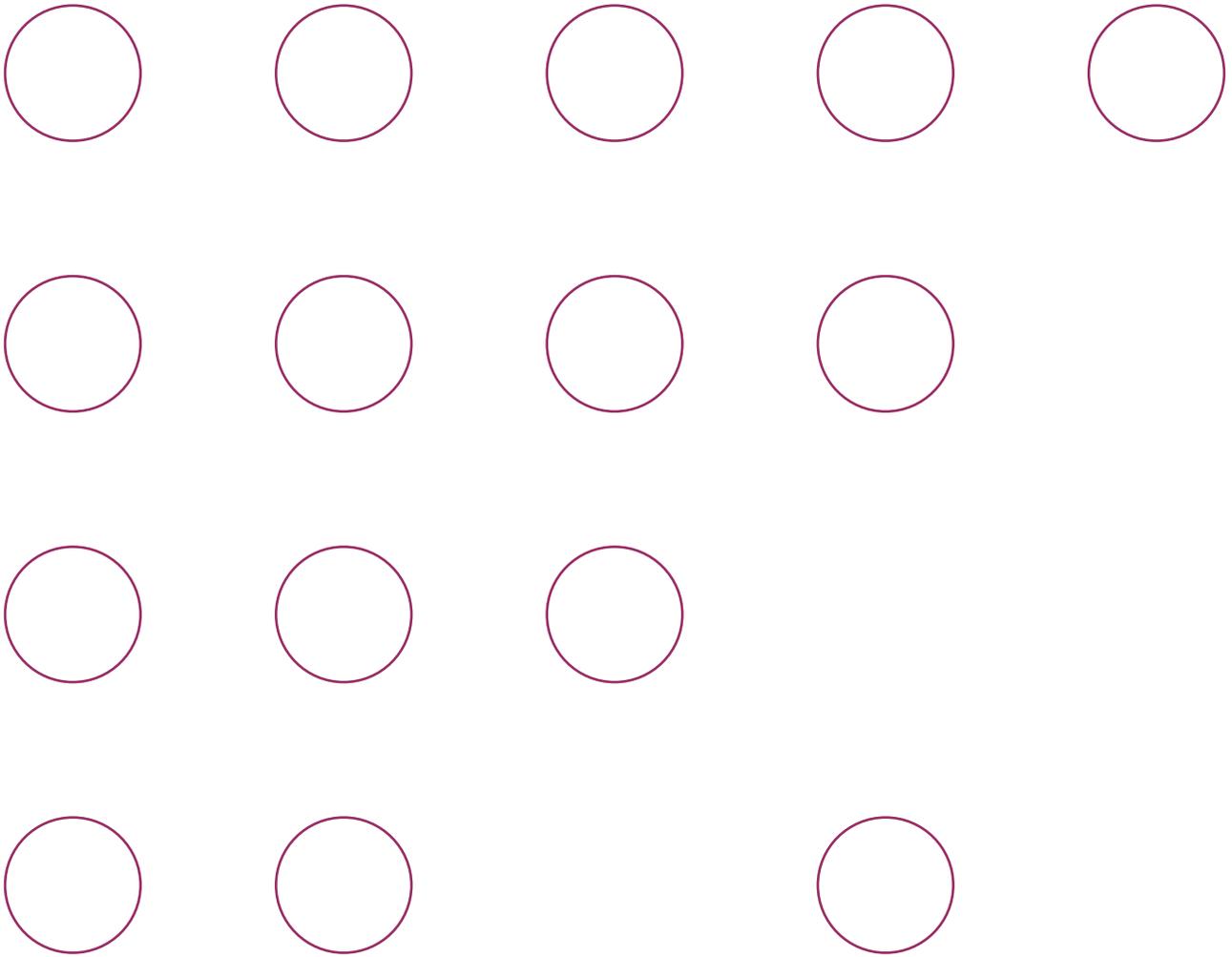
? **For More Information Related to this Topic See**

- What is market research and how do I do it? *6. Marketing*
- What are the top tips for creating effective advertising? *6. Marketing*
- What is a marketing plan and how do I create a marketing plan? *6. Marketing*

Additional Tools Available

Marketing Plan Template

Market Research Worksheet



2. What is a target market and how do I identify the right target market?

The Basics

One of the first things you need to figure out when starting a new business is: “Who is my perfect customer or client?” You should sit down and look at what you are offering and look around at who you think would be the perfect buyer/user for your product/service.

You need to know exactly (or, as exact as you can possibly make it) who your customers are. This means understanding their demographic characteristics. Some demographic characteristics are: age, gender, location, and income level. Finding out this information is part of the market research you need to do before going into business. You need to know who you are going to be selling to/talking to about your product/service.

Tell Me More

Selecting a target market allows you to create messages that appeal to specific buyers. For instance, a lipstick company may aim the advertising message at females. Targeting even further, a mature woman may respond to a benefit-based ad that a lipstick makes lips look more youthful.

Only once you know who you are targeting, can you begin to design a plan around how you will market to them. If you try to send an advertising message to everyone, you will likely lose much of your audience simply because the message doesn’t apply to them.

Businesses usually don’t have the time or resources to be able to reach everyone with their message. By choosing to concentrate on a smaller group of people, you can use your marketing budget to reach those customers who are most likely to buy from you. This strategy also gives you the best chance to make a profit.

To identify your ideal target market, you should first do market research to identify an unfulfilled need for a product/service. Once you have identified the unfulfilled need, you should determine if you can deliver a product/service that meets that need. If the answer is yes, then you should feel comfortable with your decision to proceed.

Once you’ve identified the target market, you then need to identify the target audience, which is the intended recipient of the advertising message. Many times, the market and the audience are the same. However, when one person is the end user and another is the purchaser, the target market and target audience differ. There are quite a few products used by women, such as flowers, that are purchased primarily by their husbands. In these instances, the target market is female and the target audience is the male who makes the purchase. Marketers design strategies to meet the needs of the target market and use media channels and other ways of communicating to best reach the purchaser.

Once you know who you are targeting, it is much easier to make decisions on media allocations. If your target market is young women, there is no need to purchase ad space in every magazine. You can advertise only in those popular with that audience. You’ll save money and get a better return on investment by using a targeted marketing plan. There is no need to spend your time or money communicating with people who are unlikely to purchase your product.

By clearly establishing your target, you will know how to reach them easier and find that you won’t have to invest as much money and effort into your marketing to get the results you want. You’ll be more focused, more effective in your marketing and can get a greater return on your marketing investment.

To identify your ideal target market, you should first do market research to identify an unfulfilled need for a product or service. Once you have identified the unfulfilled need, you should determine if you can deliver a product or service that meets that need. If the answer is yes, then you should feel comfortable with your decision to proceed.

Glossary Terms from this Section

Advertising Message - The content of your advertising that you want people to remember.

Demographic Characteristics - statistics about the target audience that will influence your marketing plan, such as age, location, and sex, etc.

Market Research - The activity of gathering information about consumers' needs and wants.

Marketing Plan - A document that outlines a company's marketing goals and all the business activities that will be done to reach those goals.

Media Allocations - How you divide the marketing investment among media channels.

Media Channels - The communication options that will get your message to your target, such as TV, newspapers, radio, online, social media (i.e. Facebook, etc.).

Target Audience - The intended recipient of the advertising message.

Target Market - A specific set of potential customers that a company focuses its marketing and sales efforts upon. Often the most likely customers to buy from a company.

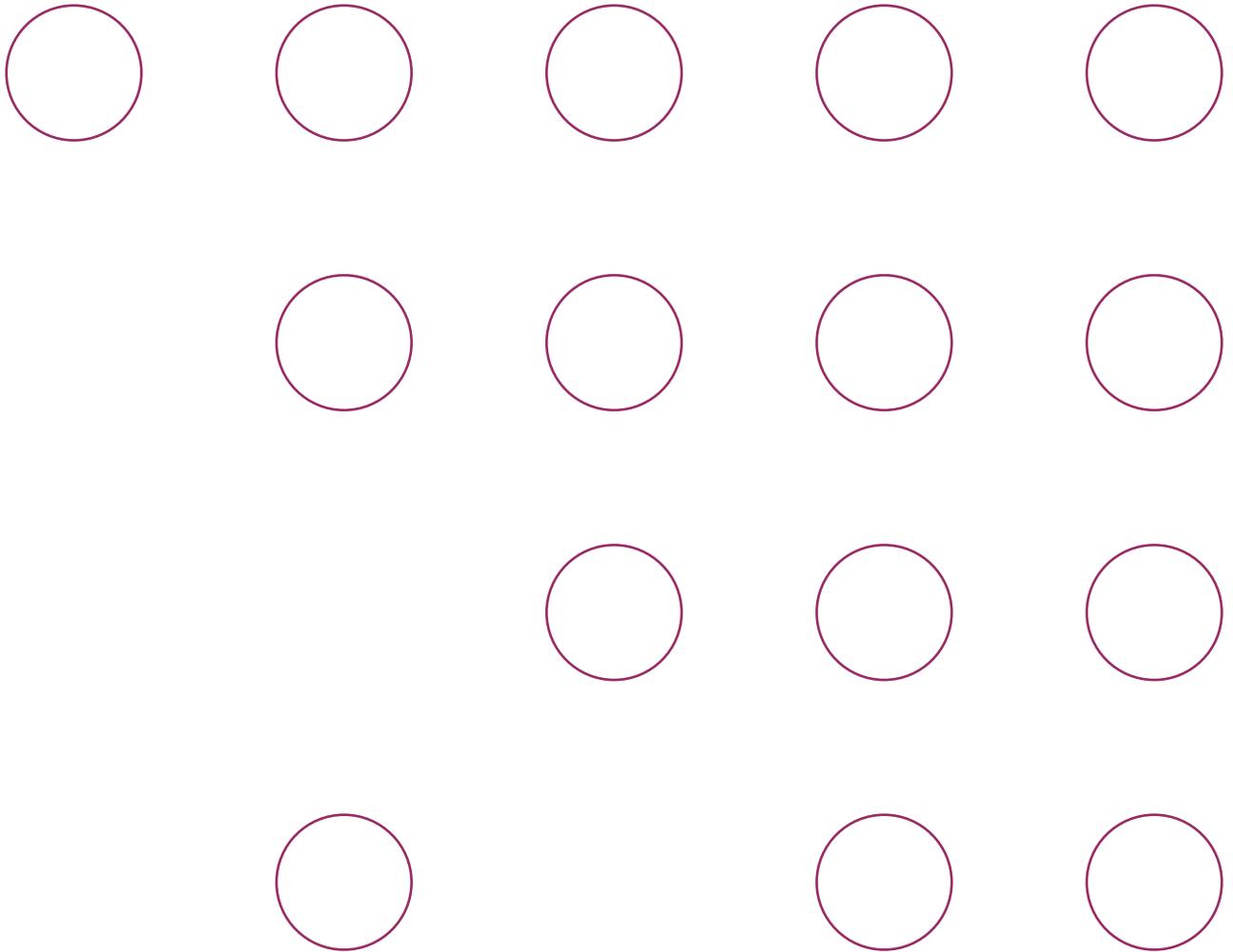
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- How can I make my advertising work best for me? *6. Marketing*
- What is a marketing plan and how do I create a marketing plan? *6. Marketing*
- How do I know if my marketing is working? *6. Marketing*
- What is market research and how do I do it? *6. Marketing*

Additional Tools Available

Consumer Profile Table

Market Research Worksheet



3. What is a competitor and how do I identify who my competitors are?

The Basics

A competitor is anyone who sells the same products or services as you do. This is because you are competing against them for customers and sales. This concept is important to know because the presence of one or more competitors will directly impact how you price your product/service. There are two different kinds of competitors: direct competitors and indirect competitors.

Direct competitors are the people or businesses that you openly compete against, because they sell the same product or offer the same service as you do. For example, if you own a parlor and there is another parlor on the same street, then you are direct competitors.

Indirect competitors are people or businesses that sell a substitute product or service. Their substitute is not exactly the same as the product or service that you are selling, but it serves the same purpose or addresses the same need. For example, if you own a traditional tailoring shop that sells custom made clothing and there is a store that sells pre manufactured imported clothing on the same street, you are indirect competitors. This is because you are both offering options for fashion apparel.

You may not know all of your competitors by name, but you do need to think about how their product or service appeals to the same target audience as your product/service and then develop a way to make your product or service different. If you can't make yourself different from the competition, you may not have enough customers to support your business.

Tell me more

Competitors are a threat to the health of your business, so you must figure out how you're going to make your product or service stand out from the competition. In other words, you need to figure out what you're going to do differently than the people who are already selling the same product or service. In business terms, this is called differentiation. For example, one restaurant sells hamburgers made with frozen beef and the other sells hamburgers made with fresh beef. In this case, the restaurants have differentiated their products from their competition.

Before you can figure out what you're going to do differently than your competition, you need to make sure you understand what your competitors are doing. You need to do market research on your competitors to find out what they're doing well, what they're not doing well, and, in some cases, what they're not doing at all. For instance, you can send a friend, family member or coworker to try and become a customer of your competitor. Test the products and/or services and make notes on everything from presentation to customer service to follow-up after the purchase. This process is known as Mystery Shopping. You'll use this information to figure out how you can make your product or service stand out.

Start out by looking at the kinds of products or services that your competitors are offering and try to determine if there's something that none of them are doing. You can also consider things like how do they offer customer service (on the phone or by e-mail), how many locations do they have, and what conveniences they offer (open late or open early). If you are marketing a product, you should discover what benefits their product offers (for example, it makes hair shiny) or at what price they are selling.

As part of this investigation, look at your own strengths and weaknesses as your competitor would look at them. Then try to imagine what they will do in order to gain sales and have a marketplace advantage over you. This thinking will enable you to defend your business against possible attacks from your competition.

Glossary Terms from this Section

Differentiation – What companies do to offer something different from the people who are already selling a similar product or service.

Direct Competitors - The people or businesses that you openly compete against, because they sell the same product or offer the same service as you do.

Indirect Competitors - People or businesses that sell a substitute product or service. Their substitute is not exactly the same as the product or service that you are selling, but it serves the same purpose or addresses the same need.

Market Research - The activity of gathering information about consumers' needs and wants.

Mystery Shopping - The process through which you or your designated team member serve as the customer of your competitor to collect information about their products, services, flaws, and unique characteristics.

Target Audience - The intended recipient of the advertising message.

For More Information Related to this Topic See:

- What is market research and how do I do it? *6. Marketing*
- What is one best practice to help me organize my marketing thinking? *6. Marketing*

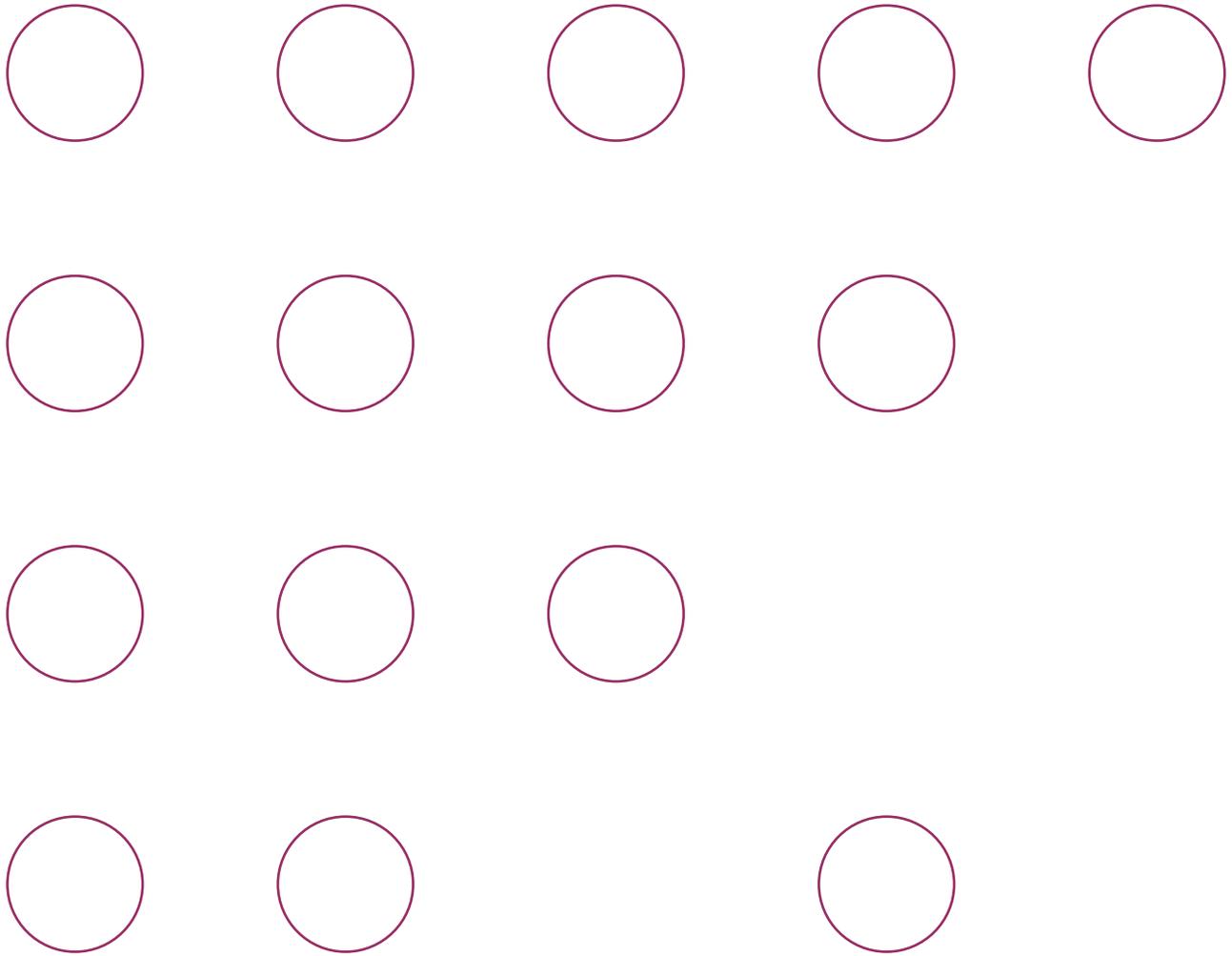
Additional Tools Available

6 Ps Marketing Plan Worksheet

Market Research Worksheet

Marketing Plan Template

Developing Your Brand Promise



4. What is advertising and how do I use it to grow my business?

The Basics

Advertising is the practice of calling public attention to one's product or service using some method of paid announcement. Understanding the power of advertising is critical for a business owner. That's because advertising is the primary way business owners communicate about a business or product to a target audience. It is the way consumers find out what benefits a product has that will meet their needs. Advertising can be done using many kinds of media, such as online media (like e-mail, Facebook or other types of social media) and of-line media (like TV, newspapers, magazines, fliers, brochures, billboards or radio.) Effective advertising tells a story – one that involves the customer and makes them feel something positive about the brand/company.

Advertising takes many forms. It can range from a low-cost sales brochure to a high-cost TV ad during the Afghan Star show on ToloTV. The challenge is how to develop effective advertising and then determine which kind of media works best for their product/service. You want to find out how to deliver your message to the target customer in the most effective way.

You can use advertising to grow your business by using it to make prospective customers aware that your product or service exists, making them aware of what your product/service can do for them, making people want to try your product/service, and finally, making them want to take action (like buy your product/service).

Tell me more

Advertising provides a direct line of communication to your existing and prospective customers about your product/service. Advertising serves many purposes. It can:

- Make customers aware of your product or service
- Convince customers that your company's product or service is right for their needs
- Create a desire for your product or service
- Enhance the image of your company
- Announce new products or services
- Make customers take the next step (such as: ask for more information, request a sample, place an order, etc.)
- Attract customers to your business
- Create an online presence of loyal customers for your business on the internet
- Reinforce your brand message across multiple channels, highlighting your consistency

Successful businesses always have a goal in mind for their advertising. Your advertising goals should be established in your marketing plan. For example, you may want to increase your sales to reach a goal, generate more interest in a new service, or encourage more customers to visit your store. Your goal could simply be increasing name recognition or changing the image you're projecting. For example, when Afghanistan Commercial Bank (ACB) newly entered the market, it focused on TV advertising to promote their brand as an established bank in the market.

Your goals will vary depending on the industry and market that you're in.

As well, all products and businesses go through three stages, with different advertising goals needed for each one:

Stage 1: The start-up business. If you are new in the market, you need to establish your identity. Your business needs a lot of advertising and promotion to grab your consumer's attention and make them aware of you.

Stage 2: The growing business. Once your business is established, your advertising can be used to differentiate yourself from your competition and convince buyers that yours is the best product/service to use.

Stage 3: The established business. The purpose of advertising at this point is to remind consumers why they should continue buying from you.

No matter which stage your business is in today, effective advertising does four things well:

- It builds awareness. Advertising's first job is to make prospective customers aware that your product/service exists.
- It creates interest. Next, advertising should raise people's interest in what your product/service can do for them.
- It must create a desire. Advertising must make people want to try your product/service.
- It should make them want to take action. Effective advertising should move your target customer to take an action. For example, this could be asking for more information about your business or moving them to buying your product.

When you are thinking of using advertising to grow your business, follow this following four-step procedure:

Step 1: Define your market. Determine who your target market is (those customers most likely to buy your product or service).

Step 2: Establish your budget. Know what you can afford to spend on advertising.

Step 3: Plan which kinds of media you'll use. Figure out what are the best ways to reach your prospective customers with your message.

Step 4: Create an advertising strategy. Choose the most effective message and visuals for your advertising campaign.

Glossary Terms from this Section

Advertising - Communication used to convince your target audience to buy a product or service.

Marketing Plan - A document that outlines a company's marketing goals and all the business activities that will be done to reach those goals.

Name Recognition - Are people able to recognize what your brand stands for when they hear the name?

Promotion - A short term action designed to change a consumer's purchasing behavior, such as a sale or discount coupon.

Target Audience - The intended recipient of the advertising message.

Target Market - A specific set of potential customers that a company focuses its marketing and sales efforts. Often the most likely customers to buy from a company.

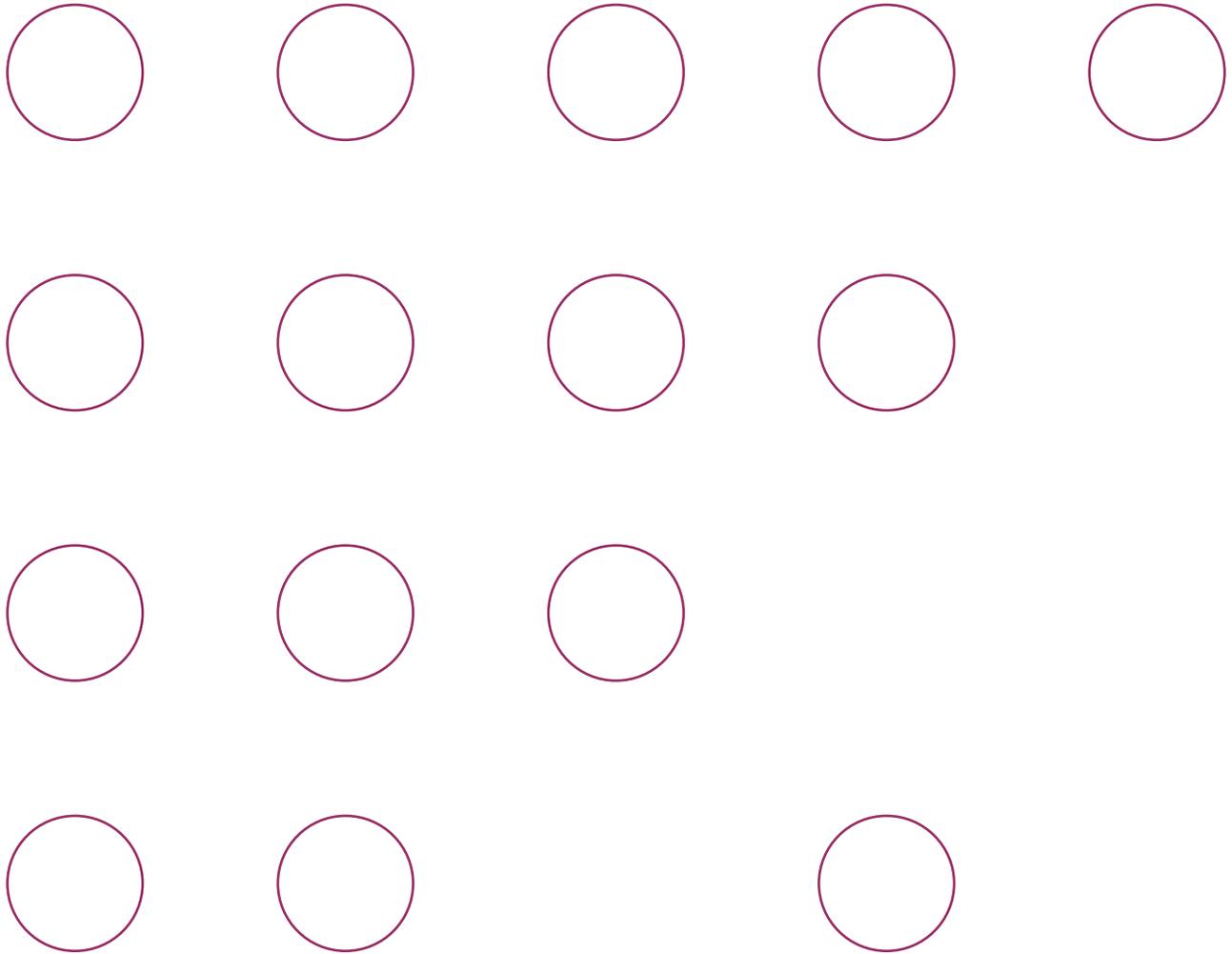
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- How can I make my advertising work best for me? *6. Marketing*
- What is marketing communication and how do I do it effectively? *6. Marketing*
- What is a target market and how do I identify the right target market? *6. Marketing*

Additional Tools Available

Market Research Worksheet

Marketing Collateral Worksheet



5. What is promotion and how do I use it to grow my business?

The Basics

A promotion occurs when marketers offer something of value, generally in the form of lower cost or something with additional value, for a short time period to try to convince customers to buy. For example, if Finest Supermarket (grocery retailer) runs a “Get 15% off on all food items during 3 days leading Eid” offer – that is a promotion. If a beverage company, like Coca-Cola, hands out a free sample of their new juice drink to everyone attending a soccer match, that is a promotion.

Promotion is often confused with advertising, but they are two different concepts. The confusion exists because a promotion is often announced using a method of advertising (like a radio ad or a flyer). For example, if a local coffee shop, such as iCafe in Share Naw, announces in a radio ad that it will offer “Buy a sandwich get 1 soda free” all day on next Thursday only, then this is both advertising and promotion. In this case, both activities are occurring – the promotion (buy a Pizza Roll and get a soda free) is being communicated by advertising (the radio ad).

Tell Me More

Promotion includes all aspects of marketing communications with your customers (and potential customers) when you try to get them to take some action in a short-term timeframe. Promotional messages can be seen/heard in media such as TV and radio; they can be found in action-oriented incentives (e.g., temporary sale prices & discounts), and are present in direct selling (in person, or personalized via phone, e-mail, or internet).

The objective of promotional activity is to get people to buy. Promotions can be an effective tool for:

- Creating a sense of urgency (“call to action”) to encourage customers to buy immediately.
- Getting people to try – using offers such as “Free sample” or “Buy one Get one Free”.
- Increasing how much they buy -- For example: “Buy 100 Afs in 3G data from Etisalat and get 150 Afs worth of data usage for next month. Or a fast food restaurant, such as Mr. Cod, has supersized meals which is an example of this type of promotion.
- Increase how often they buy -- The use of loyalty cards is a well-accepted promotional tool to motivate consumers to return more often. The airline and retail industries have been doing this for years.

Research has shown that three concepts can help explain how promotion works to grow your business: Awareness, Trial and Repurchase. These three concepts summarize the steps in the purchasing process - from thinking about making a purchase to buying the product on an ongoing basis.

Step 1: - Awareness - First, potential customers must become aware of a product/service and recall its particular benefits and performance levels.

Step 2: - Trial - If the customer thinks that the product/service will meet their needs and will deliver good value for the money, then the customer may try the product. Of course, trial may not happen if the brand can't be found in stores or if the customer realizes that her perceptions are wrong (e.g. the actual price is much higher than what she thought).

Step 3: - Repurchase - When a customer purchases the product, they can test the product's performance in use and determine whether their perceptions were correct and the product delivers the expected value. If so, the customer may buy the product again. This is the best result of a promotion - a loyal customer.

Different promotional tools are effective for addressing different marketing needs. Some well-known promotional tools are:

- Trial offers – This is usually seen at the launch of new product, this type of promotion can be used to reduce the price. “20% off for a limited time only.” The goal is to reduce a potential customer’s resistance to trying something new by offering a short-term deal.
- Coupons – this type of promotion is used for new and existing products. Coupon use has a similar aim to trial offers – encouraging a customer to buy because of a lower price.
- Sampling – the most expensive type of promotion puts the product in the hands of customers for free. This is risk free to the customer, but can be costly to the business. Sampling has been proven to be the #1 most effective type of promotion to get people to try a product or service. For instance, perfume shops hand out sample fragrances to customers to get them to visit their shops.

Glossary Terms from this Section

Advertising - Communication used to convince your target audience to buy a product or service.

Direct Selling - The action of personal selling to the customer away from a store. This can be done in person, on the phone, by e-mail, or online.

Incentives - An extra reward that motives action (for example rebates, coupons, merchandising allowances, temporary sale prices).

Loyalty Cards - A technique to reward current customers with some special offer.

Promotion - A short term action designed to change a consumer’s purchasing behavior, such as a sale or discount coupon.

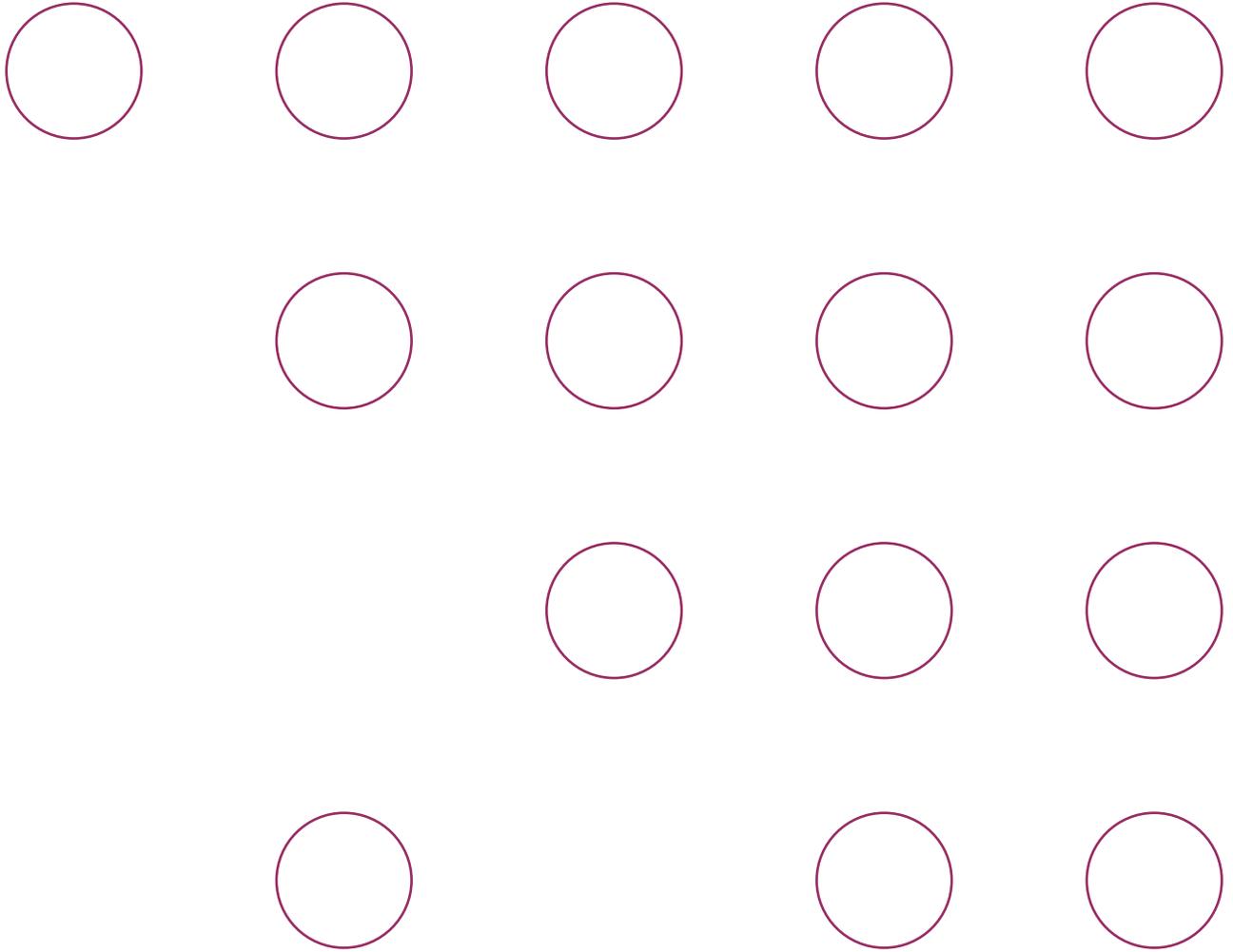
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Additional Tools Available

Market Research Worksheet

Marketing Collateral Worksheet



6. What is branding and how do I do it right?

The Basics

A brand is a name, image, symbol, design or any other feature that identifies one product or service as different from those products or services offered by others. Branding is getting people who have a specific need or problem to know, like, and trust your company. It highlights something unique and different about your product/service. Branding is a key part of the marketing process.

Branding uses different signals (such as an image, a song, a color, or a well-known person) to make consumers feel a certain way about your company, products, or services. These signals can be seen or heard in many different ways. Some widely-used examples are: logo (Da Afghanistan Brishna Sherkat); jingle (Roshan “Nazdik Shodan”)). Branding uses these signals to convince consumers that your company, product or service is different from everyone else’s.

There are three main steps to create a brand for your business:

- Have a logo that represents what you stand for
- Develop a branding message that communicates why you are unique
- Develop a short, memorable slogan about your brand (called a tagline)

Tell Me More

How do I brand my business?

Step 1: Have a visual identity. Your business should have a visual identity (logo) that quickly communicates who you are (your brand essence.) Whether you spend a lot of time and money developing a logo or not, your business must have a visual identity.

Step 2: Develop a branding message. You need to develop a branding message that you will use to communicate to your customer. Branding is about finding a specific IDEA that you stand for, finding a way to own that idea, and then building total trust that you will always deliver. To do that you need to think about:

- How does the customer benefit from my product/service?
- What is my unique selling proposition?
- Which messages work with which groups of customers?

For example, a yoghurt production company such as Deqane Roz in Kabul developed a branding message that focuses on freshness of the yoghurt and delivers on that promise through keeping the product refrigerated throughout the value chain and adding no preservatives to the product.

Step 3: Develop a tagline. A tagline is a short, memorable slogan that describes what is unique about your brand.

But, branding is more than developing a logo and a tagline. It’s about building trust by being real and genuine. You need to be focused and committed to a single idea that your brand stands for. When you develop your own branding remember:

1. People remember what they feel, but, they need a “Reason Why” to act on it You need to be focused and consistent in your message – Toyota is an inexpensive vehicle that lasts for years, if not decades.

2. People only remember one thing, so be focused
 - ToloTV – a breath of fresh air
 - 3Sports – The go to channel for sporting events and information
 - Intercontinental Hotel – The most historical hotel in the country
3. Your message will be more powerful if you can make it simple.
 - KamAir “Bal’hai Mutma’in” (Safe Wings)
 - Roshan “Nazdeek Shudan” (Getting Closer)

Building a brand takes a long time – and many long-lasting brands keep working on their brand, even after 100 years.

Glossary Terms from this Section

Brand – A unique symbol, logo, or name that organizations use to set apart their product from others in the market.

Brand Essence - What your brand stands for.

Signals - The visual and sonic cues that communicate what a brand stands for.

Tagline - A short, memorable slogan that describes your company or brand.

Unique Selling Proposition - A unique characteristic that only your product or service can offer and no one else does.

For More Information Related to this Topic See:

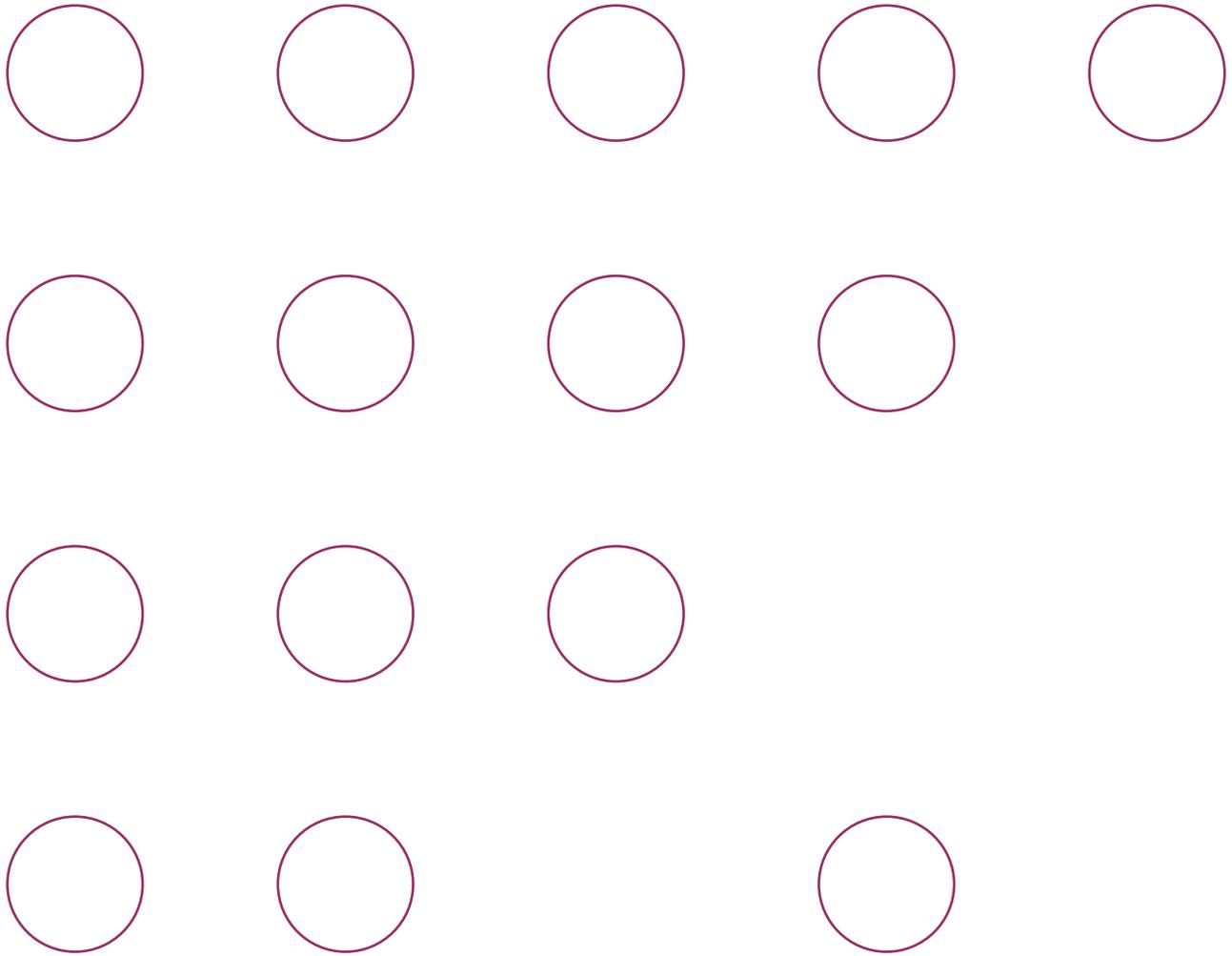
- How can I make my advertising work best for me? *6. Marketing*
- What is a marketing plan and how do I create a marketing plan? *6. Marketing*

Additional Tools Available

Marketing Collateral Worksheet

Social Media Marketing Campaign Worksheet

Word of Mouth Worksheet



7. What is marketing communication and how do I do it effectively?

The Basics

Marketing communication (MarComm) are all the messages that you send out about a brand. It includes: your advertising, direct marketing, branding, packaging, your online presence, printed materials, PR activities, sales presentations, sponsorships, trade show appearances and more. Marketing communication has one main goal - to create and maintain a demand and a preference for the brand. MarComm is used to encourage the customer to buy. Here's simple explanation of the buying process.

First, we recognize that we have a problem (my hair looks dull), then we search for information to explore options (we go to the supermarket), then we evaluate the choices that we find (look at the labels, check the price, smell the fragrance, etc.), then we make a decision (buy the Pantene Shine shampoo) and, finally, we try it at home to see if it solves our problem (did it make my hair shiny?). If, the problem is solved, we become a loyal customer, thanks to all the marketing communication messages we received throughout the buying process.

Tell Me More

Effective MarComm should be tightly focused on addressing one or more of these goals:

- Do I need the product?
- Am I aware of the product?
- How do I feel about the product?
- Why should I buy it now?

One or more of these goals should be the focus of your MarComm efforts:

Do I need the product?

MarComm focused on this goal convinces people that this kind of product or service is necessary to satisfy a current need they have. Perhaps you just had a new baby and you received a sample of a Pampers disposable diapers at the hospital. This is a good example of "Do I need the product?", as the diaper company is showing a potential consumer that there is an easy solution to their new problem of a wet baby. Maybe your car needs an oil change and on the drive to the mechanic, you see a roadside billboard for a new brand of quality motor oil, so you ask the mechanic if they have that motor oil available, that's a good example of the marketer spending money on the "Do I need the product?" goal.

Am I aware of the product?

Brand awareness is the industry term for a customer's ability to recognize or recall your brand with enough detail to buy it. Brand awareness is the way to measure how well your brand is known within your target market.

Creating brand awareness is usually the first step in building your MarComm. Before you can get customers to buy, you must make them aware of your brand. Making people aware that you exist brings people to your business and creates an interest in the market.

The highest level of brand awareness is called top-of-mind awareness, such as Alokoy Cola. This is when customers think of your brand first when they need to make a purchase of your kind of product. You can build top-of-mind awareness through repeated exposure and consistent delivery of a good product/service over time. This is a huge advantage in the market - when customers enter a buying situation and your brand immediately comes to mind first.

The more people are aware of you and the stronger your reputation, the more likely you will make a profit and people will know your brand. Word-of-mouth is any spoken or written recommendation by a satisfied customer to a prospective customer of a product/service. Word-of-mouth in the market plays a strong role in helping your brand find more customers and develop loyal relationships with top customers. The “Shinwari” food has become very popular via word of mouth and thus the restaurateurs of this type of food don’t need to do much marketing because customers seek them out.

Products which are better known tend to be better liked – that is, the more a product is advertised and seen in stores, the more it will be liked, even if consumers do not know anything specific about the product. Among women’s beauty products, L’Oreal and MAC make-up are some of the most popular brands, yet most consumers don’t know much about the chemistry or the ingredients in most of their products.

One last comment, building brand awareness takes time to take effect.

How do I feel about the product?

This goal can be defined as what your customers feel and believe about your brand. They may be completely aware of your product, but have an unfavorable or neutral attitude towards it. For example, Serena Hotel may be thought of as only being for rich Afghans and foreigners. This brand awareness for Serena Hotel shows a negative brand feeling towards it, and may keep people from visiting the Serena Hotel.

Consumers have certain feelings toward brands. Sometimes these feelings are based on their beliefs (e.g., a person feels unable to afford something) Roshan Telecom is generally considered to be the most expensive service provider, but with proper MarComm the consumer can be convinced of the value in higher quality service and better technology.

Changing feelings and attitudes is generally very difficult, particularly when your MarComm is aimed at convincing people to switch brands. One approach to changing attitudes is by “pairing” your brand with something else that is already liked. For example, Bluesonic pairing their technology brand with a famous singer like Aryana Saeed. In this way, you are hoping that the image of the celebrity will carry over to your brand.

Another approach to changing people’s attitudes is to make the MarComm humorous. Here we try to get people to like the advertisement and hope that this liking will get people to also like the brand and the purchase the product.

Why should I buy it now?

This goal is defined as MarComm that drives a customer to purchase the brand. Some of the factors that can make people buy include:

- A trigger: This is the cue that makes a buyer consider a product or a brand. The cue could come from advertising (they like the jingle) or promotion (the lower price) or from a friend’s recommendation. It might also come from its location in the store (near the cashier) or from its updated packaging.
- An expectation: Sometimes we buy a product thinking of the positive outcome of its use. Buying a birthday cake for a child would be a good example.
- The aspirational value: Sometimes we may buy to communicate our status to someone else, such as buying a luxury brand purse or watch.
- An emotional association: Maybe we are motivated to purchase by having an emotional connection with a product or a brand. Buying your favorite football team’s jersey would be a good example of this.

Glossary Terms from this Section

Advertising - Communication used to convince your target audience to buy a product or service.

Promotion - A short term action designed to change a consumer's purchasing behavior, such as a sale or discount coupon.

Target Market - A specific set of potential customers that a company focuses its marketing and sales efforts upon. Often the most likely customers to buy from a company.

Top-of-Mind Awareness - This represents a person's first thought when questioned to recall the name of a product/service.

Trigger - The cue that makes a buyer consider a product or a brand.

Word-of-Mouth - Any spoken or written recommendation by a satisfied customer to a prospective customer of a product/service.

For More Information Related to this Topic See:

- How can I make my advertising work best for me? *6. Marketing*
- What is word-of-mouth and how do I use it to grow my business? *6. Marketing*
- What is a target market and how do I identify the right target market? *6. Marketing*
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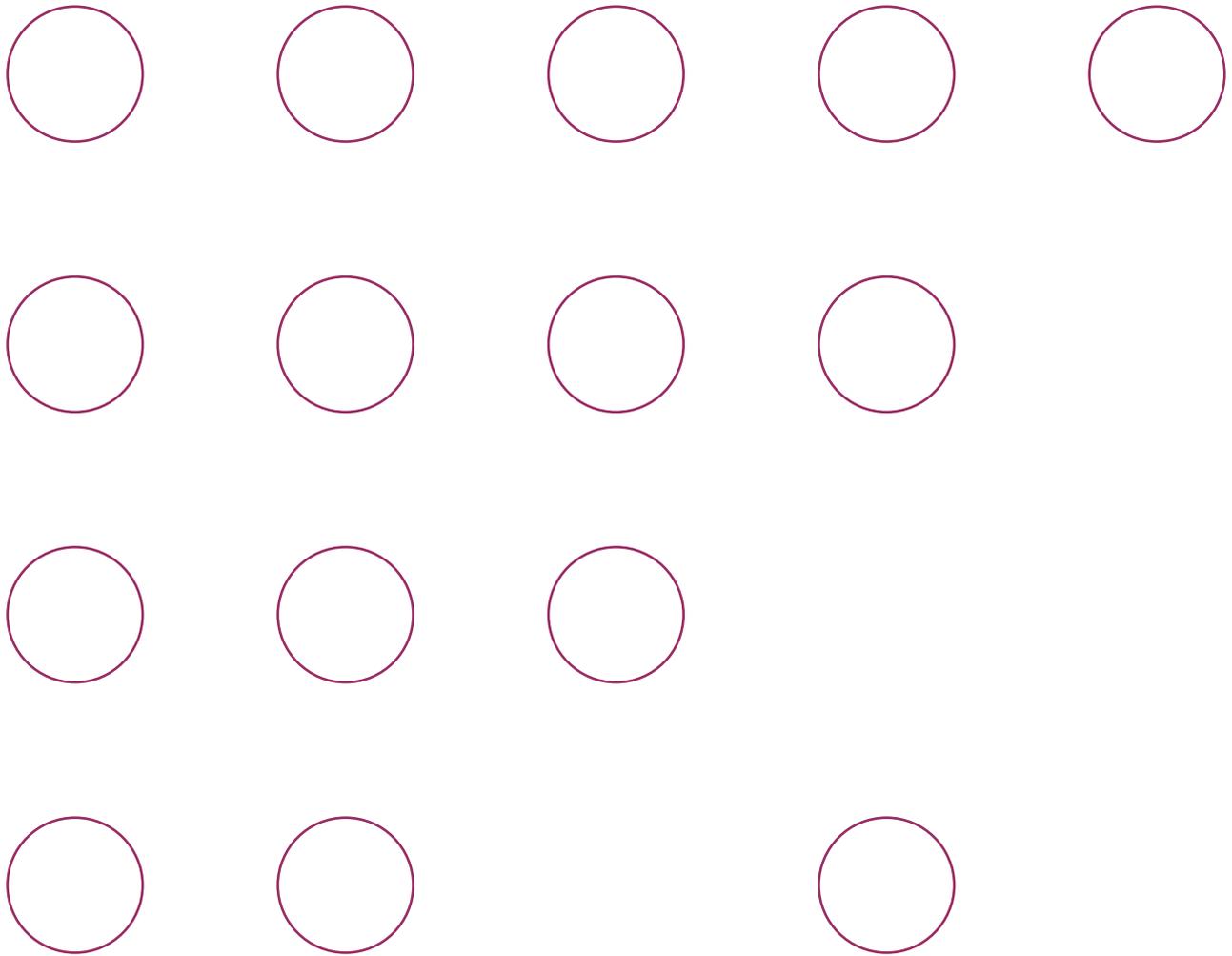
Additional Tools Available

Market Research Worksheet

Marketing Plan Template

Social Media Marketing Campaign Worksheet

Word of Mouth Worksheet



8. What is market research and how do I do it?

The Basics

Market research is the activity of gathering information about consumers' needs and wants. Market research will give you the information you need to make important decisions about your product or service. For example, you could learn how many people are willing to pay for your product or service, if there are other products or services that they need, and how much they are willing to pay for your product or service. It is important to do market research before you make any big decisions.

Often, business decisions are based on feelings (does it feel right?) rather than knowledge (do the facts support it?). Using market research to listen to your customers helps you understand what they are thinking and gives you more information to make better decisions.

There are two main ways to do market research: primary research and secondary research. Primary research means that you do the research yourself by asking people directly. Secondary research means that you look at research that other people have done and apply it to your own situation.

For example, you could do your own research by talking to people about your products and services and asking what they would be willing to pay. Ask them what they like and don't like about products and services in the market. You could even watch people shopping and ask them why they buy one product over another one. Another idea is to make a survey to collect information.

One of the easiest ways to do secondary research is online. Use a search engine like Google to find information, articles, and reports. Reports on your industry or your city may also be found at libraries, research organizations, commercial organizations, chambers of commerce, relevant government ministries, etc. or at government offices.

Sometimes you can pay for research, either by paying someone to do the research for you or by buying reports that someone else has already written. But if you can do the research yourself, it will be less expensive and you may learn more.

Tell Me More

Here are the steps to do your own primary research:

Step 1: What do you want to know? The first step is to decide the goal of your research. For example, do you want to better understand what people think of the quality of your service? Do you want to know if people in your town are aware that your business exists? These are perfect topics for primary research.

Step 2: Whom should you talk to? Next, you will want to decide whom you should talk to/listen to for your primary research. Perhaps you want to understand what young people think about your advertising. Maybe you want to understand what potential users think about your new product. Clearly identifying the target audience for your research ensures that you get answers from the people that matter most to you. For example, if you own a women's parlor, you might not want to ask men about what new color of nail polish they like most.

Step 3: Talk to as many people as possible. One of the keys to getting information you can use from your primary research is by talking to enough people. The more people you talk to, the more confidence you can have in the truth of their responses. Although it may seem like a lot, having 200 responses will confirm that your research is 99% certain to represent what the overall public believes. If you talk to less people,

then you will trust the information less. You can still use this information to make more informed business decisions, just be aware that it may not be as accurate as the information you would learn by talking to more people.

Step 4: How will you gather the information? You will have to decide how you will collect this information. There are usually two ways to do this – in person (live or talking on the phone) or using the Internet. Collecting information by interviewing people face-to-face is better than using the Internet. Meeting current or potential customers face-to-face will allow you to see their reactions to your ideas. You can quickly add extra questions to learn more about a subject. Using the Internet is “easier” – as you can contact many people in a short period of time and you don’t have to leave the office. But, often, people may be in a hurry and may not take the time to answer your questions with the honesty you had hoped for.

Step 5: Who will help you? You will need to decide who will help you collect your research data. Will you do it yourself or will you get help? If you have a small company, you may want to get people from all areas of your company to go out in the marketplace and talk to people to gather information. In this way, everyone in the company can hear what people think about your product or service. Your company may be large enough to have an advertising agency or marketing partner. If so, they should be willing to work with you in this process.

Step 6: How often do you want to collect information? You may do primary research only one time to learn something so that you can make a specific decision about your business. Or, you may want to track your progress over time towards a particular marketing goal – such as building awareness. You do this by conducting the same primary research every 3 months. You could even do your research at different locations to get a more balanced view. How often you choose to do primary research will depend on what you want to know and how you will use the information. Creating a research process to track the progress of your marketing activities is an important part of successful businesses.

Here is an example of how one company used primary research. Habiba’s Cafe wanted to find out if their target consumers remembered their advertising message. First, they developed a survey questionnaire. A good survey should be simple and straightforward, with no more than 10 questions. Ten questions are usually the limit of time most people are willing to take to help you understand what they are thinking.

Habiba’s Cafe first asked the question: “When I mention restaurants, what is the brand name that you think of first?” After talking to over 200 people, the company had a very good idea if consumers are thinking about Habiba’s Cafe when they were about to go out to eat. The higher the number of people that recall your brand first (on scale of 1% to 100%), the greater is the chance that they will buy your product/service.

The next question Habiba’s Café asked was: “Do you remember seeing/hearing advertising for Habiba’s Cafe in the last 3 months? Yes or No.” The outcome of this question showed the company what percentage of people were reached by their marketing communication. If this number is very low, then either the company did not choose the right method to reach their target (such as printed fliers versus a radio ad) or they reached the target with a message that did not have any impact.

Habiba’s Cafe asked a third question, to only the people that recalled their advertising in the previous question: “What do you think was the main message of the advertising for the food at Habiba’s Café?” Or, “What was Habiba’s Café’s advertising trying to tell you about their food?” The answer to this question revealed what advertising message consumers received. You need to verify that the message received by consumers matches up with your advertising message goal. If consumers are not getting your intended message, it is time for a change in your advertising plan.

This was a simple three question interview that helped Habiba's Café learn if consumers remembered their brand, if their advertising was reaching consumers, and if consumers were hearing the right message from the advertising. With this information, Habiba's Cafe was able to make changes to their advertising strategy.

Glossary Terms from this Section

Market Research - The activity of gathering information about consumers' needs and wants.

Primary Research - Research you do yourself by asking people directly.

Secondary Research - Research that other people have done and that you apply to your own situation.

Target Audience - The intended recipient of the advertising message.

For More Information Related to this Topic See:

- What are the top tips for creating effective advertising? *6. Marketing*

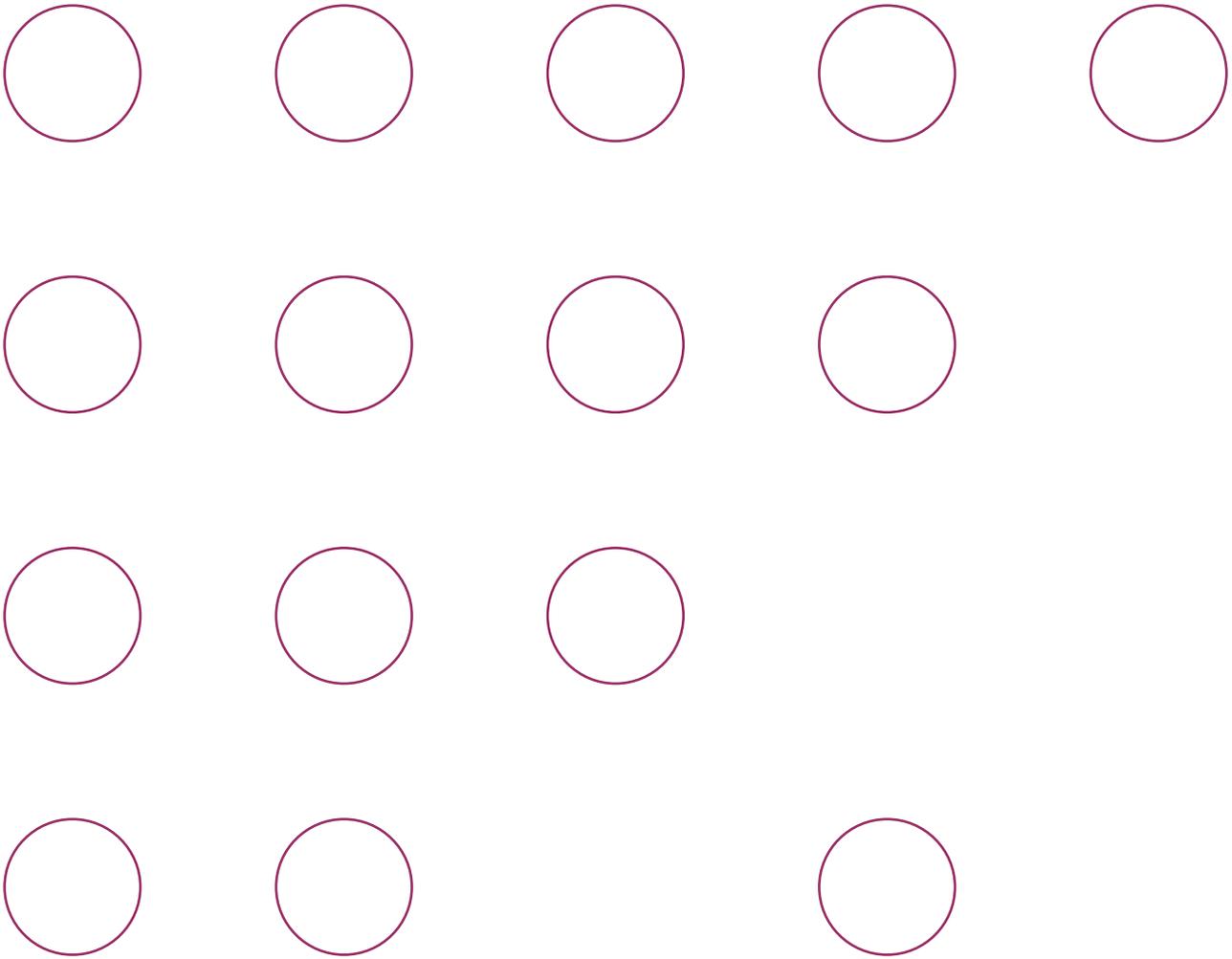
Additional Tools Available

Market Research Worksheet

Marketing Plan Template

Customer Satisfaction Survey

Free Sample Surveys: <https://www.surveymonkey.com> and <https://www.qualtrics.com/>



9. What are the top tips for creating effective advertising?

The Basics

This may be the most talked about question in all of marketing. There are many, many different points of view on what makes people pay attention to an advertising message. Research has shown that effective advertising should have these four qualities:

- It is Better than others – the ad should promise something that nobody else can do.
- It is Believable – the ad should give a unique believable ‘reason why’ you can make the claim about your product/service.
- It is Memorable – the ad should link to a memorable feeling, as this gives the ad power.
- It is Authentic – the ad message must remain true to who you are and deliver a consistent, compelling story or idea. It is all about TRUST.

Tell Me More

Each point has a specific meaning and use in your advertising:

It is Better than others

This is the situation where you are making an advertising claim about your product/service being ‘the best’ or ‘the first’ or ‘the only one to...’ These statements are powerful motivators to consumers because they focus on ideas that are easy to understand. If you are the best or the leader in your market, that means that many other people have tried your product/service and have liked it. Your product is popular with others because you have been offering them something that successfully meets peoples’ needs.

People like to see that their product/service choices match up with what others have chosen. That’s why claims like: “ranked #1 in tea sales” or “the # 1 selling magazine” are used in advertising. When we lack information ourselves about what product to choose, we look to see what other people’s choices have been. Choosing a market leading brand is an easier decision, and that is why using this strategy is so effective.

Even if you are a small brand, it is still possible to use superlative claims in your marketing. Maybe your home-made jam is “the best tasting” or your bakery is the “only one in town” who serves international baked goods and pastries everyday. You just need to be creative in how you phrase your claim. However, any superlative claim must be true and backed up by research.

It is Believable

If there is a problem in the field of advertising, it is here. Unfortunately, over time, many advertising claims have proven to be false. In fact, in many countries, governments now regulate advertising claims for just this reason. This has meant that many consumers are doubtful that advertising is true.

This should motivate you to create advertising that people can believe. As you establish a relationship between your brand and your customer, that relationship should be based on trust. That starts with your advertising claims being believable. Conducting primary market research will help you understand what people believe or do not believe about the advertising claims you are making.

Claims that people have a hard time believing may still be true – but, you need to spend so much money to convince them, that it is likely not worth the effort. For example, “my detergent gets out twice the stains of the leading brand.” While it may be true, the leading brand likely has been around for a longer time and has a much larger advertising budget. This means your message might not be accepted as true.

Lastly, research has shown that consumers will scrutinize advertising claims more in important situations than in unimportant ones. This especially impacts ads where an endorser is used. For example, the Bluesonic example provided earlier demonstrates how that brand partners with Aryana Saeed for product endorsement. On the other hand, a nationally well-known doctor would be successful in endorsing medicines, but not athletic shoes. Both people could endorse fast food restaurants effectively, as that choice is seen be less important.

It is Memorable

For an ad to be effective, you need for the target market to remember your ad at the time of purchase. There are two ways that advertisers try to make ads memorable. The first is the use of emotion. The second is the use of a rational approach. Let's look at both approaches.

Ads that have an emotional appeal tend to be those that we remember the most. The two most popular images in Afghanistan are likely to be the use of babies and patriotism for the country. There are any number of ways to create ads with an emotional appeal. The most commonly used ways to convey emotion are: humor, music, images, story with drama, and fear.

In the rational approach, the ad spells out the specific features and benefits of the product/service, usually with a benefit that a competitor cannot or does not offer. The most common rational approach is use of a demonstration in the ad. The demonstration illustrates the main advantages of product/brand by showing it in actual use. The ad often has a "reason why" which is the support for why the brand works as promised.

Whether to use an emotional or rational approach is a difficult decision. There are no specific guidelines. But, if a product's advantage can easily be seen in a demonstration (for example, showing more cell phone coverage on a map), then the rational approach may work better.

It is Authentic

Your advertising must be believable to consumers. This means that what you promise in your ads must be true. If an ad promises that a locksmith business is open "24 hours/day", then it must provide a round-the-clock service. If a toothpaste ad promises to gives you "whiter teeth in just 3 days", the product must do this. Any time that you make a promise in your marketing, you are establishing a trusting relationship with your customer. If you break that trust, you likely will not have a successful business.

Glossary Terms from this Section

Advertising Claim - A statement about how your product/service performs.

Brand - A unique symbol, logo, or name that organizations use to set apart their product from others in the market.

Endorser - Any person, whether a famous celebrity or not, that recommends a product/service.

Market Research - The activity of gathering information about consumers' needs and wants.

Target Market - A specific set of potential customers that a company focuses its marketing and sales efforts. Often the most likely customers to buy from a company.

For More Information Related to this Topic See:

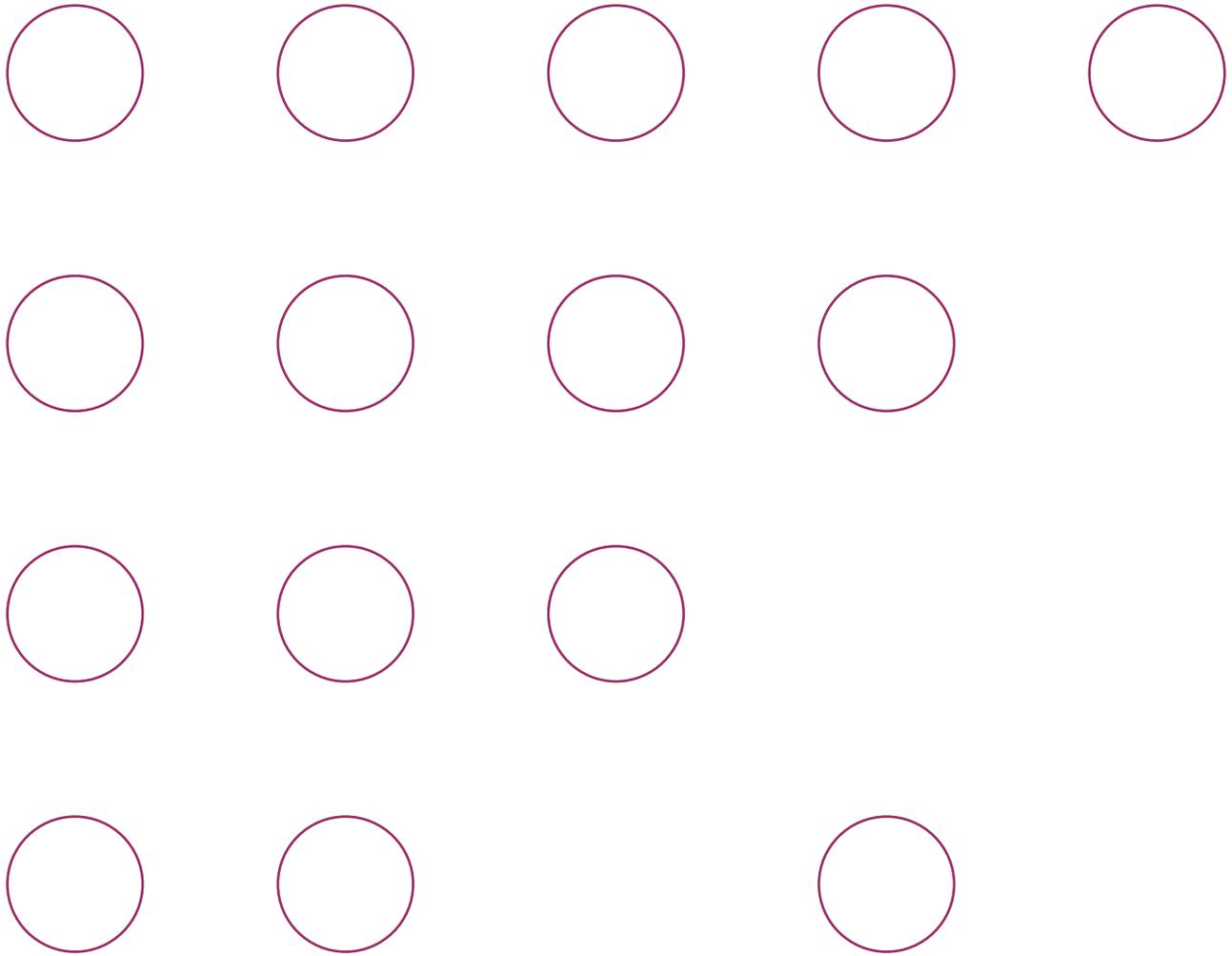
- What is market research and how do I do it? *6. Marketing*
- What is promotion and how do I do it? *6. Marketing*
- What is marketing communication and how do I do it effectively? *6. Marketing*
- What is a target market and how do I identify the right target market? *6. Marketing*

Additional Tools Available

6 Ps Marketing Plan Worksheet

Market Research Worksheet

Marketing Plan Template



10. What is a tagline and how do I create one?

The Basics

A tagline is a short, memorable slogan that describes what is unique about your brand.

Every business needs to have a shortcut or signal that quickly identifies to the customer the brand name and what it stands for. This is what a tagline does. Think about Pajhwok News which uses the tagline “Reflecting the Truth” and is a well-known news source throughout Afghanistan and internationally. Marketers use taglines to help us remember all the Marketing Communication (MarComm) elements that make up what a brand means to us. Brands that change their taglines frequently risk confusing people. Once you have decided on a tagline, stick with it.

Tell Me More

Every brand wants to be remembered, and many times that comes down to a single line. This line works to quickly summarize the key brand beliefs and the brand essence. There are no standards to judge taglines, but here are some criteria to help you evaluate your tagline as you develop it. Ask yourself each of the following 10 questions to help you develop a relevant tagline.

- Does the tagline truly fit your brand?
- Does it reflect the brand’s point-of-difference?
- Does it describe the brand’s superiority?
- Does it solve a real consumer problem?
- Does it include the name of the brand?
- Can it last? Will it survive changes in the marketplace?
- Does it inspire grand thoughts about the brand?
- Does it work well with a key visual?
- Can it be easily described and understood by everyone?
- Does it touch places that people really care about?

Once you have developed a number of tagline options, do some primary research. Ask people if they understand your business after seeing and hearing your tagline. This primary research will be critical in determining if your tagline is powerful and memorable enough to be used to define your business. Next, ask yourself if your competitor can “use” your tagline.... If your tagline would also describe your competitor, you should change it!

Glossary Terms from this Section

Brand - A unique symbol, logo, or name that organizations use to set apart their product from others in the market.

Brand Essence - What your brand stands for.

Marketing Communication (MarComm) - All activities sent out to the target market about a brand including advertising, direct marketing, branding, packaging, online presence, printed materials, public relations activities, sales presentations, sponsorships, trade show appearances, and more.

Primary Research - Research you do yourself by asking people directly.

Tagline - A short, memorable slogan that describes your company or brand.

For More Information Related to this Topic See:

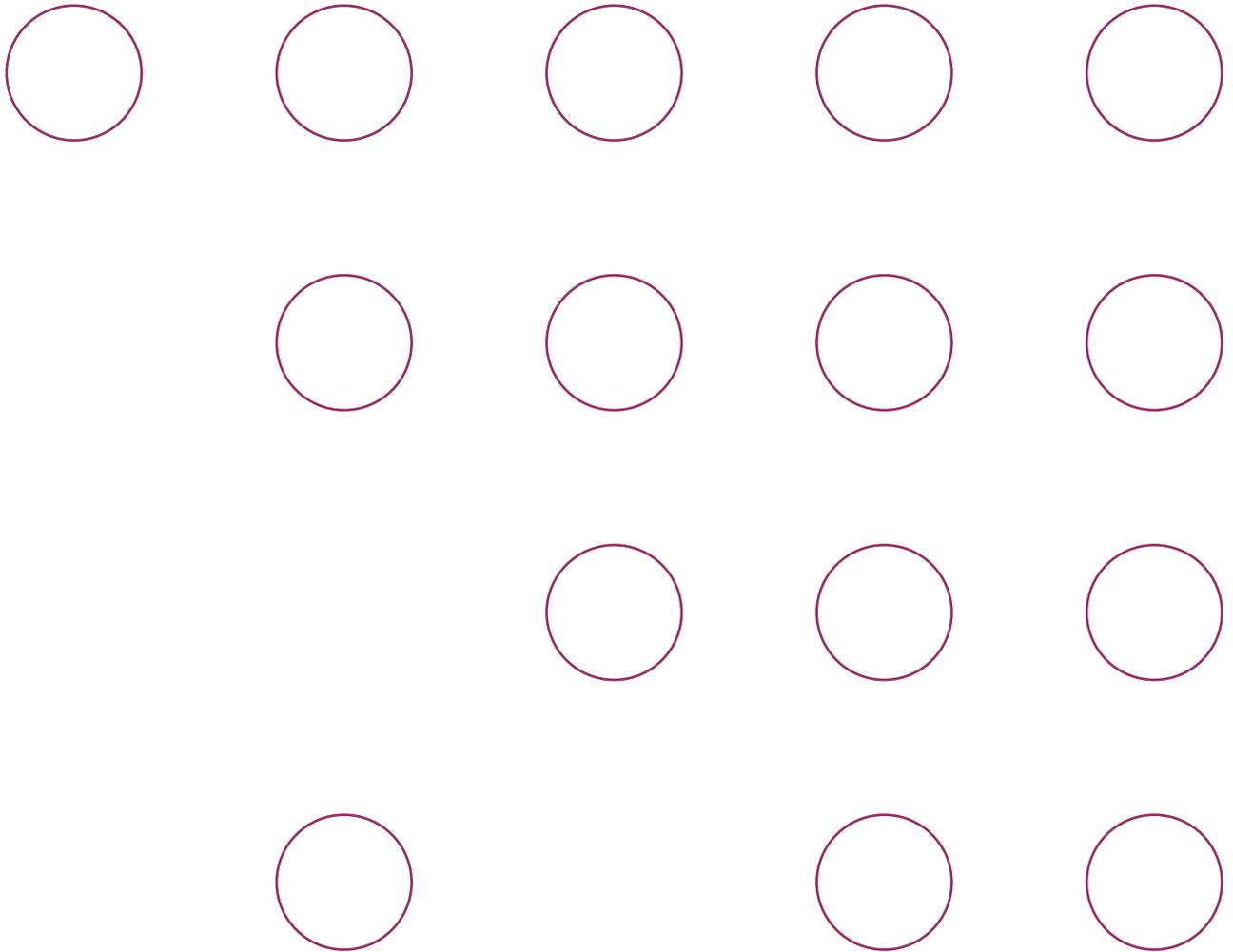
- What is branding and how do I do it right? *6. Marketing*
- How can I make my advertising work best for me? *6. Marketing*
- What is a marketing plan and how do I create a marketing plan? *6. Marketing*

Additional Tools Available

Tagline Worksheet

6 Ps Marketing Plan Worksheet

Marketing Plan Template



11. What is social media marketing and what are the do's and don'ts?

The Basics

Social media marketing refers to the process of getting attention through the use of social media websites and apps, such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn or Instagram. Social media is a term for the websites that may provide different social interactions. For instance, Twitter is a social media website designed to let people share short messages with others. Facebook is a social networking site that allows for sharing updates, photos, joining events and a variety of other activities. Using social media marketing can help you reach more people and not spend a lot of money, but you must commit time to using it and be thoughtful about what you post online.

Tell Me More

Here are ten social media marketing insights to help you build a foundation for communicating with your customers and talking about your brand.

1. Listen

Success with social media marketing requires more listening and less talking. Take time to read your target audience's online content and join their discussions to learn what's important to them. Only then can you create your own content and start conversations that add value rather than add clutter to their lives.

2. Focus

It's better to specialize than to try to be something for everyone. A highly-focused social media marketing effort aimed at building a strong brand has a better chance for success than a broad effort that attempts to be all things to all people.

3. Quality

Good quality is better than lots of quantity. It's better to have 1,000 online connections who read, share, and talk about your brand with their own audiences than 10,000 connections who disappear after connecting with you the first time.

4. Patience

Social media marketing success doesn't happen overnight. While it's possible to have immediate success, it's far more likely that you'll need to commit to doing it for a long time to achieve meaningful results.

5. Building

If you post quality content and work to build your online audience of quality followers, they'll share it with their own audiences on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, their own blogs and more. This sharing and discussing of your content opens new ways for search engines like Google to find your website. Those entry points could grow to hundreds or thousands of more potential ways for people to find you online.

6. Influence

You need to spend time finding the online influencers in your market who have quality audiences and are likely to be interested in your products, services, and business. Connect with those people and work to build relationships with them. If you get their attention as a trusted, interesting source of useful information, they might share your content with their own followers, which could put you and your business in front of a larger audience.

7. Value

If you spend all your time on directly promoting your product/service, people will stop listening. You must add value to the conversation by sharing information that they can use. Focus on creating useful and interesting content and developing relationships with online influencers. In time, those people will become a powerful catalyst for word-of-mouth marketing for your business.

8. Acknowledgment

You wouldn't ignore someone who reaches out to you in person, so don't ignore them online. Building relationships is one of the most important parts of social media marketing success, so always acknowledge every person who reaches out to you.

9. Accessibility

Don't publish your content and then disappear. Be available to your audience. That means you need to consistently publish content and participate in conversations. Followers online can be fickle and they won't hesitate to replace you if you disappear for weeks or months.

10. Reciprocity

You can't expect others to share your content and talk about you if you don't do the same for them. So, some of the time you spend on social media should be focused on sharing and talking about content published by others.

Glossary Terms from this Section

Brand - A unique symbol, logo, or name that organizations use to set apart their product from others in the market.

Content - Represents the ideas/thoughts that you willingly share with others.

Followers - People who like to read/listen to what you have to say .

Influencers - People who, over time, have become respected for their business skills and are viewed as reliable sources of information.

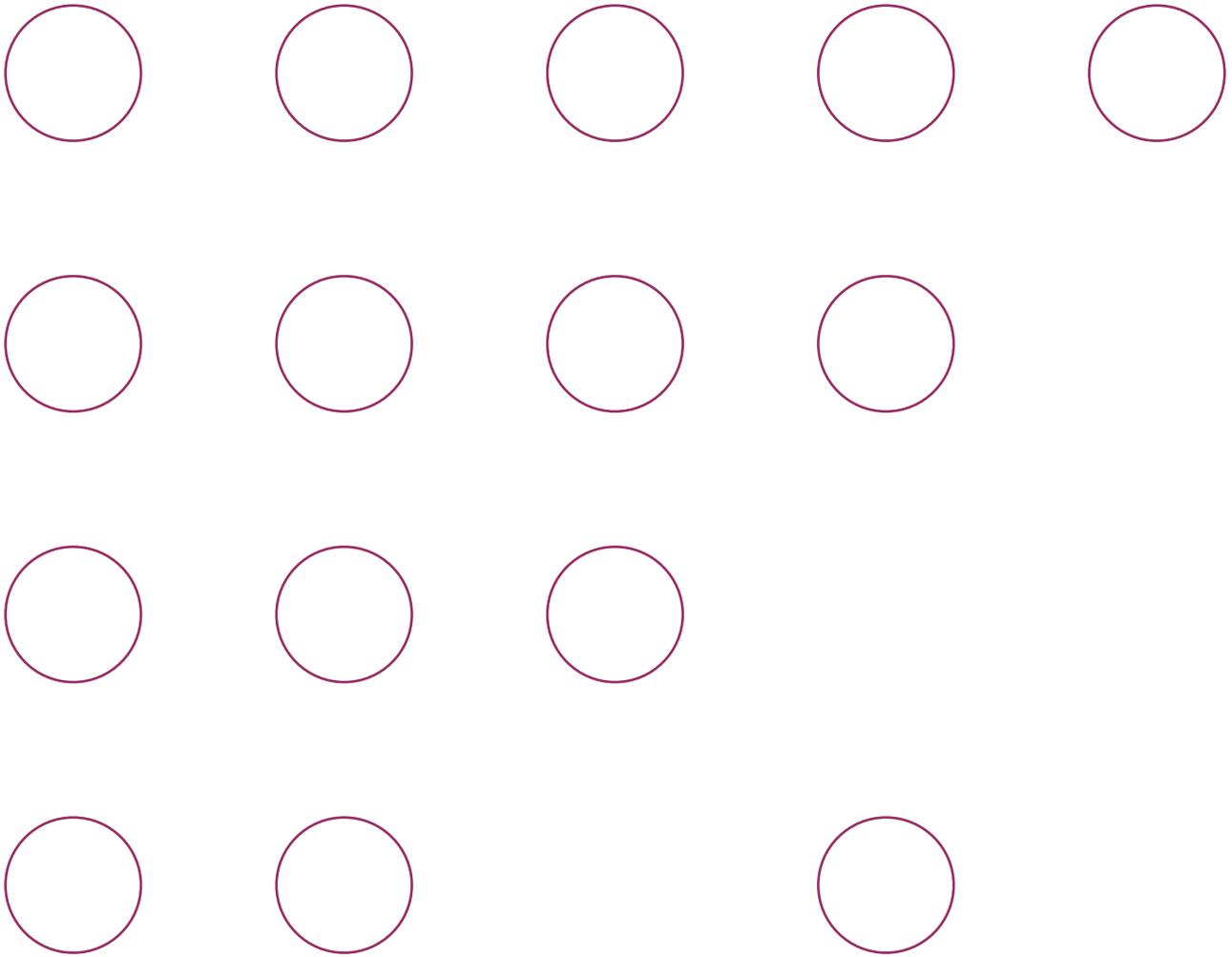
For More Information Related to this Topic See:

- How do I know that new potential customers are ready and able to buy? *7. Sales and Customer Service*
- What are some sales and customer service tactics to increase profit margins? *7. Sales and Customer Service*
- How can my business sell value to customers? *7. Sales and Customer Service*

Additional Tools Available

Social Media Marketing Campaign Worksheet

Marketing Plan Template



12. What is word-of-mouth and how do I use it to grow my business?

The Basics

Word-of-mouth (WoM) is any oral or written recommendation by a satisfied customer to the prospective customers of a product/service. Many people consider it to be the most effective form of marketing, as it uses the power of trust among friends to create positive impressions. If you hear about a great new restaurant from a friend, you are more likely to try it.

You grow WoM for your business by investing in building relationships with the people that matter most, giving them words to share, and making it easier for them to spread those words for you. WoM is all about you sharing what you want people to know with customers and supporters. If you can master WoM, you can become a more talked about product/service - which will ultimately lead to increased sales.

Tell Me More

Let's discuss three key ideas that drive successful WoM:

Engage

You need to engage with your target audience. You should listen to what they are telling you and try to become a part of the conversation about your brand. You can do this face-to-face or online. For example using social media, TOLONews constantly responds to followers on Twitter (@TOLONews). If you go to their website, every few minutes you can watch them respond to someone new.

Equip

You should give your fans reasons to talk about your brand. Share information about your amazing products, great service, insider knowledge, incredible stories, unbelievable facts, or even funny disclosures. It's up to you. It really depends on you understanding your consumers and what they like about you and providing them with whatever it is they need from you.

Empower

You should give consumers different ways to talk and share information and opinions about your brand. Let them know that they are important to you and that sharing their opinions is important to you. Help them find ways to share within their circles and find ways to help move their conversations around. A snack company, Frito Lay, asked their fans to create a new flavor of potato chips. Over 3.8 million suggestions for new flavors were sent in, making it one of the biggest marketing campaigns for Frito-Lay.

Here are some steps to get you started in developing successful WoM:

Step 1: Be interesting and give people a reason to talk about you. Nobody talks about boring companies, boring products, or boring ads. If you want people to talk about you, you've got to do something special. If you are boring, you'll never get a moment of conversation. Your word-of-mouth will just fade away, unnoticed. So, before you run an ad, before you launch a product, before you put something new on the menu, ask the magic question: Would anyone tell a friend about this?

Here's an example: There are plenty of options for clothing stores in Afghanistan, however in the Lycee Mar-iam quarter, a department store named Faisal Business Center (FCB) carries a large assortment of various home goods as well as organized fashion, jewelry, accessories and home goods while providing excellent customer service. Everyone in Kabul has heard from a family member or a friend about FCB rather than through advertising because of their excellently organized store and their excellent customer service. A favorite destination for engaged couples planning their wedding!

Step 2: Make It Easy. Word-of-mouth is lazy. You've got to help it along if you expect it to go anywhere. You need to do two things: Find a super-simple message and help people share it. Start with a topic that anyone can remember. Something like, "Our software doesn't crash," or "They give you soup while you're waiting for a table." Anything longer than a sentence is too much. It will be forgotten.

Step 3: Make People Happy. Happy customers are your greatest advertisers. You should try to thrill them. This means you should do everything you can to create amazing products and provide excellent service. Think about how to go the extra mile to make every experience with you remarkable. Make sure the work you do gets people energized, excited, and eager to tell a friend. When people like your brand, they share it with their friends. They want to help you, they want to support your business, and they want their friends to enjoy what you offer. You will get more word-of-mouth from making people happy than almost anything else you could possibly do.

Step 4: Earn Trust and Respect. If you don't have respect, you don't get good word-of-mouth. Nobody talks positively about a company that they don't trust or like. Nobody will recommend a brand that will embarrass them in front of their friends, so always be an honorable company. Make ethics part of everything you do. This means simply to be good to your customers, talk to them often and be sure you are fulfilling their needs. Make people proud to tell your story to everyone they know.

Glossary Terms from this Section

Brand - A unique symbol, logo, or name that organizations use to set apart their product from others in the market.

Social Media - Websites and apps that let users create and share information online.

Target Audience - The intended recipient of the advertising message.

Word-of-Mouth - Any oral or written recommendation by a satisfied customer to the prospective customers of a product/service.

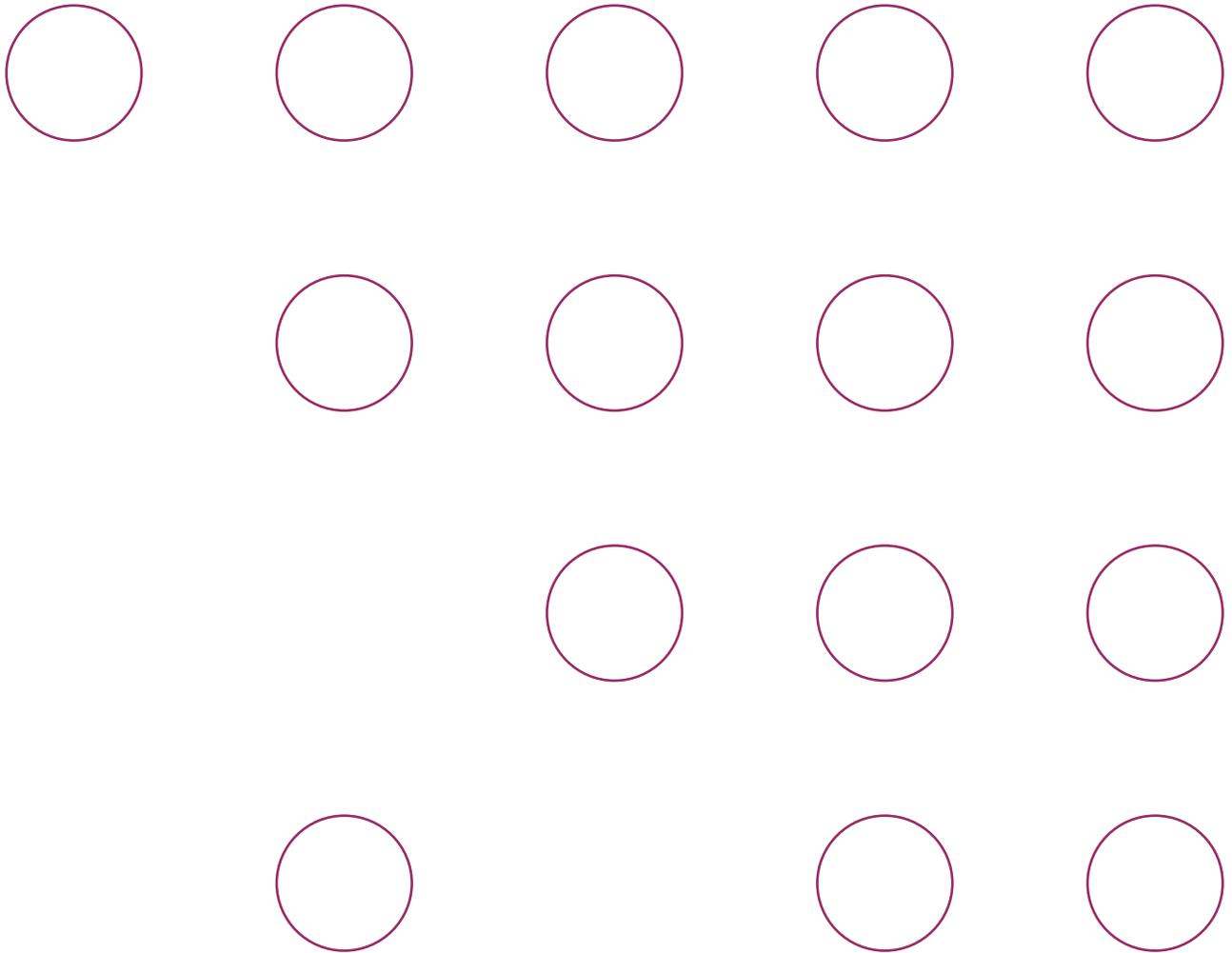
For More Information Related to this Topic See:

- How can I make my advertising work best for me? *6. Marketing*
- What is a marketing plan and how do I create a marketing plan? *6. Marketing*

Additional Tools Available

Word of Mouth Worksheet

Marketing Plan Template



13. What is internal branding and why should I do it?

The Basics

Internal branding is a concept that says everyone in your company represents your brand in everything they do. Each person in a company, no matter how big or small, should understand the goals of the brand easily and quickly. This is especially true for employees working directly with customers, such as a waiter, a receptionist, or a sales person.

Before you start your external marketing activities, you should be sure all your employees understand what your company mission and brand promise represent.

Internal branding can help bring your brand to life through how your employees behave. If done correctly, it creates a positive cycle: You attract employees who love your brand, and those employees will communicate that brand to your partners and customers, which strengthens the brand and attracts even better employees.

Tell Me More

Below are four effective internal branding steps – with notes to help you get started.

Step 1: Be clear. Having a clear and consistent strategy for communicating your brand values to each employee is the top challenge in internal branding. Your internal communications should create a discussion between you, any managers and all of your employees. The most widely used ways to do this are email, social media, office posters and displays, and conversations.

Step 2: Have formalized training. Having a formal training process that communicates the brand/company values to everyone should start on the first day a new hire arrives at the company and should continue on a regular basis, as time and budget can permit.

Step 3: The owner must be involved. Company owners/leaders have the most important role to play in your internal branding. A leader who shapes his/her company, products, and team around strong brand values and clearly and regularly communicates them to all employees is likely to have more success.

Step 4: Have a reward and recognition program. Recognize employees who act in ways that support your brand standards. Employees can be awarded small bonuses for performing beyond their regular role. Team rewards can be as simple as a celebration when a particular project has been successfully completed.

Glossary Terms from this Section

Brand – A unique symbol, logo, or name that organizations use to set apart their product from others in the market.

Brand Promise – What you say in your marketing communication that your brand commits to deliver to your customer.

Internal Branding – A concept that says everyone in your company represents your brand in everything they do.

For More Information Related to this Topic See:

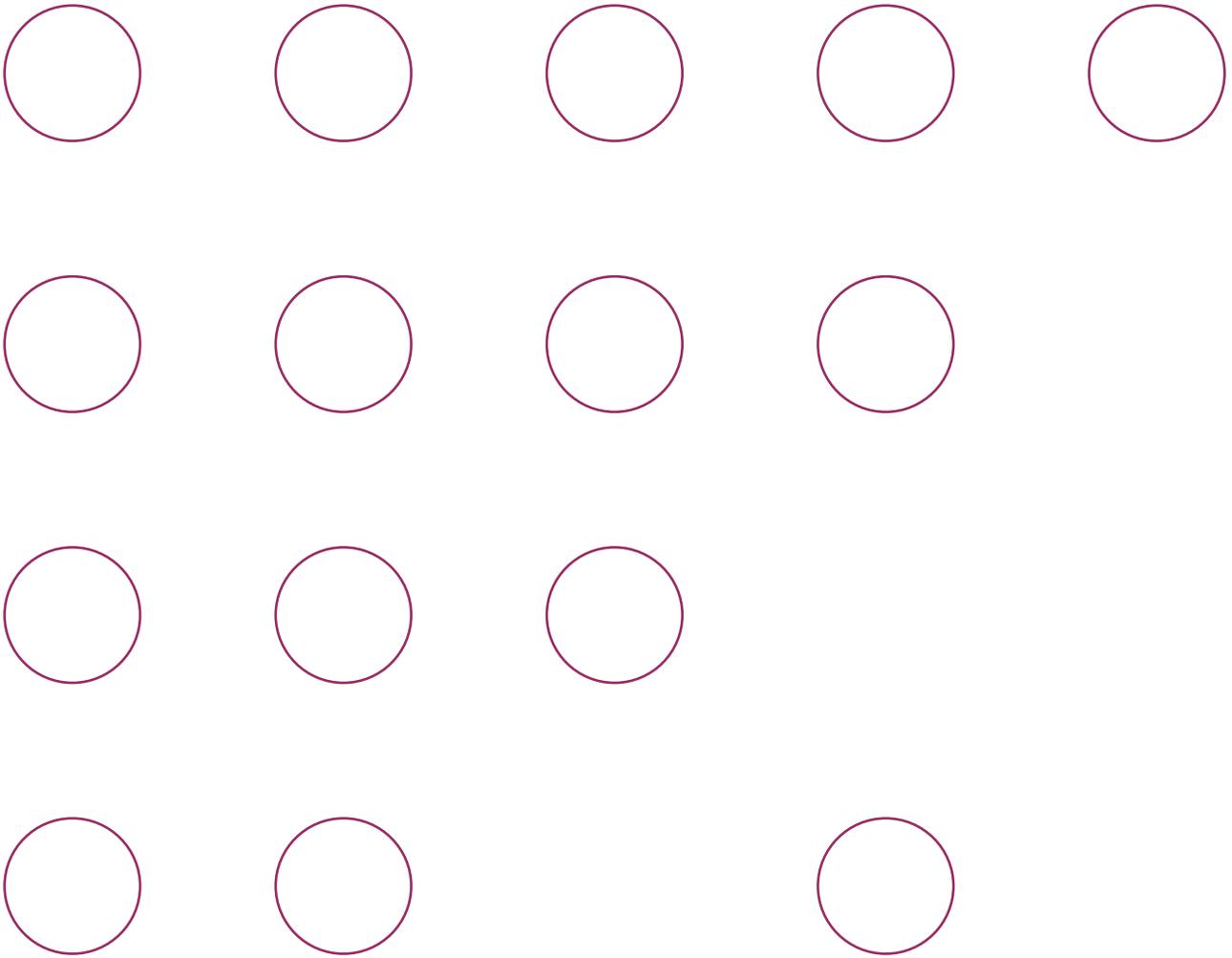
- What is branding and how do I do it right? *6. Marketing*

Additional Tools Available

Internal Branding Worksheet

Developing Your Brand Promise

6 Ps Marketing Plan Worksheet



14. Why and how should I do mobile phone advertising?

The Basics

Having unlimited access to customers is the number one reason mobile has become so important for marketers. You can reach a potential customer any time of the day or night by using a smartphone/tablet to communicate. This is rarely the case with traditional advertising such as television or a newspaper.

Picking up a mobile device has become a universal response to having a few minutes to spare. Increasingly, people are spending their extra time on mobile devices—reading texts or email, using applications (apps), connecting through social media, doing online research, and making purchases. With people spending more time on phones and tablets, companies are learning how to use them to reach their customers. With GPS features in many mobile devices, marketers will be able to target customers based on where they are located. An example is “Kaweyan Cabs” which is a ride-hailing mobile application (some call it the Uber of Afghanistan) uses mobile devices and GPS positioning to allow for two-way communication between the passenger and the taxi driver and has a phone call option to reserve a vehicle.

The most popular advertising delivery method to mobile devices is text messaging. However, over the next few years, multimedia advertisements are expected to become more popular and common. Although you might not see the importance of using advertising on mobile devices as part of your marketing plan today, you should be aware of what you need to do to be effective in today’s more and more mobile world. Mobile carriers like Etisalat & Afghan Wireless Communications Company (AWCC) regularly, if not daily, send out text message promotions to promote/upsell their products and services. These bulk-messaging packages are available to entrepreneurs and while not highly targeted, can reach a very large audience.

Tell Me More

Using text messages

If you are a small company and you don’t have much money for specially designed mobile marketing, don’t think that there is no way for you to use mobile devices at all. Creating simple text messages to inform your customers about sales or new products is an easy way to advertise. You might even consider creating a special text message promotion or discount. Text messages on special days, like birthdays or anniversaries, is another great way to create a personal connection through text-based advertising. However, be careful how many messages you send to your customers. If your customers think you are sending them too many messages too often, it could make your customers angry and you might lose their business.

Your company may use or consider using mobile devices for more complex advertising, such as having your website viewable on a phone or tablet, online sales, or online advertising.

Mobile responsive website

A mobile responsive website means that the internet site has been adjusted for viewing on a mobile device. A website that looks great on a desktop user computer may not work at all on a phone or tablet. If you want your website to be seen on a mobile device, you need to make sure that it has been designed for those devices.

- Make sure your website is mobile-friendly. This means that the experience the user has once they’re on your website is a good one. You want to make sure all the aspects of your content display—the colors, fonts, and layouts—are developed for the mobile device. If your site isn’t mobile responsive yet, talk to your web designer to make sure that your website is easy to read and navigate on all devices.

- Ensure your page loads quickly. The next step in mobile friendliness is the mobile site speed. This means that the pages load quickly and don't require a lot of bandwidth to give a satisfying experience. Remember, most mobile users will be browsing from their data networks, which are not as fast as Wi-Fi. A few ways to do this are to use fewer images and videos, minimize having pop-up windows, use professional web developer services, etc.
- Break up the content. It's particularly important to break up your online content with subheadings and bullet points. Online readers are trying to scan and read things quickly, so your content should be grouped into smaller chunks. What doesn't look very long on a computer screen might look like a novel on a smart-phone screen, so breaking things up makes your content a lot easier to read for your mobile users.
- Keep it short. A lot of people are getting online on their mobile devices during their lunch breaks, while they're waiting in line at a store or waiting to see a doctor. They don't usually have time to read something long, so keep your information short and to the point.
- Language Matters. Though some browsers are able to translate website content to various languages, that feature is not readily available for Pushto, Dari or other Afghan languages and thus adding a local language option on the website can help with accessing information for some of your potential customers. However, ensure that the link to switch back and forth between languages is prominent, ensure you research which local languages (if any) your customers prefer, and lastly ensure you are consistent in your messaging across all languages so there's no confusion.

Mobile Commerce

Mobile Commerce is the act of purchasing a product or service through your phone. This can be anything from purchasing shoes to booking train tickets. If you are going to sell your product or service using a mobile device, you need to be sure your business provides the ability to conduct sales transactions smoothly and safely. Your end-to-end transaction processing should be flawless. This means there are no website performance issues, you have an easy-to-access product catalog, and an easy check-out process.

Mobile Advertising

One thing that mobile brings is the opportunity for your ad to be displayed on your customer's phone. Just like ads that appear on websites, companies can gain additional reach from mobile ads – they can increase the number of people that see their ad. Another benefit from using mobile ads is the company can 'own' the small screen. Whereas, on a website, there might be a few ads popping up, on a mobile phone site, most likely, only one ad can appear.

Your company may not use mobile websites, commerce or advertising yet, but you should be aware of how mobile devices are being used in marketing, and potentially by your competitors. Look for simple ways to use things like text messages and social media to reach your customers on their phones and tablets. There are also other commonly used mobile messaging applications which have created opportunities to stay in close contact with your customers, to market and advertise promotions, etc. and even receive real-time feedback on service. For example, some companies create fan groups on social media platforms such as Whatsapp or Viber to send product updates and receive feedback.

Glossary Terms from this Section

Applications (Apps) – Programs available on the internet for a variety of interests.

Desktop User - The person who accesses Internet information from their desktop computer.

Mobile Responsive Website - Internet site that has been adjusted for viewing on a mobile device.

Mobile Users - The people who access Internet information using their mobile phone/tablet.

Promotion - A short term action designed to change a consumer's purchasing behavior, such as a sale or discount coupon.

Smartphone/Tablet - A portable device to access the web. It has many features, such as phone, camera, etc.

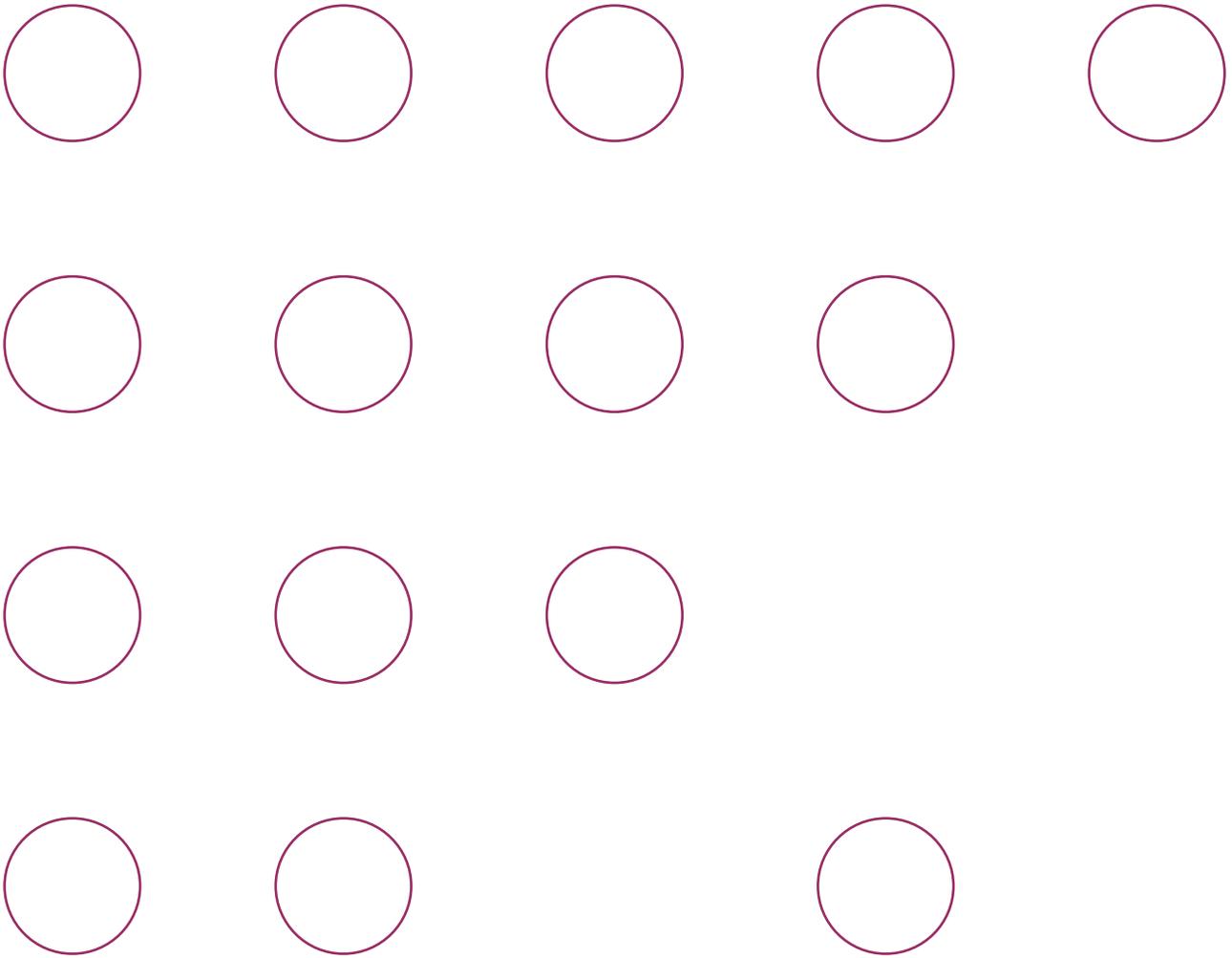
? **For More Information Related to this Topic See:**

- How can I make my advertising work best for me? *6. Marketing*
- What is a marketing plan and how do I create a marketing plan? *6. Marketing*

Additional Tools Available

6 Ps Marketing Plan Worksheet

Marketing Plan Template



15. How is selling related to marketing?

The Basics

The sales process is everything that you do to make the actual sale – getting a customer to make a purchase, or sign an agreement or a contract. Marketing is everything that you do to reach people and convince them that your product/service is the best option for meeting their needs. Both sales and marketing are needed for a business to be successful. Some people say that selling is a more personal form of communication, as many times you are sitting directly in front of a customer trying to make a sale.

Selling traditionally involves sales people who go out “on the road” to meet with potential buyers and convince them to carry your product or use your services. Ideally these people will already know your product/service because of your marketing efforts, such as your advertising or your promotion. Sales people can be your own employees or employees of someone else that you hire to conduct the sales process for you. Their goal is to turn the leads, generated by the marketing activities, into sales.

Marketing traditionally makes potential customers aware of your brand and communicates what you have to offer. Marketing comes before selling.

Here is an example of how the two functions can work together. You own a trash collection company and you need more business. The marketing person identifies the target audience who may be interested in the service that you offer. In this case, it is all the homes in a specific community that have need for garbage collection. You decide to hire a person to hand out a flyer to be hung on their front door with an offer for “20% off on your first month’s service” with a phone number to call or e-mail address to use. The sales function will take that call (or e-mail) and schedule a meeting with the caller in order to give them a price for their garbage service.

Marketing works first to communicate that your product/service satisfies the customers’ needs and it is followed by the selling function which converts leads into sales.

Tell Me More

There are two different ways that the selling function works. In the first, you are selling your products/services to other businesses (called business-to-business or B2B selling) and in the second, you are selling products directly to consumers who are the end users (called business to consumer or B2C selling). While the concept of selling is the same in both approaches, it makes sense to better understand the sales process of each approach.

In B2B, one business is selling to another business. For example, a company that grinds flour may be selling to a company that bakes bread using that flour. The size of the orders is often bigger and the sales may use contracts and other agreements. B2B selling is often done in a one-on-one meeting, making calls, and networking with industry professionals.

In B2C, the company is selling directly to the individual who will be using the product. As with B2B, your prospect decides to buy your product because of your marketing efforts, but the final purchase may occur in a store.

Your marketing efforts are the first step in the process of a potential client eventually buying your product or service. It’s the sales role to complete the deal and maintain a healthy after-sales relationship. Studies have shown that it takes multiple contacts using both sales and marketing to move any prospect from ‘unaware’ to ‘sold’. That is why it is important that you ensure both sales and marketing are working together with similar goals and objectives – and rewards.

What if you are uncomfortable with the sales or marketing process? An alternative that often proves successful is to partner with someone that possess the talents that you feel you lack. If you are stronger in marketing, find someone who understands the sales process. If you are better at sales, find someone that can help you strengthen the message, create marketing materials that sell and give you marketing tactics and ideas.

Glossary Terms from this Section

Brand - A unique symbol, logo, or name that organizations use to set apart their product from others in the market.

Business to Business (B2B) - The activity of selling products or services to other businesses.

Business to Consumer (B2C) - The of selling products or services to consumers.

Sales process - Moving a prospective customer from unaware to sold.

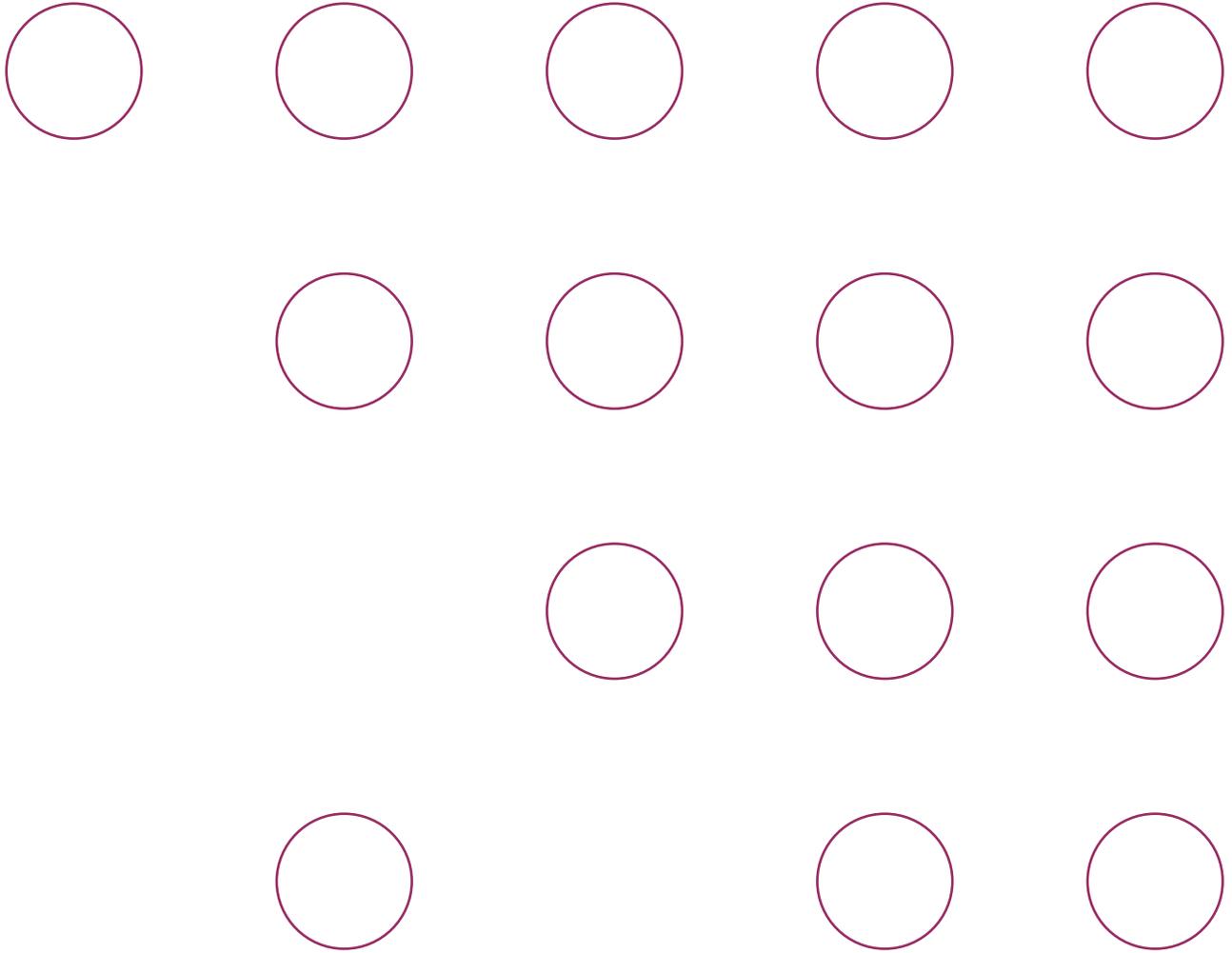
For More Information Related to this Topic See:

- What is a marketing plan and how do I create a marketing plan? *6. Marketing*
- What is marketing? *6. Marketing*
- What is advertising? *6. Marketing*

Additional Tools Available

6 Ps Marketing Plan Worksheet

Marketing Plan Template



16. What is cause marketing and why should I care about it?

The Basics

Cause marketing is linking your brand to a non-profit organization or charity that you believe in. For example, the Bayat Foundation is an example of a non-profit which is aligned and funded by the Afghan Wireless Communication Co. (AWCC) and funds generated from AWCC go to support non-profit and philanthropic work done by the Bayat Foundation. Some examples of cause marketing are:

- You give some amount from each sale to the cause
- You sponsor an event or a team, having your logo on promotional materials or clothing
- You include people who are effected by the cause into your operations, such as hiring disabled people to work for you
- You include the cause in your marketing materials or packaging

You do cause marketing because you truly care about the cause and want to help it prosper. But cause marketing should only be done if it benefits your business as well as the non-profit. Both organizations must gain some value for cause marketing to work. Therefore, it is important to identify a partner with similar goals and beliefs.

One benefit for your company in using cause marketing is that by linking your brand with the cause, you will attract people who also care about this cause and they may buy your product/service because of this association. Sometimes partnering with a popular cause may bring a company respect and good press. Small companies may explore cause marketing when they have a limited marketing budget and want to get greater exposure for their brand. Another benefit to cause marketing is that it often creates positive feelings in the employees of the company. Workers feel that they are contributing to something that is helping others and therefore have greater job satisfaction.

Be aware, when you are forging a business partnership with a non-profit, they should also benefit from working with you. They may raise money for their cause, make more people aware of their organization, gain helpful skills, or get access to volunteers. It is only when BOTH sides of the partnership are receiving benefits that cause marketing works and can be sustainable.

Tell Me More

Here are some of the things you should do – and not do – when choosing a cause to partner with in your marketing.

Step 1: Identify a cause that fits your business. The goal should be to match your brand with a non-profit cause or charity organization to create ‘win-win’ marketing, when both sides see a benefit. You want your customer to feel good about buying your product because of the organization you are working with. Your company will gain a reputation for caring, and possibly increased sales. The non-profit will gain awareness for its cause. But, that only works when your product and the cause seem like they go together. If your restaurant does not allow smoking, you should not partner with a tobacco products company but perhaps look for a partner to support a sports program such as a football team you promote every year. Or, if you believe that alcohol should not be served in public, you should not use promotional materials from spirits companies in your restaurant.

Look at what you sell and understand the target that you’re trying to reach. Then pick causes that will bring out the emotions of that audience.

Step 2: Don't pretend to care when you don't. There's no point in supporting an issue you don't really care about — people will see it. Having a genuine passion or interest in the cause means you'll stay engaged and you'll still feel successful even if marketing efforts aren't as successful as you had hoped. Cause marketing is most successful when the mission of the non-profit matches the values of the sponsoring company.

Step 3: Define your marketing goals. Decide at the start why you're getting the brand involved with a cause and what you want out of the partnership with that cause. There's a range of possible marketing benefits from such sponsorships, including building company credibility, improving your brand's reputation, making your brand appear different, strengthening customer loyalty, and improving employee pride in your company. Other benefits might include increased sales and increased brand awareness by having your brand name highly visible at events or in marketing materials.

Step 4: Don't skip over the business benefits. Just because you're dealing with a non-profit is no reason to ignore good business practices. Make sure that the agreement makes financial sense for everyone.

Step 5: Be specific about what you expect. Identify the details at the start. Calculate how many times your brand name and logo will be seen, what kind of information will be placed on their website, how many banners will be seen, what kind of article will be written for the non-profit's newsletter, etc. And then record it all in a signed contract.

Step 6: Measure the results. You need to measure results to learn what works and what doesn't. Request reports, as informal as you like, from the non-profit. Or, assign an employee to track sales or promotions, preferably someone who cares about the partnership.

Step 7: Blend cause marketing with your other efforts. Partnering with a good cause is only one method of getting out your brand's message. You can't rely on that alone. Cause marketing must be treated like any other brand marketing effort in terms of identifying target audience, defining how far the marketing will reach, how much media coverage there will be, the costs of banners, ads, radio spots, etc.

In summary, if you use cause marketing, make sure it's part of a bigger overall branding and marketing strategy.

Glossary Terms from this Section

Brand – A unique symbol, logo, or name that organizations use to set apart their product from others in the market.

Cause Marketing – Marketing activities that link your brand to a non-profit organization or charity that you believe in.

Non-Profit Organization – A company, usually focused on the less fortunate, that is in business not to make a profit but to achieve other goals – often to the benefit of mankind.

Win-Win Marketing – A situation where both parties benefit equally from a marketing activity; both sides see the outcome as winning, therefore it is a “win-win” situation.

For More Information Related to this Topic See:

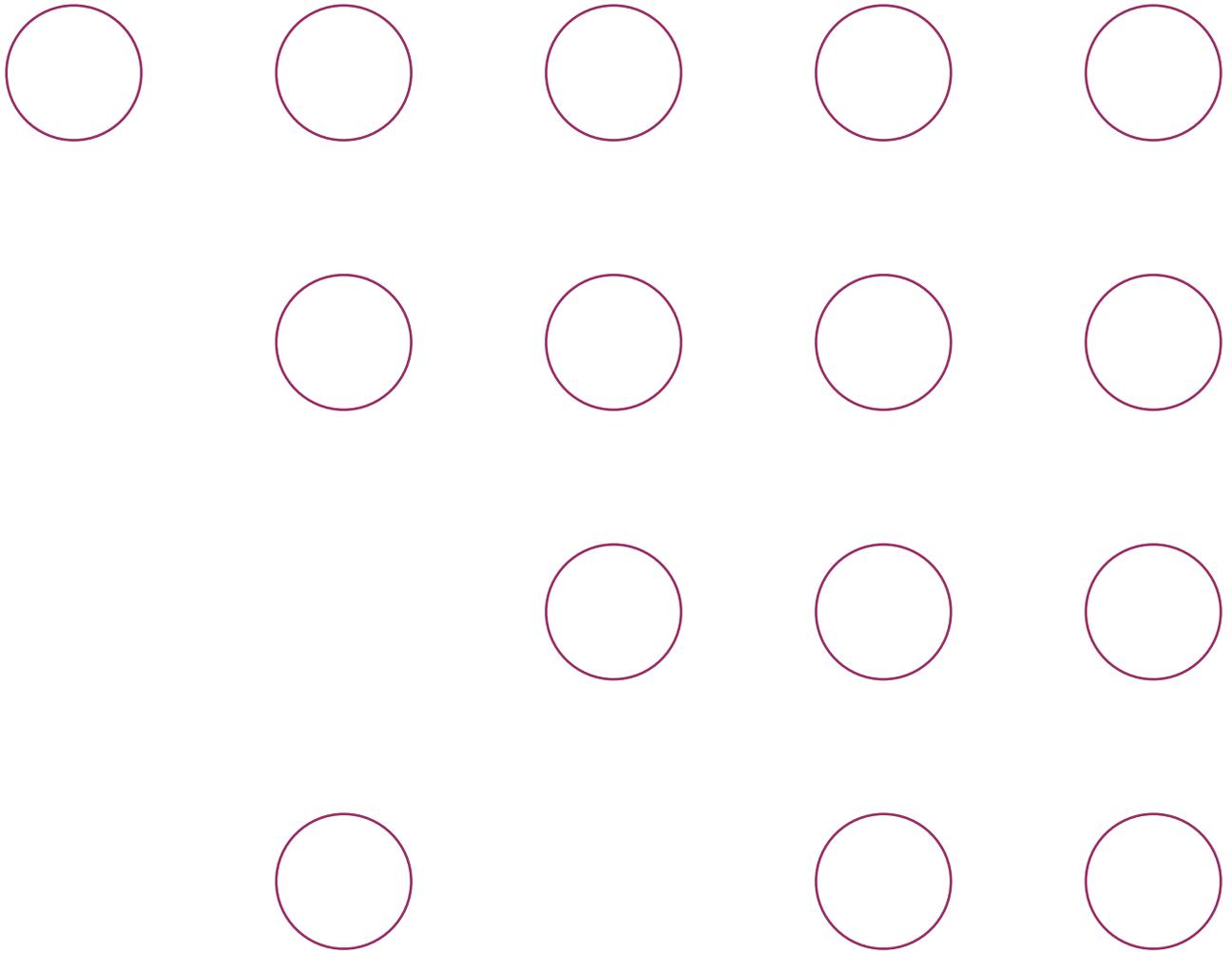
- What is branding and how do I do it right? *6. Marketing*
- What is a marketing plan and how do I create a marketing plan? *6. Marketing*
- How do I know if my marketing is working? *6. Marketing*

Additional Tools Available

6 Ps Marketing Plan Worksheet

Marketing Plan Template

Developing Your Brand Promise



17.
**What is one best practice
to help me organize my
marketing thinking?**

The Basics

Before you start marketing your business, you will want to think strategically and create a marketing plan. A good way to organize your thoughts is to answer six questions about your business:

- What is your product?
- Who is your target?
- Where and how will you sell?
- How will people find out about your product?
- What price will you sell at?
- How will you measure your success?

Each question represents an important part of your marketing plan. They describe a process, activity or action that you will need to follow in order to properly market your product/service. Using this information together in a marketing plan will enable you to focus your thinking to address the major issues facing every business.

Tell Me More

Each element is an important part of an effective marketing plan:

What is your product?

The product is your offering (and it can be a product or a service). While it may sound simple, a clear definition of exactly what you are offering is important to a focused marketing plan. For example, if you are a parlor owner, will you also be offering hair coloring and foot massages? If you are a pencil manufacturing company, will you offer pencils in packs of 10 or 20? A product must live up to the performance that you promise to the user. And a customer must believe that the brand delivers the benefits that they are seeking. Perceived benefits may be physical (drills a hole), logical (enables me to build a deck), or emotional (e.g. makes me feel safe, secure, and comfortable).

Products can over deliver – that means they deliver more benefits for their price than the customers expect. A product/service offering more value is likely to win more customers until competitors respond with reduced prices or improve their own products. In any case, it is what the customer that are the true test of whether product's benefits are delivered

Who is your target?

One of the first things you need to figure out when starting a new business is: “Who is my perfect customer or client?” You should sit down and look at what you are offering and look around at who you think would be perfect for your product/service.

You need to know exactly (or as exact as you can possibly make it) who your customers are. This means understanding things like: age, gender, location, and income. Finding out this information is part of the market research you need to do before going into business. You need to know who you are going to be selling to/talking to about your product/service.

Where and how will you sell?

This is often called distribution. You need to decide how consumers get your product/service. This answers the question: “where do I buy it?” It is about defining how to get the product into the purchaser's hands. Will you sell directly to the consumer? Will you use the Internet to sell your product? Will you work with a wholesaler or

retailer to get your goods to market? These are the kinds of questions that must be addressed.

How will people find out about your product?

This element contains all the planned marketing communications, including advertising, promotion, and MarComm.

What price will you sell at?

Price is the way we exchange our product/service for money from the customer. From the buyer's point-of-view it is the cost for buying a product or service. A full discussion on pricing can be found in the Pricing chapter.

How will you measure your success?

There are many ways to measure marketing performance, and many use basic finance concepts. The idea is that all marketing should have a measurable, time-based goal before it starts. An example of an advertising objective could be: "Within the next 6 months, increase by 20% the people who are aware that my product exists." An example of a promotion objective could be; "Within 3 months, ensure that at least 100 people have tried my product/service." You should always measure your marketing progress against an objective - so that you know what has or hasn't worked as planned.

Glossary Terms from this Section

Advertising - Communication used to convince your target audience to buy a product or service.

Distribution - The entire process of getting your product into the hands of the buyer.

Market Research - The activity of gathering information about consumers' needs and wants.

Marketing - The process of reaching your customers and showing them why they should buy your product or service.

Marketing Plan - A document that outlines a company's marketing goals and all the business activities that will be done to reach those goals.

Perceived Benefits - Those benefits that your user attributes to using your product/service.

Promotion - A short term action designed to change a consumer's purchasing behavior, such as a sale or discount coupon.

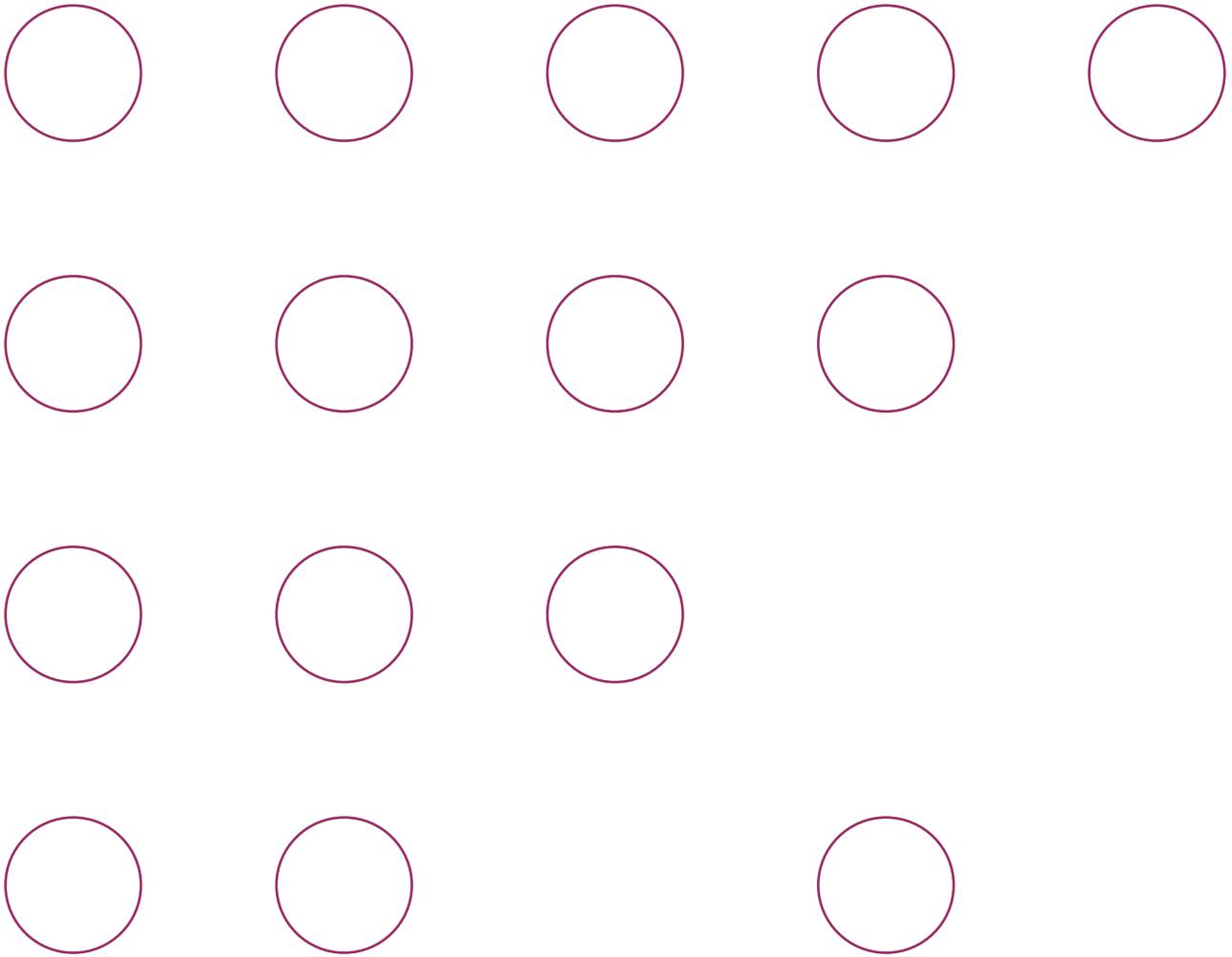
For More Information Related to this Topic See:

- What is market research and how do I do it? *6. Marketing*
- What is branding and how do I do it right? *6. Marketing*
- What is a marketing plan and how do I create a marketing plan? *6. Marketing*

Additional Tools Available

6 Ps Marketing Plan Worksheet

Marketing Plan Template



18.

What good business practices do customers appreciate and how can I use these ideas in my marketing?

The Basics

Businesses always want to satisfy their customers. A satisfied customer becomes a loyal customer – and a loyal customer who may recommend your product/service to others. Also, it is much more difficult to find new customers than it is to keep current customers happy. That means we should do everything we can to keep loyal customers. There are four ways to keep your customers satisfied:

- Deliver on your promises
- Be easy to work with
- Give people choices
- Talk to your customers often

Good business owners should keep all four of these concepts in the front of their mind when they are managing their business.

Tell Me More

Deliver on your promises

The more confident people are in your ability to deliver on what you promise, the more loyal your customers will be. People want to trust that you will deliver the product when you said you will. For example, they want to know that you will repair the clog in the kitchen drain for the exact price you quoted. They want to know that you will show up to photograph the wedding at the time when you said you would. Each of these opportunities to build confidence is under your control. Anything that you can do to demonstrate your ability to do what you said you would do, will increase their confidence. Perhaps you can call or send an e-mail to your client after your job is done, mentioning that you enjoyed the experience, which can be a reminder that you delivered it on time and on budget.

Be easy to work with

The best way to get someone to work with you is to make it as easy and painless as possible for them. So, how do you make it easy? Here is a check list of questions to think about:

- How easy is it for customers or potential customers to reach you to get information? Is your contact information easy to find on your website? Is it easy for clients to make an appointment with you, and are those appointments flexible? In other words, can you meet with a client at a convenient place? If appropriate, can you conduct meetings online so clients do not have to leave their location to meet with you?
- Do you provide reminders or confirmations of their appointments by telephone, e-mail, SMS/text or letter?
- Have you explained all the product/service options you have available to the customer?
- Is your work progress easy to follow? If you have written agreements with clients, is it written in a language the client can understand?
- Do you keep records of conversations with clients so that clients do not have to repeat themselves every time they contact your office?
- Are you keeping your clients informed, even when there is no activity on their project to reassure the client that you continue to be on top of their project?
- Are your billing statements easy to understand?

Give people choices, but not too many

People love to have choices. They feel that the more options they have, the greater their chances are of finding the choice that will perfectly satisfy their needs. This is true up to a certain point. Too many choices can be-

come an overwhelming experience. When customers are given a very large number of options to choose from, they have a much harder time making a decision than those who had a limited number of possible choices. This is because having too many options causes a sort of paralysis in decision-making and many people choose to do nothing at all. And when a choice is made under these conditions, it usually comes with frustration. Why does this happen? When we are presented with too many options, we usually fear making the wrong decision. Keep your product/service options to a reasonable number. For instance, if you run a lawn trimming service you could offer a Gold plan, Silver plan, and Bronze plan for your clients, where the level of service and frequency of service changes for each of the three levels.

So how do you provide choices but not too many? Businesses must intelligently limit the number of options that are presented to customers. This doesn't mean dramatically cutting the number of options available, but rather presenting them wisely, much like an in-store sales representative would do when assisting a customer who wants to buy a dress. For example, the sales person might say: "Let me know what color and size you need, and I will bring it to you."

There are several efficient methods for easing the selection process and giving the customer the direction they need. One way is by 'filtering' – this is where you allow the customer to identify the most relevant options. If you have a website, then providing a 'suggested' option is a proven method of helping customers. It tells the customer, "This item fulfills all of your basic needs and it is sold for a reasonable price. Most of our customers choose this one."

Another method uses comparison to help ease the choice. For example, that same clothing sales person could say: "Business women usually pick this bag". This way your potential customers will unconsciously associate a product with a group they would like to be a part of.

Lastly, you should decide whether or not to accept returns of prior purchases. You should decide how long people have until they can no longer return merchandise. You can decide to have a 100% money-back guarantee, so people can feel more confident about your quality.

Talk often to your customers

This is where it is your responsibility to be in constant contact with your clients and customers. One of the best ways to ensure the health of any business relationship is to judge how often you contact their main decision-maker. The more often the contact, the healthier the relationship. For example, how often do you meet your top customer? How often do you talk to your top supplier? The answer to this question should provide you with insight into how strong is the relationship with your customers.

Each of these best practices work to greatly influence the buying decisions of your clients and consumers.

Glossary Terms from this Section

Best Practices - Time-proven ways that make customer/consumers feel good about your brand.

For More Information Related to this Topic See:

- What is market research and how do I do it? *6. Marketing*
- What is marketing communication and how do I do it effectively? *6. Marketing*

- What is a target market and how do I identify the right target market? *6. Marketing*
- What is a marketing plan and how do I create a marketing plan? *6. Marketing*

Additional Tools Available

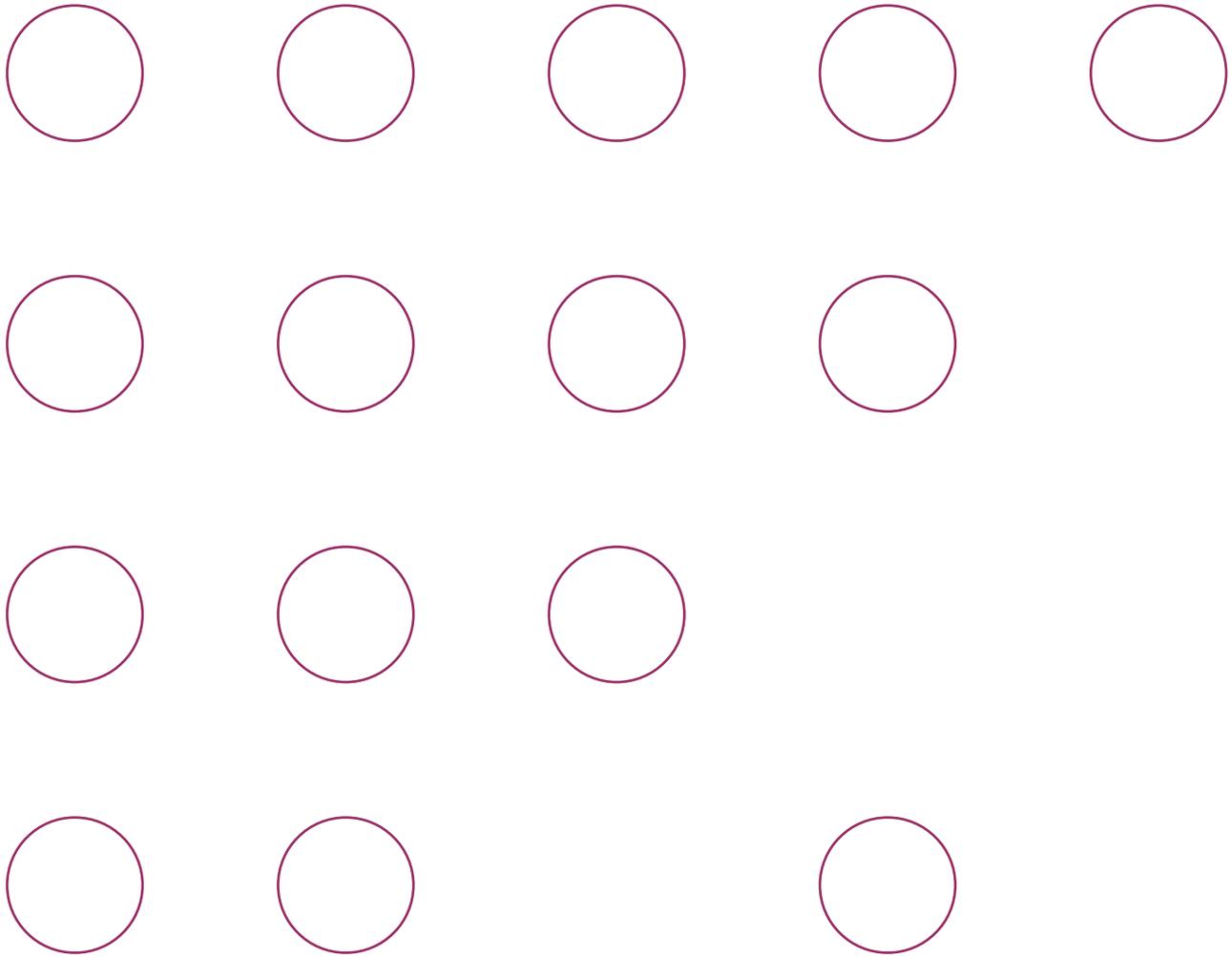
Customer Satisfaction Survey

Market Research Worksheet

6 Ps Marketing Plan Worksheet

Marketing Plan Template

Developing Your Brand Promise



19. **What is a marketing plan and how do I create one?**

The Basics

Marketing plans are written documents which lay out all the planned marketing activities for the coming year. Ideally, marketing plans are:

- A record of all the marketing research and analysis done
- Roadmaps for directing decision making and marketing/branding actions
- Forces the writer to carefully examine each piece of the marketing process and how the parts are linked together
- A plan that can be updated as new information is learned

A suggested outline of a marketing plan:

- Title Page
- Table of Contents
- Executive Summary
- Introduction/Company/Brand Background
- Situation/Market/Brand Analysis
- Recommended Brand Objectives, Strategy and Tactics
- Financial Considerations
- Summary
- Appendices
- References

Tell me more

The content of each section of the marketing plan includes:

Title page

This should contain the following information:

- Name of company, product(s), and country(s)
- Time period for which plan is designed
- Person(s) writing the plan
- Person(s), group or company for whom it was prepared
- Date of submission

Executive Summary

This is an overview of the marketing plan's highlights. It includes a brief introduction identifying the brand, major elements of the plan (for example, opportunities, marketing communication initiatives, etc.) and identifies the brand's greatest challenge. It should clearly outline the recommendations and spending plan to address these issues. The Executive Summary should be a short, focused story that makes the reader want to read more. It sets the stage for everything that follows. This section should address:

- What do you want the reader to be thinking about while reading?
- What is the important problem(s) being faced?
- How does this plan solve/address the identified problem(s)

While the Executive Summary comes first in the plan, it is often written last, after all the other strategic ele-

ments have been outlined in the other sections of the plan.

Introduction/Company Background

The types of information and amount of detail in this section depends on the situation. If the plan is about a new brand, then you should explain the brand concept. If it's about an existing brand, then talk about a brief history, past performance, strategies in existing markets, etc.

Situation/Market Analysis

Much of this information will come from the market research you have done. This section should contain the following information:

- **Market Definition** – what is the market you are competing in? How big is it? Who are the major competitors? Rank order by degree of competitiveness (i.e., their strengths/weaknesses)
- **Brand Essence** – explain what are this brand's points-of-difference that will lead to marketplace success.
- **Source of business** – from where do I plan to get my business?
- **Risk Assessment** – what are the risks involved in going ahead with this plan? Having this section provides a balanced view.
- **Market Research** – write the results of your market research along with your analysis of the macroeconomic environment combined with your demographic analysis.

Recommended brand strategy and tactics:

- **Market Segmentation** – This section should identify and group customers who will respond differently to the marketing and brand strategy.
- **Market Targeting** – This section explains why the target segment(s) offers the best chance of success against competitors.
- **Positioning Statement** – This section has a brief statement clearly defining “who” the brand is targeting and highlights all the marketing decisions.
- **Marketing Program** – The key elements are: What is your product; Who is your target; Where and how will you sell; How will people find out about your product; What price will you sell at; How will you measure your success.

Financial Considerations

Identify the budget for your marketing strategy. State how much each marketing element will cost and explain any assumptions. This section shows what financial resources are needed to make the plan a success. The financial plan is often called a budget. Use this section to convince people that it makes financial and marketing sense to proceed. Your numbers need to “make financial sense”. The spending plan must be realistic and it cannot represent something either too big to achieve or too small to matter.

Appendices/References

Any calculations used, analyses of market data, graphs, figures, financial data plus assumptions, etc. References will include all information sources used in developing the marketing plan.

Glossary Terms from this Section

Branding – Getting people who have a specific need or problem to know, like, and trust your company.

Market Research – The activity of gathering information about consumers' needs and wants.

Market Segmentation - The process of identifying unique characteristics, such as location, wealth, etc. that differentiate market segments.

Market Targeting - The process of deciding where to focus your marketing efforts.

Marketing - The process of reaching your customers and showing them why they should buy your product or service.

Marketing Plan - A document that outlines a company's marketing goals and all the business activities that will be done to reach those goals.

Positioning Statement - A sentence or two that identifies how your product or service differentiates itself from others in the market.

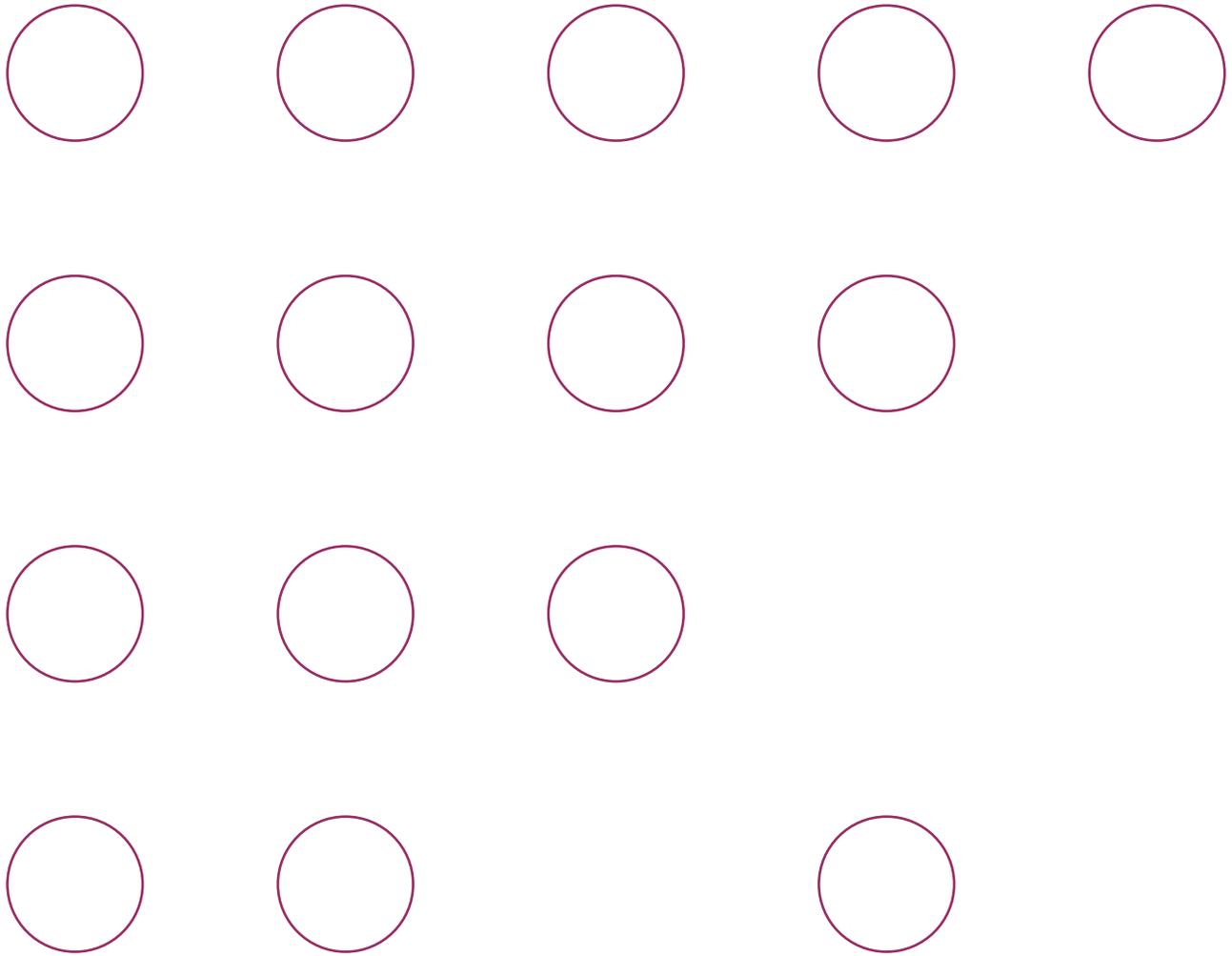
? **For More Information Related to this Topic See:**

- What is market research and how do I do it? *6. Marketing*
- How can I make my advertising work best for me? *6. Marketing*
- What is a target market and how do I identify the right target market? *6. Marketing*
- How can I make my advertising work best for me? *6. Marketing*
- How do I know if my marketing is working? *6. Marketing*

Additional Tools Available

Marketing Plan Template

Sample Marketing Plan



20. **How do I know that my marketing is working?**

The Basics

There are many ways to measure the result of successful marketing, but you are the only one who can define what success means to you. For some, success will mean having increased sales or more profits. While for others, having a business that has an excellent reputation defines their success. Each marketing effort should have a goal and have a measurable end-result.

Three of the most common marketing goals that a business can measure to determine if their marketing is successful are:

- **Increased Sales** – If your goal was to increase sales, then you can track the number of products or services sold. You can compare this number to your plan or your sales made in a similar time when you did not do marketing. For example, if you own a store that sells dresses and your goal was to increase dress sales by 20%, you can measure your actual sales results versus this target. The same measurement process would work if your goal was to increase profits.
- **Build or Improve Reputation** – If your goal was to make people think more highly of your product or service, you can give a survey where you ask people for their opinions about your business. The answers to a simple question such as: “Would you recommend my product/ service to a family member?” might help you evaluate if your marketing has helped you improve your reputation. If people say “Yes, I would”, then it would mean that they trust your brand enough to recommend it to someone very close to them.
- **Increased Awareness** – If your goal was to make people aware of your business, you can measure the number of new customers that come to your shop or restaurant – or visit your website. To gain even more information, you can also conduct a face-to-face survey, asking people: “Have you ever heard of my company?” The more people that say yes to this question, the more successful your marketing was in building awareness.

These are three examples of how to figure out if your marketing is working. It all starts with defining the goal of each marketing effort and deciding how you will measure your progress.

Tell me more

In addition to the common marketing goals of increasing sales, improving your reputation, and creating awareness of your brand, there are several other marketing goals you can measure to see if your marketing is effective:

Creating Sales Opportunities

This measurement shows if your marketing was successful in creating new sales opportunities. For example, if you owned a garbage collection service, you might prepare a one-page flyer and distribute it door-to-door to all the houses in your target neighborhood with a trial offer of “One week free garbage collection for every 4 weeks purchased”. You can measure the success of this type of marketing activity by measuring the number of “leads generated”. This measures how many new customers came from your flyer. If you provided a phone number to call or a website to visit on the flyer, you can measure how many responses were generated from this activity.

Gathering Information About a Customer

You can measure the effectiveness of marketing activity that is designed to learn more about a customer. For example, if you own a grocery store, you could give each customer a loyalty card, which they used every time they made a purchase. The loyalty card could give them discounts on certain items, and, in exchange for this

discount, they would agree that you can track what they buy. From this information, you could design future offers aimed at each customer's unique purchasing pattern. Success is measured in the number of repeat visits to your store or in the increased sales of the items that were featured in the customized offers.

Are people talking about your brand?

Some of your marketing activities may try to create "buzz". Buzz simply means that your brand name is being mentioned - either on line or off line - and people are becoming aware of you. On-line, your success can be measured in the number of "likes", "shares" or "posts" in your social media. Offline, it can be measured in increased brand awareness.

Generating Trial

You can track if your marketing activities are getting people to try your product/service. For example, if you own a retail shop that sells perfumes or fresh herbs, you could hire someone to stand outside your store and offer people free samples of your products. Or maybe you could set up a mobile cart in a shopping mall and offer people in this high traffic area the chance to smell your perfumes or taste your fresh herbs. Success can be measured by how many new customers you get or by how awareness has increased because of your sampling.

Create an Image For Your Brand

Marketing activities, such as advertising, are often used to help create an image for your brand. For example, if you advertise that your product is 100% guaranteed, you want people to believe that it is very trustworthy. Success can be measured by conducting primary research, where you ask people a question such as "When I mention X brand, what is the first thought/image that comes to mind?" When you gather enough information from asking this question, you will be able to see if people are thinking of your brand in the way you had planned. In this example, if only a small amount of the people you talked to say that your brand is "trustworthy", then your marketing is not working to achieve this goal.

Glossary Terms from this Section

Buzz - A term used to describe the noise generated by people talking online and offline about your brand. In Dari this is commonly referred to as "awazah".

Leads Generated - New sales inquiries resulting from marketing initiatives.

Sampling - Offering a product or service for free as a way to try it without risk.

For More Information Related to this Topic See:

- What is market research and how do I do it? *6. Marketing*
- What are the top tips for creating effective advertising? *6. Marketing*
- What is word-of-mouth and how do I use it to grow my business? *6. Marketing*

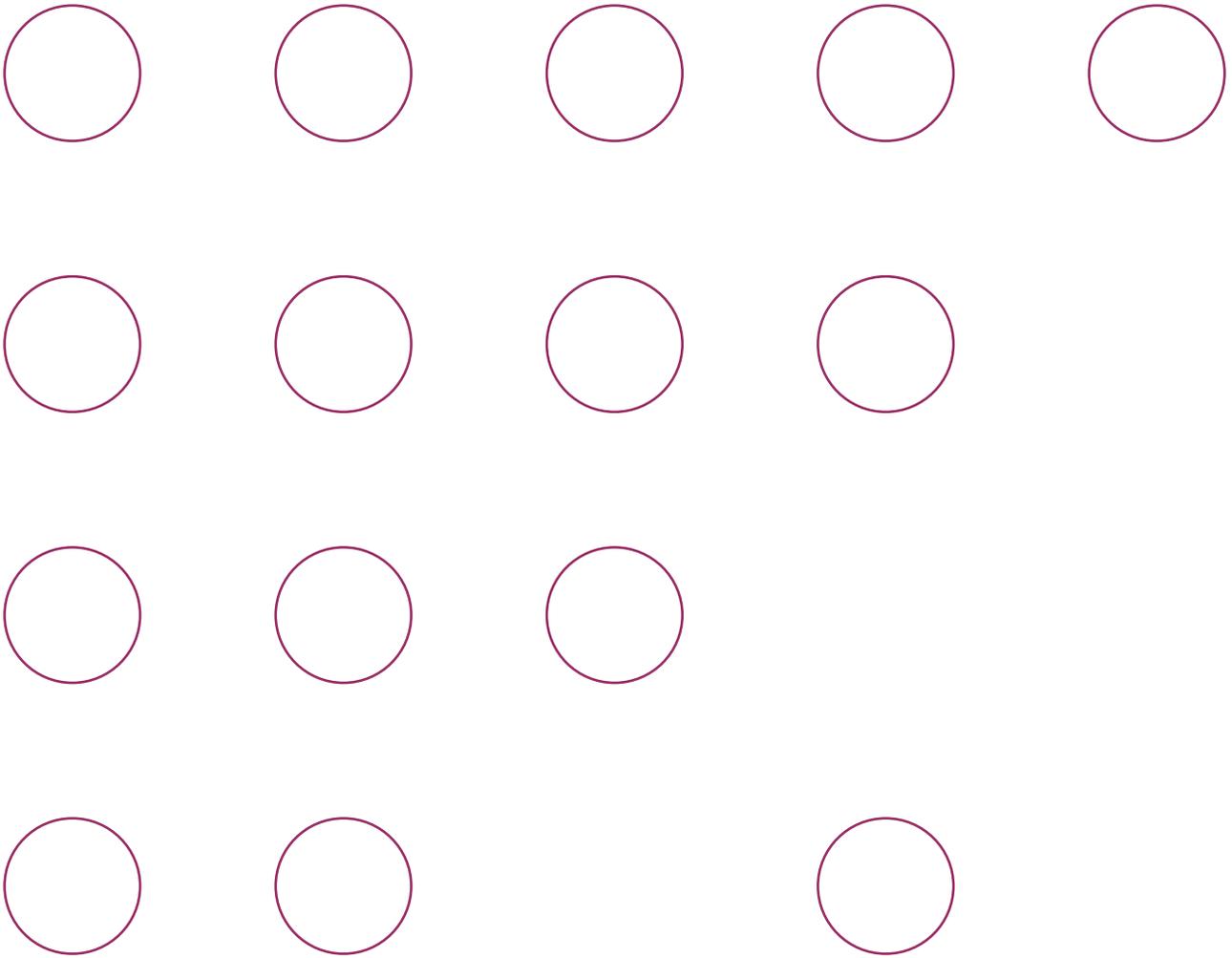
Additional Tools Available

6 Ps Marketing Plan Worksheet

Market Research Worksheet

Customer Satisfaction Survey

Word of Mouth Worksheet



21. **What are the top marketing tips?**

The Basics

This answer contains straightforward tips that every business can use to improve their business performance. It does not matter if your business is large or small, each of the tips will help you focus on one key area of better serving the needs of the customer.

- Work hard to understand what your customer needs
- Respond to your customers right away!
- Use recommendations from satisfied customers
- Add an unexpected bonus for your customer at the sale when you can
- Make sure all your marketing asks the customer to do something (like buy your product or try a sample)
- Repeat your marketing messages often
- Focus on the benefits of your product/service, tell why a customer should use it
- Look for low cost ways to increase the value of your product/service... then test raising your prices
- Follow the best practices (deliver on your promises, be easy to work with, give people choices, and talk often with your customers)
- Create a clear brand for your product/service
- Never stop marketing!

Tell me more

Marketing Tip #1: Understand your customer's needs.

Listening to customers and finding out their needs is usually the first step to business success. It usually starts with you talking to a small number of prospective customers, either individually or in groups. Primary research will help you discover whether people would be interested in buying your product or service – and at what price! Market research will help you identify your ideal customer. Here are some suggestions on what to ask your target customer:

- Does my product or service meet your needs?
- If not, what features could I offer to change your mind?
- I sell more than one version of my product/service, which one do you prefer and why?
- One of my competitors offers Product A and Product B, would you like to see me offer that same item?
- Are there features of my competitors' products you would like to see me offer?
- I'm thinking of adding a new product to my range of products/services, would you be likely to purchase that product/service from me?

Marketing Tip #2: Respond right away.

Answer your telephone, texts, emails, and social media questions!

All the marketing in the world is no good when your phone or e-mail goes unanswered. One of the goals of marketing is to generate new business. If a prospect calls you, that call indicates their interest in buying. When you do not answer the phone/e-mail, you have probably lost that client. Callers most often will NOT leave a message. They will contact the next business. Inconveniencing a consumer is an unpardonable sin. They won't forgive you, so be sure to answer the phone.

Handle customer complaints quickly and with a positive attitude. Strive to preserve your relationship with them instead of focusing on your immediate profit from the transaction. They will reward you with repeat sales and referrals... instead of punishing you by telling everybody they know about their unhappy experience and causing you to lose future customers.

Marketing Tip #3: Use recommendations from satisfied customers.

Collect testimonials from your customers and use them in all your advertising. Testimonials are positive comments about your brand that are obtained from current users. They provide evidence that your product or service delivers the results you promise. For maximum impact, use testimonials that describe the specific results that the customer enjoyed.

Marketing Tip #4: Add something extra when you can.

When you can, add an unexpected bonus to sales transactions just before completing the sale. This might be a coupon, a free sample, even a flyer about a new product/service. It prevents customers from developing any last-minute hesitation ...and may improve their opinion of you and your product/service.

Marketing Tip #5: Make sure all your marketing asks the customer to do something.

Strive to have a “call to action” in all your marketing communications. Many consumers arrive at a website, watch a TV ad, or look at your print ad and then immediately move away ...unless something instantly catches their attention. Ensure you make them take an action that moves them to make a sale, take a choice, try something new, etc.

Marketing Tip #6: Repeat your marketing messages often.

The advertiser with a weak message, repeated often, will win over a competitor with an equally weak message that is heard less often. When it is weak vs. weak, advertising frequency is a tiebreaker. That’s because it helps build brand awareness.

However, the advertiser with a weak message and a big ad budget will prevail over a competitor with a strong message that never gets heard.

Marketing Tip #7: Focus on benefits.

Include the benefits of your product/service in the headlines of all your marketing communications. It is key to understand the difference between features and benefits. Features are what a product is, the benefit is why should I use it. People always buy products or services for their benefits, not their features.

For example, a carpet weaver in Afghanistan will manufacture hand-made rugs, while imported carpets in Afghanistan are machine made. The benefit of a hand-made Afghan carpet is the durability and quality of the workmanship which allows the carpet to retain it’s value, while machine made carpets are more likely to lose value and show signs of usage.

Marketing Tip #8: Look for low cost ways to increase the value of your product/service... then test raising your prices.

Look for some low-cost ways you can enhance the perceived value of your product or service. Then test raising

your price. Don't be surprised if both your sales and your profits go up. You can demonstrate a reasonable cost for your product or service by breaking down the price to its lowest time increment. For example, "Enjoy all of this for less than \$1 a day" (for something priced at \$325 a year).

Marketing Tip # 9: Follow the best practices to make customers happy.

Keep the best practices in mind when you are considering anything that touches on managing your small business. They are: deliver on your promises, be easy to work with, give people choices and talk often to your customers.

Marketing Tip #10: Create a clear brand for your product/service.

You need to create a clear brand identity. Then, create your unique, visual (graphic) identity. This is traditionally a logo or a logo plus a tagline.

Once you have completed the logo/tagline creation process, print this visual identity on every piece of literature that you have. Any time your business is represented in any type of print media, whether electronic or paper, have this visual identity present. Stick with it and be very careful about changing it.

Marketing Tip #11: Never stop marketing.

Growing businesses never stop marketing. You might think that you can stop marketing once you "succeed". It is simply not true. You must continue to market to retain your current customers and win new ones. No matter what business you are in, there will be some customer loss. If you hope to maintain any level of business security, you must continue to invest in marketing to ensure steady growth. You will need to replace your losses with new gains.

Glossary Terms from this Section

Call to Action - MarComm that moves people to make a purchase decision.

Market Research - The activity of gathering information about consumers' needs and wants.

Testimonials - Positive comments about your brand that are obtained from current users.

For More Information Related to this Topic See:

- How can I make my advertising work best for me? *6. Marketing*
- What is a target market and how do I identify the right target market? *6. Marketing*
- What is a marketing plan and how do I create a marketing plan? *6. Marketing*
- How do I know if my marketing is working? *6. Marketing*

Additional Tools Available

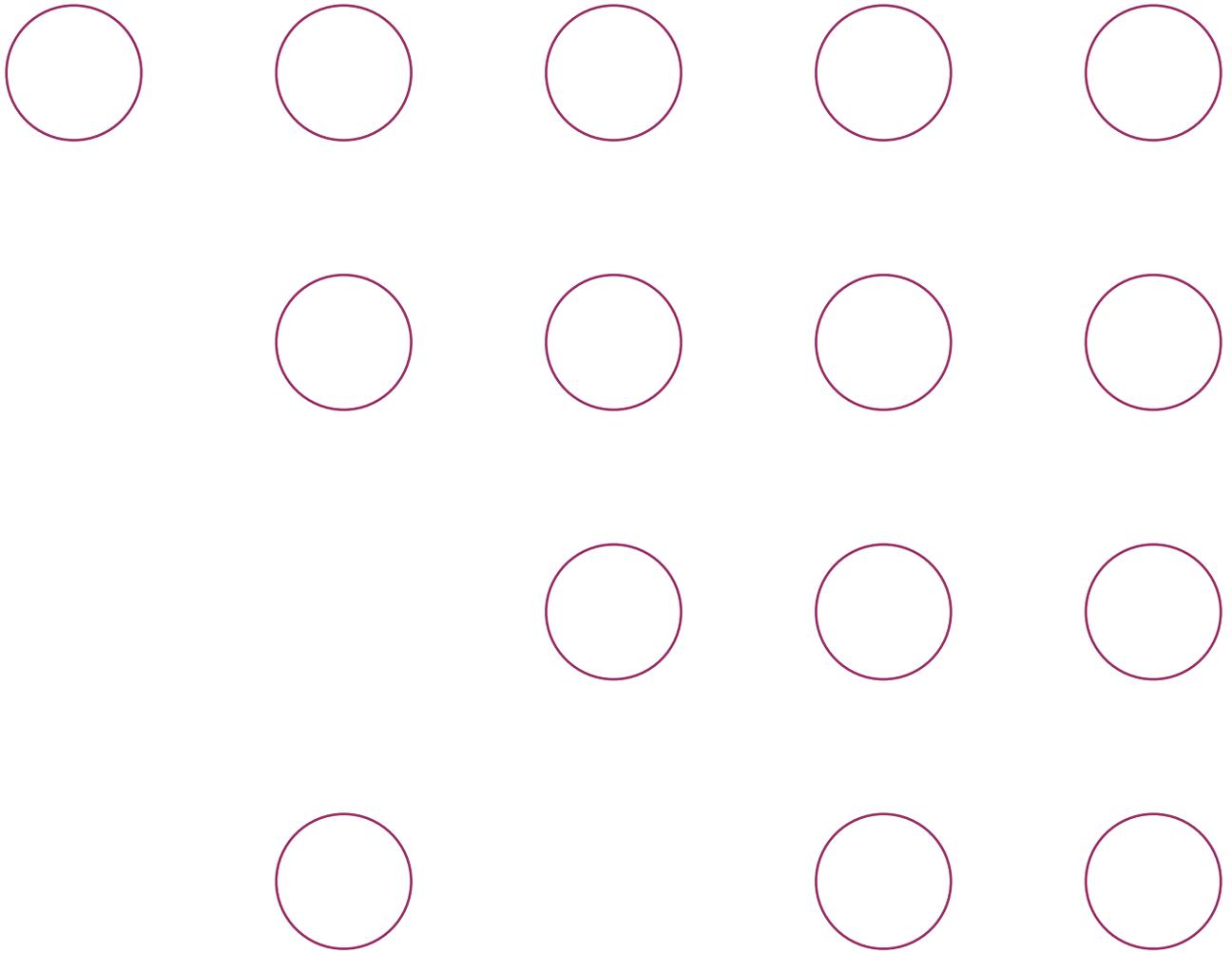
6 Ps Marketing Plan Worksheet

Market Research Worksheet

Customer Satisfaction Survey

Marketing Plan Template

Marketing Collateral Worksheet



Tools