



Karen P. Morrione
4245 Iris Brooke Lane
Snellville, Georgia 30059

www.working-media.com

770-609-6224
karen@working-media.com

How To Plan Marketing Communications

For small businesses, often a marketing communications plan is all you need to drive your marketing efforts. A marketing communications plan allows you to focus on what your message should be, the audience you intend to reach, and what channels you will use to communicate your message. The outline below provides a good overview of the essentials for planning your marketing communications strategy:

Market Overview – an assessment of the current market for your products and services, including identification and description of primary and secondary markets to target. You will want to understand as much as possible about these groups, in particular, how they like to be approached by potential vendors. Within each market segment, summarize and prioritize the benefits you offer to that market and the barriers to entry that you must overcome.

Marketing Communications Goals – what are the results you want to achieve from your marketing efforts, and how long will it take for you to achieve them? Typical marketing communications goals may include generating leads from a specific target market, increasing referrals from past clients, or repositioning the company to take advantage of emerging trends in the marketplace.

Communications Strategy – Describe the strategy that will position your company to achieve the desired results within the specified timeframe. Typical strategic ideas may include creating a customer retention plan, developing complimentary product or service offerings, and identifying co-marketing opportunities with other businesses.

Communications Tactics – your communications plan should include a high-level list of specific projects and activities required to execute your strategy. Typical tactical recommendations may include launching a newsletter, optimizing a Web site for improved search engine rankings, or producing a direct mail campaign.

Marketing Communications Tasks – break down your tactics into smaller tasks, where each task is a step that must be executed to fulfill the tactical recommendations. These can be broken out by categories such as Web site, brochure, newsletter, direct mail, and media relations.

Quarterly Calendar – sort your tasks into a timeline of specific activities for each quarter of the year covered under your plan. This step will help you see the “big picture” of your goals and strategies and help you refine your plan into something that you can manage given your current budget and access to resources.

Like all strategic plans, your Marketing Communications plan should be a living document. We recommend adjustment of the plan on at least a quarterly basis throughout the course of the year to ensure optimal results.