

## Vistaprint Marketing Plan



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## **Executive Summary**

Vistaprint prides itself on its extraordinary capabilities to empower its customers in customizing their marketing needs from design to implementation. In an effort to extend those capabilities of customization even further, this marketing plan delves into rewarding our customers for their current purchases and encouraging repeat business. As part of a customer specific rewards program, customers have to opportunity to earn trials, discounts, and free merchandise. Our other initiative of implementing a sales force as account representatives also enhances brand awareness and customer service, two of our pertinent business weaknesses. The combination of these new pursuits aims to increase revenue and garner market share through market penetration by enhancing our already successful strategy of offering customer personalization.

## **Situation Analysis**

### **A. The Internal Environment**

#### **Review of marketing goals and objectives**

Vistaprint's main goal is to provide individuals, small, and medium sized businesses with essential marketing services. They want to become the online supply of “all things marketing” to the small- and micro- businesses (The Motley Fool, 2010). Some marketing services are business cards, brochures, flyers, banners, t-shirts, and other marketing materials. They even offer website services, including graphic design and 800 numbers for purchase (Vistaprint, 2010).

Vistaprint has also tapped into a consumer market to allow customers to create personalized items like t-shirts and mugs. Their consumer market has been secondary to the small business market.

The firm has become one of the Fortune 100 Fastest Growing Companies because of its long term thinking strategy and being able to take advantage of growing trends.

Vistaprint is a truly global company that operates via internet transactions. The trend of online shopping and business has played right into their strategy. So, too, have the recent economic conditions, which have caused consumers to seek the best quality at a low price: VistaPrint's exact value proposition (Fortune Magazine, 2010).

#### **Review of current marketing strategy and performance**

VistaPrint primarily relies on online advertising. They promote themselves within Google and other search engines to reach those business people who are online looking for help.

They offer trade promotions such as free samples or trials to entice new buyers. They also

tailor marketing campaigns to their established clients, such as direct e-mail advertisements.

Known as “the leading online provider of marketing products, [Vistaprint] literally built its emerging empire on the backs of regular old business cards.” Vistaprint has marketed its product by giving out free business cards with its logo on the back. This was a low-cost way to market their products and enable customers to become “marketing agents” (The Motley Fool, 2010).

The firm has been successful financially and seen substantially rapid growth in recent history. VistaPrint totaled around \$640 million in sales for the 2009 fiscal year, with about \$70 million of that being profit. Their annual revenue growth rate is 50% (Datamonitor, 2010).

### **Review of current and anticipated organizational resources**

Vistaprint has its own patented proprietary software program for printing technology on their self-service based website. They group similar orders together and they have a computer manufacturing program that does this. This in turn tells the company what to produce and integrates the printing system so they eliminate long waits, costs, and processes typically associated with individualized, high-quality printing services (DW 2006, p. 2).

They have higher human resource growth which will lead to more innovation and advancement of the company.

### **Review of current and anticipated cultural and structural issues**

Vistaprint's overall customer orientation is consumer oriented. Their whole website is based on customization and what the individual wants.

The company is very long-term oriented; they are looking to revolutionize the way their services are delivered. In turn, this makes the company culture very adaptive. They are very horizontal and they have management that makes decisions quickly. They provide services for marketing, so they specialize in marketing themselves and realize that it is important. The CEO, Robert Keane, has remained in charge since he founded the company in 1995 (Datamonitor, 2010).

In summary, they have rapid production turnaround, financial stability, low overhead, and a growing customer base making the company increasingly successful.

### **B. The Customer Environment**

#### **Who are the firm's current and potential customers?**

Vistaprint serves small and medium sized businesses as well as the home office market. They are in 120 countries. They mainly focus on business-to-business sales, but they also have business-to-consumer sales. Their product usage is for small-business and self or at home marketing (Datamonitor, 2010).

They have an integrated supply chain. They only materials that they purchase are the ones that they print on. These materials are typical commodities: paper, t-shirts, mugs, etc (Datamonitor, 2010).

### **What do customers do with the firm's products?**

Customers can sample a product before placing a large order, which gives the company a competitive advantage. Vistaprint relies on business customers because they place larger quantities of orders. The typical business consumer for Vistaprint would be a business large enough to need high quantities of marketing materials but not large enough to have marketing services in-house (Vistaprint, 2010).

Customers utilize online marketing products: Vistaprint is “providing tools that guide them through things like search marketing and copywriting, which will maximize their online efforts.” Furthermore, the company’s goal is “to make Internet marketing as easy as designing a business card” (Marketwire, 2010).

### **Where do customers purchase the firm's products?**

The customer purchases everything via the integrated online ordering process from the Vistaprint website.

### **When do customers purchase the firm's products?**

The firm holds promotional events to entice customers. However, the customer purchases the firm’s products and services year round at their request. The orders placed are based on the individual company’s marketing needs.

One of the drawbacks of Vistaprint is that some customers do not receive customer service 24/7. They claim around the clock service center; however, this does not always work and operate (Complaints Board, 2010).

### **Why do customers select the firm's products?**

The basic value proposition of the company is that it is highly customizable, low cost and high quality, and time efficient. Vistaprint performs as a one-stop source for customizing and providing a wide range of marketing capabilities in a convenient and consistent online process.

The products and services offered are very comprehensible and have everything that a company needs for marketing, not limited to printing. Vistaprint also offers 800 number and website services for their customers (Vistaprint, 2010).

As the customer needs increase, the company's offerings will need to adapt and change as well. Vistaprint's strategy is to grow with their customers and they focus on relationship marketing and equity.

The company is currently aiming to promote its Internet marketing products and services, by offering custom websites, email marketing and online search profiles. The company recently launched an SEO (Search Engine Optimizer) tool that will help customers to "quickly and easily optimize their site to be found by search engines and also assist customers in creating relevant content that will help to improve their site ranking". This tool makes it easy for non-technical users to optimize their sites and improve their rankings (Marketwire, 2010). Customers are selecting the firm's products because the tools that they are offering are making it easier for customers to use their services.

### **Why do potential customers not purchase the firm's products?**

The customer's basic needs are not being met. The companies that are not buying are either small enough to not need their services or large enough to have already invested in



their own in-house marketing capabilities. Also, the company may have lost consumers to customer service complaints but many of those do not have to do with the product itself.

One basic need that Vistaprint does not cater to is immediate, overnight services.

The customer has to pay for non-tangible aspects, such as website design, promotion, etc.

Therefore, customers look elsewhere for internal development.

### **C. The External Environment**

#### **Competition**

Vistaprint is the top company that does online printing; this is seen in the following Figure 1-1. The commercial printing industry is around \$100 billion and this is broken up among 35,000 different companies. The company has become the leading player in the printing industry because they have focused on the marketing needs of micro businesses. Vistaprint has said that the opportunity for focusing on micro businesses is about \$25 billion (between the U.S. and Europe) (The Motley Fool, 2010).

Vistaprint's competition is: Office Depot, Shutterfly, FedEx Office, Taylor Corporation, Staples, Inc., UPS Stores, Business Cards Tomorrow Inc., Zazzle, Costco Wholesale Corporation, Overnightprints.com (Datamonitor, 2010).

The main competitors are Office Depot, Inc. (ODP) and Shutterfly, Inc. (SFLY). Figure 1-1 is a chart that shows financial information, discussing Office Depot, Shutterfly, Vistaprint (VPRT) compared to the industry. This chart discusses market capitalization (or market cap), quarterly revenue growth, gross margin, net income, earnings per share (EPS), and price earnings ratio (P/E).

Compared to its' competitors, Vistaprint has the highest market cap, with 1.80 B compared to the industry, which has 149.79 M. Also, Vistaprint is the leader in gross margin (64.04%), net income (65.55 M), and EPS (1.44) (Yahoo! Finance, 2010).

**Figure 1-1\***

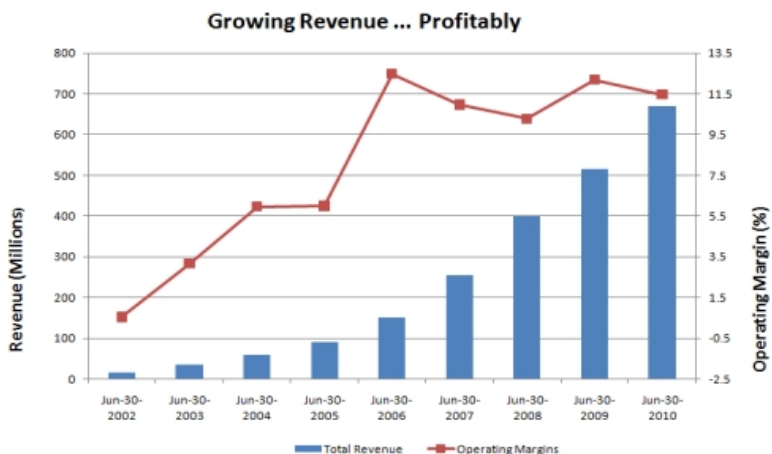
	<b>VPRT</b>	<b>ODP</b>	<b>SFLY</b>	<b>Industry</b>
<b>Market Cap</b>	1.80 B	1.29 B	879.52M	149.79 M
<b>Qrtly Rev. Growth</b>	17.50%	-4.3%	20.90%	18.10%
<b>Gross Margin</b>	64.07%	28.71%	55.55%	37.32%
<b>Net Income</b>	65.55 M	-21.13 M	8.70 M	N/A
<b>EPS</b>	1.44	-0.08	0.31	0.11
<b>P/E</b>	28.34	N/A	103.05	21.98

\*Information taken from Yahoo! Finance

### **Economic Growth and Stability**

Vistaprint currently has 50% growth rate and ship to 120 countries. In the 2009 fiscal year, they were able to achieve 50% revenue growth even in an economic recession. They achieved 29% increase in customers and 34% increase in orders (Datamonitor, 2010).

**Figure 1-2\***



\* Take from www.fool.com

Figure 1-2 displays the growing revenue for Vistaprint. The company experienced the highest revenue in 2006 and experienced a slight decrease in the following two years. However, the company experienced an increase in 2009 and only a slight decrease in 2010. The company has been successful in achieving an increase in revenue in an economic downturn.

### **Technological Advances**

The entire commercial printing industry has relied on continuously improving technology to remain competitive, and Vistaprint's success can be attributed to their lead in making those advancements (Encyclopedia of American Industries, 2009).

Recently, Vistaprint has launched its very own Search Engine Optimizer (SEO) tool, along with custom blogs for its Internet marketing packages. Because Vistaprint deals with many micro businesses, the two new elements are simple and effective for the micro businesses that are looking to increase its search engine rankings. These technological advancements have added a broader collection of Internet marketing products and services offered by Vistaprint (Printing Impressions, 2010).

The SEO tool will help customers with the optimization of their sites to be found by different search engines and assist customers in creating relevant content. The tool uses an optimization report card. This evaluates a user's site and allows them to profit on search opportunities immediately. Many customers find this tool useful with its ease of use and the fact that it helps a business optimize their site and improve their rank with no prior search marketing knowledge (Printing Impressions, 2010).

Vistaprint has maintained a large market share in the commercial printing business and they have more than 40 patents issued and 50 patents that are pending. Currently, the company spends more than \$250 million on Research and Development (The Motley Fool, 2010).

### **Sociocultural Trends**

With the growing use of technology in daily lifestyles, consumers are more comfortable buying products and services online and they are looking to save money due to the current economic environment. With the increase of globalization and desire of customization, their services and products will be in more demand.

A potential environmental issue deals with the fact that Vistaprint consumes paper on a large scale; however, they have started an eco-friendly product initiative (Consumer Affairs, 2010).

### **SWOT Analysis**

#### **A. Strengths**

##### 1. Value proposition

Low cost, high quality, free samples, promotions, highly customizable

##### 2. Unique industry leader

Technological advancements, software patents, offers differentiating services (websites and 800 numbers)

#### **B. Weaknesses**

##### 1. Customer Service

Customer service hotline is not always maintained, random service charges not well advertised, hidden terms and conditions (Complaints Board, 2010)

##### 2. Brand Loyalty

Customers have a propensity to go elsewhere for major marketing needs

Also, many customers only purchase few products and are hesitant to explore entire line

### **C. Opportunities**

#### **1. Increase demand**

Increase in the number of small businesses, economic factors, emerging markets, online shopping and Internet usage is increasing

#### **2. Consumer Markets**

Try to get smaller businesses, one-on-one consumers and build relationships

### **D. Threats**

#### **1. Increase Competition**

Other companies have faster turn-around time, they may use own in-house marketing

#### **2. Economic Conditions**

Companies discount marketing as a real profitable investment or they can turn to their own in-house marketing

### **E. The SWOT Matrix**

<b>Strengths:</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>Opportunities:</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>R</b>
• Value Proposition	3	3	9	• Increase Demand	3	3	9
• Unique Industry Leader	2	3	6	• Consumer Markets	2	2	4
<b>Weaknesses:</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>Threats:</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>R</b>
• Customer Service	-2	1	-2	• Increase Competition	-1	1	-1
• Brand Loyalty	-2	3	-6	• Economic Conditions	-2	2	-4

## **Marketing Goals and Objectives**

**A. Marketing Goal A:** Increase revenue through market penetration.

### **Objective A1:** Rewards Program

Details:

Going along with the theme of customization in their products, consumers have the option to customize their rewards program.

Based on amount of money spent, a rewards customer will earn a certain number of points. Points can be cashed in in the rewards section for an assortment of either free products, discounts, or trials at the discretion of the customer's choice. Certain promotions may offer an incentive for obtaining more points towards the rewards for buying a certain product. Also, promotions can also potentially only require a lower level of points than normal in order to cash in a reward.

Because customers have more of an incentive to make their purchases with VistaPrint, in a customizable fashion, they are more likely to make those frequent purchases in order to get the rewards.

Because there are so many different print companies, none of which have a substantial market share, VistaPrint will gain that market share by differentiating themselves with this rewards program and thus building their brand and supporting their value proposition even more.

Specific and measurable outcome:

- Stronger customer loyalty
- brand equity
- 25% of customers partaking in Rewards Program after 1 year

Time frame: 1 year

Responsible unit/person: Division of the Marketing Department

**Objective A2: Sales force**

Details:

Sales Account Representatives:

Account Reps are optional for qualifying rewards program customers, although their main purpose is to acquire prospective customers.

These qualifying customers include those who make continuously repeated and expected purchases at specific dollar amount, and choose to do so. The value in existing customers having an account rep is one on one customer service, and the ability of them to negotiate and consult with them regarding their marketing/print needs.

Through trade shows, referral programs, and cold calling, sales reps will generate more market penetration.

We will slowly build this sales force in major cities, starting with NYC, Chicago, and L.A. in the first year. Sales force employees will work mobility and will be managed by a newly appointed National Sales Manager, who will report directly to the Director of Marketing.

Specific and measurable outcome:

- Increase customer satisfaction
- Increase number of new customers/ business by 10%

Time frame: 1 year

Responsible unit/person: Marketing department, appoint Sales manager

### **Objective A3: Increase customer service**

Format:

- Outsource

Specific and measurable outcome:

- Increase customer satisfaction
- 24/7 maintenance of line
- Ability to serve more diverse customer base

Time Frame: 1 year

Responsible unit/person: Operations and Purchasing

## **Marketing Strategy**

### **A. Primary Target Market and Marketing Mix**

**Primary target market:** Business – Individual, small and medium sized

This target's basic needs: Reach customers and present a professional image

Identifying characteristics (demographics, geography, values, psychographics):

Professionals, Small business owners

Purchasing/shopping habits and preferences: Online, habitual, one-time, seasonal

Consumption/disposition characteristics: Professional use, Personal use,

Marketing materials and tools

Product: Offer high-quality printed marketing materials, promotional products and marketing services such as copywriting, design, websites and postcard mailing.

Major product features and benefits: Customizable, printed materials;

reaching more customers, long-term relationship with regular orders

Sustainable competitive advantage: Large variety of products, marketing bundle

Differentiation/positioning strategy: Customizable, all online, easy to use, high quality, low cost



Brand name and packaging: Product does not currently showcase the brand; however, we look to showcase the brand with packaging  
Customer service strategy: Better customer service, improve 24 hour service  
Supplemental products: Rewards program, free trials and coupons  
Experiential/symbolic attributes offered: Customer has control, easy to upload and use

**Pricing:** High quality, low cost – bundle deals, coupons, concurrent ordering deals

Pricing objectives: Offer highest quality, lowest cost for personalization  
Overall pricing strategy: Keep costs low and competitive, create value proposition for customers  
Price comparison to competition: In the middle of competition – More for less: depending on customization, it can be less or more expensive  
Profit margin (selling price relative to unit costs): Varies by products: some in bulk (business cards, stationary) and others are one time purchases (banner); some are not quantifiable (website graphic design)  
Discount/markdown policy: Redo product free of cost; Rewards program  
Special pricing incentives: Promotions – deals, trials, coupons  
Special financing offered: Financing options for large order sales

**Distribution:** FedEx

General supply chain strategy: Order supplies, receive design from customer, print design, ship through FedEx  
Distribution intensity: Dependent upon customer requests/ time frame  
Channels and intermediaries to be used: Supplies, FedEx, online website  
Strategies to ensure collaboration in the supply chain: Have as much control over supply chain as they can, FedEx  
Strategies to increase time, place, and possession utility: Improve partnerships with suppliers and FedEx, more printing facilities, work with office supply store, cost friendly

**Integrated Marketing Communications (Promotion):** E-mails, Rewards Program, Targeted Marketing

General IMC strategy: Value proposition and cost-savings to the customer in the most effective way possible  
IMC objectives and budget: Market share revenue; Percentage of budgeted revenue  
Elements of the advertising strategy: Online, through e-mail  
Elements of the personal selling strategy: Sales Force  
Elements of the consumer sales promotion (pull) strategy: Offer discounts to customers

## **Marketing Implementation**

### **A. Structural Issues**

The overall approach to implementing the marketing strategy is to increase revenue through market penetration through development of the Rewards program, sales force, and increase customer service.

The changes to the firm's structure needed to implement the marketing strategy are to manage and control the sales force and oversee the Rewards program.

The required internal marketing activities in employee training are sales force training. The sales force must do outside sales and have knowledge of the Rewards program. We will train account representatives for specific customers within tiered Rewards program.

In the area of internal communication and promotion of the marketing strategy, we will have the sales force report to the sales force management. Another change would be company e-mail and newsletter for changes (given to all employees).

Lastly, in the area of coordination with other functional areas, the sales force will affect the Finance/Accounting will also affect the Human Resource department because they will have to hire the sales force and negotiate the terms of their contracts.

Customer-contact employees and managers will be empowered to make decisions. The sales force will be able to decide the quantities and the products that are offered by the Rewards program. However, the Rewards program has structured

tiers in regards to what can be offered. Therefore, there are some restrictions so that the sales force does not have complete control. The Account Representatives will report to the Sales Managers.

### **B. Tactical Marketing Activities**

Specific Tactical Activities	Person/Department Responsible	Required Budget	Completion Date
Product Activities 1. Limited Product selection within Rewards Program	Rewards Program Manager (new position) – within Marketing department	Dependent on Customer's points accumulated	Incorporation: 1 Quarter Review: Quarterly for 1 year
Pricing Activities 1. Rewards Program will affect	Rewards Program Manager (new position) – within Marketing department	Account for discounts/free trials that customers receive	Incorporation: 1 Quarter
Distribution Activities 1. Order directly through Account Representative	Sales Account Representative	Salary of account representatives	Dependent on customer – when, how, quantity ordered
IMC (Promotion) Activities 1. E-mail Marketing 2. Outside Sales force 3. Word of mouth referral	Rewards team (new “committee”) – within the Marketing department		1 Quarter

### **Evaluation and Control**

#### **1. Formal Marketing Control**

The types and levels of formal controls that will be used to ensure the implementation of the marketing plan are based on revenue increase, Rewards member purchasing activities, sales managers, and Human Resource trainers. We will need financial and human resources for these activities to occur.

### **Input Controls**

The actions needed before the marketing plan can be executed are that there needs to be money to hire sales force and run the Rewards Program. Also, additional capital expenditures needed are cars, phones, laptops, etc. for the sales representatives. Lastly, for the revised human resource activities, there will need to be customer service training for the employee recruitment and selection.

### **Process Controls**

The actions needed during the execution of the marketing plan in the area of management-focused controls are that the sales force reports to management to ensure Rewards Program. There will be strict documentation of sales force activities. In regards to internal marketing and communication programs, the Rewards Program division must communicate to the marketing department and upper division as to what is being done, what is being given, etc. For ensuring organization-wide customer orientation, we will hold regional meetings quarterly between Rewards Program management.

### **Output Controls**

These are performance standards that are to be compared to marketing goals and objectives during and after the execution of the marketing plan. For overall performance standards, members in rewards program increase in revenue, sales are made through account representatives, and customer satisfaction through hotline. For product performance standards, we will increase production selections in the Rewards Program (variety of products). For price performance standards, we will make the actual pricing more specific to the customer and it is not specifically defined in the

Rewards Program. In regards to distribution performance standards, some corrective actions that can be taken is to have the account representatives less involved or revert to majority of the sales to online. Lastly, in regards to IMC performance standards, the potential corrective actions that can be taken if the standards are not met are to reduce the sales force, alter the Rewards Program, and alter the marketing campaign.

### **Marketing Audits**

Marketing activities will be monitored by surveys, which will be given before and after the marketing campaign has started/ended. There will be tracking of the Rewards Program, product purchases and if there is an increase or decrease in revenue. Lastly, the marketing audit will be performed by research within the marketing department.

The marketing audit will include looking at the surveys given before and after the marketing campaign, increase/decrease of profits, customer satisfaction, etc.

## **2. Informal Marketing Control**

The levels of informal controls that will be used to ensure the implementation of the marketing plan are that the sales representatives must be self-motivated because they will working from home and must make sure that the customers are satisfied. The sales force compensation based on their sales. Employees must be committed to the organization at a level that is sufficient for implementing the marketing plan and this will be done specifically in regards to the Rewards Program. The employees must be dedicated and if there are any questions or problems, the employees will be sent to developmental programs.

### **Social Control**

To enhance employee's share of the firm's value when implementing the marketing program, we will invite them to corporate to hear about why and how the marketing program will work specifically. We will then ask for their input on the marketing program and how we could modify it to make it better.

The behavioral norms within the sales force will be self-motivation, outgoing, friendly, patience. These behaviors must be present or else the sales force will not achieve their goals. For the Rewards Program, we expect to have motivation by the team to make goals of how many customers use and customer satisfaction with the program.

### **Cultural Control**

The organizational culture is appropriate with the marketing plan because as previously stated, Vistaprint spends a lot of money on research and development. Therefore, the company is customer oriented and the sales force delivers one-on-one attention to its customers.

### C. Implementation Schedule and Timeline

<i>Month</i>												
<b>Activities</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<b><i>Product Activities</i></b>												
Limited Product Selection			X			X			X			X
<b><i>Pricing Activities</i></b>												
Rewards program will affect			X			X			X			X
<b><i>Distribution Activities</i></b>												
Order directly with Account Rep.												
<b><i>IMC Activities</i></b>												
Word-of-mouth referral			X	X	X	X						
E-mail marketing			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Outside Sales force			X									
Website Promotion			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

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