

Digital Marketing Plan Structure

The Goal of Digital Marketing Plan

This structure will help you answering the key questions in planning digital marketing. You can gain the highest grade 5 if you discuss the main areas mentioned here. You do not need to have comprehensive plan for all the details in this structure, but you need to show good understanding what is essential for your business. For example if you are writing the plan for a small company, maybe only one or two social media channels are relevant for that particular business.

Lacking structured plan is a typical problem for small and medium sized companies when it comes to marketing and especially digital marketing. This document presents a structure for a digital marketing plan that we use on this course.

Some general advice:

- Think about your customer and focus around your customer, not around your product or service, think about your customers' needs and expectations.
- Digital marketing landscape is changing constantly, so give special attention to monitoring and modifying your digital marketing plan on the fly. There is no Google or Facebook campaign that does not require monitoring or modifications.
- In the beginning you have to estimate and guess key figures. Do not worry about estimating and guessing these. You would have real data only after launching a real digital marketing campaign. To discuss key figures and estimates use given general average figures.
- There is not one right plan, you have to find ideas relevant to your business. Make a good situation analysis, and it will help you go further. Find the best digital marketing channels for your business. Since this is an exercise how to make a digital marketing plan, we include at least the most common digital marketing channels. There could be more suitable channels specific to your business.

Remember SOSTAC model was discussed in our lessons.

SOSTAC

S = Situation Where are we now?

O = Objectives Where would we like to be?

S = Strategy What will we gain?

T = Tactics What we do in practice, now and tomorrow, next month?

A = Action

C = Control How to make sure we get there?

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1. Situation analysis. Where are we now?

Understanding your online marketplace

The immediate, or micro-environment

A. Our customers

Always start with the customer, their characteristics, behaviours, needs and wants. You should consider:

Ideal customers - characteristics summarized in named personas are useful to get started, think about demographics, searching and product selection behaviors and unmet needs - detail here is very useful to talk about "What would John do.. or think about...". Also consider what your data tells you in regard to your most profitable, and potentially profitable customers

B. Our market

Market description - Focus on actionable needs and trends - are you meeting them, what are they.

C. Our competitors

Benchmark against competitors. Do some online research about your competitors, what is their presence, what kind of keywords they use and where they are on social media?

D. Intermediaries and potential customers

Review customer use of different types of sites which may influence their decision for example, search engines, specialist news sites, aggregators and bloggers

E. Wider macro environment

These are the big picture strategic influences, discuss these very briefly because these can be very vast area. Very short basic definition, for example one short paragraph, half a page is enough. Pick for example 2-3 of the following questions, and be very compact.

Legal - checking your online marketing activities comply with privacy and online trading laws before problems arise, are there any special laws retaining to your field of business that you must be aware of?

Environment - is your approach ethical and sustainable, ecological way of thinking is very fashionable for example, is there something you must take into account in your business?

Political – is there something happening that has impact on your business?

Technology – is there some big changes coming for example?

F. Our own capabilities

Once you have looked outwards (often missed), only then should you turn inwards and look at your own capabilities. Very short discussion here about your own resources in your company.

G. Internet-specific SWOT summary

Include a digital channel SWOT which summarizes your online marketplace analysis findings. Most of you did this with your situation analysis.

2. Goal-setting. Where do we want to be?

Setting useful, actionable objectives

You should be as specific as possible in your goals. In this first definition of goals you can discuss your business's overall goals of digital marketing. **Later when you define the channels, you can discuss goals for each channel in that part.** So in this first section you can define goals in general, how much you should increase sales, how many new customers from all digital channels etc.? Remember that you need to make good guesses and estimate these in the beginning, you do not have any real marketing data unless you are really working with a company to get that data. So it is OK to estimate things.

We recommend these should be:

SMART –

Specific

Measurable

Actionable

Relevant

Timely or time-oriented, a historical analysis

Define at least a rough idea of the monetary planning, what is your digital marketing annual budget and how you would divide that between different channels.

What kind of key figures you expect by using your digital marketing budget, discuss at least the most important concepts: CTC and CPC.

Discuss how many new website visitors or opt-ins (registered new potential customers) you plan to acquire, how many customers you should convert into buying customers and how you are planning to retain your existing customers (newsletters, customer loyalty rewards etc.)

Remember that on average for example Google clicks cost around 0,20 – 2,00 Euros as discussed during our lessons. Remember from lessons that general CTR's were under 1% in many cases, but you may use 1%, 2% or 3% estimates for example in your rough definition of these goals and monetary units. From e-mail campaigns it is easier to attain 10% CTR's for example.

3. Strategy. Long term plans, how our digital marketing helps to achieve these goals?

Setting a meaningful strategy

Define here briefly your company overall long term plans and how your digital marketing will help in achieving those goals.

Your CRM-strategy

We have discussed the CRM term, that is the most important part of your strategy formulation. Present here your CRM strategy and list what kind of requirements you have for the technical solutions.

Targeting

Define briefly what kind of targeting criteria you use in selecting your online customers.

Proposition and the marketing mix

What are your key messages, how do you define your product or service. How do you use your key messages online? Are you using other offline marketing activities that have impact on your online activities.

Online presence.

What is your online presence? Website? Do you have online reservation system or other online services? Do you integrate your website to social media? Are you using blogs? What kind of resources you need for these activities? What kind of feedback channels you offer to your customers? Discuss briefly these questions.

Marketing automation.

Describe briefly how marketing automation would help your business. Familiarize yourself with the lecture material and describe what benefits you could get by using marketing automation.

4. Tactics, action and control

Define Digital marketing channels

You have been working on these during the whole course. So just put everything together and give it finishing touches. Discuss the following terms: Acquisition, Conversion and Retention.

Acquisition=getting new customers

Outline how you will acquire traffic, what are the main digital channels for you.

Key digital media channels for traffic acquisition would include:

- Search engine marketing (natural and paid)
- Display advertising
- Social media marketing
- Email marketing
- Affiliate marketing

With your digital marketing channels give some basic idea of budget, how much money you would put/need(if imaginary). Some budget ideas are required for the highest grade 5, see the chart for the requirements.

REMEMBER: You always need creative marketing thinking, this will be highly appreciated in your final grade also. Try to think about some new fresh ways to use your digital channels, did you get any ideas from your competitors?

Conversion

How do make buying easy for your customers so that you increase conversion=the percentage of customers who turn from registered customers to buying customers.

Retention

Discuss briefly how you keep your existing customer, what kind of communication? Some loyalty program? Social media interaction, how do you identify different customers and how do you communicate to them?

Discuss briefly the following also, you may integrate these into the presentation of the channels if you wish to do so:

Control

Discuss how you intend to monitor your digital marketing, what kind of tools you will need and what kind of data you need from your campaigns and customers.

Action

Discuss what kind of activities you will use, social media actions? Do you integrate something to offline marketing, trade fair? or something else?

5. Executive summary

No, you're still not quite finished, but almost! After your plan is created, go back to the beginning and create a **1 page summary** that a busy, senior executive can understand and believe in!

The same exec summary is useful for PowerPoint presentations should you need to present the bones of your plan. **Keep it short, max. one page.** Tell the background info of the company briefly for a person who sees this for the first time. After the basic company info tell briefly the highlights of your digital marketing plan.

Remember that this is a very short synopsis of your whole plan, and remember to write it to a person who does not know anything about your company or your digital marketing activities.