

Writing a Marketing Plan

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A marketing plan is an operational document that outlines the marketing activity that a business plans to implement to generate leads and reach its target market.

A marketing plan details the outreach, both traditional and digital, and PR campaigns to be undertaken over a period, including how the company will measure the effect of these planned activities. A marketing plan would normally include: A business summary, business initiatives, marketing objectives, target market information, customer information (or buyer personas), information on your competitors, marketing strategy, marketing channel plan, and a budget.

The following guide explains each of those sections in detail, and also gives you the example of **'Earth Farm'** an imagined new enterprise who want to sell training on sustainable farming.

You can find the **'Earth Farm'** examples in bold below, you can also use this guide as a template for your first marketing plan.

1. Business Summary

- **Company Name**

Earth Farm

- **Headquarter/Office Locations**

Earth Farm, Small Town, Scotland, SC10 6FA

- **Mission Statement**

Earth Farm teaches others to work the land in a way that ensures it will feed and nurture future generations.



The European Agricultural Fund
for Rural Development
Europe investing in rural areas



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

- **SWOT Analysis**

| Strengths | Weaknesses | Opportunities | Threats |
|---|--|---|---|
| What we're good at. What's working. What our customers like about us. | What we want to fix. What we want to strengthen. What we want to become more efficient at. | What the industry might soon want. What we think we'll be good at. What will be our differentiator? | What we think could hinder our growth. What/who we think could take our customers. |
| 1. Teaching others about environmental sustainability and low impact-farming. 2. 3. Etc. | 1. People don't know about us. 2. 3. Etc. | 1. Lots of farmers looking to change their processes to a more sustainable model. 2. 3. Etc. | 1. Some farmers are resistant to change. 2. Vegans. 3. Etc. |

2. Business Initiatives

- **Overarching initiatives: marketing objectives, goals, metrics**

Initiative 1

Description: **[Over the next 12 months, we'll be an example of sustainable livestock farming to other New Entrants.]**

Goal of initiative: **[To increase conversation around sustainable farming, while improving the visibility of our brand.]**

Metrics to measure success: **[10 new customers a month buying our training plan and an invitation to speak at the New Entrants Conference.]**

Initiative 2 ...

Initiative 3 ...

Initiative 4 ...

Marketing Objectives

Marketing objectives define what we want to achieve from our marketing strategy, how we are going to exploit strengths and opportunities and overcome weaknesses and threats. Marketing objectives must be consistent with corporate goals, achievable in practice, measurable, compatible with the external business environment and internal operating environment.



3. Target Market

- **Industry Name**

In 2021 we're targeting the following industries where we'll sell our product and reach out to customers:

1. Industry Name: **Beef (including primary producers, farmers, processors, abattoirs, butchers, and consumers.)**
2. Industry Name: ...
3. Industry Name: ...

- **Buyer Persona(s)**

Buyer Personas:

A buyer persona is a profile that depicts your ideal customer based on real data of your existing customers and market research. Buyer personas help humanize the ideal customer you are trying to attract, which helps you understand them better and pick the right marketing strategy to convert them.

Persona 1:

Laura is a farmer, with a large beef herd. She is 35 years old. She has always worked in agriculture, being brought up on the family farm. Laura spends a lot of time with her family, and has young children. Laura cares deeply about leaving a legacy for her kids, and also protecting the environment, We can provide her with easily accessible training information, and encourage her to become an ambassador and run workshops from her farm.

Persona 2: ...

Persona 3: ...

- **Competitive Analysis**

Competitive analysis is a system for understanding your business' standing in the marketplace in relation to your competition. It is a strategy for gathering intelligence and putting that information to use. With a thorough competitive analysis as part of your initial business plan, you'll be positioned to outshine your rivals and draw loyal customers.

Executing a competitive analysis requires some planning, research, and honest introspection. Take it step by step, and you may be surprised what you discover about the business environment in your neck of the woods.

Direct competitors are those rival businesses who sell goods and services identical or nearly identical to your own.

Earth Farm's Direct Competitors are; SAC Consulting. SAC Consulting are a large organisation with 26 offices all over Scotland and N England. SAC Consulting offer environmental and sustainability advice to Farmers.

(E.g.) SAC Consulting SWOT ...



Indirect competitors sell goods and services that are not the same as yours, but which satisfy the same customer need.

Farm Advisory Service is an indirect competitor to Earth Farm as they make information on sustainable farming free to industry.

(E.g.) Farm Advisory Service SWOT ...

Alpaca Consulting are an indirect competitor to Earth Farm, as their prospective customers may decide to invest in alpacas rather than overall sustainability goals.

(E.g.) Alpaca Consulting SWOT ...

Finding your competition begins with research. Use keywords that describe your company in a Google search. **(E.g.) Sustainable farming, environmental consultancy, future farming, bio-diversity, emissions, carbon footprint, farmer consultancy, make my business better, rural business.** Be thorough and search every term and combination of terms you can think of, taking care to include terms that cover your indirect competitors as well. Identify the top search results for businesses in your product or service area. Determine how your offerings compare to theirs and what differences stand out. Dig deeper into your biggest competition by investigating their websites, annual reports, government reports and certifications, prices, promotions and types of marketing activity they do.

Complete a thorough SWOT analysis for each of your competitors.

4. Market Strategy (The 7PS)

- **Product**

Describe the products with which you will enter the target market described in the section above. How will this product solve the challenges described in your buyer persona description(s)? What makes this product different from (or at least competitive against) your competition?

- **Price**

How much are you selling this product for? Is it competitive? Realistic for your customers' budget? Will you run any seasonal promotions/discounts associated with this product?

- **Promotion**

How will you promote this product? Think more deeply than your blog or social media channels. What about this content will drive value into your product?

- **People**

Who in your existing team, family or external network plays a role in your market strategy? Describe what each of them, or each team, will do to bring your market strategy success.

- **Process**

How will the product or service be delivered to your customer? Is it an ongoing service or repeatable product? How will you support their success with your product or service?

- **Physical Evidence**

Where is your product displayed? If you sell an intangible product or a service, how would customers produce visible evidence of your business?

5. Budget

You may not know exactly how much money to invest into your marketing, or how to build or consider a budget. Marketing isn't free (even on social media!) It takes your time (which is money) and it may take extra content or resources.

List out your estimated expenses for the year ahead – and estimate high.

Revisit your budget as and when new opportunities arise and see if you need to look for more, or make an adjustment elsewhere in the budget.

| Marketing Expense | Estimated Price |
|---|--|
| Marketing Software Sprout social, mail chimp, Monday.com, asana etc. | £1200 per year |
| Event 1 [Hosting] Earth Farm Open Farm Day | £2500 per event 2 x event per year. |
| Event 2 [Attending] Royal Highland Show | £500 |
| Content Sponsorship [time period of campaign] Paid Social Media campaigns | £2500 per year |
| Pay-per-click (Google) (£0.10 per click) | £35 per month |
| Total | [Total Marketing Team Expense for Current Year] £9620 |



6. Marketing Channels



Public Relations:

Public relations (PR) is the set of techniques and strategies related to managing how information about an individual or company is disseminated to the public, and especially the media.

How you will utilise PR: **Earth Farm aims to have 2 interest pieces published in a) Farmers Weekly and b) The Guardian within the year.**

Metrics to measure success: **Number of column inches/number of interest pieces/ free press interest.**



Digital Advertising:

The practice of distributing promotional content using online platforms such as social media, search engines, websites, and any other program that can be viewed digitally is known as digital advertising.

How you will utilise Digital Advertising: **using a combination of google ads, ad words, Facebook ads, Earth Farm will post one advert promotion per month. We will change our tracking and targeting based on our analysis.**

Metrics to measure success: **Click through and Conversion**

Offline Promo:

Even though the arrival of the Internet appeared to be the end for print-based and other “dated” mediums, marketing campaigns using offline channels are still a fundamental aspect of many company’s marketing mixes.

In fact, according to a recent study conducted by Google in partnership with Ipsos MediCT, traditional offline media such as TV, radio, and print still plays a leading role in online searches for products and services.

How you will utilise offline promo: **Attending the Royal Highland show. Print leaflets to advertise the Earth Farm Open Day and distribute at schools and youth clubs.**

Metrics to measure success: **The leaflet handed out in schools is the entry ticket to the event. Count the entries. Have a special discount code only available to those who met us at The Royal Highland Show – see how many times the discount code is used.**

Paid Search:

Paid search marketing is a cost-effective type of Search Engine Marketing (SEM) that matches your ads with users actively searching online for your products or services. When using paid search ads, you pay to list advertisements throughout the internet search engines and platforms. Paid search marketing is oftentimes referred to as PPC (which stands for pay-per-click). PPC is the most common form of paid search marketing there is.

How you will utilise Paid Search: **Research and invest in key search terms for PPC “farming sustainably” “environmental farming” “Scottish farming” “farm advice”.**

Metrics to measure success: **CTR (click through rate), CPC (the average amount spent per click) conversion, impressions.**

Social Media:

Social Media Marketing is the process of using social media platforms so you can make your content and brand more easily to share content in order to achieve ways of marketing and reaching out to more people with your goals of using social media. Social Media marketing isn't just advertising. It's creating and sharing engaging content to help people feel connected to your business.

How you will utilise Social Media Marketing: **Earth Farm will post 3x per week on Facebook, 2 x per week on Instagram grid and we will use the stories function on both most days. We will aim to post video content and great pictures. We have drafted a social media strategy and use a content management system (like hootsuite).**

Metrics to measure success: **Followers, impressions, engagement, shares and saves.**

Conclusion

Your marketing plan helps to ensure that your business stays aligned to it's vision through its goals and activities. It helps you to measure your input, and ensure that you cover it with adequate budget. A marketing plan should be a living document, referred to regularly and adapted as the business grow and develops.

For any more advice on writing a marketing plan, please contact:

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