

Developing a Marketing Plan



SUMMARY

Planning your marketing is important. If you plan it carefully you will be able to target your resources effectively and attract the kinds of customers that you want. You will also be able to measure how effective your marketing is.

Through good planning and professional execution, you can attract the right type of customers for your business.

The following are the main points to cover when developing a marketing plan

BACKGROUND

Business history in terms of product, customers, staff, management systems and finance

POSITIONING

Where the business is positioned in the marketplace, appealing to whom?

BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

Build in targets for occupancy or visitor numbers, turnover, gross profit for areas such as food and beverage, also retail.

SWOT ANALYSIS

SWOT analysis is a useful analytical tool to help you understand the positioning of your business. It will help you play to your strengths. It enables you to:

Identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of your business. Assess the levels of service, tariffs, range and standard of facilities. Assess the image the business has - does it have a good location for its guests?

COMPETITION

Identify competitors and analyse them. Follow key competitors' progress e.g. business and service development, pricing policy etc.

MARKET RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Who are your current customers? Who will be your future customers? Research the UK and if appropriate overseas markets to assess which markets are attractive and profitable for your business. Research your



KEY POINTS

- A written marketing plan is an important document for your business.
- Constructing a marketing plan will help you target your resources effectively.

WHO DO I ASK?

customers to establish their origin, business mix, and their interests. Much of this information will be available on a computerised or manual customer management system. This will be in addition to customer comment cards, which will demonstrate how well you are meeting customer needs.

Refer to any statistical information provided by tourist boards. A useful website is <http://www.staruk.org.uk/> which provides national statistics on tourism. WAG/Visit Wales at <http://www.wtbonline.gov.uk/> click onto the research and statistics heading on the top of the page for information on Wales.

If you are already in business consider participating in WAG/VISIT WALES pan-Wales surveys. The results are published, illustrating trends and assist in market planning.

It is useful to evaluate the business you are turning away - this information may guide you on how to develop your business in the future. If parking is an issue can you link up with a local authority or commercial provider?

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Identify what needs to be developed to meet the needs of existing and potential markets to secure future business.

TARGET MARKETS

Businesses large or small must target the customers who are more likely to buy their product.

Identify which markets are the right ones for you.

- What proportion of your business comes from the leisure sector? Or other sectors including corporate (business travel and conferences), groups (leisure or corporate), UK regions or overseas countries, or maybe niche markets such as walking or fishing?
- Do leisure guests come as families or couples without children?
- Are they generally older age groups or a mix?
- Do they tend to be Times readers or The Daily Mail readers?

Each market will have its own set of needs.

Also consider customers with special needs or requirements- customer care includes planning for these not just being polite and welcoming.

- Some clients may need to dine quickly due to business commitments or transport.
- Special dietary requirements are commonplace. Many chefs are not good at delivering interesting and varied vegetarian menus.
- Children require high chairs, special menus and cutlery.
- Wheelchair access to enter the establishment and to be able to use the facilities (see link)

Summary of market types

- Geographic markets e.g. regions of Britain, country by country overseas
- Business markets e.g. leisure, groups, corporate (business stays and conferences/events), education (school groups).
- Interests e.g. local, activities, and food.
- Visiting friends and relatives

MARKETING OBJECTIVES

Put succinctly the direction you wish the business to grow

Objectives should follow the SMART guidelines:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant

WHO DO I ASK ?

- Timed.

Objectives should include targets in admission figures or occupancy, sales of food and beverage, retail etc

Example

- To achieve an increased of 2% occupancy year on year 2004-7.
- To maximise admissions and increase the visitor spend to £9.15 per head by 2005.
- To increase the education market over the next three years by a total of 5%.
- To increase average room rate by £4 year on year 2004-7
- To increase the volume of repeat visitors by 3% year on year.
- To increase the number of visitors in the months of January-March by 5% by 2006.

BUSINESS PLAN AND BUDGETS

Budgets to follow in order to meet business and marketing objectives. The guideline in many textbooks for a marketing budget is 3-5% of turnover for the smaller hotel and guest house. An attraction, which operates in a more competitive environment, will require 10-15% of turnover.

MARKETING ACTIVITY PLANS

Produce activity plans to illustrate how you are going to attract business from your target markets