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SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER
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UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON | BAUER

MARKETING PLAN TEMPLATE

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A well-designed marketing plan is an essential component to any successful small business's overall business strategy. A marketing plan helps small business owners identify target customers, understand the current market, build brand identity and awareness, and align marketing tactics with business goals. An effective marketing plan becomes the roadmap to gaining more customers and improving the success of your company.

Follow below for essential elements to include in your small business marketing plan:

SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An executive summary typically summarizes each of the sections of the marketing plan and gives stakeholders a brief overview of your marketing strategy. Write this section last, to make sure you provide a high-level view of your marketing strategy. An executive summary may include:

- How you intend to reach your target audience
- Description of your company and team
- Overview of market factors and trends
- Introduction to your products and services
- Summary of marketing objectives and strategies
- Summary of financial projections

SECTION 2: BRAND MESSAGING

Before designing a detailed strategy to reach your top marketing goals, it's important to establish a cohesive brand voice that is unique to your brand and speaks to the needs and ethos of your target customer. Brand messaging includes elements such as:

- **Vision:** Identifies forward-thinking aspiration for your company and what you hope to achieve.
- **Mission Statement:** Describes what the organization does or provides in order to achieve the vision.
- **Core Values:** Defines core pillars of what the company believes in and shapes company culture.
- **Tagline:** A distinctive catchphrase that communicates your brand and what you provide.
- **Unique Seller Proposition (USP):** Describes company's value to the customer and key differentiators from the competition.

SECTION 3: TARGET CUSTOMER & BUYER PERSONAS

Provide a general overview about your target customer, who they are, what they want, and what motivates them to interact with your business. Even if you accept business from a wide range of customers, targeting specific groups of consumers will help you speak directly to certain audiences and helps shape future marketing campaigns and initiatives.

- Basic demographic information (age, gender, income level, location, etc.)
- Purchasing behaviors
- Motivation for buying (ex: furnishing their homes, wanting to look good, learn about a specific skill, etc.)
- Where does your target customer typically consume media and information? (ex: magazines, newspapers, tv, social media, trade shows, etc.)

To dive deeper into your target audience, you may want to create buyer personas, which are semi-fictional customer profiles detailing relevant demographics, background information, identifiers, motivations and challenges based on data and research about current and prospective consumers.

SECTION 4: SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

A situational analysis reviews the current state of the market and gives insight into the health of your business and opportunities for growth. Market research and analysis is a key factor in developing a practical marketing strategy within your industry. This section may include:

- **Core Competencies:** Defining capabilities and characteristics of your organization that make you stand out from the competition and can be a strategic advantage in your market.

- **SWOT Analysis:** An assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of your organization.
- **Competitive Analysis:** Identifies market competitors and evaluates their strengths and weaknesses relative to your current business strategy.

SECTION 5: MARKETING GOALS & OBJECTIVES

In this section, list your business's marketing and sales goals for the year. These goals should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound), and include information about target sales goals, KPI's, marketing benchmarks, and plans for growth and expansion. Some example marketing goals are:

- Generate 30% more leads on XYZ landing page in six months as a result of XYZ Facebook marketing campaign.
- Increase Spotify podcast listeners by 15% by investing \$xxx in our media department in the next four months.
- Attain a 20% increase in webinar signups by next July through our "Free Webinar" email marketing campaign.

SECTION 6: MARKETING STRATEGY



Your marketing strategy details how you will promote your products and services, and how you plan to use these methods to achieve your marketing goals. Be sure to include specific tactics that will be used to efficiently meet each outlined marketing objective. Some ideas to consider include:

- **Promotions Strategy:** How you will reach new customers.
- **Pricing Strategy:** How your goods and services are strategically priced to remain competitive.
- **Distribution Strategy:** How customers will purchase your goods and services.
- **Conversion Strategy:** How you will turn prospective customers into paying customers.
- **Marketing Channels and Materials:**
 - Print Marketing (flyers, brochures, business cards, banners, etc.)
 - Website
 - Social Media
 - Digital Advertising (Google Ads, SEO, Email Marketing, Facebook Ads, etc.)
 - Traditional Advertising (TV, radio, billboards, magazines, newspapers, etc.)
 - PR and Media Releases
 - Trade shows and special events

- **Future Marketing Campaigns:**

Some examples include:

- Referral Program
- Customer Testimonials
- YouTube Marketing
- Social Media Campaigns
 - Influencer Marketing
 - Contests and Giveaways
 - Brand Partnerships

SECTION 7: FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS



In the last section, break down projected promotional expenses and expected results of your strategy in terms of new customers, sales, and profits. Be sure to:

- Include a calculated budget that will fund each component of your marketing strategy, as a part of your overall annual financial plan.
- Identify which expenses and tactics will yield the highest return on investment and use those findings to prioritize outlined marketing initiatives.