

# What Every CEO Needs To Know About Marketing

As a CEO, you are responsible for growing your business, so you rely on marketing communications to bring leads into your sales pipeline. However, with an overload of information (and misinformation) about marketing, it's often unclear how exactly to market your business and generate quality leads. This whitepaper cuts through the marketing hype and explains the six most critical tenets you need to know to market your business effectively.

They are:

1. There is no silver bullet in marketing.
2. Base your marketing efforts on your business goals.
3. Great marketing is deliberate and strategic.
4. Strategic marketing is the most cost-effective way to drive business growth.
5. Don't spend a dollar on marketing campaigns until you have a tactical blueprint.
6. Always measure and optimize.

## There Is No Silver Bullet In Marketing.

Contrary to what you may see and read on the web, there is no one effort that will solve all your marketing challenges. The marketplace is too complicated, and your audience is on too many channels for a single type of marketing to be the solution. A vendor who tells you that their product is the answer, (such as marketing automation, SEO, pay-per-click, social media—fill in the blank) is looking through a very small lens at your marketing needs. You may well need their product, but you must integrate it into several coordinated initiatives to form a holistic marketing plan.

Marketing today is complicated. It requires a synchronized, multi-channel effort (often called an integrated approach) that takes into account your goals and your entire business situation.

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### Base Your Marketing Efforts On Your Business Goals

If your Marketing team is unaware of your business goals, it can't effectively deliver the results you need. You will limit your potential success if you assume your business goals are unrelated to marketing. Consistently, the marketing department provides necessary support to drive efforts across functions.

For example, let's say your goal is to acquire ten new \$100,000 contracts this year. Marketing can home in on that target market and reveal messages that will resonate with those buyers. Need to hire ten talented new employees? Marketing can collaborate with HR to formulate an external communications plan that showcases your unique company culture to potential employees. If you have a customer satisfaction goal, marketing can incorporate that objective into their social media strategy to better reach customers by expanding communication channels. Production goal? Use your marketing team to create an internal messaging campaign that motivates and rewards employees for reaching targets. And, let's not forget the sales department. If your Marketing and Sales departments are not aligned, you are only cruising at half speed. In short, you can energize your business goals by linking them to your marketing objectives.

### Great Marketing Is Deliberate And Strategic.

Many businesses have a try-it-and-see approach to marketing. They try a bunch of different tactics like social media, search engine optimization, digital advertising, and email marketing with the hope that something works. When one campaign achieves some results, they do more of that. Over time, what develops is a mish-mash of different efforts, that aren't coordinated, and often only loosely connected to business goals.

Try-it-and-see marketing is expensive, time-consuming, and delivers so-so results. It is based on little more than what you are comfortable implementing. How much of your success in business was based on doing what you felt like doing? If you want to move the needle, you must prioritize strategic marketing as the most reliable, cost-effective approach.

#### **What is strategic marketing?**

Strategic marketing is a deliberate plan, informed by your business's current situation, that allocates resources to best communicate your value to the right audience at the right time and in the right place.



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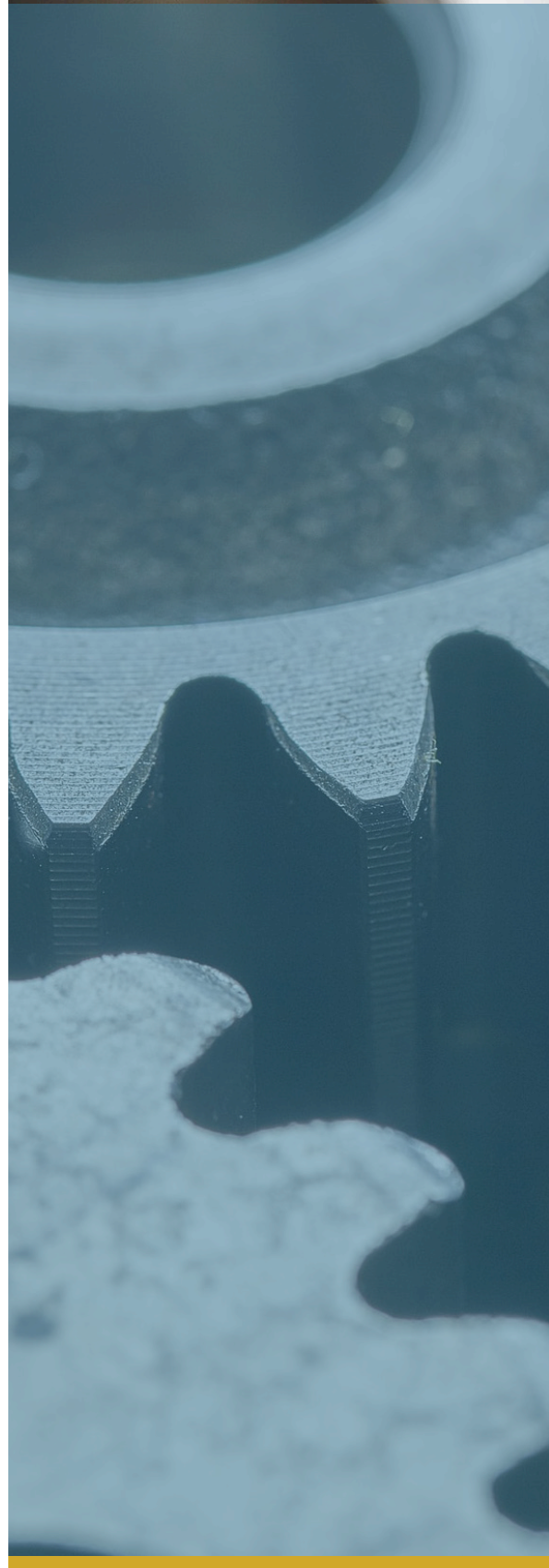
### Strategic Marketing Is The Most Cost-Effective Way To Drive Business Growth.

Unlike try-it-and-see marketing, strategic marketing focuses on driving business growth and achieving specific objectives. However, to execute strategic marketing you have to thoroughly understand your business's current situation so you can develop the right marketing plan. This requires a formal situation analysis.

Big businesses rely on their situation analysis every day because it provides a competitive advantage and helps them grow. Yet, very few small businesses undertake it. It's time small businesses made use of this decisive tool. Here are the seven parts of a complete situation analysis:

- **The SWOT Analysis tells you how to position your company**
- **to mitigate weaknesses and threats, and leverage strengths and opportunities.**
- **The Brand Audit shows you the gap between what you think you are communicating and how customers perceive your brand.**
- **The Competitor Analysis reveals your competitors' strengths and weaknesses and locates flaws in their marketing that you can use to your advantage.**
- **Target Market Research discovers who your target markets are, what is important to them, and the best ways to message to them.**
- **A review of your Search Engine Optimization uncovers how your website ranks against competitors in search engine results.**
- **Analyzing your Customer Data indicates where your profit centers are, measures your customer lifetime value (CLV), and provides a myriad of valuable insights and trends.**
- **Reviewing your Website Data (Google Analytics) reveals what people do on your website, and thus how they interact with your brand.**

When you combine the intelligence from your situation analysis, you have the data points necessary to formulate a strategic marketing plan that addresses the needs of each of these seven areas. That way, your marketing plan is directly tied to the pedals that will move your business forward.



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### Don't Spend A Dollar On Campaigns Until You Have A Tactical Blueprint.

The tactical blueprint outlines exactly where, when, how, how often, and to whom you will deliver your brand messages. While the marketing plan is the big picture of how you will tie your situation and your business goals together, the tactical blueprint provides the details. The tactics are the actual delivery methods like email, social media, digital advertising, and SEO. This highly detailed plan must also include goals for each effort. Until you know precisely what you want each campaign to achieve, there is little point in investing precious resources on marketing campaigns.

### Always Measure And Optimize.

All too frequently, businesses implement marketing plans, and no one checks back to see if the efforts achieve their goals. No marketing plan is complete until it includes a specific, written measurement plan that contains:

- **Key performance indicators (KPIs) that are tied to your goals.**
- **A regular schedule for measuring and reporting.**
- **The responsible persons who will measure, analyze, and report.**

Measuring your marketing plans will help you achieve your goals more quickly. A written measurement plan provides visibility and accountability, and allows for meaningful adjustments to campaigns that increase ROI and save money.

Create a detailed measurement plan for every tactic, and don't sign off on budget plans until it's complete.

**Understanding these six tenets will help inform your marketing decisions and ease the burden of growing your business.**

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