

Quick Strategic Planning for Independent Professionals

1. Determine your long-term mission, objectives and goals

- a. What business are you in/not in? Why/why not?
- b. Why did you get into this business?
- c. How long do you want to be in this business?
- d. How do you want to leave this business or retire?
- e. What do you want to achieve before you leave?
- f. In the long term, how do you want to be remembered?

2. Analyze the external environment

- a. Who are your customers? Who are your best customers?
- b. Whom do you have to please other than customers?
- c. What's happening in your industry, community, government, company, or team that could affect your business?
- d. Who are your competitors in your industry, neighborhood, customer segment or style? In other words, with whom do you compete for your best customers' attention?
- e. How do your customers specialize and differentiate themselves?
- f. What greater demographic, economic, technological, political and social forces do you need to watch, and how do changes affect your business?
- g. What's happening with groups and/or organizations who service, supply or intermediate your business?

3. Analyze your strengths and weaknesses

- a. What do you love to do? Passions...
- b. What do you hate to do? Will you outsource?
- c. What can you be best in your industry at doing that you also love to do?
- d. Where are there gaps between how you want to serve your customers and what you're doing right now?
- e. How will you go about bridging those gaps?

4. Set your marketing mission, objectives and goals

- a. What is the purpose of your marketing this year? Objectives...
- b. What economic variable will you emphasize this year, e.g. market share, profitability (cutting costs), reputation, etc.?
- c. What, specifically, do you want to do with your marketing dollars this year? Goals...
 - i. Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic, Time-based, Rewarded (how)

5. Set your Core Marketing Strategy

- a. How will you segment your customers, e.g. geography, age range, buying preference, etc.?
- b. Who is your target market? What makes them tick?
 - i. What behaviors, attitudes, qualities and characteristics do your perfect customers possess?
 - ii. What do you choose for your perfect customers to expect you to provide to them?
- c. What is your competitive edge, your Unique Value Proposition, e.g. efficiency, comprehensiveness, knowledge, effectiveness, etc.?
- d. How does this benefit your customers (WII-FM: What's In It For Me)?
- e. What particular blend of marketing variables will you use to achieve your objectives in your target market? Are you competing on...
 - i. Product: Quality, Features, Options, Style, Services, etc.
 - ii. Price: Discounts, Allowances, Social Costs, Credit Terms, etc.
 - iii. Promotion: Advertising, Publicity, Promotions, Personal Contact
 - iv. Place: Locations, Transport, Channels, Coverage, etc.

6. Set specific marketing tactics

- a. What offerings will you make? In other words, what kinds of sales do you want to make? (e.g. homes, investments, commercial, fee-based, etc)
- b. What channels will you use and how will you use them (e.g. specific stores or offices, salespeople, independent middlemen, telephones, advertising media, PR media, and direct mail)?
- c. How much can you afford to invest/budget? For how long?
- d. What communications tactics will you use in your advertising, sales promotion, personal selling and public relations?
 1. Purpose—inform, persuade, remind?
 2. Budget, delivery method, region, frequency
 3. Communication vehicles (how, when, where, who)
 - a. Mailings, speeches, presentations, demonstrations, word-of-mouth, posters, trade shows, sales literature, films, catalogs, sales conferences, biz cards, endorsements, promotional giveaways, special events, website, writings

7. Create a measurement and tracking system

- a. How will you know which tactics worked and which did not?
- b. How will you measure them against one another?
- c. How will you keep track of your progress overall?