

Marketing Plan

Contents

Introduction: Using the Marketing Planning Framework

1. Terms of Reference

2. Executive Summary

3. Business Mission

4. External Marketing Audit

 Macroenvironment

 The Market

 Competition

5. Internal Marketing Audit

 Operating Results

 Strategic Issues Analysis

 Marketing Mix Effectiveness

 Marketing Structures and Systems

6. SWOT Analysis

7. Marketing Objectives

 Strategic Thrust

 Strategic Objectives

8. Core Strategy

 Target Market(s)

 Competitor Targets

 Competitive Advantage

9. Marketing Mix Decisions

 Product

 Promotion

 Price

 Place

10. Organization and Implementation

11. Control

Marketing Planning: Using the Framework

The marketing planning framework is designed to provide a structured approach to the production of a marketing plan. It follows the stages of the marketing planning process outlined and discussed in Chapter 2 of the textbook.

The framework can be used in a number of ways including:

- **Analysing cases that require the production of marketing plan.** By following the process described here, a case study can be analysed to create a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) chart. This can then be used to produce practical marketing recommendations.
- **Enabling project work that requires a marketing plan to be completed.** Project work may take the form of within-module assessment or a separate exercise conducted at the end of a marketing or management course. In both cases the template described here can assist the completion of the report by providing a logical structure to the data collection analysis and the formulation of recommendations.
- **Facilitating in-company marketing planning.** The framework is not an academic exercise that bears no relation to how marketing planning should take place in the real world. It has been tried and tested within companies and has proven invaluable in providing an easily applied structure to marketing thinking and analysis.

For maximum value, the framework should be used in conjunction with the discussion of marketing planning in Chapter 2 of the textbook.

1. Terms of Reference

The terms of reference state the objectives of the marketing planning exercise and its coverage.

2. Executive Summary

The executive summary describes the report's major findings and recommendations. It is designed to provide a busy reader with the major issues contained in the report. The executive summary allows the reader to gain insight to key outcomes without having to read all of the report. Bullet-points can be used to present the key points in the executive summary.

3. Business Mission

The business mission is a broadly defined, enduring statement of purpose that distinguishes a business from others of its type.

It should state "what business is the company in?" and "what business does it want to be in?". It may include the markets being served, the customer needs being satisfied, and the technology used.

A mission statement can dramatically affect the range of a firm's marketing activities by narrowing or broadening the competitive playing field.

4. External Marketing Audit

A marketing audit is a systematic examination of a business marketing environment, objectives, strategies and activities, with a view to identifying key strategic issues, problem areas, and opportunities. It provides the basis upon which a plan of action to improve marketing performance can be built.

The external marketing audit focuses on:

- Macroenvironment
- The market
- Competition

Note that information may not be available on all of the areas listed under each topic.

For further information, see Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 17.

Macroenvironment

The macroenvironment consists of broad environmental issues that impinge on the business. You may wish to analyse it using the following headings:

Economic
Socio-Cultural
Technological
Political/Legal
Ecological

Not every heading may be used; if it is not likely to impact the company, leave it out. For every event, state its likely impact on the company and the resulting implications.

The Market

The market consists of:

- analyses of market size, growth rates and trends;
- customer analysis including who they are, what choice criteria they use, how they rate competitive offerings and how the market is segmented;
- distribution analysis, which covers significant movements in powerbases, channel attractiveness analyses, physical distribution analyses and analysis of the role and interests of decision-makers and influences with distributor organizations.

Competition

Competitor analysis examines:

- Who are the competitors to the company (actual and potential)?
- What are their objectives and strategies, strengths and weaknesses, market shares, size and profitability?

Finally, any entry barriers that make market entry from new competitors difficult should be identified.

5. Internal Marketing Audit

The internal marketing audit focuses on the activities and performance of the company in the light of the external marketing environment:

It should cover an evaluation of the following four sections:

- Operating Results
- Strategic Issues Analysis
- Marketing Mix Effectiveness
- Marketing structure and systems

Note that the information may not be available on all of the issues listed under each topic.

Operating Results

This covers operating results (by product, customer, and geographic region) for sales, market share, profit margins and costs.

Strategic Issues Analysis

Strategic issues analysis will answer the following questions:

- What are our current marketing objectives?
- How do we currently segment the market?
- What is our competitive advantage (if any)?
- What are our core competencies?
- How are our products positioned in the marketplace?
- How are products placed in terms of market attractiveness and company strength (portfolio analysis)?

Each answer will be evaluated to produce strengths and weaknesses.

Marketing Mix Effectiveness

Each element of the marketing mix (product, promotion, price and place) will be evaluated in the light of the external marketing environmental analysis.

Marketing Structures and Systems

The marketing structures and systems of the company will be evaluated to identify what exists and its effectiveness. Marketing structures include marketing organization, marketing training, and intra and interdepartmental communication. Marketing systems include marketing information systems, the marketing planning system and the marketing control systems.

6. SWOT Analysis

A SWOT Analysis is a structured approach to evaluating the strategic position of a business by identifying its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It provides a simple method of synthesizing the results of the marketing audit by summarizing the company's strengths and weaknesses as they relate to external opportunities and threats. Strengths and weaknesses will derive from the internal marketing audit analysis. Opportunities and threats will derive from the external marketing audit analysis.

7. Marketing Objectives

As a result of the marketing audit and SWOT analysis, relevant marketing objectives will be set. Two types of objectives need to be considered: strategic thrust and strategic objectives (see the next two sections).

Strategic Thrust

Strategic thrust defines which products to sell in which markets. The options are existing products in existing markets (market penetration or expansion), new/related products for existing markets (product development), existing products in new/related markets (market development) and new/related products for new/related markets (entry into new markets). See Chapter 6.

Strategic Objectives

Strategic objectives for products need to be set. The options are build sales and market share, hold, harvest (improve profit margins) and divest (drop or sell product). See Chapter 18.

8. Core Strategy

Core marketing strategy involves the achievement of marketing objectives through the determination of target markets, the setting of competitor targets and the creation of a competitive advantage (see the next three sections).

Target Markets

A choice of target market(s) has to be made. A target market is a group of consumers/organizations (segment) that the company wishes to aim its offering and communications at. It defines **where** the company wishes to compete. See Chapter 7.

Competitor Targets

Besides targeting consumers/organizations, the company will choose competitor targets. Weak competitors may be viewed as easy prey and resources channelled to attack them. The choice of target market may define competitor targets and be influenced by them: market segments with weak competitors may be attractive targets. See Chapter 17.

Competitor Advantage

A competitive advantage is a clear performance differential over competitors on factors that are important to target consumers/organizations. This provides the basis of **how** the company competes. Major success is dependent on the company creating a competitive advantage by being better (e.g. superior quality or service), being faster at anticipating or responding to customer needs than competitors, or being closer by establishing close long-term relationships with customers. See Chapter 17.

9. Marketing Mix Decisions

By defining a target market and understanding the needs of their consumers/organizations, a marketing mix can be created to meet those needs better than the competition. Decisions have to be made regarding product, promotion, price and place.

Product

Product decisions involve choices regarding brand names, features (that create customer benefits), quality and design, packaging, warranties, and the services that will accompany the product offering. See Chapters 8 and 9.

Promotion

Promotion decisions involve choices regarding advertising, personal selling, direct and Internet marketing, sales and promotions and public relations. See Chapters 11-15.

Price

Pricing decisions involve choices regarding list price, discounts, credit terms and payment periods. See Chapter 10.

Place

Place decisions involve choices regarding the distribution channels to be used and their management, the location of outlets, methods of transportation and inventory levels to be held. See Chapter 16.

10. Organization and Implementation

A marketing plan needs a marketing organization to implement it. Reorganization may mean the establishment of new marketing structures (e.g. brand management) or the creation of a marketing department for the first time.

Consideration should also be given to implementation issues. These focus on **who** is responsible for various activities, **how** the strategy should be carried out, **where** things will happen, and **when** action will take place. See chapter 19.

11. Control

The aim of control systems is to evaluate the results of the marketing plan so that corrective action can be taken if performance does not match objectives. See Chapter 19.