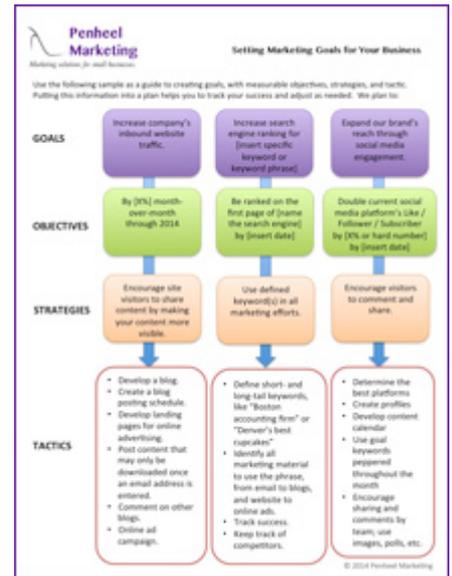


## Why We Love A Marketing Plan (And You Should, Too!)

Over the past few weeks, several of our clients are moving forward with some marketing efforts they may not have tried before, such as online ads, video marketing, and other great marketing efforts.

Before we begin working with them, we often ask about their marketing plan and goals. Some have everything set up and know what they want to accomplish by when. Others have a kind of “dear-in-the-headlights” look, and have no idea what we’re talking about.

To help our clients and to help you prepare your marketing plan, here is a simple [marketing plan goals cheat sheet](#) to help you get started with your company’s marketing plan.



Click here to view the full-size image.

### Why a marketing plan?

No matter how old your business is, it's important to think about your marketing strategy for these reasons:

1. It helps you identify what makes your business unique.
2. It aids you in outlining how you plan to reach your target audience, via various media, while focusing on a goal.
3. It helps you to stay focused on what you want to accomplish, by when, and according to a measurement metric.
4. It articulates actionable tactics and measurable metrics to follow throughout the goal period.
5. It aids you in forming your day-to-day action plan and narrows your focus toward only those things that will help you to reach your goals.

### The Formula

Think of your marketing goals like a career goal. You want to accomplish something, by a certain date, to increase/decrease a measure. It looks like this.

1. Specify the **goal**, e.g., “I will increase leads by 20 percent.”
2. Determine the **timeline**, e.g., “in the next quarter.”
3. Identify the **strategy** you plan to implement to reach that goal, e.g., “...by combining online advertising and leveraging social media engagement to broaden my network.”

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“I will [insert the goal] by [insert the measurement metric] in [insert the time frame] by [specify a high-level tactic used to accomplish the goal]. ”

Our example: “I will increase leads by 20 percent over the next quarter by combining online advertising and leveraging social media engagement to broaden my network.”

### Wrapping it Up

A marketing plan is not meant to be just another “to-do” on your list. It’s meant to help you gain a laser focus on your business goals and how you plan to accomplish them. Wavering from the plan takes time away from the goals and could compromise a business effort. That’s not to say, stick with what’s not working, but rather to have a clear idea of how long a marketing effort may take before it shows promise and adjusting your plan accordingly.

### Your Turn

When it comes to marketing planning, do you often find you wait until sales have slowed, or do you maintain and track a marketing plan all year that’s tied to your business plan?

### Additional Resources

- [The Email Cheat Sheet](#)
- [2014 Marketing Mix Trends](#)
- [How to Set S.M.A.R.T. Marketing Goals Template](#)
- [Building the Marketing Plan: A Blueprint for Start Ups](#)