

Getting started with Marketing: Fundamentals, Essentials and Reach





Hello business owners and entrepreneurs

Welcome to the Marketing Toolkit for SMEs!

Our mission at Microsoft is to empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more. And the goal of our Microsoft4Afrika initiative is to empower every African who has a great idea for a business or an application and to turn that idea into a reality which in turn can help their community, their country, or even the Continent at large.

This Marketing Toolkit is designed to help you transform your business, by developing your own marketing goals, strategy and tactics so you can expand your reach to customers, find new business opportunities, and stand out against competitors.

One of the goals is to remove any mystery or confusion about marketing and to make it accessible and relevant to the millions of small and medium enterprises in Africa. So in developing this toolkit, the 4Afrika team hosted a series of workshops with start-ups and SME organizations across Kenya and South Africa, to hear about your specific needs, questions and challenges. This toolkit takes you through all the marketing touchpoints: from understanding the basics and fundamentals, to building your plan, team, brand and online presence.

As you read through the toolkit, we hope you will soon realize that you don't have to be a high profile, trained marketer to start with marketing. You are probably already doing some, or even most, of the basics – you just may not have realized it. This toolkit is here to help you understand the theory, create a real plan, fine-tune your approach and get you on the right track to developing a marketing approach that delivers measurable results.

We hope you enjoy working through this guide and developing your own approach to marketing that's right for you. Marketing is a long-term but very rewarding, investment in your business.

Chris Capossela
Chief Marketing Officer-Microsoft Corporation

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01

Marketing Fundamentals



Why do I need to do this?

Understand what marketing is and what impact it can have on your business
Learn the fundamentals of a marketing strategy and how to get started

What is Marketing?

If a young man tells his date how handsome, smart and successful he is – that’s advertising.
If a young man tells his date she’s intelligent, looks lovely and is a great conversationalist – that’s marketing.

When you hear the word ‘Marketing’, what you do think of? Selling a product?

Putting an advert in the newspaper?
The word ‘marketing’ is often used together with ‘selling’ or ‘advertising’ or ‘go-to-market’. However, they are not essentially the same thing.
Selling is about convincing your customer to buy your product. Marketing is about communicating the value of your product, so that your customer decides for themselves whether they want or need your product.
Go-to-market builds the bridge in-between, ensuring that the value proposition, target market, personas, customer journey and planning for execution of marketing and sales happen flawlessly.

So, marketing looks at the exact needs of your customers and demonstrates that your product can satisfy them. Advertising, digital marketing, online marketing then, are all components of marketing.

A small business needs both sellers and marketers. Marketers create interest, spark desire and develop demand. Sellers ‘seal the deal’ and get the sale to happen. Very often in a small business, the marketer and seller are both the same individual, and it is therefore important to know the different disciplines very well, especially when starting up.

Marketing is the process of making your customer aware of their need for your products and services.

Why do I need Marketing?



"I've just started my own small business, but I don't have enough money to hire a marketer. I'm rather going to focus on my product and finances for now and worry about marketing later when I have a few customers."

Good news:
You don't have to hire a marketer to start marketing

Don't be an entrepreneur who falls into this trap!

Having a proper marketing focus from the beginning will help you to overcome obstacles that will come later. It will give you better insight into your target audience, so that you can pick the right customers, set the right price, say the right things and sell in the right places from the beginning. Why go through five rounds of product and customer changes when you can get it close to right the first time?

The good news is that you don't need to wait to hire a marketer to start thinking about marketing. In fact, you have probably already started marketing – you just haven't realized it.

Do you have a relationship with your customers? Do you know who they are and what makes them tick?

Are you constantly getting their feedback as you develop your products? If you are, you're marketing!

More than ever, it is important to get in front of your customer – whenever and wherever possible. Whether that is physical or online, make sure you are in touch with their needs and wants, and have feedback channels to ensure you know what is relevant in their worlds. The sooner you get to understand and start satisfying their needs, the better off you will be. Remember marketing is all about satisfying the needs of the customer, not about your product. If that sounds weird, that is okay. The point is you need to understand the 'why' for your customer, i.e. why they would buy from you, and then satisfy that why.

If you're uncomfortable doing this, just think of it this way: You know your business best. If you can understand why your customer is buying from you, you share what you know and stay true and authentic, half the battle is won. Customers buy authenticity.

How do I get started with marketing?

The first basic starting point is to understand your business, your customer and your market. To do this, look at the 5 C's and the 4 P's of the Marketing Mix.



This will help you to:



Understand your own strengths and weaknesses



Identify your best customer targets



Understand who you're competing against and how to make yourself stand out



Define the product you'll be offering, how much you can charge for it, where to sell it and how to communicate the value to your customers



Know who the businesses or entities are that will help you achieve your goals and objectives



Understand which macro-environmental factors, such as the economic, the political and regulatory environments will have on your business.

Ask yourself the below questions



Company

- 1: What type of company do I want to run / am I running?
- 2: What is my mission, objectives and values?
- 3: What product or service do I offer?
- 4: What is the unique value I can offer? (My "UVP")? What is our why?

Competition

- 1: Who are my competitors?
- 2: How do they operate?
- 3: What can I do differently and better than my competitors?

Customer

- 1: Who are my target customers? (age, location, gender, income, language, occupation, personas, values etc.)
- 2: What are my target customers' needs?
- 3: What challenges can I solve for them?
- 4: What is the customer journey they embark on when deciding to buy?

Collaborators:

1. Who are the collaborators that can help me reach my objectives?
2. Are there any suppliers and distributors that will be critical to my success?
3. Are there any other business entities, such as financial institutions that I need to foster and maintain a good relationship with?

Climate:

1. Are there any economic macro-environmental factors to consider in my business?
2. Are there any political considerations to think of that may impact my business?
3. What should I consider in terms of regulatory impacts for my business?

What is a UVP?

UVP stands for Unique Value Proposition. It is a short statement you create which covers: What you offer, how you satisfy your customer's needs and why people should buy from you and not your competitors. It is a promise of your value. All your marketing materials should be based on your UVP. **Refer to this article on examples of UVPs: [Useful Value Proposition Examples \(and How to Create a Good One\)](#)**

A cost-effective and easy way to follow the activities of your customers and competitors is to use this 5 step guide:



Study the market to stay relevant

Watch for any changes, challenges, opportunities and trends (in either customer needs or competitor's products or market changes)

Read testimonials, comments and articles to understand what customers think about your product / service



Conduct formal research

Use free tools to get deeper market insights

Hire a research firm

Subscribe to relevant feeds and available research online

As an entrepreneur it is your responsibility to be on top of your game. You have to read. Continuously. Daily.



Get regular insights from your customers

Use online or mobile surveys

Start conversations on social media

Host focus groups of customers to answer questions



Talk to your customers

Find out their needs by finding out their why.

Why will they buy from you?

Why from you and not your competitor?

What specific need to they need solved, and how can you solve it by making them feel they are the only customer in the world that you specially solve this need for?



Watch your competitors

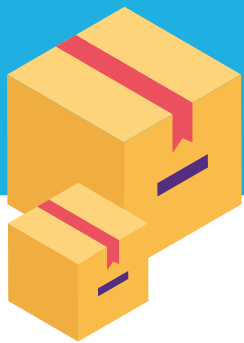
Explore what they are doing that your potential customers like /don't like

Follow their social media handles and updates to understand their strategy and get new ideas

The Marketing Mix

The Marketing Mix started originally with four P's , namely Product, Price, Place and Promotion, and has been widely shared and taught. Over the years there were several elements added to the Marketing Mix, and in some instances over ten critical P's now exist as the market continuously adjusts.

We will share the four basic P's of the Marketing Mix in more detail, and for those who want to go do research on the the other elements, these will include at least the following ten elements: Product; Price; Place; Promotion; Promise; Position; People; Performance; Process; and Point of View.



Product

Exactly what are you going to sell – a product or a service? Think of your product or service as a solution to your customer's needs



Price

What price will you sell this product or service for?



Place

Where will you sell your product or service?

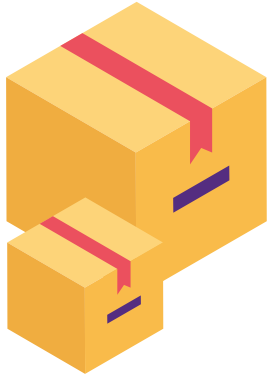


Promotion

How, when and where are you going to promote your product or service?

As you consider the Marketing Mix that includes the four P's of Marketing, remember that the Digital Marketing Mix also looks at Product, Price, Place and Promotion as it relates to the online world. It simply adapts to the digital marketing context. If you promote and place product online, different pricing tips and tricks become relevant. And using search engines to have your product or service 'found' is one of the digital places to be explored.

Ask yourself the below questions.



Product

1: What do my target customers need? What could help them in their daily lives, their businesses, or in having fun?

NB: Determining target customers will never be a perfect science, and that's okay.

2: How does my product or service help them solve a problem they have?

3: What similar products or services are there that I can improve on?



Price

1: How much can and will my target customer pay for my product or service?

2: How are competitors pricing similar products or services?

3: What's the minimum I need to charge in order for my business to eventually make a fair profit?

NB: Cheapest is not always necessary. Focus on value, not price.

Ask yourself the below questions.



Place

- 1: Where can I sell my product or service? (online, in store, through retailers and wholesalers etc.)
- 2: What's the most convenient way for my customers to get the product?
- 3: Where are my customers currently buying or consuming similar products and services?



Promotion

- 1: How can I make potential customers aware of my product or service? (in stores, on social media, at tradeshows, on the radio, talking among friends, word of mouth, etc.)
- 2: Where are my customers currently spending their time on entertainment, learning, or working? Can I reach them in new and different ways?
- 3: Do I understand the customer journey, and how to ensure I target every step in the journey to promote the product to the customer? Do I understand that every customer first explores, then evaluates alternatives, then buys, and then comes back to buy some more if they are happy?

NB: Marketing is an ongoing, never-ending cycle. Remember, you might not get it right the first time – and that's okay, that's part of business. The important thing is to keep looking at all the 5 C's and at least the 4 P's of the Marketing Mix together as a system. Ask questions and be honest about what's working and what still needs refinement. Marketing is not a perfect science, but a continuous exploration on how to gain more traction with customers.

How do I build my first marketing plan?

Now that you've done the basic groundwork and started asking the right questions through the 5 C's and the Marketing Mix, you can start developing a **marketing strategy** and **marketing plan**.

Goals

What do I want to achieve?

For example: I want to sell 20 000 units in eight months.

Remember, your goals should tie into the overall mission and objectives of the business.

Marketing Strategy

What is my high-level plan to reach my goals?

How am I going to use my resources in a smart way?

For example: I will use social media to reach customers, drive them to my website, complete the transaction through eCommerce and ship the product.

Marketing Plan

How will I execute my marketing strategy?

What are the daily tactics I will use?

For example: I will pay someone \$10 a day to handle my Twitter and Facebook account, design my own website for \$0, use a free PayPal account to collect payments and use the postal service to ship the product for \$5 each.

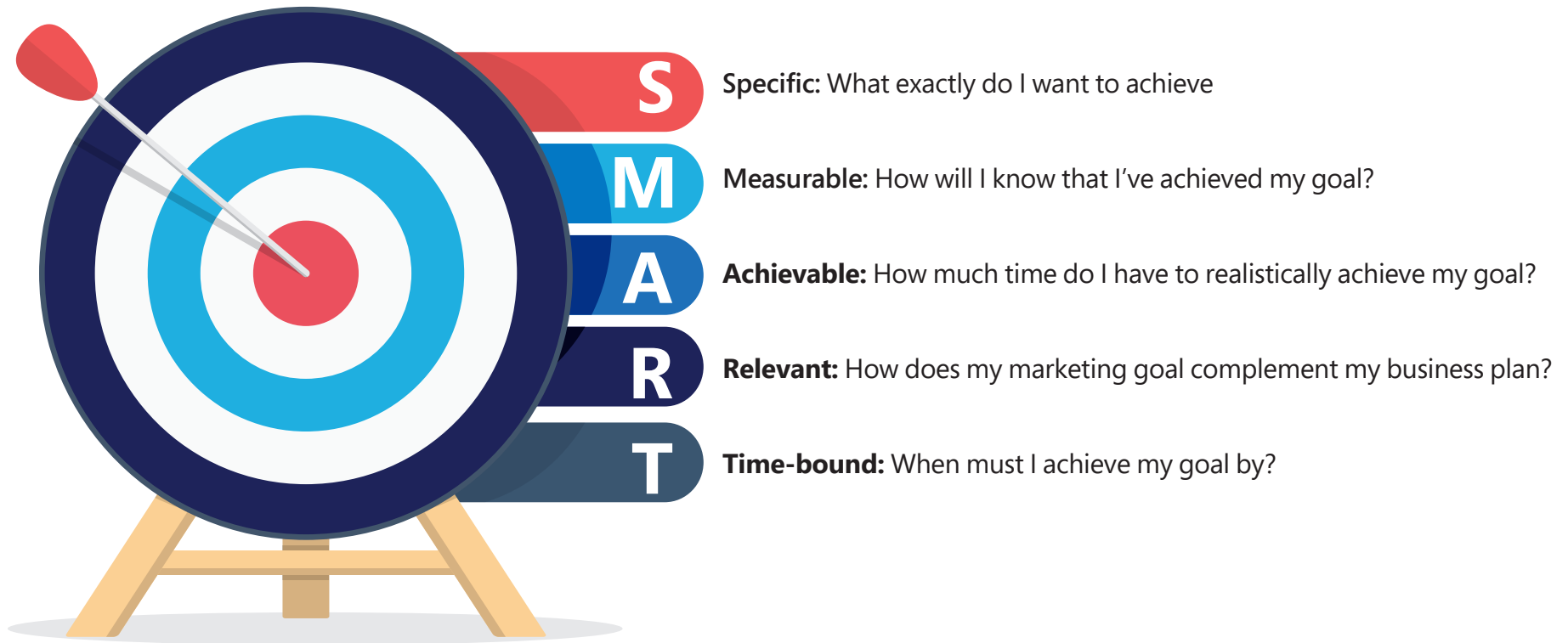
Your marketing plan should be an action plan.



Creating marketing goals

To help you define your goals, just think of being **S.M.A.R.T**

Ask yourself the following questions.



Good examples of S.M.A.R.T. goals

- Generate 50 leads and 25 sales through social media by November.
- Create awareness of my product or service by having 100 people view my Facebook post each week.
- Raise \$50 000 in funds through private investors by the end of the year.
- Hire five new talents into the business over the next six months
- Find two new providers or suppliers to distribute promotional items by the end of the year

Creating a marketing strategy

Now that you have your marketing goals in place, it's time to work on the marketing strategy. You need to create a high-level plan for how you're going to use your limited resources wisely, in a coordinated way to reach your goals.

To create this, let's go back to the 5 C's and Marketing Mix. Refer to the questions you answered on pages 8, 10 and 11. The answers to these questions will be your marketing strategy.

Example of a marketing strategy:

1. Company

- a. Founder has strengths in product design and production
- b. Founder also has good understanding of professional world
- c. Founder does not have sales or marketing experience (needs to hire someone with those skills)

2. Customer

- a. We will target wealthy businessmen in downtown Nairobi with our product
- b. These customers are highly demanding, but are willing to pay a lot for a product that is faster than what they currently use

3. Competitor

- a. Wealthy businessmen in downtown Nairobi are currently buying Product X, which is low end, and works alright

4. Collaborators:

- a. Understand who the businesses or entities are that will help you achieve your goals and objectives

5. Climate:

- a. Understand which macro-environmental factors, such as the economic, the political and regulatory environments will have on your business

4. Product

- a. We will create a basic version of the product by month two
- b. We need to be 15% faster than our current competitor.
- c. Product needs to be rugged (to take on business trips)

5. Price

- a. Can charge slightly above our closest competitor since our product completes the job a little bit faster

6. Place

- a. We will sell at grocery stores in high-end neighborhoods and in the city center, on street corners

7. Promotion

- a. Our core message will be "Our product works better and is 15% faster"
- b. We will advertise with flyers in the city and in taxis in downtown Nairobi

What is the difference between a marketing plan and a business plan?

A marketing plan focuses on the customer, price, distribution and promotion of your product or service.

A business plan covers a much broader section of your business. It includes things such as financing, staffing, partnerships etc.

Your marketing plan can help you achieve goals in your business plan, and your business plan needs to account for resources and the effects of your marketing plan. The two plans should always be in harmony with each other. Your marketing plan can help you achieve goals in your business plan, and your business plan needs to account for resources and the effects of your marketing plan. The business plan has oversight into all areas of the business and allocates resources such as people and money to execute on the different plans. It is important that the marketing plan is aligned to execute on the objectives highlighted in the business plan. The two plans should always be in harmony with each other.

It is important that both the marketing and business plans are used as living documents, rather than documents produced for the sake of it.



Creating a marketing plan

Now that you have your marketing strategy, you can put together your marketing plan, which details the actions you'll take to execute your strategy.

Example of a marketing strategy:

| | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Company  | Action | Hire a sales and marketing lead from the local university for \$XX an hour |
| | Who | Action to be completed by founder |
| | When | Completed by March 1 |
| 2. Customer  | Action | Hold a focus group with our best customers and another with brand new potential customers |
| | Who | Action to be completed by sales and marketing lead |
| | When | Completed by: Quarterly (March 15, June 15, Sept 15, Dec 15) |
| 3. Competitor  | Action | Check competitor prices and report back to founder |
| | Who | Action to be completed by sales and marketing lead |
| | When | Completed by: Monthly |
| 4. Product  | Action | Develop working prototype and final product |
| | Who | Action to be completed by founder |
| | When | Completed by: January 31 (prototype) and March 1 (final product) |

A final note on your marketing strategy and plan

Make your strategy and plan valid for one year. Review it every 2 - 3 months and be flexible. Your market will change and you should be able to adapt with it.

What is ROI?

ROI stands for **Return On Investment**. It is a way to measure profitability. Ask yourself: What am I looking to get in exchange for this? Is the expected benefit worth the investment? Remember, your ROI doesn't always have to be in financial terms. It can be new sales leads, better product ideas or information about customers, etc.

Calculating ROI

As part of your marketing efforts, you need to decide what you want your Return on Investment (ROI) for each activity to be. Think about what you can measure that will indicate whether or not you are meeting your marketing goals.

Things you can measure include:

- Email open rates
- Website click-through and read rates
- Advert clicks
- Social media followers and engagements
- Competition entries
- Sentiment (what do people think about your business?)
- Sales leads

NB: A cheap form of market research is to always ask your customers the famous question: 'Where did you hear about us?' This will help you determine which of your marketing tactics is the most effective. Keep a written log of all this feedback to use as data.



FAQs

1. How do I know if I need marketing or not?

Every business needs marketing, especially if it wants to grow and succeed. Small businesses cannot progress into larger companies without marketing. Marketing gives you better insight into your target audience, so that you can pick the right customers, set the right price, say the right things and sell in the right places.

2. How much budget should I dedicate to marketing?

As a marketer, the most important thing to consider first before allocating a budget is coming up with a marketing plan. Once the marketing plan makes business sense and identifies ways of achieving the goals and objectives, the channels to be used will define the budget required to achieve the desired results.

3. When is the right time to think about marketing in my company?

From the beginning. If you're already running a business but haven't started marketing, start today. As we've mentioned, you don't have to

hire a marketer before you start marketing. There are lots of cost-effective marketing activities you can start today, which this toolkit is designed to help you with.

4. How do I know my marketing plan and strategy is working?

You are the one who knows your business the best. Research your customer, talk to them and always get feedback. It's trial and error. Fix what doesn't work.

5. How do I react to changes in the market?

Go back to your 5 C's and Marketing Mix. Clearly show what has changed and adjust your plan as needed.

6. How do I know what I'm missing in my marketing – find the gaps?

First, cover the basics. You don't have to do everything, especially at the start. In fact, it might be better to do less things, but do the right things and do them well. You'll soon know if you're missing something important.

7. How is marketing different from advertising?

Advertising is only one component of marketing. It's the "promotion" in the 4 P's. Advertising is often what people think of first, but it's not necessarily the most important. And it's usually the most expensive. There are probably more creative and more effective ways to get the right customer to notice your business.





External links:

[Useful Value Proposition Examples
\(and How to Create a Good One\)](#) →

[How to Measure the ROI of
Marketing Programs](#) →

[Marketing & Communications](#) →

[4 Common marketing mistakes
SME's make](#) →

02

Marketing Essentials



Why do I need to do this?

- Understand who makes up a marketing team
- Deepen your knowledge of your customers
- Create a strong brand and identity
- Ensure you have all the marketing must-haves.

Who makes up a marketing team?

Start-ups – small enterprises

A small business has limited resources, and whereas a large enterprise will be able to have more people dedicated to specific marketing roles, in a small business one or two persons will often cover the full marketing and go-to-market spectrum.

NB: All employees form part of your marketing team. They are the voice of your brand, representing your business, its image and its reputation. Be transparent with your marketing objectives, share your UVP and encourage all team members to be ambassadors for your brand.



Business owner

Defines and manages marketing strategy/plan



Team of one or two

Manages go-to-market planning, campaign planning, especially the implementation of the 'Promotion' element of the Marketing Mix, such as implementation of social media, email marketing, customer surveys, marketing research, events, competitor analysis etc.



Extended marketing team partners, retailers, distributors and suppliers

Serve as voice of your company at point of sale. Work with them to support your marketing efforts. Partners can also assist with expertise you don't have.

Who makes up a marketing team?

Large enterprises

Marketing Director

Face of marketing team: Defines marketing strategy and provides strategic direction.

Marketing Manager

Executes marketing strategy. Ensures marketing plan is rolled-out by relevant teams. Reports back to Marketing Director.

Brand Manager

Oversees marketing activities and ensures the right message is delivered. Monitors market trends and consumer behaviour.

Product Manager

Manages distribution channels. Monitors competition and target customers to ensure product always meets needs.

Digital / Social Media Manager

Manages all social media platforms: Writing content, responding to queries etc. Oversees social media strategy to ensure it meets marketing objectives.

PR / Event Manager

Manages all external communications and reputation of company. Organizes and drives all events.

Agency Manager*

Manages the marketing / PR / digital agency to ensure plans are rolled out and targets met. Reports back to Marketing Manager.



Managing an agency

An agency will be responsible for executing elements of your marketing plan and helping you meet key objectives and targets. It is however highly unlikely for a small business to have a full agency solution in the early stages, so some of the elements may be outsourced.



Hiring the right talent

Building your marketing team takes time and energy. Remember, it is a long-term investment for your company, so you need to do it right.

Here are some tips for finding new talent:



Use your networks:
Friends, schoolmates,
family and associates.



Keep a calendar of
when university
graduations take place.
Go to universities and
run recruitment drives.



Universities are also a
great place to find
interns. Graduates are
hungry to do the work
and learn on the job.
Be aware of turnover
though – and have a
backup plan for the
intern that might only
stay for 3 months.



Use your social network
(LinkedIn, Twitter etc.) to
find people with the
right qualifications and
experience.



When assessing CVs
or interviewing
candidates, look for
passion the people
who believe in your
mission. If you are a
start-up or small
enterprise, be open
and transparent
about your growth
journey.

Remember, when hiring for a small team, the incentives and work environment is usually very different to when you hire for a large enterprise, so the secret is to find talent who understand that there is an opportunity for them to grow their career with the business.

How can I develop loyal customers?

In Part One of the toolkit, you learnt how to research and understand your target customers and their needs. Now it's time to take this a step further and deepen your knowledge of your customers.

Monitoring your customers is an essential marketing tactic. It will help you to:

- Validate your target audience and ensure you're marketing to the right people
- Stay relevant and authentic
- Ensure you always deliver value
- Identify and develop loyal, happy and returning customers
- Obtain new customers by understanding what works and what doesn't work

Creating a Customer Database

It's important to keep a database of your customers' contact details. Together with contact details, you should also collect and update other data, such as demographics and how happy they are with you ("Sentiment"). This will function as your marketing currency, helping you to make important decisions around optimizing your current and future marketing activity. Please remember to comply to the required protection of personal information requirements for your business when collecting data.

Data to collect

| | | | | | | | |
|-----|--------|----------|------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Age | Gender | Location | Occupation | Buying patterns (season, time of day etc.) | Sentiment | Stage in buying cycle (new, returning) | Where they heard about you and would they recommend you |
|-----|--------|----------|------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|

Helps you understand target market and their needs

Helps you monitor satisfaction, optimize your strategy to develop loyalty, and track referrals

Top Tip

Social media is a very valuable tool in getting feedback from your customers. Customers often post reviews, feedback or queries on your pages, which gives you – and potential new customers – valuable insight into your business performance. Use it to have and generate these meaningful two-way interactions.

You can also collect this information through:

- Telephone
- Email
- Online
- Surveys (SurveyMonkey / Surveygizmo, etc.)
- Face-to-face
- eCommerce analytics (payment methods etc.)

Bigger organizations have processes, for example:

- Bank branches: Forms for customers to complete and place in a box
- Call centres: Ask key customer satisfaction questions (e.g. Please rate your experience)

Driving loyalty

Based on the information you collect in your customer database, use it to drive loyalty campaigns such as:

- Regular sales promotions for customers
- An easy loyalty program: Card stamps, email voucher codes etc.
- Exclusive updates and offers (notify loyal customers first)
- Free product trials
- Referral incentives (e.g. discount)
- Thought leadership pieces for B2B clients



Microsoft Dynamics 365

Top Tip

Explore tools such as [Microsoft Excel](#), [Dynamics 365](#) or [PowerBI](#) to see how you can start creating and managing a customer database. Think about different ways you have been asked to rate your customer experience or satisfaction before, and how you can use or adapt some of these methods.

How do I develop a strong brand?

Earlier in the toolkit, you learnt about a Unique Value Proposition (UVP). Your UVP helps to form the essence of your brand.



What is a brand?

(Logo) A brand is a unique sign, symbol or set of words that identifies a product and sets it apart from its competitors.

(Perception) A brand is what you represent. It is what a person feels or thinks about you when they see or hear your brand. If someone feels good about your brand and what you stand for, they are likely to recommend you.

- 1 What is my company mission? What do I want to represent? (Examples: Fast and reliable service. Friendly staff. High quality products. Ensure you live up to these through your marketing plan!)
- 2 What does my company name mean?
- 3 What are the key words I use when I explain my business in 30 seconds?
- 4 How do I want people to feel when they see my brand? (Examples: Safe. Nostalgic. Empowered)
- 5 How is this different from my competitors?



Top Tip

If you are a small business owner or entrepreneur, be cautious about making your name the company's brand. Doing this can make it very hard to scale your business later on. It does work in some instances (Richard Branson, Donald Trump, Oprah Winfrey etc.), but a team needs to be behind you to deliver on this brand. When you are in a profession such as a doctor, dentist, engineer, or any other professional title, using your own name for the business may still work, however, when you think of scaling the business later on, this could still pose a challenge. It is therefore very important to spend time coming up with a brand name. Also ensure you check the name in several key languages to ensure interpretation does not mean something else.

A brand also drives:

- Instant recognition
- Differentiation from competitors

Now that you've asked these questions, think about how you can convey this visually through a logo and slogan. Consider colors, fonts, shapes and competitor logos. Test it out amongst your network to see if it's effective and has the desired impact.

Developing a logo professionally is a must. You cannot have an unprofessional logo made with ClipArt representing your brand. Watch out for affordable online solutions to get affordable, professional logos done.

Watch: What is a brand – and how to make yours stand out →

Handling negative brand situations

Part of creating a brand is forming and managing its reputation. Negative situations can often arise from bad service and product problems.

Be concerned, but not worried, if / when this happens to you. There are methods you can use to regain the trust and loyalty of your customers. Just focus on the solutions.

- **Communicate honestly with your customers.**
Acknowledge the problem, but then show how you are resolving issues quickly and efficiently. Often, customers will remember how you solved a problem and be more impressed with your resulting customer service than if the problem had never happened in the first place.
- **Search** for what went wrong, what / who did not work properly and identify responsibilities.
- **Correct** processes and take actions to ensure the issue doesn't arise again.
- Don't harp on about your mistake. Learn the relevant lessons and **move on**. This is often called: 'Failing forward'.



What marketing collateral do I need?

Now that you have developed a brand, it's time to show it off!

NB: Your brand needs to be represented – consistently – at any time you are in touch with your customers, distributors, retailers, partners and / or investors. It is therefore most important that, as you start hiring talent, and bring new team members onboard, that they are trained in the consistent use of the brand, including logos, fonts, colors and tone of voice.

Here are some essential corporate items that you need:

- Business cards
- Email signature
- Website [with customized domain name]
- Letterhead
- PowerPoint template
- Building / car branding (optional)

Each of these materials should contain:

- Your company name
- Your logo
- Your brand personality / slogan (4 – 5 words)
- Your contact details

All these templates can be built using Office 365 →

FAQs

1. How often should I revamp my brand?

As a general rule-of-thumb, keep your brand for at least three years so that customers and partners can get familiar with it. However, ensure ongoing investment in and review of your brand. This should be part of your marketing budget. Ensure your brand evolves with your business.

2. I don't have time or budget to do this, how can I start?

There are lots of free and cost-effective tools available online to help you create logos, websites and other brand collateral (we've listed a few in this toolkit). If you don't have time, consider hiring local talent to assist you, or employing the skills of friends and family. Whether you do it yourself or through someone else, it will be a worthy time investment.



03

Marketing Reach

Why do I need to do this?

- Understand the concept of integrated marketing
- Learn about content marketing and how to use it as a marketing strategy
- Learn the basics of digital marketing and how to get started
- Understand how to use social media as an effective business tool

What is integrated marketing?

It sounds like a complex term, but it's actually a very simple concept

Integrated marketing is a type of marketing strategy. It focuses on creating a consistent and seamless brand experience for your consumer. In other words, every communication channel you use, whether it's a radio advert or a social media page, should work together to convey the ultimate message of your brand. No matter where your customer deals with you, their experience with your brand should be the same.



Example: Let's walk through the 5 steps with an example.



I'm a startup that sells razor blades - and I would like to create an integrated marketing campaign.

1. My objective of the campaign is to drive customers to my website, where they can purchase my razor blades online.
2. Because my target audience is men from 18– 35, I am going to reach them on Facebook, YouTube and with a newspaper advert. I know my customers spend a lot of time on these channels.
3. I now have to create marketing content (videos, posts, wording etc.) for these different channels. It's important that the content all has the same look and feel – and communicates the same message and tone of my brand, whether it's visually or in writing. I'm going to base all my material off the artwork from my website.
4. The content that I create should grab people's attention and be easy to understand.
5. All my content is going to include a call to action. I'm going to tell people exactly what I want them to do: Visit my website to place an order. On my YouTube video, I'll include a link to the website in the video and in the description box below. All my channels will work together to drive traffic to my website, because that's my objective.

What is content marketing?

Once you have your integrated marketing strategy in place, you can start to create the content that will go on your different, chosen channels. This is known as content marketing.

Content marketing is the art of creating and strategically distributing clear, compelling, valuable and relevant content to your audience. It should both retain your current audience and attract new members.

What counts as content? Everything from a written article to a photograph, blog post or advert. In short, anything you create to drive messages around your brand is a piece of content.

Top Tip :Avoid promoting your product all the time or using too much marketing speak in your content. People are surrounded by content all day – and so they don't like being advertised to.

Rather, share content that will add value to their lives.

This can include:

- Infographics sharing interesting information on your industry
- Article with 'How-to' tips and tricks
- Funny videos you can share with your friends
- Visual posts on Facebook with inspiring or insightful messages and quotes

Good example for a razor-blade company:

Blog post: How to make your blades last longer

Bad example for a razor blade company:

Facebook post: Looking for the perfect holiday gift?
Look no further than our razor blades! Which post would interest you the most?



NB: When creating content, always make it relevant to your brand and industry, but through the filter with the questions of: Why should my audience care about this? Will it add value to them? Will it satisfy what matters to them? Remember, your customers don't buy from you because of your product, they buy from you because of a specific why, a specific need, your product satisfies for them.



So if I'm not always talking about my product, what's the value of content marketing?

The ultimate objective of content marketing is to:

- **Position yourself as an expert and build trust.**

Soon, your customers will be thinking: If your content is good, your product must be too. If you're adding value to my life, you must really know and care about satisfying my needs.

- **Build your brand.**

Your content can help communicate your values and create a brand personality – which customers will love.

To start thinking about a content strategy, ask yourselves these questions:

- 1: What industry does my product or service fall into?
- 2: What are the challenges and opportunities in this industry?
- 3: What new insights or information could I share with my audience around this industry that will teach them something new and add value?
- 4: How can I communicate the features of my product / service and business values in a fun and compelling way?
- 5: What content can I create for my different channels? (e.g. videos, blog posts, photographs)

Now decide...

- **Your content marketing objective**

Do you want to become an expert in your field, or are you an expert in your field? Do you want to drive traffic to your website? Do you want a certain number of YouTube subscribers, or Twitter followers, etc.?

- **Which channels you are going to share your content on (Facebook, YouTube, Radio etc.)**

Where does your audience spend most of their time? Which channel would help you land your message in the most impactful way?

- **If you choose social media channels, how often you are going to post content**

NB: You need to be consistent and stick to your frequency. Best practice is once a day on Instagram; maximum once a day on Facebook; once a week on YouTube if you can manage and want to grow your audience fast, alternatively at worst, once a month; and twice a week on LinkedIn.

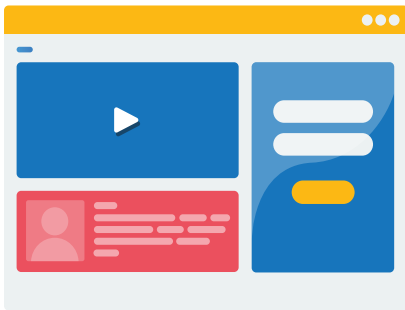
- **How you are going to measure the success of your content marketing**

This will be based on our objective. It can include: Social media engagements (shares etc.), blog views, clicks on your links

What is Digital Marketing?

Digital marketing is not just about having a website or putting your content online. It is a strategic process of using digital technologies to reach audiences, convert them into customers and retain them. You also need to include measurement tactics to see how your assets are performing.

The goal of digital marketing is to promote your brand online.



Website



Social media accounts
(LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter etc.)



Database of email addresses for email marketing, and phone numbers for mobile marketing. Remember to comply to personal information protection requirements!

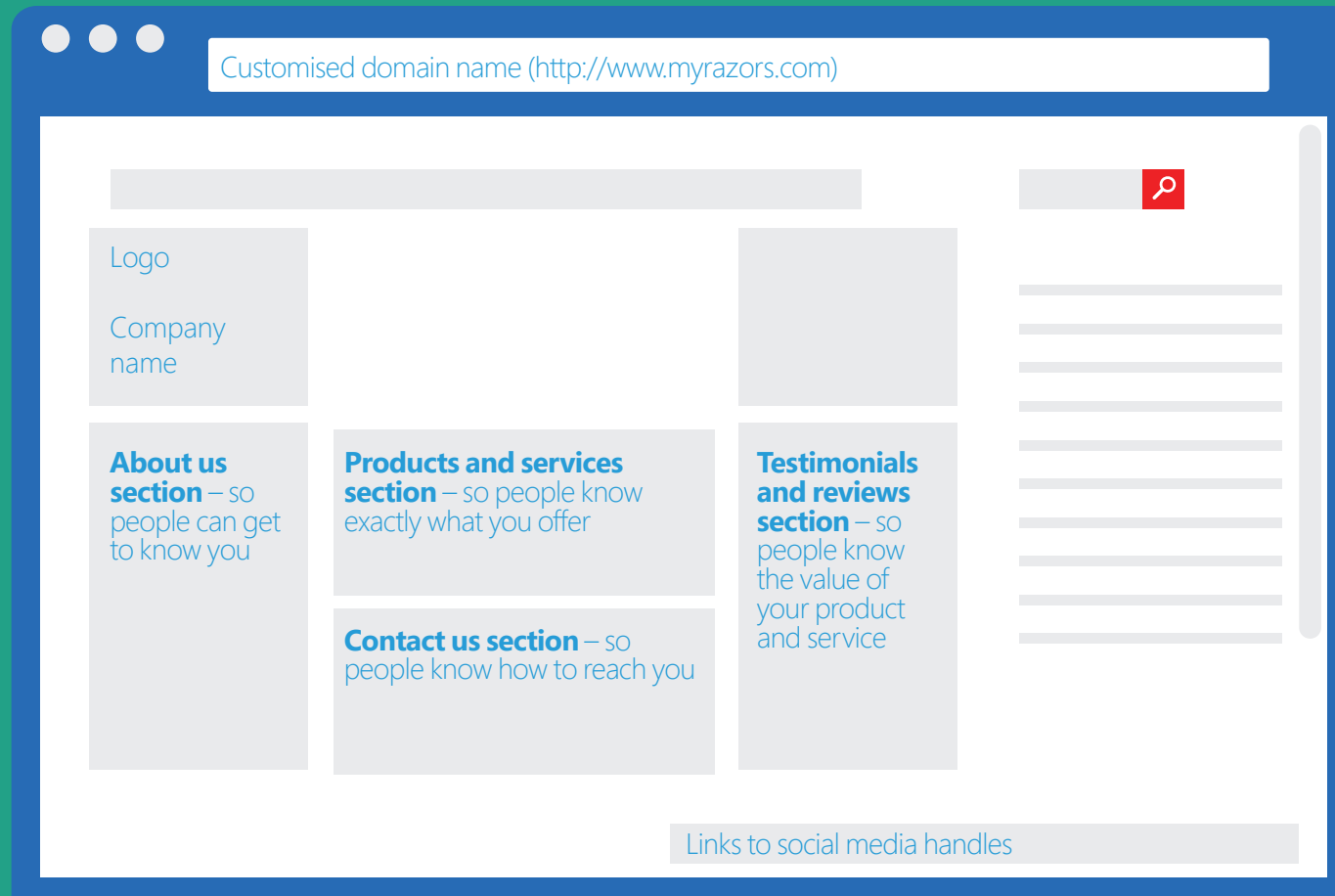
Building a website

Having a website is not optional. It's a necessity for any business. The first place people will look for a product or service nowadays is online. The goal of digital marketing is to promote your brand online.

Don't worry about cost. There are some great free or cost-effective tools to help you build beautiful and unique websites that function well. So get building!

- [WordPress](#)
- [Wix.com](#)
- [FWB – freewebsitebuilder.co.za](#)

Information that must appear on your website:e.



NB: If you want to sell your products online, build in an eCommerce function too.

This will include a product catalogue, shopping cart, check-out facility, payment options and details on delivery.

A word on SEO

What is SEO?

SEO stands for Search Engine Optimization. It is the process of making sure your website comes up (preferably on top) when people type in relevant keywords or search phrases.

For example: If you are a plumber, you want your website to come up first when someone types in: 'Plumber in Nairobi'.



So how can you ensure your website pops up and is visible to more people? There are a number of things that internet browsers consider:

Keywords: In order to appear in search results, you need to have the right keywords in your website copy. Think about what phrases and words people would type in when searching for your product or service, and include the different options in your copy. For example:

- Plumber in Nairobi
- Plumbers in Kenya
- Plumbing services
- Cheap plumber in Nairobi
- Fixing toilets



Top Tip

When creating your keywords, don't use short and vague words like 'plumbing'. This could bring up a million search results. Try to be as specific as possible and opt for phrases instead of just words (i.e. affordable plumber in Nairobi). Remember, people want digital experiences, so focus on the user experience of helping customers find the information they need quickly.

Think about the keywords that people would use to search for you and start incorporating them in all your online content. Also do an online search to see how popular your keywords are.



Good quality content published on a regular basis: Browsers love this – and they track the quality of your content by how much people engage with it and come back. If you're a site people find valuable, they will put you higher up on the search results. How can you publish good, regular content?

- Blog posts
- Frequently asked questions (FAQs)
- Testimonials
- Social media live feeds
- Downloadable content (tips, tutorials and templates etc.)



Links to good websites and having them link back to you. This builds your credibility and shows browsers that other sites validate you. Link to your partners, distributors, retailers etc. and have them include a link back to your website on their own.

Online advertising

In addition to SEO, there are other ways of making sure your website gets noticed. These include online advertising.

Search engine adverts

Search engine marketing is when advertisers bid on keywords that users of services such as Bing and Google may enter when they are looking for a product or service. These adverts can appear at the top and bottom of the search results pages for mobile and desktop users. For adverts on specific websites, there are also banner adverts. You'll have to consult with target websites for prices.

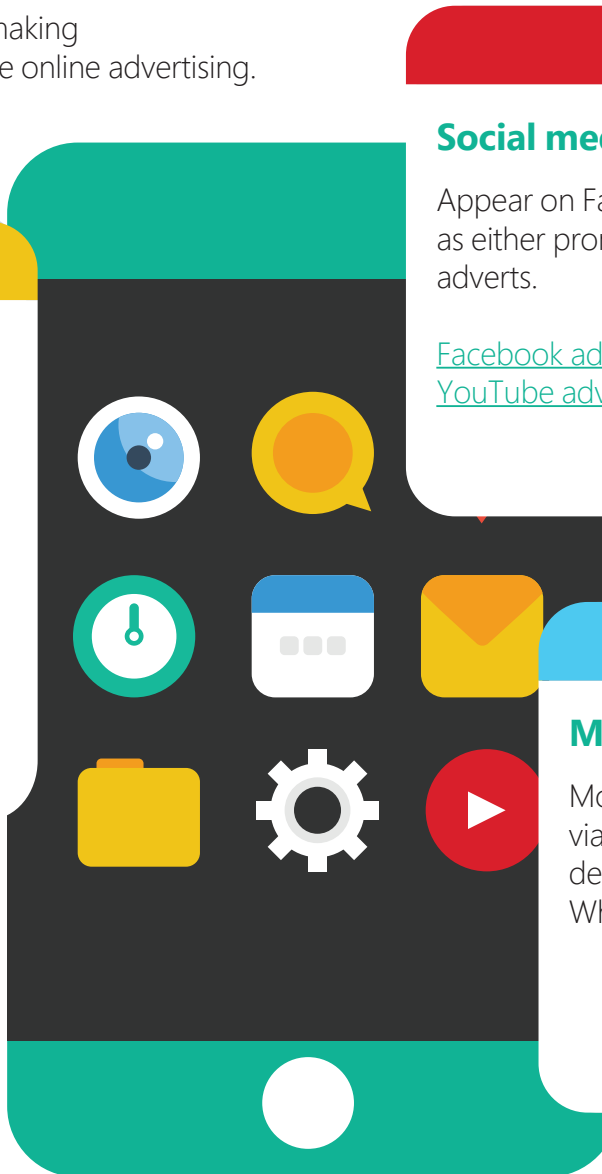
Social media adverts

Appear on Facebook, Twitter or YouTube as either promoted content or page adverts.

[Facebook adverts](#)
[YouTube adverts](#)

Mobile adverts

Mobile advertising is a form of advertising via mobile phones or other mobile devices, and can take place via SMS, or WhatsApp or banner advertising.



What is Promoted Content?

Promoted content is content that has **money** or **advertising spend** behind it. This will improve the reach and engagements of your post, ensuring that more people see it. You choose which content you want to promote.

Without promoting your content, only about 6% of your audience will see it – so it's always a good idea. There is no specific money limit either – **you can decide how much budget** you want to put into it.

Some tips for creating online adverts:

- Keep them short and punchy
- Focus on the customer benefits (not who you are and what you do)
- Highlight offers, deals and promotions
- Target adverts by location, age, interests etc. to ensure they reach the right audience (the online tools will guide you in setting this up)
- Include a call to action: Tell people exactly where to go or what to do
- Don't be misleading. When someone clicks on your advert, they must be taken directly through to the information which the advert promised to give them. If they have to click around and search for it, they will get angry and leave.

Get 50% off on all tyres until 01 January. Visit our website to see participating retailers: www.tyres.com

Why it works:

- Short
- Communicates benefits (50% off)
- Includes call to action (visit our website)

We manufacture tyres of the highest quality. www.tyres.com

Why it doesn't work:

- Focuses on brand (what we do) not customer (what we can do for you).
- Why should I care and click on this?
- No call to action

Are online adverts a good idea?

Yes. And here's why:

You define your budget.

(you'll never be charged a cent more). You can also choose specific billing options such as:

- Pay per click: Only pay for your advert when people actually click on it
- Pay per view: Only pay when someone watches either 30 seconds of your video or the full thing

You can target them to your exact audience.

Unlike radio, you have control. Ensure your message only goes to the right people.

They come with free and detailed analytics.

You can easily track the performance of your adverts and see what's working / not working to optimize your strategy. This is a great approach for your ROI.

To get started, explore the advertising tools shared above.

Are online adverts a good idea?

Most website tools come with a built-in analytics dashboard. This will help you to keep track of things like:

- Unique visitors
- Visitors per day
- Bounce rates (% of users that leave your website after just viewing one page)
- Time spent on website
- Page views

These are useful in monitoring the performance of your website. Check them regularly to see what's working / not working so you know what to change or do more of.



How can I use social media as an effective business tool?

Social media is a very valuable and relevant marketing tool – if you use it correctly. With it, you can:

- **Market in real-time with content**

- **Engage with your customers in real-time**

Start conversations, respond to queries, run research polls, share updates with them

- **Collect feedback and testimonials**

Facebook has a built-in rate and review section on every business page

- **Stay up-to-date with industry trends**

Follow relevant organizations, track trending hashtags etc.

- **Research competitor activity and behavior**

Monitor their handles to see what they are up to (just don't follow or Like them, or they will know)

- **Improve your SEO and SEM**

Include the relevant keywords in all your posts and spend some marketing money where it makes sense



Top Tip

Remember that most users today access social media on their smartphones. Optimize your content for mobile. Rather, share content that will add value to their lives. This can include:

- Keeping it short. Small screens make text look longer. People scroll quickly and don't like to read. Also keep videos short to save on bandwidth.
- Ensuring links you share are mobile friendly. It's no use directing them to your website if they can't access it on their phones. Keep your websites mobile friendly too!

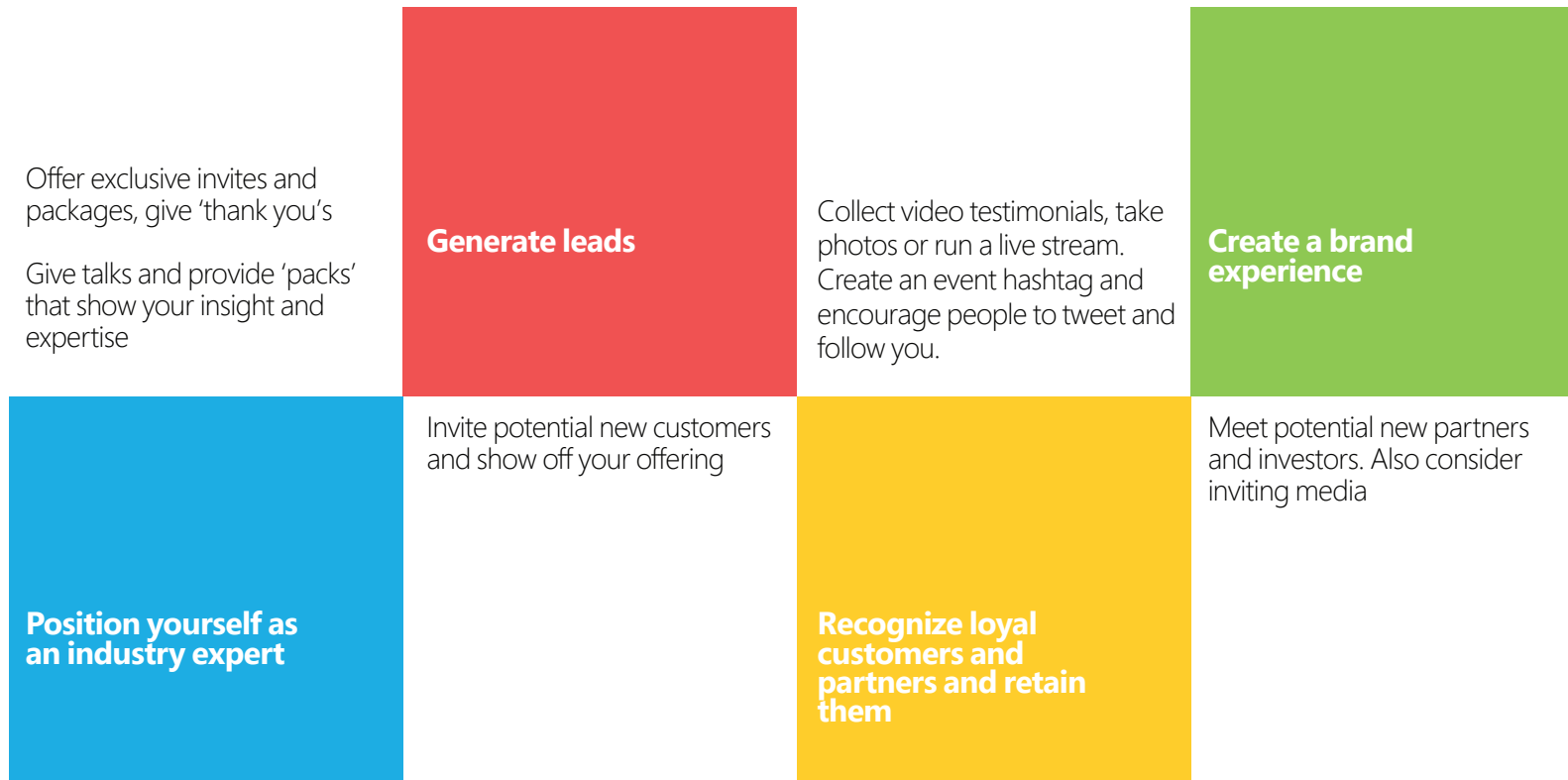
Avoid sharing any content that could be offensive or controversial.

For more on using social media effectively, download our PR & Communications toolkit

Event marketing

People love putting a face to the brand, so meeting people face-to-face at an event is always valuable. It also provides a great opportunity for customers to experience your brand.

However, events can be expensive, so decide if you have place for them in your marketing strategy and budget. Online events are more popular than ever, at a fraction of the cost, so make sure to also explore this solution.



When you would host an event

- New product launch or demonstrations
- New CEO
- Sharing recent surveys, insights or research
- General brand experience: Getting to know you, your product and service

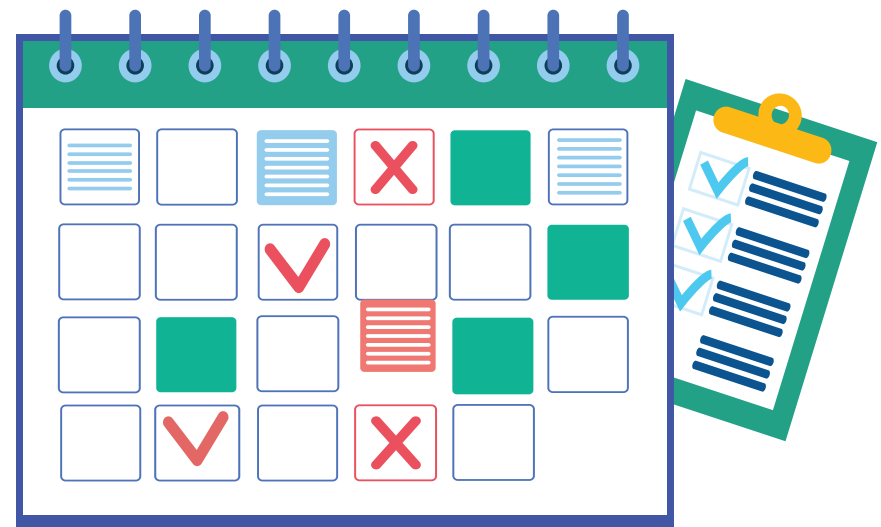
You can also consider hosting online events, such as Twitter parties or webinars. Just ensure you have the necessary resources, know-how and audience. Use your social media channels to promote all your events.

Event checklist

- Date and time
- Venue
- Catering
- Invitations, RSVPs and follow-ups
- Speakers and agenda
- Social media hashtag
- Technical equipment (microphones, screens, speakers etc.)
- Branded collateral (pull-ups, water bottles, lanyards, pens etc.)
- Giveaways and prizes
- Budget and sponsors

If all this is a bit much for you, consider:

- Hosting joint events with partners, retailers, distributors etc.
- Bringing an events manager on board to assist (budget dependant)



FAQs

1. Which social media channels should I be on?

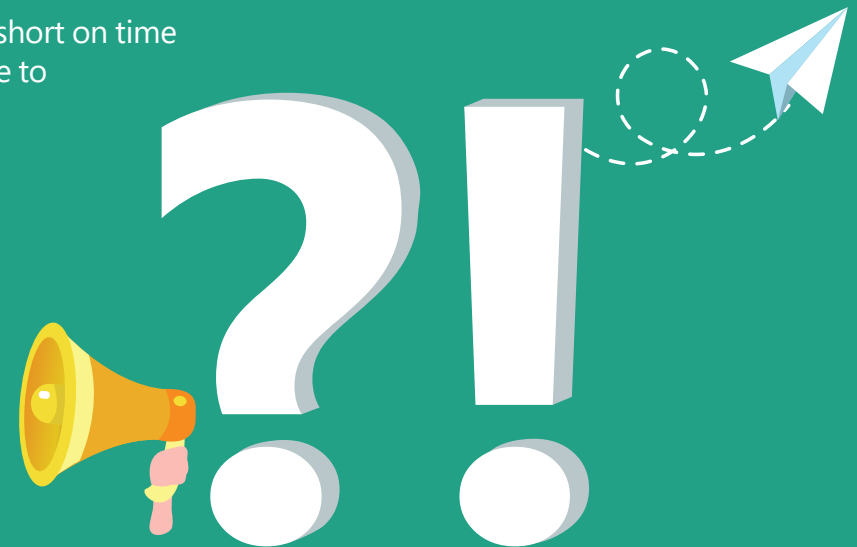
Only select channels that make the most business sense and that help you meet your objectives. If your brand doesn't suit being on Instagram, don't put it there. Social media is also a long-term commitment, so make sure you can commit to updating the channels you choose regularly. It is also wise for those resources in the business who also promote social media posts, to have a preferred channel, and focus on that to grow their individual and business brand. One simply cannot be all things to all people.

2. I don't have time or budget to do this, how can I start?

Social media channels are free to sign up for, so you can start with the basics of posting content on a regular basis (once or twice per week). Sourcing and creating your content may take some time, so you need to decide whether you'll be able to do it yourself, or hire someone to assist you. Just remember to fully brief whoever you hire on brand reputation management. You don't want them posting controversial or biased comments on your business page.

3. Do I need an agency or can I do this myself?

You can easily run your digital marketing on your own. However, if you are short on time and have some budget to spare, consider hiring an agency. They will be able to advise you on the latest trends and digital best practices.





External links:

[15 Examples of great integrated marketing campaigns](#) →

[25 Clever content marketing examples with amazing results](#) →

[Learn from the best: 8 Inspiring content marketing examples](#) →

[10 Most powerful marketing campaigns of all time](#) →

[10 Digital marketing tips for small business owners](#) →

[5 mistakes to avoid when designing your logo](#) →

[Four steps to identify your target markets](#) →

In conclusion

Marketing is a long-term investment. It's about developing and keeping a lasting relationship with your customers.

As an SME, it's important to start with a marketing plan from day one. Keep measuring every activity and revisiting your plan every year to optimize your approach. Don't be afraid to ask questions and try new approaches.

Remember that not everything will work. But you always have the ability to change it.

For more tips, tricks and resources on running your business, sign up on [Biz4Afrika](#).

Did you find this toolkit valuable? Please share your feedback with us:

We graciously acknowledge the following contributors:

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