



H-Paper

Six Simple Solutions to a Better Marketing Plan

The H Agency www.theHagency.com

Six Simple Solutions to a Better Marketing Plan

The H Agency www.theHagency.com

The purpose of this H-paper is to help with your end-of-year planning. We compiled a list of six tips that can help you improve your marketing efforts in the coming year. In the current economy you have the opportunity (and sometimes the directive) to look for new solutions and try new approaches to improve your marketing results. For a marketing professional, this is a glass-half-full chance to demonstrate the extra value that you bring to your organization.

The H Agency www.theHagency.com

New Orleans: 1055 Saint Charles Avenue, Suite 300, New Orleans, LA 70130 Phone 504-522-6300 Fax 504-524-6359
Houston: 4203 Montrose Blvd., Suite 450, Houston, TX 77006 Phone 713-224-0400 Fax 713-224-6541



SIX SIMPLE SOLUTIONS TO A BETTER MARKETING PLAN

1. Think strategically

Strategic thinking is simply a matter of seeing through your CEO's and CFO's eyes. According to Susanne Lyons, former Chief Marketing Officer at Visa and Charles Schwab, "CEOs and CFOs think in terms of profitability, cash flow, and revenue. When you plan for the coming year, think of the impact your marketing activities will have on generating revenue for your company. Then communicate your marketing programs using terms that resonate with the goals of your senior executives." By thinking and acting strategically, you show that you understand how your marketing activities contribute to your company's bottom-line growth. You demonstrate that you can leverage your marketing and advertising budget to improve your company's financial health.

2. Listen to your customers

Listen to your customers more closely. Survey or interview them to learn why they feel your product is important. Learn what they like and dislike. What you learn could help improve the way you market and even show you the type of new customer prospects for which to look. In the process, you may gather positive client comments and testimonials that can help build credibility for marketing to new prospects.

According to Steve Strauss, money magazine columnist for USA Today, "selling is not manipulation, it's a process whereby you discover a potential customer's needs and then show them that your product or service fills that need better than your competition." Your current customers are your best prospects. Thank them for their business, reward them for their loyalty and they'll keep coming back. Tom Peters, well-known writer and lecturer on excellence in business practices, says, "The magic formula that successful businesses have discovered is to treat customers like guests and employees like people."



SIX SIMPLE SOLUTIONS TO A BETTER MARKETING PLAN

3. See yourself through your customers' eyes

Take a fresh look this year at your product or service – from your customers' perspective. Think less about why **you** feel your product or service is special, and more about what your customer feels is important. What are your product's real strengths? What are its benefits in the eyes of your customer? Benefits describe how your product or service improves a person's life. Benefits include convenience, ease, and saving time and money. Benefits say how your product satisfies real customer needs and desires. They are emotion-based. According to the website entrepreneur.com, benefits answer your customer's question "What's in it for me?" Does your marketing message identify what's in it for your customers? Make sure you spell out the benefits in **all** your communications.

4. Set clear goals and objectives

Review what you've done in the past and reuse only what has worked. Set measurable goals and objectives for what you want your marketing activities to achieve. For example: How many responses do you want your ad campaign to generate? How many new leads? How many sales? How much revenue? Be realistic and practical but make a goal and shoot for it. Then, choose those marketing tactics or activities that can best accomplish the results you want.

NOTE: The attached **Marketing Snapshot** will help you organize your marketing goals, strategy and tactics for the coming year.

5. Make measurement your mantra

For every marketing tactic in your plan, think of a way to measure its effectiveness. Be creative. If you can't think of a way to evaluate an activity's performance, then reconsider its importance to your plan. Find or create the tools and processes that give you the proof of your results. Solid numbers (return on investment) will resonate with the CEO and CFO and raise your value within your company.



SIX SIMPLE SOLUTIONS TO A BETTER MARKETING PLAN

6. Shift to hybrid thinking

Since you're going to be thinking more strategically this year (point #1), considering your marketing efforts in terms of how they support your company's profitability, there's one more thing you can do that will shift your new marketing perspective into high gear – "hybrid thinking."

Like a car engine that runs on part gas and part electricity, hybrid thinking blends two perspectives – traditional strategic thinking and creative thinking – for more efficient results. If you are developing a marketing strategy, rebranding, streamlining operations, or creating a marketing plan to introduce or promote a product or service, almost everywhere in business today, planning is influenced (and improved) by the discipline of hybrid thinking.

Marketing effectively using the hybrid approach requires both sides of the brain. When you are developing your marketing strategy start by identifying left-brain, strategic activities like core selling proposition development, customer research and sales goals; then bring them together with right-brain activities like brainstorming and visual concepts.

Set a company wide goal for 2010 to begin combining left-brain logical and linear thinking with right-brain intuitive and holistic thinking to produce new insights, innovations and improvements to create more effective and distinctive solutions.



SIX SIMPLE SOLUTIONS TO A BETTER MARKETING PLAN

Getting Started

The attached, two-page “Marketing Snapshot” document is designed to help you organize your thoughts and create a list of ideas and strategies for the year ahead, including a month-by-month action list.

All of us working in marketing and communications need new more effective and more innovative solutions for the coming year and beyond. The best marketing minds agree that the market place is changing. Where there’s change, there is always opportunity.

- For a strategic perspective on how to make the most of your marketing plan,
- To create a “hybrid” plan of marketing activities to reach your annual objectives,
- For help refining your marketing message so your prospects respond more often,
- To develop tools and processes to help measure advertising and marketing response rates,
- To discover the benefits of hybrid thinking and how it can improve the way you market...

...contact The H Agency today. **Hybrid thinking is what we stand for.**



Company Name:

By:

Date:

Yearly Marketing Budget: \$

Target Market:

Key Initiatives:

Goals: (specific and measurable)

1.

2.

3.

Strategies:

1.

2.

3.

Strengths:

1.

2.

3.

Product or Service Benefits:

What to Start:

What to Stop:

What to Continue:

Monthly Tactics and How to Measure

January:	July:
February:	August:
March:	September:
April:	October:
May:	November:
June:	December:

The H Agency www.theHagency.com

New Orleans: 1055 Saint Charles Avenue, Suite 300, New Orleans, LA 70130 Phone 504-522-6300 Fax 504-524-6359

Houston: 4203 Montrose Boulevard, Suite 450, Houston, TX 77006 Phone 713-224-0400 Fax 713-224-6541

WHAT DO YOU STAND FOR?TM

The H Agency is a branding, marketing and design agency founded in 1990 by Founder, President and Creative Director Winnie Hart and now with offices in New Orleans and Houston. The company has grown from a local New Orleans design firm into a regional agency that specializes in developing marketing programs and brand strategies for healthcare and wellness companies.

The “H” in The H Agency stands for the things that make us unique — hybrid, health, heart and helpful. It also stands for the systematic approach, uncompromising principles and unparalleled energy we bring to our work.

For more information about how to make your next marketing project more successful, contact The H Agency, 504-522-6300.

The H Agency www.theHagency.com

New Orleans: 1055 Saint Charles Avenue, Suite 300, New Orleans, LA 70130 Phone 504-522-6300 Fax 504-524-6359
Houston: 4203 Montrose Blvd., Suite 450, Houston, TX 77006 Phone 713-224-0400 Fax 713-224-6541