

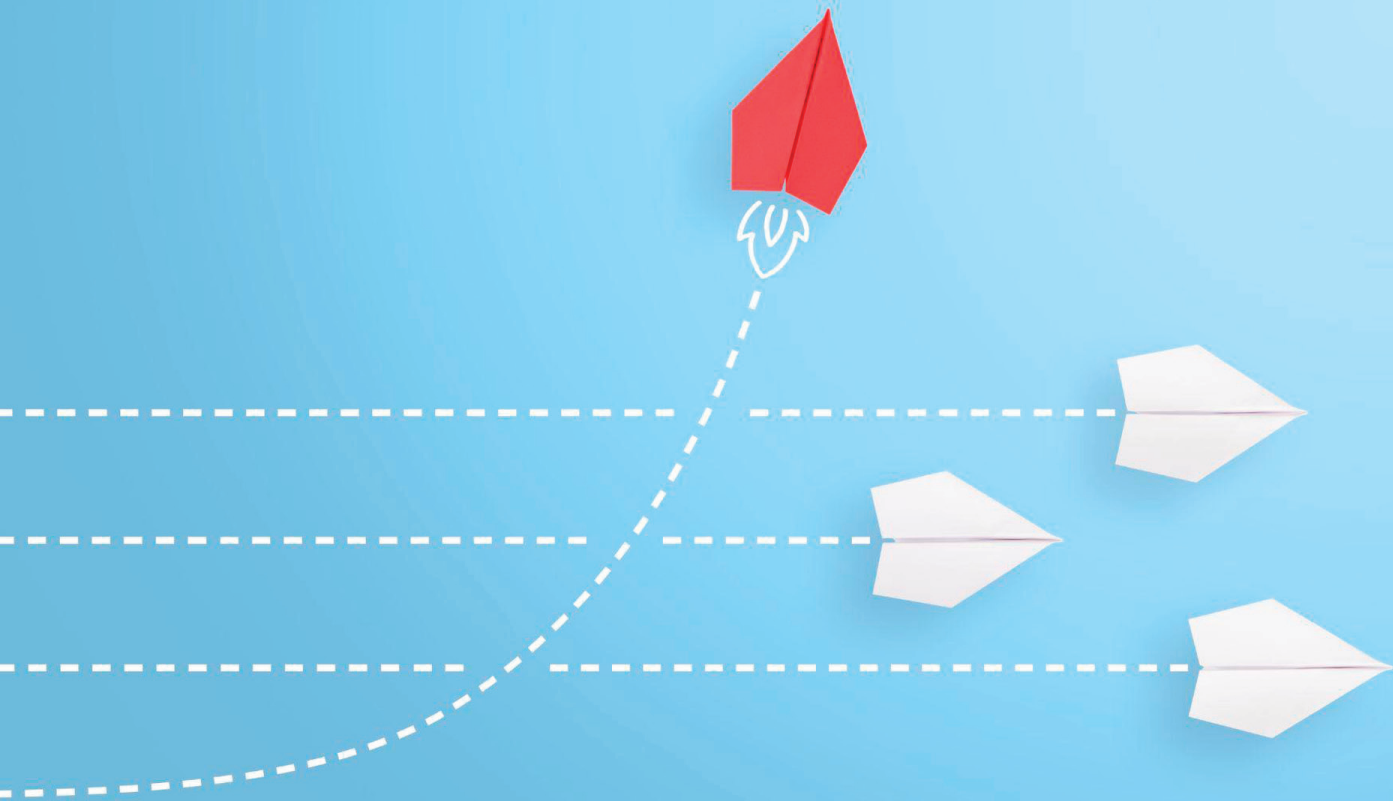
WHY A 6 MONTH MARKETING PLAN IS YOUR SECRET WEAPON



What if you could organize your workload to be more creative around holidays/special events, produce more effective content, and generate even bigger results?

Your coworkers would say you're a genius, and your boss may even call you a superhero! Okay, maybe they wouldn't go that far. But I'm willing to bet your life at work would become easier and much happier!





It all begins with knowing the steps to create the best process for planning ahead and making them your own. Now, at first that may sound ambitious or even complicated, but once you know the right steps it becomes second nature and an incredible skill to have in your repertoire. You'll see, by planning your marketing strategy in bi-annual increments, you will immediately begin having better communications with other departments, prevent knee-jerk reactions from other decision-makers, and set in motion a positive, organized, and goal focused work culture.

Let's get started! You can do this on your own, or with your team -we encourage a collaborative process as working together to build your plan encourages inspiration and responsibility. Here are the 4 steps you can take today to create a 6 month plan and begin reaping the benefits.

- 1 EVALUATE CURRENT MARKETING JOURNEY**
- 2 ATTACK THE GAP**
- 3 VISUALIZE SUCCESS**
- 4 PRIORITIZE GROWTH**

01

EVALUATE CURRENT MARKETING JOURNEY

Create a list of current marketing activities with the following categories: Paid Campaigns, Content, SEO, Website, Social, Other. These six categories should cover your basic activities, but feel free to adjust for your company's strategy. The idea is to keep it simple and allow the generality to keep this process easy and manageable.

We want to list all current and recent past endeavors under each heading. For example, Display ads = Paid Campaigns, Product Infographic = Content, Newsletter = Content, Annual Brochure = Content, etc. Nothing is too big or too small to add to your list. Look at every way resources (money, and time) are being spent to help reach your goals.

Now let's place each of these activities under the umbrella of the basic step of the customer's journey:

AWARENESS
CONSIDERATION
DECISION

As you already know, these stages of the buyer's journey are necessary for customers to know, like, and trust you. They sometimes are not in this order, and occasionally 1 or 2 are made quickly. But once confidence is earned, the opportunity that a customer will make a purchase is dramatically increased.

You may be surprised to find how balanced or unbalanced your resources are being spent in areas that need attention. Whatever the outcome, it's important to stay focused and complete this step of the process. This exercise is meant to help create a perspective that will allow you to see where your efforts are laid in relation to your overall company goals. Thus, empowering you to enhance your future efforts and strengthen your communication points with other departments and within your team.



EVALUATE CURRENT MARKETING JOURNEY



ATTACK THE GAP

By defining our goals, and identifying areas of opportunity, we have identified the gaps. Now that you have observed the areas of opportunity, it's time to close those gaps. We can tackle these by using the following basketball metaphors.



PASS - There are always some activities that won't withstand you or your team's analysis and need to change. For example, you may have tried a new social platform that no one is following, or perhaps there's a promotion or sale that hasn't garnered the results you've wanted. *Quit spending your resources* on projects that are ineffective or even just producing weaker results than other activities, and make changes.



DUNK - When you identify the most beneficial marketing strategies and efforts, you want to "Slam Dunk" them! By fully adopting or increasing your efforts in these areas you can allocate your resources much more effectively and efficiently. Maybe your one-sheets you post to your site engage a good deal of views, but you only create them once a month. Or perhaps you have a PPC campaign that has resulted in a high amount of clicks and could use a refresh in creative. *Increase your efforts* any time you recognize the successful marketing strategies that earn additional efforts.



PIVOT - Having already isolated the work that you will Pass or Dunk, will expose the remaining efforts that are steady or average in results. You can then appraise those areas for improvement. Perhaps they fall in the area of needing an increase in conversion rates. Or maybe they land in the opposite direction, and they cause friction in the handoff process between marketing and sales department. Either way, your review has *revealed strategies that require a change*. Your actions may allow for more interaction on social media, advocating for increased online reviews, or expanding blog writing resources.



VISUALIZE SUCCESS

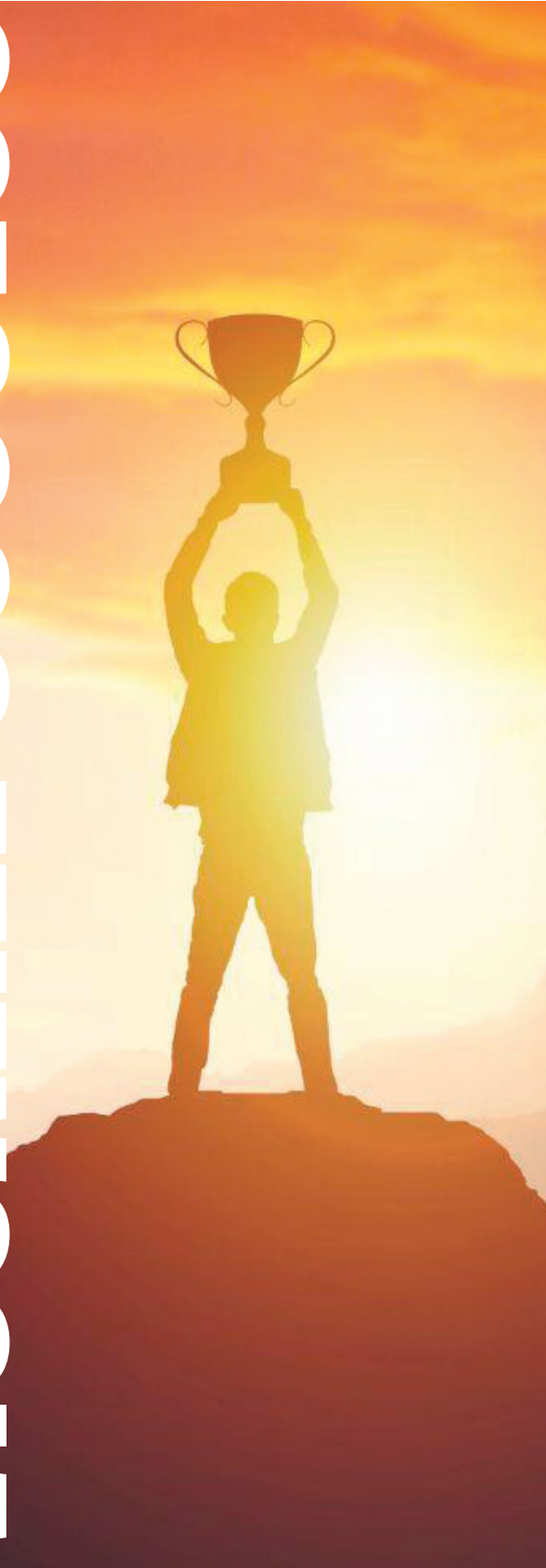
For our third step we want to create a common vision that you and your marketing team will rally around and will help everyone know what you're expecting of them. Using the previous step's review of activities, you can now work through a big picture of what you would like to accomplish throughout the upcoming year.

Your vision should fold into your company's overall goal and mission. A good exercise is to fill in the blanks of this sentence: In the upcoming year, we will focus on _____ because _____.

An example may look something like this: In the upcoming year, we will focus on engaging, inspirational, actionable content because we want to show our audience we are experts in creating ideas and solutions that increase their revenue and help them reach their goals.

Now, we want to spend some time thinking through new ideas for projects that will accomplish your vision. Use your past experiences to help create new ideas. This is where working through this process with your team would be a great source of help. Think BIG. Aim for ideas that will give your company huge results and growth. It's okay to take chances, and try things you haven't before. In fact, creative and unusual thinking are great ways to stand out from the competition. There are no bad ideas, you can always filter out items that might not fit your vision.

VISUALIZE SUCCESS



04

PRIORITIZE GROWTH

Our final step is to organize and prioritize the right projects that will drive growth 6 months at a time (or annually if you're feeling empowered). There are dozens of ways marketers weigh new endeavors, ICE method, impact+time vs fast+cheap, framework method, etc. But my favorite one is the easiest one I know!

Divide a paper in half, on the left side write at the top 10%. And on the right side, write 10x. These two sections stand for 10% Improvement and 10x Growth. As you think about which side each idea will land in, be honest with the best fit and opportunity that idea has for growth.

When each idea is placed in a column, recite your vision from the previous Visualize Success step and identify the top 3-5 projects that have the biggest opportunity for 10x Growth. Will these accomplish your vision and the company's mission? The results of this exercise reveal the projects you should place into the high-priority group.

From there, use a ***marketing calendar** to take into account the amount of time and budget needed to execute each project. Include in your evaluation the personnel you'll need, as well as the internal and external costs associated.

We often prioritize what's on our schedule, but fail to schedule our priorities. By taking control of your vision and applying each activity into an organized 6 month layout will make your world much easier! Your work will become more efficient and your coworkers will think you're amazing!



Feel free to download our **Annual Marketing Plan Template and customize it to fit your needs and just as important, be proud to display your incredible layout to your team!*

Marketing requires a consistent effort to receive the best results. Looking at your plan from a high-level perspective helps prevent you from missing cultural holidays, events, and milestones. With a modeled plan, you and your peers can see everything as the “big picture” empowering you to monitor and modify as necessary, and encourages creative management and positive conversations.

Let your people know you're looking to take the company to the next stage together, get them excited and amped! When you empower your team to become invested in the outcome, you build a culture filled with creativity and productive conversations. Your work to create a 6 month marketing plan is nothing short of a real super power, and adding this process to your arsenal of skills is the key to success.

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