

## ***Examples to help you write a Marketing Plan***

The purpose of the marketing plan is to provide a focal point for decision-making, and to guide managers when trying to solve unforeseen problems. There are often many people involved in delivering marketing outcomes: the plan helps to co-ordinate activities so that everyone knows what is expected and can plan accordingly.

Ideally, a marketing plan should be well-rehearsed and discussed thoroughly with the people who will have to deliver it. This will give them ownership of the plan, which means that they will feel more motivated to “buy into” the plan, and also the actual delivery of the plan will be less likely to meet with unforeseen snags.

There are many different ways of structuring the plan, but here is a common outline.

*Part One: Purpose and mission* This section should contain an outline of what the business is for, and where it seems to be heading.

*Part Two: Situational analysis* This can follow the marketing audit, which can be abbreviated as follows:

- Product/Market analysis
- Distribution analysis
- Competitor analysis
- Financial analysis
- Other factors.

*Part Three: Strategy and Objectives* This is about our broad general direction, and about setting measurable objectives so that we will know when we have arrived. It breaks down as:

- Marketing Objectives
- Marketing Strategy.

*Part Four: Tactical programmes* This section is about what we will do to achieve the strategic objectives outlined above.

- Markets
- Products
- Promotion
- Distribution
- Pricing.

- Other factors.

*Part Five: Budgets, Performance Analysis, Implications*

- Budgeting and Analysis.
- Implications.

*Part Six: Additional considerations*

Here is an outline example of a marketing plan for a firm in the organic meat products business. This is a small firm, which operates by contracting with organic farmers to buy fixed amounts of product, has the meat processed to make sausages, pies, and ready meals, and markets the products through supermarkets. The firm is a small player in a somewhat specialist market.

*Part One: Purpose and mission* The purpose of our company is to promote and facilitate the use of ethically-reared, healthy, organic meat in the manufacture of meat-based products. Our mission is to become the leading supplier of organic meat-based products in the UK and ultimately in the rest of Europe.

*Part Two: Situational analysis*

- **Product/Market analysis** Our most popular product lines at present are sausage products, both cooked sausages (salamis, etc.) and uncooked frozen sausages. Ready meals are currently slow-moving, but these are potentially our highest-margin product. Sausage sales tend to be buoyant among thirtysomething professionals who have an interest in home cooking: ready meals sell to ethically-aware people who do not usually cook from first principles. Approximately 15% of UK consumers buy at least some organic produce.
- **Distribution analysis** Currently our main distribution is through delicatessens and specialist stores rather than mainstream supermarkets. The mainstream supermarkets are reluctant to pay premium prices for organic meat products, preferring to stock organic fresh meat from farms which are directly contracted to them. The only way they will deal with us is via own-brand products, which we have been reluctant to do since we need to establish our own brand.
- **Competitor analysis** There are no direct competitors in producing organic meat products, but we do have many competitors in the non-organic sector. We cannot compete with these large producers on price: we are currently niche producers, probably too small to be seen as a threat by the majors.
- **Financial analysis** We are small players, and do not have deep pockets for a large share of voice. We have extremely limited

resources which are unlikely to grow unless we can enter more lucrative markets.

- **Other factors** There is a growth in public interest in organically-produced food, especially meat. Due to health considerations and recent problems with meat production (for example BSE, foot and mouth disease, and bird flu) the public are moving away from the previous emphasis on cheapness, and moving towards more healthy alternatives which are perceived as safer.

### *Part Three: Strategy and Objectives*

- **Marketing Strategy** We need to move our business towards a mass market for recipe products using organically-produced meat. This will improve our profitability and ultimately our security in the market. We aim to capture a share of the ready-meal market which is equivalent to the proportion of the population who already buy organic food.
- **Marketing Objectives** We aim to enter at least one major supermarket chain this year, and capture a consumer base of 5% of the population (rising from our current 3%). This figure will increase in future years until we achieve 15% within 5 years.

### *Part Four: Tactical programmes*

- **Markets** We need to investigate the ready-meal market and find out why our current penetration is so low. We need to find out which products would be most popular with this sector, and why people are motivated to buy ready-made organic meals.
- **Products** We will need to develop new recipe products to meet the needs of a new market segment. These products need to be developed as a result of rigorous market research.
- **Promotion** Our new product range needs to be promoted in the mainstream media. We will aim to run local TV campaigns based on supermarket penetration within specific regions of the country. We will also run a series of sales promotions in order to support our retailers. The platform of our advertising campaign will be based on the health aspects of the products rather than on the
- **Distribution** Our main target supermarket chain will be Waitrose. The Waitrose brand has resonances with our own branding, and the chain is geographically concentrated allowing us to use a limited TV coverage, keeping our promotion costs to a minimum.
- **Pricing** Our pricing will remain higher than competing, non-organic products. Partly this is to reinforce the quality image of the brand, partly it is to maintain our margins. Consumers have already demonstrated a willingness to pay premium prices for organic food.
- **Other factors** We are not yet at the point where it would be worth our while to increase the overall market. We are still in the market-capture

stage. There is a therefore a potential threat of entry by major competitors if we make serious inroads into their markets.

*Part Five: Budgets, Performance Analysis, Implications*

- **Budgeting and Analysis** The budget for the TV advertising should be set at £3 million. This would give us a sufficient impact in the South East: we should only run the campaign once we have distribution through Waitrose or a similar supermarket chain. We would need to generate an extra £30 million in turnover to cover the cost of the promotion, but this should be seen as an investment in the brand, which will generate revenue streams for a long period to come and will also reduce the risk of competitors taking market share from us.
- **Implications** In the longer run, we should expect the mainstream producers to create their own organic versions of existing recipes. This is a very real threat, as their brands are already better-established than ours. We therefore need to establish our brand quickly in the public mind, positioned as “the real thing”.

*Part Six: Additional considerations* If competitors do retaliate, we need to recognise that they will have deeper pockets than us and we will therefore need to be creative in our approach.