A marketing plan is your roadmap for finding and keeping customers. By planning your marketing step-by-step, you give your company the best chance of success in today’s competitive marketplace. From establishing a strong brand to understanding your ideal customer, to creating a compelling buying experience, the time you put into planning now will pay off many times over in the success of your business.

**Mission:**

Your mission is to develop a comprehensive in-depth marketing plan for an online in three steps over the term. This is Step One.

* Students do NOT have to determine a product that they would sell in the online environment as this will be predetermined for the class.
* Each student will develop their own unique and individualized Marketing Plan for the common product selected by your instructor.
* The target customer must be an end user consumer and not a business, therefore, all sales are B2C and not B2B.
* Your website must be the primary selling platform, but you may use other secondary or tertiary distribution channels such as the Amazon Seller Account or other such distribution channels. If you do choose secondary or tertiary distribution channels, you must be fully aware of how they work, their costs, etc. and include the details in your Marketing Plan and the pro-forma income spreadsheet.
* All students will follow the same detailed Steps of the Marketing Plan using the same templates that are provided for you.
* Please note: This is an *individual effort and not a group effort*.

**Your Product:**

iPal 2 robot

Originally designed as a teachers’ aid for children, the iPal2 offers an open development platform allowing users to leverage brain games, music therapy and other content to engage and entertain older adults with various levels of cognitive ability. The iPal2 is a 40″ tall humanoid robot with a 10″ Android tablet on the chest plus a hand-held remote control. In addition to Alexa, Zoom and other popular apps, AvatarMind offers proprietary apps to facilitate text-to-speech chats, changes in facial expressions and movement (using a smart phone or separate tablet). This easy-to-use robot can reduce stress on staff or volunteer caregivers when used for 1:1 visits or in group activities.

A couple of robots with headsets

Description automatically generated

Unlike service robots that exist to perform manual tasks, the iPal2 robot itself is considered a **‘social’ robot**. It has wheels on the base so it can roll around and the arms and head move so the robot seems to dance. However, it is the aesthetics of the form factor of a cute robot that creates a fun and more engaging way to interact. People often name their robots and want to have their picture taken with them.

Social isolation, loneliness and boredom are critical concerns for the health of older adults. They can lead to accelerated cognitive decline and increased risk of early death. The form factor and fun additions in the iPal2 make AI voice technology feel like another person or some type of being in the room, versus just a smart tablet which feels like a device. That means iPal2 helps provide companionship, which can help people feel like they aren’t so alone.

A robot standing on a platform

Description automatically generated

**Useful links to help get you started:**

[From the iPal Robot Website](https://www.ipalrobot.com/) <https://www.ipalrobot.com/>

<https://www.digitaljournal.com/pr/news/prwirecenter/global-companion-robots-market-2024-updates-business-statistics-and-leading-players-analysis-by-2031>

<https://www.robotlab.com/store/ipal-autism-pack>

<https://robotiklab.co.uk/product/ipal-2/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yoVWnN5i_vk>

The **marketing plan time frame is one (1) year from the launch date of** **January 1, 2025**. Please **develop this marketing plan with this timeframe in mind.**

Your market is **ALL OF CANADA** and as such all aspects of your marketing plan must take this into account. You will be provided with a **seed capital budget of $20,000** **which must be paid back in full within the first year of operation.** All initial expenses cannot exceed this initial seed capital as loans are not permitted. This includes everything from inventory to your website hosting, to content development for marketing, to marketing to promote your business on Social Media platforms to boosting your posts on various social media platforms. Expenses associated with implementation of your various strategies to marketing your company from launch date must be clearly detailed and included as separate line items in the proforma. Expense items in your strategies must match those found in the proforma exactly.

For all three Steps of the Marketing Plan, each student will develop and submit a **concise NARRATED Microsoft PowerPoint presentation and upload it to the course Moodle site before the due date and time. Penalties apply for late submissions. There are no written reports for this course. Ensure the audio recording for each slide of your narrated PPT presentation is working, clear, easy to hear and understand. Presentations with no audio or audio that is of very poor quality will be rejected and receive a score of zero. There are no opportunities for resubmission.**

Your presentations will be reviewed and assessed by the instructor using the grading rubrics provided.

The **Maximum number of slides permitted in your presentation are 21 slides.** The slides should be self-explanatory and stand on their own. You are permitted to provide limited slide notes however, that said, they are NOT to introduce new material that is not already presented on the slide, but to SUPPORT material presented on the slide only. This may take the form of showing your assumptions, calculations, analysis, and your citations. Given that you have a **maximum of** **15 minutes** for your narrated PPT presentation, this works out to about one minute per slide, which is the accepted business standard. **Any content beyond the 15-minute time limit will be disregarded as if it was not included or presented and will receive a score of zero. So do not go over the time limit – practice and time your narrated PPT presentation.**

**Cover Page:** Student name & ID number, Instructor’s name, Course name and number (MRKT 4331 – R50), Date of submission, – **1 slide**

**Maximum time limit for each narrated PowerPoint presentation: 15-minutes**

**Maximum slide count for the body of report:** **15 slides**

**Appendices** – **5 slides - maximum**, including citations /bibliography. (You are not expected to present these in your narrated PPT presentation. These are for reference by your instructor to see your supporting analysis.)

Slides that exceed the slide maximum will be disregarded and not considered for grading purposes. In other words, only the first 15 content slides will be considered as part of your presentation for grading purposes. **Any slides beyond the 15-slide limit will be disregarded as if they were not included or presented and will receive a score of zero.**

Your content should clearly address the Rubric requirements for each Step of the Marketing Plan as it is your recorded PowerPoint content that your instructor will assess for your grade.

Narrated PowerPoint slide presentations must be submitted on time to the course Moodle site as directed in the Course Presentation.

**PENALTIES: *(no exceptions permitted)***

***Late assignments: 15-mark (not percent) penalty for each day late. (One second past the due time is considered late. Date and time taken from Moodle)***

***Incorrect format: 15-mark penalty (not percent) for any assignments submitted in any format other than Microsoft PowerPoint presentation format for steps One through three. Student will be required to resubmit in the proper MS PPT format to receive a grade.***

***Incorrect Moodle Assignment folder: 15-mark penalty (not percent) for assignments submitted to the incorrect assignment folder. Student will be required to resubmit into the proper folder to receive a grade.***

***Incorrect template or order of topics: 15-mark penalty (not percent) for students electing to use their own template or put topics in an order other than what the template requires.***

**Students are required to use the Marketing Plan Step’s 1, 2 & 3 Templates provided**. **Students are required to use the same headings and in the same order as found in the Marketing Plan Steps 1, 2 & 3 Template when developing their PowerPoint slide presentations**.

Following the Template ensures you cover off and complete all aspects of the deliverables for the marketing plan and it is clear to your instructor which part of the marketing plan you are addressing. It is not the job of the instructor to find content in your presentation and then try to find a match as to which component of the Rubric it might apply to.

**1. Define your products**

Describe, in detail, the product assigned to you to promote in your **online** business. No face-to-face sales, of any kind, no drop shipping is/are permitted therefore you must overcome as much as possible the fact that online customers cannot use all their senses of touch, taste, sound, etc. Include detailed multiple pictures of your product(s) with details of their specifications such as weight, size, dimensions, colors, technical specifications, etc. For a good example, look at what Amazon does for their products.

**2. Define your brand**

**Part A - Problem being solved**

* What problem is your target audience solving by using your product?
  + Try to think less literally (i.e., they eat at my restaurant to solve hunger) and more about the specific motivations that bring them to your business (i.e., they need a healthy fast-food option they can use on their short lunch break)

**Part B - Positioning Maps**

* + Use **two** different positioning maps with different axis criteria to help visualize how you want to be perceived relative to your major competitors. You should develop each positioning map using those **critical axis** **attributes** most important to your target market that will help differentiate you from the competition. Critical should integrate and relate to what your target audience determines as critical not what you might think is critical. You have this information from your “Part Four: Identify your customers” analysis.

**Part C - Explanation of your two maps**

* + Explain / analyze what your Positioning maps indicate.

**Part D - Actionable Insights**

* + Based on your analysis of the positioning maps, what is your positioning statement and how do you want to be perceived in the marketplace? Essentially, what is your sustainable competitive advantage? *DO NOT default to the worst differentiator of “Lowest Price” as this is not sustainable or acceptable for this project.*

**3. Define your Goals and Business Initiatives to accomplish the overarching company goal(s)**

Remember:

This is a Canada wide online business, no physical stores or any sort, no face-to-face sales of any sort. All sales are online to people you do not know. That means you will NOT be selling to your friends and family for this marketing plan. Far too many students default to this limited option.

**Please limit the number of Initiatives/Goals/Objectives to a maximum of two.**

Better to have an in-depth analysis on a few goals and initiatives than a superficial analysis of too many business goals and initiatives. You do not have time in your narrated PPT presentation to cover more than two initiatives.

Your online business goals and initiatives are for the first year of operation only**.** Use the following format below for each initiative. These should be **S.M.A.R.T.**

**Part A - Examples:**

[*Your Company name*] has the ambitious goal of [*overarching company goal(s)*]. To help the business do that, our marketing team will pursue the following initiative(s) in [*current year*]:

**Example one**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Initiative # 1 |  |
| **Description** | [Example: Over the next 12 months, we’ll work on building the number of likes per post on FB] |
| ***Goal of initiative:***  *(Must use hard numbers that are researched and supported – no theory please.)* | [Example:  1. To increase our FB likes per post from 3 likes per post in month 1 growing linearly to 50 likes per post by month 12 with an average of 25 likes over the year]  2. To post 1-2 FB posts daily  3. To generate an average of 15 sales per month from FB posts |
| ***Metrics to measure success:***  *(Must use hard numbers that are researched and supported – no theory please.)* | [Example: Based on industry research the conversion rate of likes is 2%. This means for every 100 likes I will generate 2 sales towards our monthly sales forecast. Assuming we generate an average of 25 likes per post annually, this translates to 30 days per month X one FP post per day X 25 likes = 750 likes per month or 15 sales per month at a 2% conversion rate. |

**Example two**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Initiative # 2 |  |
| **Description** | [Example: Over the next 12 months, we’ll work on building a blog property that becomes a go-to resource for our customers’ burning questions – and our number-one source of leads month over month.] |
| **Goal of initiative:**  *(Must use hard numbers that are researched and supported – no theory please.)* | [Example: To increase our website’s rank on Google and create critical top-of-the-funnel marketing content that helps our sales team start more conversations with prospects.] |
| **Metrics to measure success:**  *(Must use hard numbers that are researched and supported – no theory please.)* | [Example: 50,000 organic page views per month / 10 content downloads per month which lead to a 30% conversion rate where we generate 30 sales for every 100 downloads contributing towards our monthly sales forecast] |

**4. Define your customers**

*The purpose of a business is to create and keep a customer. This makes understanding customers the top priority of any business.*

Your highest priority persona

Create the highest priority persona or your best imaginary customer description. This persona should correspond to the most important customer segment or target market segment that you want to attract. For example, a coffee shop near university might be going after students\ as their primary persona, with parents of young children as their secondary persona and the local business crowd as their tertiary persona. **You are to identify in detail ONLY your primary persona**. This will help you focus and complete a deep dive and analysis of one target rather than choose several targets and dilute your focus and presentation.

Your persona will help you visualize the customer(s) you are targeting and develop brand messages and marketing tactics that will resonate with them.

**For the highest priority persona, you must address each of the five (5) elements that describe this persona.**

**Part A - Geographic:**

* This is already set for this project – Online and digital landscape across all of Canada - where will your business and sales take place? Simply say you will be selling online across Canada.

**Part B - Demographic:**

* What is their demographic profile - ***who is your customer*?**

* + Characteristics of your primary persona expressed statistically, such as age, gender identification, profession, income, social status, education, marital status, religion, birth rate, death rate, average size of family, average age at marriage, race, ethnicity, etc.
  + The more demographic detail you have about your highest priority persona the better you will be able to understand them and the better you will be able to target them effectively with appropriate strategies.

**Part C - Psychographic:**

* What is their Psychographic profile – Interests, habits or routine, preferences, values, hobbies -***why* *do they buy?***
* What is their Lifestyle profile– Status, relationships, known associations like athletic and health/wellness preferences or career and family ambitions.

Examples: socially or environmentally conscious, health and wellness preferences, value saving time, communicate via digital media…

**Part D - Behavioral:**

* + Buying Factors / Sensitivity – Price, quality, brand name, service, special product features, advertising, packaging, location, store design, ambiance, discounts, coupons, rebates, loyalty programs, contest, influencers, newsletters, blogs, IGTV, etc.? ***- what triggers their buying behavior?***
  + What specific Social Media platforms and sites do they use and if more than one, prioritize them based on frequency of use.

**Part E - Target Market:**

* Using a combination of demographic, psychographic, lifestyle, and behaviours, profile your ***BEST***customer. Crafting customer *persona(s)* are a great way to capture your client’s story of *doing business with you*.

Note: See Persona Template provided in the Course Moodle Resources as this may help you flesh out this section more fully. Link to source: <https://fitsmallbusiness.com/customer-profile-template-examples/>

Additionally, **HubSpot** has a free downloadable “make my persona” template. Link is: <https://www.hubspot.com/make-my-persona?hubs_post-cta=bottom&hsCtaTracking=1bc2de50-bb5b-4f9c-9e43-1869869a7e8b%7C1270b4df-4164-4c44-b3c5-1c7290afdfbe>

**5. Macro Environmental Analysis - PESTEL**

Scan your organization’s external macro environment. The important principle is identifying the key factors from the wider, uncontrollable external environment that might affect the organization. The PESTLE analysis should feed your [**SWOT Analysis**](https://oxford-learning-lab.teachable.com/p/swot-analysis)as it helps to determine the threats and opportunities represented by macro-environment forces that the organization usually cannot control. Link: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PEST_analysis>

Address ALL elements of a **PESTEL analysis and develop Actionable Insights**:

**All elements apply** to all businesses but do vary in importance / impacts. Use and complete the table provided below. Keep your Positive and Negative impacts to the ONE only, then address actionable insights.

**Part A – PESTEL Table**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **PESTEL Element** | **Positive Impacts** | **Negative Impacts** |
| Political | * - | * - |
| Economic | * - | * - |
| Socio-Cultural | * - | * - |
| Technological | * - | * - |
| Legal | * - | * - |
| Environmental | * - | * - |

**Part B – Actionable Insights**

* What activities can you undertake to mitigate the **single** biggest PESTEL negative element and take advantage the **single** biggest PESTEL positive element?

In other words, prioritize your positive impacts from the highest positive to the least positive and use the highest positive in your discussion about how to take advantage of this highest-ranking positive element. Similarly, for the negative elements, prioritize your negative impacts from the highest most negative impact to the least negative impact and use the highest most negative impact in your discussion about how to take minimize this highest-ranking negative element.

**6. Define your competitors**

Who else in this environment sells competing products? Anything that may be considered an alternative to what your business provides (please don’t say you have no competition – you do!).

You must understand what your competitors are doing and how their products stack up against yours. Analyze your competitors’ websites, social media, blogs, newsletters, online reviews, annual statements, product documents, brochures, etc. Talk to their customers about their needs. And don’t overlook the opportunity to learn more by talking directly to the competition.

**Part A - Competitor Strengths and Weaknesses analysis table**

Find ONE **significant** and **direct** competitor**, in addition to your company,** that you can profile with **Strengths** and **Weaknesses**- things they do well and things they can improve upon. Use and complete the table provided below. No more than three strengths or weaknesses for your business and that of the competitor. Choose only the most important strengths and weaknesses.

*Remember – Direct and Indirect competition. If you are a sandwich shop: Other sandwich shops are direct competition; a sushi restaurant is indirect competition. Both stop a customer from being hungry. Only one of you gets their lunch money. Focus on the DIRECT only.*

**Direct Competitor Strengths and Weaknesses analysis table**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Competitor** | **Strengths** | **Weaknesses** |
| ***Name of your company goes here*** | * - * - * - | * - * - * - |
| ***Name of the primary direct competitor you identify goes here*** | * - * - * - | * - * - * - |

**Part B - Positioning Strategy**

Once you’ve discovered your competitive landscape in the Competitor Strengths and Weaknesses analysis table above, it’s time to add yourself into the mix. Positioning refers to what differentiates your business from others.

Size up the competition and tell your reader how you will be different and take them on! Explain why customers would buy your product versus that of your competitor?

**7. Analyze your business – TOWS SWOT**

Take a hard look at your own business. You are to do this with a classic TOWS SWOT analysis – defining your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and developing strategies. Do not simply blindly compile lists, rather think about how these important factors contribute or detract from achieving your objectives. **Use the TOWS SWOT table template provided below** to build your Tows SWOT table.

Wikipedia link: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SWOT_analysis>

**Part A - TOWS SWOT Table**

* You may have several elements for each category of the SWOT table.
* Limit your lists for each SWOT category to a maximum of two otherwise you will not have time to explain each element in the narrated PPT presentation.
* Explain the listed elements of your Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
  + Explain why each element is on your list for each SWOT category.
  + Explain how each listed element relates to your product and business.
  + Do not simply list your elements for each SWOT category in the table without an explanation and expect the audience to figure out what they mean and how they apply to your product and business.
* Strengths:
  + what characteristics does your business possess the give it an advantage over others?
* Weaknesses:
  + what places your business as a disadvantage versus others? Address these weaknesses immediately.
* Opportunities:
  + what conditions or situations in the marketplace or in your competitors’ offerings could you exploit to your advantage?
* Threats:
  + what conditions or situations in the marketplace, or activities by your competition, could work against you?

**Part B - Strategies:**

* + The strategies you list in the TOWS analysis are strategies you would implement in the **first year** of your launch.
  + Focus on your TOP SWOT element for each element of the TOWS SWOT analysis. What is your strongest Strength / Weakness and what is the biggest Threat and Opportunity? Use this top SWOT to develop your SO/WO/ST/WT Strategies.
  + Explain each of your four SO/WO/ST/WT **Strategies**. Do not simply list them on the table without an explanation.
  + Use the accompanying table below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Your Company Name goes here | **Strengths – S**  1.  2. | **Weaknesses – W**  1.  2. |
| **Opportunities – O**  1.  2. | **SO strategies.**  Leverage strengths to maximize opportunities = **Attacking strategy**  1. | **WO strategies**  Counter weaknesses through exploiting opportunities = Build strengths for **Attacking Strategy**  1. |
| **Threats – T**  1.  2. | **ST strategies**  Leverage strengths to minimize threats = **Defensive strategy**  1. | **WT strategies**  Counter weaknesses and threats = **Build strengths for defensive strategy**  1. |

**8. Map your customer’s journey**

***This is one of the most important parts of the STEP ONE presentation****. If you do not understand this, then you cannot be an effective marketer to your target audience.*

Your goal is to deliver the right messages, to the right people, at the right time. It’s essential to communicate your brand consistently throughout your customers’ entire journey with you – from discovery to purchase to after purchase support and repeat business.

The key is to understand, at each point in the journey, what customers hope to achieve from the transaction and what their expectations of your business are. By referring to the customer persona you completed earlier, complete the following chart to clarify what marketing activities at each point on the journey are necessary for creating a loyal customer.

**Persona**

* Attention:
  + how will we make this person aware of our business?
* Interest:
  + how will we get them interested in our business?
* Desire:
  + how will we create a desire to purchase?
* Action:
  + how we get them to act and buy?
* Loyalty:
  + how will you make them loyal to our business?

**Appendices –** (Maximum of 5 slides)

Additional useful information, supporting research/analysis/calculations, industry benchmarks, infographics, etc. that might clutter the slide in your marketing plan step one presentation should appear in an appendix. Ensure you properly label, title, and name axis, etc. your appendices.