



Marketing Lab

Do You Have a Plan?



Marketing is one of the most important aspects of growing a business, yet it's often the most neglected. Business owners too often throw money at various advertising methods hoping for the best, instead of studying the market, developing smart strategies for growth, measuring results, and fine tuning campaigns.

Does your business have a marketing plan in writing?

When was the last time you researched your competition?

If you don't already have a marketing plan, it should contain:

- A description of your product and service offerings. (Be sure to update these as your business evolves.)
- A rationale for your pricing, based on recent research.
- Key statistics that steer your advertising. For example, your business revenue last year was 70% business to consumer and 30% business to business.
- A discussion about recent trends in your industry that may impact how you should position and market your business for the future.
- A description of what sets you apart from your competition.
- A description of any marketing challenges you face.
- A review of whether you achieved your marketing goals for the prior year.
- A description of your marketing goals for the coming year. For example, increase total sales by 5%.
- A description of your core marketing strategies. For example, "Maximize Free Advertising Opportunities," "Build More Partnerships," or "Increase Online Advertising."
- A budget total and a description of how that budget will be allocated. It may help as you go through the rest of this self-evaluation, to note what percentage of your marketing budget you want to allocate to each area.

INFORMATION
CUSTOMERS
TRENDS
**MARKET
RESEARCH**
ANALYSIS
POSSIBILITIES
THREATS

Tip: Communicate your marketing goals to your entire staff, so they can contribute to achieving them.

Developing an effective marketing plan requires time and research. CDESIGNS can help. Our experienced staff can research your industry and market and help write your marketing plan. We can provide you with advertising options we think could be successful, based on our research. Typically, we can help prepare a marketing plan for \$1200-\$1500.

If you need help with a marketing plan, contact CDESIGNS at 520-622-8635.

Let's Review Your Brand Image

If you are using a dated color scheme, images that contain yesterday's fashions and décor, or antiquated fonts, you may be sabotaging your business's growth potential. Even businesses with long-established brand equity need to refresh their brand image periodically. Subtle changes can be made to update the look and feel of your brand without losing its original essence and familiarity. Ask yourself:

- Does your slogan/tag line still fit your current market?
- Is the color scheme of your logo and brand materials on trend?
- Are you using popular, modern-day fonts?
- Are the hairstyles, clothing, and décor in your images giving off clues that your brand is old-fashioned?

Tip: Stop turning customers away to competitors who are in tune with the times. For best success, "dress" your brand according to current design trends.

If you're not sure whether your brand needs updating, our experts at CDESIGNS can evaluate your materials. With our knowledge of today's trends, we'll give you our honest assessment. It's a service we provide at no cost to you.

Contact CDESIGNS if you would like a free brand image evaluation. 520-622-8635

Let's Review Your Website

Along with the progression of technology, the elements customers expect to find when they arrive on a website have evolved. As a result of this evolution, website design standards have changed. For example, if you don't know what a hamburger menu is, your business may be missing the boat. (And no, it doesn't have anything to do with lunch!) Is it time to scrap your old website and start over?

Ask yourself:

- Is your website still accurately representing your products and services?
- Is your website as visually captivating as other more modern sites?
- Is your website mobile and tablet friendly?
- Is the text on your website clear, compelling, and error free?
- Does your website contain strong calls to action?
- Are you maximizing opportunities to link to your social media accounts?
- Does your website provide your customers with several different options for contacting you?
- Is your website focused on providing your customers with valued information, goods, and services?
- Is your website optimized to achieve good organic search rankings?

Tip: Your website is a critical marketing tool that will make or break opportunities to gain new customers. For best success, invest in keeping the design and technological features of your website on the forefront. Frequently update your website with current promotions, news, loyalty programs, and any other value-added features that will keep your customers engaged and returning again and again.

Visit us at www.cdesignsmarketing.com/web-design to see examples of some of our stunning websites. A custom-designed, 10-page site with basic web features runs \$3650. If you need website help, contact CDESIGNS at 520-622-8635.

Let's Review Your Signage

Signs can:

Attract Customers Limit Liability
Increase Profits Promote Your Brand

Signs that Attract Customers

Are you maximizing the opportunity to attract new customers with exterior, on-site signage?

Is your exterior signage eye-catching?

Is your signage worn out or dated?

Poll your customers to see how many of them found you just by driving by. If they found you some other way, ask them if your exterior signs made it easy to find your location. Consider whether you need to make any adjustments to your exterior signage.

Wayfinding Signs

Periodically put yourself in the shoes of customers who don't know where anything is on your property. What path would you like them to take and is that path clear to them?

Can your customers easily find what they came for?

Will your customers know where to check in, pick up, pay, ask a question, find a restroom, etc?

Poll your customers to make sure they are easily finding what they need. Do you need to add or modify your on-site signage to make it clearer where to go or where to find something?

Signs that Persuade

Are you using signage to maximize the opportunity for impulse buys?

Do you need to add or modify signage to feature products or services that are new, on sale, in season now, etc?

Safety/Instructional Signs

Do you need to add safety signs to limit your liability or to comply with regulations?

Do you need to add instructional signs to enhance your customer's experience?

Logo Signs

Are you adequately promoting your brand with logo signs?

When customers leave your premises, will they remember your business name?

Do you need to add more interior or exterior logo signs, so customers will remember your business and tell their friends about you?

CDESIGNS can design and deliver these and more signs right to your door:

Aluminum Signs	Posters
Coroplast Signs	Yard Signs
Vinyl Banners	Car Magnets
Trade Show Booth Displays	Monument Signs
Window/Door Decals	Custom Signs

If you need help designing and ordering a new sign, please call CDESIGNS at 520-622-8635.

Let's Review Your Print Materials

Print materials are one of the most affordable ways to reinforce your brand and get the word out about your products and services. Are your business essentials well-coordinated and professional? Are you distributing low-cost print materials to advertise your business? Consider whether any of the following materials would help promote your business:

Business Cards	Door Hangers	Posters
Booklets	Flyers	Postcards
Brochures	Hang Tags	Presentation
Calendars	Letterhead	Folders
Catalogs	Newsletters	Rack Cards
Coupons	Notepads	Sticker Labels

CDESIGNS can design, print, and deliver these and more print materials. Order a quantity of 5,000 or more of any cdesigns print product and we'll design it for you for free! Get started. Call 520-622-8635.

Let's Review Your Online Advertising

More than 3 billion people are now using the internet to connect socially, to get information, and to research products and services. Tap into this resource to get in front of your customers. Consider whether any of these internet advertising opportunities might make sense for your business:

Banner Ads

Banner ads are static or rotating website display ads. Some websites offer ad space on a flat monthly cost basis and others offer it based on the number of times your ad is displayed.

Do you have a very specific target audience and a compelling offer?

If so, have you considered placing banner ads on websites where your customer type is browsing?

PPC Ads

Pay-per-click ads are "text-only" or "text-plus-graphic" ads offered by Google on a pay-per-click basis. You choose a keyword or key phrase relevant to your business. When someone does a Google search for that word or phrase, your ad will display. You pay only when someone clicks on your ad.

Would you like to reach people who are Googling a certain keyword or key phrase?

The best PPC ads contain a competitive price and a strong call to action. Can your offer be summed up this way in just a few words?

If so, have you considered implementing a Google pay-per-click ad campaign?

Retargeting Ads

Site retargeting ads are displayed to people after they visit your website. While they are on your site, a bit of Java code in the footer of your website drops an anonymous "cookie" on the visitor's browser. Later, when they are surfing the web, the cookie will let your retargeting provider know when to "serve" them ads - to recapture their interest and bring them back to your site.

Search retargeting ads are displayed to people who previously did a search engine query for a keyword or phrase that your business wants to target. The viewer didn't necessarily previously visit your website.

Contextual retargeting - If your website shares similar customers with another website, you can partner up to share your cookies. So if a customer leaves one site and visits the other, ads from the previous site will display on the current site, and vice versa. Since you and your partner site have customers who share the same interests, this can be a way you can save paying more for highly targeted ads.

Email retargeting - An example of this is when a registered customer abandons their shopping cart, an email can be sent to them with an offer

Note: Ads shouldn't be retargeted to customers who already purchased a product.

Statistics show that as little as 2% of your site traffic makes a purchase on their first visit. Retargeting is a modern tool used to re-attract the other 98% in the hopes they will buy on a subsequent visit. It also promotes brand awareness.

Can retargeting ads benefit your business?

Have You Considered Print Publication Advertising?

Explore opportunities to get your message in front of your target customer in:

- Trade Publications
- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Coupon Books

Tip: Print ads can work especially well if you offer a niche product or service.

CDESIGNS can create beautifully-branded digital and/or print ads for you. When you hire us to create your web or print ads, we can work directly with the company hosting the advertising to facilitate your ad placement. We can obtain the specifications for the ad and provide your artwork in the format they require. Our custom digital and print ad design is \$85/hr. A small, custom banner ad design typically requires 1-2 hours.

Contact CDESIGNS for help with digital or print ad design and placement. 520-622-8635

Have You Thought About Direct Mail?

The post office recently lowered commercial postage rates for the first time in decades. With the USPS Every Door Direct Mail program, you can mail up to a 20 page brochure or catalog for 17.6 cents each!

Is your business conducive to direct mail marketing?

Have you tested one or more direct mail campaigns for your product or service?

Get the word out to the masses! CDESIGNS can design, print, and mail your campaign. From postcards to brochures to catalogs, we do it all! Call 520-622-8635.

Let's Review Your Social Media Presence

Social media has become an integral part of life online. More and more consumers are staying inside their social media platforms for news and product information. Use social media to:

- 1. Exponentially spread the good word about your brand.** Create social media content that encourages users to share it with their network of friends.
- 2. Establish an ongoing channel for communicating** news, promotions, and other useful information to keep your customers engaged and get them coming back again and again.
- 3. Reach department-specific business goals.** A good social media marketing strategy involves all functions of your business. For example, are you or your human resources manager looking for job candidates? Post the job opportunities on your social media page. Do you or your sales manager need more leads? Social media can be a great place to find and respond to new leads. Do you or your customer service manager want to announce a new customer loyalty program? Make a splash on social media. Did your business just receive an award or certification? Show it off on social media. Does your marketing manager want to promote a new product or special offer? Launch it on social media. All of these and more goals can be supported in the realm of social media.
- 4. Maintain and regain your customer's confidence.** Social media gives customers a forum to express their experiences with your business, and it gives you an opportunity to manage your business reputation by responding quickly to negative customer feedback. This social CRM (customer relationship marketing) shows that your company cares about its customers and can match or go beyond its competition to provide outstanding customer service.
- 5. Get a pulse on customer sentiment.** Social media allows you to foster and follow conversations about your brand and receive real-time feedback to help steer marketing and customer service efforts.
- 6. Help your organic search engine rankings.** Creating links to your website from your social media pages can increase traffic to your website, which can in turn increase leads and revenue. One of the key components of social media marketing (SMM) is social media optimization (SMO). Like search engine optimization (SEO), SMO is a strategy for drawing new and unique visitors to your website. SMO can be done two ways: by adding social media links to content such as RSS feeds and sharing buttons, or by promoting activity through social media via status updates, tweets, or blog posts.
- 7. Increase sales with paid social media advertising.** In addition to the organic reach you can achieve with social media marketing, recently, social media platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn began selling paid advertising. We can work with you to create social media ads to increase your reach. Accomplish it with organic social media posts, paid social media advertising, or both; it promotes your brand and can increase referral and new business.

CDESIGNS can geo-target your campaign to a specific region or regions.

These are some of the most widely-used social media platforms:

- **Facebook** is a popular free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send and share messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues. According to statistics from the Nielsen Group, Internet users within the United States spend more time on Facebook than any other website.
- **Twitter** is a free microblogging service that allows registered members to broadcast short posts called tweets. Twitter members can broadcast tweets and follow other users' tweets by using multiple platforms and devices.
- **Google +** (pronounced Google plus) is Google's social networking project, designed to replicate the way people interact offline more closely than is the case in other social networking services. Google uses your Google+ business page to help your business information appear in search results in Google+, Google Maps, Google Search, and Google Earth.
- **Linked In** is a social networking site designed specifically for the business community. The goal of the site is to allow registered members to establish and document networks of people they know and trust professionally.
- **Pinterest** is a social curation website for sharing and categorizing images found online. Pinterest requires brief descriptions but the main focus of the site is visual. Clicking on an image will take you to the original source, so, for example, if you click on a picture of a pair of shoes, you might be taken to a site where you can purchase them. An image of blueberry pancakes might take you to the recipe; a picture of a whimsical birdhouse might take you to the instructions.
- **Instagram** is an online mobile photo-sharing, video-sharing, and social networking service that enables its users to take pictures and videos, and share them either publicly or privately on the app, as well as through a variety of other social networking platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and Flickr.
- **YouTube** is a video-sharing website that makes it easy for users to watch videos.

Are you using social media to market your products, promote your brands, connect to your current customers, and foster new business?

Do you have a social media strategy?

Does your social media strategy directly support your current business objectives?

CDESIGNS can create, configure, and manage any of these social media accounts for you.

CDESIGNS can:

- **Create and update your social media graphics as needed.** We can create custom buttons, status updates, promotions, and more, to drive traffic from your social media platforms to your website.
- **Create and execute all of your social media content for you.** We can send a monthly content query email to up to 10 of your Department Heads/Key Contact People for content input. Our monthly email can serve as a monthly reminder to you and your department heads to push your latest goals and communicate important information to your social media audience. We can turn the brief talking point(s) we collect into exciting social media blasts. During months when there is little or no content, we can fill in with content we create. All content is submitted for your approval before we post it.
- **Maintain your social media calendar.** CDESIGNS can create and manage a social media content calendar for you. We can work with you to prepare and schedule upcoming announcements, promotions, value-added educational material, and other types of content.
- **Post all your social media output on your behalf** (Such as tweeting, Facebook status updates, blog posting, etc.)
- **Perform all your social media engagement on your behalf** (Such as responding to tweets, Facebook page moderation, blog moderation, etc.)
- **Provide basic “listening” & trend reporting for your brand.** CDESIGNS can provide you with monthly quick-glance reports of your social media trends and statistics. The report will summarize major trending topics within your social media platforms and provide key figures so you can track your social media progress.
- **Manage your social media reputation,** including responding to customer complaints on your behalf, or pushing posts of concern to your designated contact for a response. CDESIGNS can work with you to create a social media protocol for responding to customer complaints. We can monitor your social media for any sign of customer dissatisfaction and respond on your behalf, based on the established protocol.
- **Watch your competitors** – Give us the names of up to 3 competitors and we’ll include a competitor trendwatch summary on your monthly report.
- **Push Leads** – We can push social sales leads to your designated contact.
- **Produce** monthly progress reports.
- **Manage Paid Social Media Advertising Campaigns.** CDESIGNS can geo-target your campaign to a specific region or regions.

Our social media management packages start as low as \$195/mo! Visit CDESIGNSmarketing.com for more details or contact us at 520-622-8635.

Have You Considered Radio, TV, & Billboard Advertising?

Radio

If you're trying to reach a specific demographic, a golden oldies, news talk show, or rock station might be just the venue to advertise your business.

TV

Despite the rise of the internet, Americans spend hours watching tv every day. If you want to reach a wide audience, explore tv advertising opportunities.

Billboards

If you want to direct prospective customers to your business, or if you want to reinforce your brand with a strong visual display, look into billboard advertising.

Does radio, television, or billboard advertising make sense for your business?

In most cases, for just 15% more than your cost for radio, television, or billboard advertising, CDESIGNS can facilitate ad creation and placement for you, saving you time (money) in the long run. We can work with the communications company to create a marketing campaign aimed to drive action.

Don't put it off another day. Market and grow! Call CDESIGNS for help with your projects.

Visit CDESIGNSprint.com for an instant print quote. Visit CDESIGNSmarketing.com for more information about our marketing services.

CDESIGNS 520-622-8635



Building Award-Winning Brands