



A Marketing Guide for
the Environmental Sector

December 2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Examining the challenge which marketing presents for many companies in the environmental or green technologies and services sector, ***A Marketing Guide for the Environmental Sector*** has been created to help businesses understand the principles of and execute a range of marketing activities which will drive growth.

Providing an introduction to what is commonly referred to as the 'marketing mix', the report details the key factors which will inform a business's strategy and the core elements to include in any marketing plan.

By considering the factors which make up a brand, such as its promise, vision and values, the report illustrates how to create develop or improve upon a business's proposition, and from there create a suite of key messages which can be included in future marketing activity.

To help make the most of this subsequent activity, a 'How To' guide forms the final section of the report; from advice on how to write a press release that will stand out, to making the most out of trade shows, as well as digital campaigns and more traditional activities such as personal selling. The report also provides guidance on evaluating the success of the activity undertaken.

A supplementary toolkit and case studies provide further guidance and practical examples for those businesses wishing to explore the potential benefits of dedicated marketing activity in more detail.

INTRODUCTION

One of the key challenges faced by many companies in what is commonly described as the environmental or green technologies and services sector is how to market their business effectively.

Marketing is of course a broad discipline, and there will never be a 'one size fits all' solution but understanding the basic principles remains as important for businesses in all sectors as it ever was. And understanding and using these principles will not only enable businesses in the environmental sector to improve their marketing content and messaging, but help them reach their target audience through the most effective channels, striking a balance between showcasing green credentials and making a robust business case for investment.

To support businesses in the green technologies and services sector and SMEs in particular, this document has therefore been produced to provide an overview of the principles of marketing and guidance on marketing a wide range of products and services.

The document considers how to create a marketing plan, including details of the key elements to include as well as examining a wide range of marketing activities which might be appropriate in different circumstances.

How-to guides are also included, which examine how to write a good press release and secure media coverage as well as how to make the most of a trade show or how to tackle digital marketing for instance.

A variety of case studies have also been provided, illustrating how businesses ranging from SMEs with a niche product, to companies specialising in green-construction methods, have employed different tactics to market their product and services.

A separate toolkit has also been created to help businesses in the green technologies and services sector understand their brand and what it represents, and importantly, ensure they have a robust proposition which will underpin all marketing activity.

It is recommended that this toolkit is used prior to creating a marketing plan. If a clear proposition already exists, it is worth reviewing the toolkit, and using it to help define key marketing messages. All of the outputs from the toolkit are directly relevant and will feed into future marketing activity.

1. DEVELOPING A MARKETING STRATEGY



Developing a marketing strategy is a crucial step for every business, regardless of size, location or the product or service it sells.

Without a clear strategy, a business's attempts to attract new and retain existing customers will be inefficient at best and while some small success may be achieved, it is likely to be short term and represent only a fraction of what is possible.

It is important to remember that marketing is a process rather than a singular activity or simply a means of selling more products. This process requires every business to establish where demand exists for a service or product and then find solutions to those requirements as well as the means by which to make customers aware of them.

For environmental sector companies, further consideration must be given to why potential customers specifically need a low carbon product or service. Return on investment may include changing customer perception or other factors, as well as financial return of course.

Ultimately, the marketer must identify compelling reasons and tangible benefits to buy green technology products or services and illustrate why these reasons will in the long term, make good business sense. For instance, energy efficient lighting in a warehouse will cost more in the short term but deliver long term energy savings with a pay-back period of three to five years for instance.

A good marketing strategy will identify those additional factors which mean warehouse operators need to invest in energy efficient lighting now. It could be a direct contribution to overall operating efficiency, health and safety, regulatory compliance or any one of a range of factors which will influence the decision to invest.

A robust marketing strategy then, will not only be centred around how a product or service for sale meets clearly defined customer requirements, but it will enable the business to develop long-term, profitable relationships with customers which have bought into the low-carbon agenda.

It is also essential that this strategy is flexible.

Traditionally, businesses created an annual marketing plan at the end of each year, setting out the activity for the year ahead and agreeing the budget to deliver the plan. Today, technology and of course the internet have changed the way people and businesses interact with each other to such an extent that our expectations are not just greater, they are quite different to just a few years ago. And it is unlikely that the rate of change will slow. It means that a plan written in December may well simply be out of date by March the next year.

The environmental sector by its nature is also changeable and so a strategy which is adaptable and can respond to changes in the market place as well as changes in customer perception and demand, supported by a marketing plan which mirrors this flexibility is key.

A budget can still be set of course, the amount being determined by the type of activity that will be delivered and the channels which are used as well as factors such as how well established the business already is.

There are no hard and fast rules in terms of how much a business should spend on its marketing – popular guidance ranges from 2% to 20% of gross revenue, depending on numerous factors including how competitive an industry a business is operating in.

The cost of implementing various types of marketing activity will also vary depending on who delivers the activity agreed upon. And if a professional agency is employed, the costs will vary according to factors such as location and agency size. A large London agency is likely to charge more for its services than a smaller specialist agency which is local to you in Greater Manchester, and a city centre agency is likely to have higher overheads.

Similarly, a marketing campaign which is based around trade show attendance will require a bigger budget than one which is based upon content creation – producing blogs, social media content or thought leadership articles which have been written to provide commentary on market issues, positioning the business as an expert in its field.

Ultimately, your marketing effort is designed to drive revenue and in the majority of cases for successful businesses, the budget will task-orientated, which requires a tactical marketing plan.

Remember: the overarching objective of any marketing strategy for all business including those in the green technologies and services sector remains unchanged. In simple terms, it must identify and then illustrate how the benefits of your product or service will be communicated to the target market.

And with the strategy agreed, a tactical marketing plan can be created – this plan will set out how the strategy will be implemented. The plan should be reviewed regularly in order to respond quickly to changes including the requirements or possibly attitudes of customers as well as the wider economic climate. This process of evaluation and action must be seen as critical to long term growth.

But before producing the first plan, it is worth considering the principles of marketing in a little more detail.

2. AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PRINCIPLES OF MARKETING

2.1 The Marketing Mix

One of the fundamental principles of marketing is the marketing mix. The marketing mix consists of four different factors – the four Ps – which businesses need to get right in order to successfully sell their goods and services.



2.1.1 Product

This is the first step of the marketing mix. Without the product there is nothing to market.

The product should fill a gap in the market in some way or fulfil some type of business need such as the low carbon green building insulation offered by Molygran Ltd based in Bury which expanded its polystyrene product range to create a significant growth opportunity.

The product should be designed according to the target market's specific requirements, needs and / or desires.

2.1.2 Price

The price of a product or service must reflect what the target market or customer is willing to pay which may be determined by the cost of similar sorts of products or services or if none exist, by conducting market research, but ultimately it must of course also enable the business to generate profit.

It must be determined based upon the way in which product is being positioned – an environmental sector product or service may well require a greater investment in the short term. Consideration will need to be given to the price difference for similar services or products available elsewhere if applicable, and if there is an additional cost, the associated environmental benefits must be clearly defined.

Price will inevitably be dependent on the cost of production too and should reflect the level of profit that is desired as well as the price that competitors outside and within the green technologies and services sector, are charging. Pricing above the competition may be desirable if the product or service is intended to be seen as premium in some way or to reflect the added value of its green credentials.

2.1.3 Promotion

Promotion is how a business makes its customers aware of the product or service offered but also how it makes those things attractive.

Promotion may take the form of traditional PR such as press releases or social media campaigns, advertising via commercial radio stations or on social media platforms such as LinkedIn, or it may include introductory offers or marketing events and trade shows for instance.

Every promotional campaign however should reflect the fact that different target markets will respond differently to specific types of promotional activity. Some methods of promotion will either not be appropriate for a specific audience, or are unlikely to reach that audience. If prospective customers do not typically attend trade shows, exhibiting even at shows which are relevant will not reach the audience required. Similarly, if there is little activity on social media channels or the prospective customers are not active on platforms such as LinkedIn, a social media campaign may not be the best approach.

If a business offers multiple services or products, these may need individual promotional campaigns to highlight a specific product among many or to target both the private and public sectors for instance in which case the key messages may be different – references to reputation and profitability being more appropriate in terms of the language used, for the private sector for example.

2.1.4 Place

Place refers to the method of distribution for a business's service or product, or the actual location in which the customer will be able to purchase it.

Some of the key things to consider are whether the product is best suited to a specific geographic region or perhaps the type of retailer who might sell the product. In short, the product or service needs to be available in the places the customer will expect to find it.

3. KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE IN A MARKETING PLAN

A good marketing plan will provide a roadmap which identifies target customers, how these potential customers will be communicated with and how the business will retain those customers and drive repeat custom.

Every marketing plan will be different in format and style depending on the business in question but there are a number of elements which it is good practice to include.



3.1 Executive summary

This section is a summary of the sections of the plan – its purpose is to provide an overview which is beneficial both for the person writing the plan and other stakeholders.

Write this section only after the rest of the plan has been completed.

3.2 Target market

This is the part of the plan in which the target customer is identified – it is typical to profile customers, considering their requirements as well as demographics and where relevant, leisure interests – essentially, the better you know your customer, the more easily you will be able to find common ground, build a relationship and communicate effectively with them.

The more detailed this profiling is, the more targeted your communications activity and / or advertising will be.

An example template is shown below, and many templates are freely available on the web.

| | |
|---|---|
| Company Info | |
| Industry | |
| Company size | |
| Geographies | |
| Business model | |
| Annual revenue | |
| Position Info | |
| Job title(s) | |
| Responsibilities | |
| Reports to | |
| Supervises | |
| Career background | |
| Career path | |
| Demographic Info | |
| Gender | |
| Age range | |
| Income range | |
| Education level | |
| Geography (urban/rural) | |
| Degree | |
| Personality Traits | |
| Demeanour | |
| Communication preference | |
| Content preference | For example: White papers, fact/spec sheets, technical guides |
| Content voice | For example: Factual, logic-based |
| Trigger Words/Buzzwords | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| Common Team Goals | Nb: this refers to the overall goals and objectives of the individual/ team/department being profiled |
| | |
| | |
| Individual Goals/Motivations | |
| https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nnCdRQ5C3mQ | |

| | |
|---|---|
| | |
| Challenges/Obstacles/Pain points | Nb. Include the main blocker in terms of buying your product or service |
| | |
| Customer Quotes | Nb: These help provide context for future reference re: the points listed above |
| | |
| Preferred Info Resources | For example: blogs, conferences, trade shows, consultancies |
| | |
| Common Objections | Nb: These should be specific to your recommended solutions |

For a business in the green technologies and services sector, it is particularly important to consider the differing criteria that individuals within target customer companies will consider before making a purchase. The primary consideration for an operations manager for instance may be production line efficiency or overall equipment effectiveness, whereas a managing director or finance director may be more influenced by the required capital expenditure or a quantifiable return on investment.

In this scenario, it may be appropriate to consider alternative ways of presenting this type of information. For instance, presenting the Total Cost of Ownership (which allows other costs to be included in the equation such as energy, parts, consumables or other factors where the environmental sector can offer advantageous terms) rather than capital expenditure, may illustrate the overall benefits more effectively.

In addition, it may be necessary to adapt the way in which a product or service is described depending on whether the prospective customer is operating in the public or private sector. For instance, the public sector may respond more positively to terms such as 'value', while the private sector will be influenced by 'profit'. There is no one size fits all approach however, by understanding what motivates a prospective customer, the pitch and language used can be adapted accordingly. Reputation and association with premium brands for instance are factors which may be incorporated into the language used with private sector companies.

The green credentials of an environmental sector product or service should still form part of the marketing communications or sales pitch, but the balance of information will be informed by understanding the decision maker's interests, aspirations and business priorities.

Ultimately, it is important to be aware of the issues which may affect your target market and prospective customers – these might include things such as austerity, the Circular Economy package for instance or the implications of Brexit in terms of environmental legislation.

And when considering your audience, try to identify individuals by job title such as finance directors, operations managers or environment / facilities managers, giving consideration to their objectives and priorities – in other words the things which will motivate them to engage with and buy from you.

<For further guidance please also refer to section 4: The anatomy of a brand toolkit>

3.3 USP (Unique Selling Proposition)

A business's USP is what differentiates it from the competition. The proposition should be created based on the following considerations:

What: (what your business is)

Which: (what your business provides, to achieve what result)

So that: (the benefit this provides for your customer)

It will capture why prospective customers should deal with you rather than the competition and will make the benefits of your product or service clear from the start. It is also the thing which should resonate with a business's prospective customers and which will in turn drive repeat custom.

Example in the energy sector

Founded by two friends who worked in the industry but became disillusioned by what they saw as the common failings of the big energy companies – namely poor customer service, inefficiency, a lack of transparency and poor price structures – Bulb was established with a clear vision: to simplify things, empower its customers and provide a fair service. Its proposition captures this, along with another of its founding principles – the provision of green energy.

Bulb: Making energy simpler, greener, cheaper
<https://bulb.co.uk>

Your proposition will be underpinned by the key messages developed. It is good practice to develop proof points i.e. a sentence which summarises how your business delivers the benefit referred to in each of the key messages.

<For further guidance please also refer to section 4: The anatomy of a brand toolkit>

3.4 Distribution

This section will summarise how customers will buy the product or service. Will the business employ a direct sales model for instance or will products be distributed via a third party. Certain models will be more effective for specific products or services and the target market. For instance, if your business manufactures gym equipment it may make sense to leverage the reach of an established distributor operating in your market, in order to reach more potential customers and drive growth. However, if your business offers an energy saving system for instance, a third party distributor is unlikely to be relevant and the product will be sold directly to the customer or end-user.

3.5 Marketing collateral

Identify all of the methods / platforms or materials that will be used to communicate with prospective customers: these may include a website, brochures, business cards etc.

If you intend to exhibit at trade shows for instance, pull up banners, customer brochures and a media pack may all be elements of marketing collateral you wish to produce.

It may also be necessary to document here, how and by whom this collateral will be produced – a specialist agency for instance might be employed to produce website content.

3.6 Promotion

Arguably the most important section of the plan, this will detail the tactics that will be employed to promote the business's product or service. It should include things such as media advertising, sponsorship, trade show participation, press releases etc. It will also identify which of these methods will be the most effective in reaching the target market. The decision regarding which are the most effective methods will be informed by the work you have already undertaken, to research your target market. (See 3.2 Target market)

It is also essential to consider the online promotional strategy here.

To make a website work effectively for any business, two things are vital: using the right keywords and SEO (Search Engine Optimisation).

Online advertising such as banner adverts should also be considered as well as how social media channels like LinkedIn or Twitter, Pinterest or Facebook will be used. Many businesses in the green technologies and services sector will find that LinkedIn is the most relevant social media platform but it is worth spending a little time considering how others might be used to raise brand awareness and drive sales.

These are the things which will direct customers to a business's website, generating sales.

3.7 Referral

Referrals can be one of the most effective means of securing new customers but however good a service or product is, without a clear referral strategy, it is likely to be a missed opportunity.

Document in this section, how the business will go about securing referrals, including when and how existing customers will be approached, will referrals be incentivised etc.

The manner in which customers will be approached will depend to some degree upon on the product or service offered – it may a regular service interval for instance, or if no contact is expected after the sale, perhaps via email or phone to check customer satisfaction – it is for each business to determine what is appropriate for them.

3.8 Retention

It is usually easier to generate growth by selling more to existing customers, than by finding new customers. Retention is therefore key to long term growth, to ensure that new customers are not simply replacing old customers. But it will also enable higher value relationships to be created by gradually upselling additional services to long standing customers.

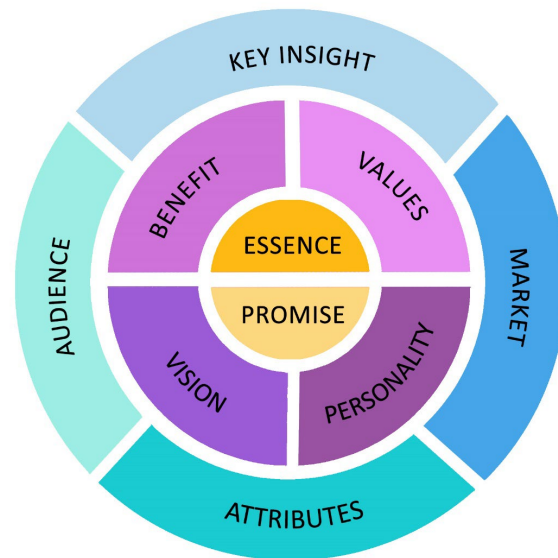
Identify here what the business will do to build loyalty with existing customers – perhaps through value added services or simply via regular communication, and how it will go about upselling to those customers.

3.9 Financial

This is the part of the marketing plan where the business creates its financial projections. Sales and anticipated profits should be detailed and remember to use all of the information in the marketing plan to create this projection. The cost of promotional campaigns for instance should be included as well as the cost of exhibiting at trade shows or advertising in local media or online.

4. THE ANATOMY OF A BRAND

A brand is the expectations, memories, stories, people and relationships which combined, constitute the reason to choose a business's product or service, regardless of the sector, industry or market in which it operates.



If a customer purchases or indeed pays a premium for green technologies and services and consequently reviews their options and makes a repeat purchase, or endorses the service provided, then true brand value exists.

The brand anatomy should be a reference point within the business whenever decisions are made and it will provide a guide to help environmental sector business challenge the status quo, out-manoeuvre the competition and consistently deliver their promise.

Key marketing messages will also be defined by the brand anatomy and will reference what are described as the tangible and intangible features of the business.

Use the Brand Anatomy toolkit provided to define clearly each of the elements which make up your brand, identify your audience groups and create the right key messages. It will then be possible to create or if these elements already exist, give further consideration to the business's proposition and USP.

You may wish to use an external facilitator or professional agency to help run a workshop, using the toolkit provided, and collate the outputs to make a final recommendation. Alternatively, you might consider using the toolkit as the basis for an internal meeting, developing your proposition and key messages independently or seeking ad hoc external marketing support as required.

HOW TO?

A professional agency can be employed to manage and create the marketing collateral required but you can also do much of this yourself.

This series of how-to guides will help to ensure your marketing and communications activity is as effective as possible, whether you are launching a new product, attending a trade show or planning a social media campaign.

1. How to write a press release
2. How to make the most of an exhibition
3. How to make the most of Pay Per Click (PPC)
4. How to plan and deliver a digital or social media campaign
5. How to be effective at personal selling
6. How to evaluate the success of marketing communications.

1. How to write a press release

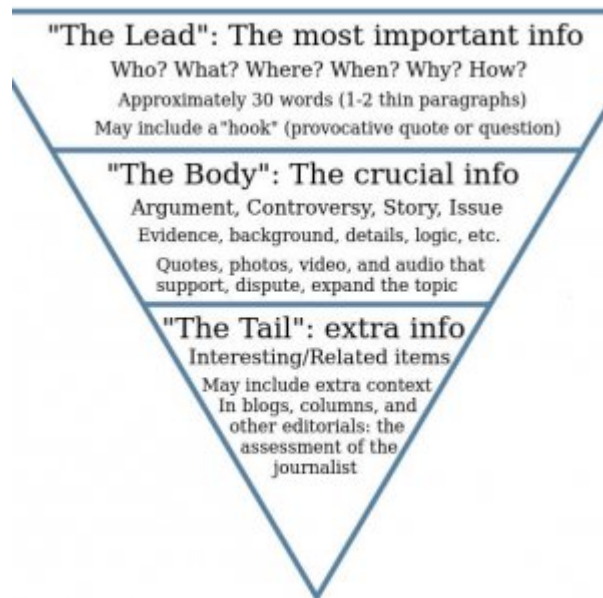
Every organisation needs to know how to get their news heard – and press releases are still one of the most important ways of doing that.

Writing and issuing a press release can help your business gain valuable PR.

But there are some essential points to bear in mind when getting your news down on paper:

1. So what? – The first thing every writer should ask themselves. Do you have something interesting to say? If not, why are you writing this? If it's not something people want to read then go back and find the 'story'.

2. The five Ws – It's one of the basics of storytelling: who, what, where, when, why (and how)! Try and get this information in your introduction. Journalists are busy people and will often have to scan read the information they receive. So get the most important information at the top of your press release. Keep your sentences and paragraphs short and snappy. The [inverted pyramid](#) is a simple way to help you structure your work.



3. Plain English please – avoid jargon at all costs. Write simply and concisely – why use 10 words when you can use three? If you're conveying complex information, put it into layman's terms wherever possible.

4. Say what? – A selection of quotes is an essential element of any news article. Ensure you quote the correct person (check spellings!) and include their job title. Often the quote can become the story – so make sure what they are saying is interesting and adds value to the press release. Just like we want to avoid jargon in the body of the press release, we also want to avoid it in quotes too. Make sure the spokesperson sounds like a human being – not a corporate robot.

5. **Word count** – Journalists write to strict word counts. And so should you. You should be able to say everything you need to in around 350 words or on one sheet of paper. If the journalist needs more information they will request it.

6. **For more information** – And on that note, ensure you include your contact details at the foot of the press release. A contact name, telephone number and email address are all essential in ensuring journalists can get hold of you quickly and easily.

7. **Pictures** – Make sure you have some high resolution images available to accompany your press release. Journalists will always be looking for quality photography to accompany articles – it could be the difference between a full page lead and no coverage at all. The image should be representative of the news in your press release. And if you have quoted someone, you should also try to include a head and shoulders image (readers like to be able to see who is speaking to them).

8. **Interviews and photocalls** – If your press release relates to an event or you believe it would make a good photo or interview opportunity, why not invite the press? Ensure you provide all the information a photographer or journalist would need to get there including date, time (be flexible if possible), address (including postcode), a contact name and mobile number. Ideally the interview will be with the person quoted in the press release – so choose your spokesperson carefully.

9. **Format** – Sending your press release in a simple format will always be appreciated by journalists and news desks. Make sure it includes:

- **Date:** Ensure your press release has the date of issue at the top and whether it is for immediate use or embargoed until a specified date.
- **Headline:** Include a succinct title which summarises the press release.
- **Notes to editors:** At the end of your press release you can include any additional information for the journalist if necessary. Information such as company background, for example. Again, keep these notes straight to the point (a couple of paragraphs is plenty). If the journalist has any questions they will ask.
- **Attachments** – send your press release in the body of the email and attach an easy to read format (such as a word document version as well). Images can also be attached but if they are large or there are several, then send them via a file share platform (such as a Dropbox or We Transfer) – because nobody appreciates their inbox crashing!

Example press release



9 November 2016

Pelican Communications has unveiled the secrets of the perfect press release

Marketing and public relations agency Pelican Communications has launched a top tips guide to crafting the perfect press release.

The integrated agency released the information on its latest blog 'How to: Write the perfect press release for journalists.'

Jessica Beckett, senior communications consultant at Pelican, said: "As a former journalist I was delighted to put together this top tips guide.

"Having seen the industry from both sides I know how valuable a well written press release can be. I hope it will be a useful tool for anyone who would like to share news and information to the media."

The step-by-step guide aims to help businesses and organisations understand how to write a press release. It includes information about writing style, formatting and understanding audiences.

Pelican Communications, based in Manchester, delivers a wide range of services including media relations, content creation and design. It specialises in four markets: food, packaging and food production, environment and outdoor and leisure.

The perfect press release top tip is the latest post on the company's website www.pelicancommunications.co.uk where a wide range of expert knowledge blogs are also available.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

Pelican Communications is an award-winning marketing communications and PR agency dedicated to "Driving Brilliant Results" time after time.

Voted Best Small Marketing Agency in the Prolific North Awards, we are experienced and passionate about our work and our clients.

The idea of a specialist consultancy dedicated to specific markets was conceived by managing director and former newspaper editor Michael Bennett, after a decade of experience with major consultancies.

For more information contact:

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10. Issuing your press release – journalists are busy people. Target your communications to the right reporters. For example, on a very basic level, a food journalist will not want to receive news about cars. Spend ample time researching and compiling your media list. Sending relevant information to relevant people will be appreciated.

If you are not familiar with the relevant media titles, consider buying a media list from an organisation such as Gorkana (<http://www.gorkana.com/>) or Response Source (<https://www.responsesource.com/>).

Media lists tailored by sector can be created and purchased either as a one off, or you can subscribe to get on-going access to the details of on and off line media as well as the journalists you will want to contact.

It is also possible to use these companies' services to issue your release rather than emailing it yourself.

When emailing a press release to more than one journalist, it is good practice to blind copy (Bcc) recipients. It is also worth sending an individual email to your primary target journalists. In some instances, it may be worth considering offering a particular news story to one title exclusively.

Other websites such as <http://journalisted.com/> which holds details for many journalists on regional and national as well as trade media titles can also be used free of charge to help compile your target media list.

Remember, it is important to target the media outlets which are relevant to your prospective customer, not simply those which cover your sector or the green technologies and services sector more generally.

For instance, a company like Chalcroft Construction, specialising in sustainable construction designed to minimise environmental impact and improve efficiency in the food industry, would target the food trade media as well as the construction media. This would mean sending a relevant press release to titles such as Food Manufacture, as well as Construction News.

After sending your press release – don't pester. You would be surprised how fast a journalist's inbox fills up, especially when approaching their deadline day – take a note of this at research stage.

But don't be afraid to pick up the phone to follow up your email. Conversations lead to contacts! Ask if the press release is of interest, if it's not, try to find out why. Don't be disappointed, this information will help you tailor your communications in the future.

2. How to make the most of a trade show or exhibition

In the modern digitally connected world do exhibitions still have a role to play in the communications mix? The answer is yes...

Exhibitions have one great advantage; they give you a chance to meet potential customers, journalists and industry opinion formers face-to-face.

Unfortunately many businesses fail to make the most of the communications opportunity that events present and so fail to capitalise on their investment.



To make life easier, follow these top 10 tips for making the most of exhibitions:

1. Pick the right exhibition

It's common sense, but there's no point going to a food industry exhibition if you're selling automotive goods.

Do your research and find out which are the main exhibitions that are relevant in terms of your product or service and who your prospective customer is. For instance a packaging company might attend a packaging trade show, but if the prospective customer is within the soft drinks sector, then exhibiting at a food and beverage trade show might be more productive.

Then get the organisers to send you the information they have on visitor numbers and their job roles. You can then work out if the people you want to target are going to be at the exhibition. If they're not, think hard about where you could better spend your budget.

2. Speaking opportunities

Well before the exhibition programme is announced the organisers are busy putting together a programme of seminars and speakers. Suggest an interesting topic and you've got a good chance of making it onto the programme. You'll then benefit from the pre-show publicity machine promoting you and your brand, and you can brief your own PR team to secure more coverage on the back of the speaking opportunity.

3. Sponsorships

You can sponsor everything from the delegate packs to the coffee shop and the added brand profile can really help you stand out from competitors.

As a sponsor the show organiser may also offer you additional benefits such as attendance at drinks receptions, press events and seminars. All worth having if they raise your brand profile.

4. Show previews

Most exhibitions have a pre-sell period of at least six months with an intensive marketing and PR programme.

Introduce yourself to the show's marketing and PR manager, explain what you hope to achieve from the event and provide them with information about your organisation. This way there's a good chance they'll include you in pre-show PR and marketing. You'd be surprised how many organisations miss the chance of being included in previews simply because they fail to email some information.

5. Pre-sell

Let existing and potential customers know you'll be exhibiting. Give them an excuse to visit the stand or attend your speaking slot. It could be a prize-draw, a new product launch or the chance to meet an industry celebrity. Whatever it is, make sure they know you'll be there and have something interesting for them to see. Otherwise you may get passed by.

6. Set appointments

Set appointments for target customers. Get them to commit to a meeting so you can have the right people from your organisation on stand to make the most of the sales opportunity. Get the meeting in their diary and get a mobile number so you can remind them on the day of your stand number and the time of the meeting.

7. Sales training

How many times have you been to an exhibition and seen people looking really bored on their stands?

It costs a lot of time and money to staff your stand so make sure your people are open, engaging and friendly to anyone who comes by. Invest in some sales training so your team makes the most of every opportunity to engage with a potential customer.

8. Engage journalists

Industry journalists spend a lot of time reporting on exhibitions with show previews, at show reportage and post-show reviews. They are interested in new product launches, industry research, opinion and comment, so make sure you give them what they need before, during and after the show.

This means well written press information and photography, plus suggestions for features and opinion pieces.

You can also invite them onto your stand to meet and interview key people from your organisation or invite them to an exclusive pre-show briefing. Finally don't forget to have plenty of press packs both in the press office and on your stand so you can help any journalist who pops-in unannounced.

9. Keep it current

Use social and digital media to create a buzz around your stand. Follow the show Twitter stream so you can add comments and re-tweet. Keep your own social media sites up to date and link-in with any new contacts you make at the show.

10. Follow-up

Finally and most importantly: follow-up.

You've spent a lot of your budget on the event so don't let your sales leads slip away with poor post-show planning. Contact everyone who visited your stand with a simple message thanking them for their interest. Get your sales team to arrange meetings with potential customers and monitor their success.

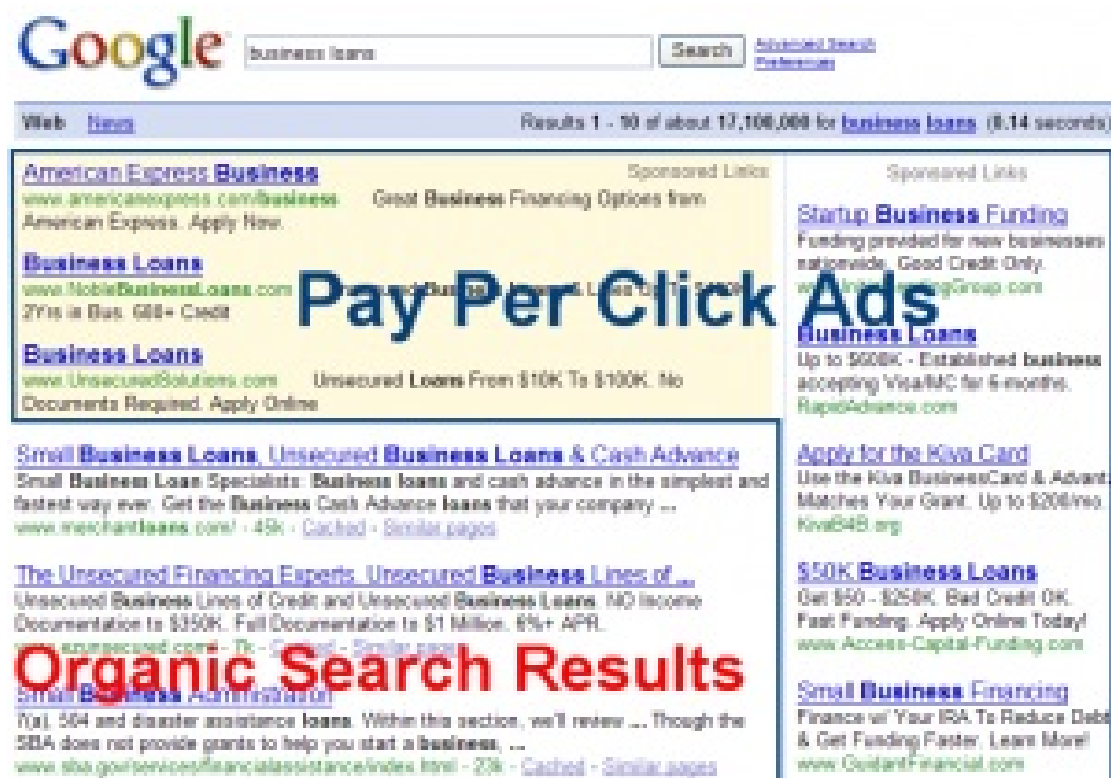
Finally keep in touch with any media contacts you've made they may want to do a more in-depth feature on your business or visit your site.

Conclusions

So with the right preparation, exhibitions provide an excellent platform for building brand awareness and generating sales leads. Whatever the advantages of electronic communication, there's still no substitute for meeting face-to-face and creating relationships with long-term value.

3. How to me the most of Pay Per Click (PPC)

A pay per click (PPC) campaign is a great way to get your business noticed among your customer base, drive traffic to your website and most importantly generate solid sales leads.



The classic anecdote of a £12 million air conditioning contract win converted from a few pennies spent on a Google ad is a story rolled out very often by the ecommerce brigade. This sort of return on investment is fairly rare but there is no question that a targeted PPC campaign should be considered as part of your marketing activity.

So how do you go about creating a successful campaign?

1. Identify

The first step is to identify your goals – which pages on your website would you like your audience to engage with and what do you want them to do. Do you want to drive newsletter signups, encourage downloads of an industry guide or simply get people to pick up the phone?

Once you know what you want to achieve you should start developing a list of phrases and keywords that you believe your audience will type into search engines when looking for your offering.

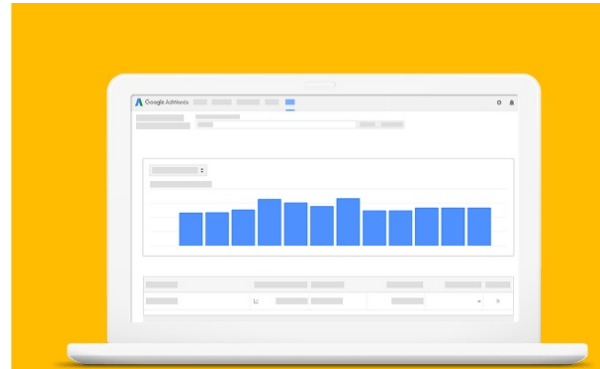
It is important to think about long-tail keywords (three words or more) as visitors are more likely to use them when they're closer to a purchase. They can be counter-intuitive as they will target a lower search volume but will provide better results.

2. Research

Before starting the campaign do a bit of research and test your search terms. Google Adwords has a tool that allows you to find out the search volumes for your phrases – this should be your first port of call as building a webpage and putting budget against an unused keyword is simply a waste of resource.

Reach the right customers with the right keywords.

Get keyword ideas to help build your campaigns with the AdWords Keyword Planner.



If you're selling to other businesses, there's nothing wrong with asking your current customers, especially those you have a good relationship with, what they would search for when looking for a supplier.

For instance, what would a business seeking to invest in its manufacturing premises to improve energy efficiency search for? Similarly, what search terms would be used to find a supplier of sustainable or waste management solutions? Using this knowledge, your business's keywords can be adapted or extended if appropriate.

3. Set targets

Having a good idea of what success looks like is important. If this is your first foray into PPC then it may be better to view the first few months as a test or learning phase that forms the foundation of the on-going campaign and guides your future targets.

Your targets are up to you, but they could include increases in web traffic, specifying a number of sales leads generated from the campaign or an increase in online purchases. It is important to ambitious but realistic.

4. Budget

Creating a PPC campaign is very much a test and learn exercise. Optimising a campaign over time will help to build an informed opinion in terms of the budget required but generally, high value products or services will require a greater budget than low value items. For instance the average cost per click for credit cards is £10.00 while for a ubiquitous product such as socks, it averages £0.99

The nature of the industry in which you operate, whether construction or manufacturing for instance, will therefore affect the budget required – which could range from £10 to £10,000 to create a meaningful campaign. In addition, the way in which the budget is spent can be set in a variety of ways.

For instance, it is possible to pay via a cost per click model, a cost per acquisition model or indeed based on the number of views rather than actual clicks on the advert. Which model is chosen will depend on your objective – if that is to drive website visits and raise brand awareness, then a cost per click model is best. If driving sales is the sole objective, then a cost per acquisition model is generally preferred.

5. Monitor

Monitoring the effectiveness of each of your keywords is vital. This isn't limited to checking the number of clicks a PPC ad gets, but ensuring that the advert is delivering your end goal.

If one of your ads is only clicked 10 times, but each of those visits results in a solid sales lead or purchase, then this ad is working more effectively than one that is clicked a thousand times but results in no leads at all.

6. Amend

Finally, don't let your campaign stagnate, make sure that the keywords are delivering consistently and make changes accordingly.

If one of your ads isn't working – pause it. If there is a general decline in the number of clicks – review and change your keywords. If one search term is proving to be very successful then put more budget against it.

A well thought out and effectively delivered PPC campaign can deliver exceptional results for your business.

4. How to plan and deliver a digital or social media campaign

The first thing to remember is that the same principles apply to a digital marketing campaign as they do to any other – the fundamental requirements including analysis of the competition and wider market place as well as objectives and clearly identified audiences are not suddenly less valid simply because the campaign is digital.

When planning to implement a digital campaign, the first thing to think about is creating the plan. Obvious perhaps but there are many more businesses who do not have a coherent, documented digital plan, than do.

The purpose of a digital marketing plan is simple, it exists to capture the objectives, goals and tactics of a business's digital initiatives. This means the plan will help the business to target specific digital personas and identify the appropriate channels via which to do so, as well as the way in which these channels can be used most effectively.

Five key steps are detailed below to help you kick start the process. Please also refer to Section 3: *Key elements to include in a marketing plan*.

1. Analysis

Review the product or service your business offers in relation to the market place and assess the performance of both the product or service and the customer service the business offers. The findings of an open and realistic assessment will be invaluable when it comes to deciding on the digital tactics you will employ.

2. Objectives

Setting out clear objectives is an essential part of any marketing plan – here you will identify what the business is trying to achieve specifically via its digital activity.

This will include general objectives such as, increasing customer retention or brand awareness.

The crucial part is to translate what this means for a digital campaign and create a coherent digital goal. For example, a general objective to increase sales translates to increasing the conversion rate of the website or increasing individual order values.

With clear goals identified, it is possible to identify digital tactics to help achieve them. It will also be possible to set digital key performance indicators or KPIs. Analytics software will be a prerequisite to tracking performance. As performance is measured, so targets can be set to drive improvements.

3. Audience

With clear objectives, goals, KPIs, and targets created, the next stage is to create the digital strategy. The backbone of this will be clearly defined audience segmentation.

A persona should be attributed to each audience segment and the strategy will capture how your business relates to each persona, how it solves a real problem or manufacturing issue for instance – this is your value proposition. It will also capture the needs of each persona, which digital channels are most applicable and which social media platforms those personas gravitate towards as well as the perception that each persona is thought to have regarding your business, product or service.

The greater the level of detail that can be captured at this stage, the more valuable the plan you create will be and the more targeted and effective your digital tactics will become.

4. Channels and tactics

This part of the plan will capture in detail the strategy which will be employed, such as Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), Pay Per Click (PPC) or social media activity on platforms such as LinkedIn.

These specific tactical solutions should also be linked to specific goals such as brand awareness, new business acquisition or customer retention.

5. Measurement

Last but by no means least, identify how each element of the digital plan and associated activity will be measured.

Identify a specific means of measuring KPIs. The most widely used is Google Analytics which can be used to measure conversions for instance but a quick internet search will reveal a wide range of tools which are available to track engagement and help assess the success of your content marketing.

Finally, do not be put off by the term Digital if your business has not undertaken any digital marketing activity previously – instead think of it simply as an extension of current or traditional activity and a means by which it is possible to target customers more effectively than ever before.

5. How to be effective at personal selling

Personal selling offers businesses advantages and disadvantages in comparison with the other elements of the marketing mix.

One advantage for instance is that personal selling allows the sales person to present their message in a highly targeted manner to a specific audience and receive immediate feedback. It is precise and can have a high impact. However, by its nature, it is something which has limited reach and a high cost to implement. In general, an approach which combines personal selling with other forms of marketing is most effective and while the role of a sales person is clearly to sell, those who are skilled in this area will often help a business significantly in terms of building long term relationships and improving customer retention.

Remember, the personal selling process is a consecutive series of activities, not an isolated pitch. To be as effective as possible, keep the following key points in mind:

1. Always ask questions

To be effective at personal selling, every business or sales person must understand why the customer is or may be interested in the product or service offered.

Questions should be asked which help to clarify this, and provide insight which allows a tailored pitch to be delivered. Such questions should seek to establish the opinion of competitor services or products, thereby identifying the factors which will help influence a sale.

The greater the insight that is gained the better your business will understand the factors which will motivate potential customers to buy from you and ultimately to carry on buying from you. Knowledge as the saying goes is power.

2. Establish and address concerns

Continue asking questions and anticipate objections. Find out what if any concerns there might be regarding your product or service. It is impossible to address a customer's concerns if you do not know what they are. The right questions will allow such issues to be dealt with early and significantly increase the likelihood of a successful pitch or sale. In many cases, simply providing more information will suffice to allay concerns and by doing so, you will position the business as an expert, one that understands the challenges its customers face and one which the customer can trust.

3. Have you got the sale?

Don't be afraid to ask for the sale. This is one of the key advantages of personal selling – it can be done directly or indirectly but the question must be asked.

The nature of the response if it is not yes may well also provide further clues in terms of the factors which need to be addressed to complete a sale. Hesitation may well simply mean there is a minor point that needs clarification – ask what it is.

Recognise the signals that a customer is ready to buy. Common signals that customers give include asking questions, making comments, leaning forward or nodding, or asking about price or terms.

4. You haven't finished yet

Just because a meeting has gone well it does not always mean a sale is guaranteed. To be effective at personal selling, it is critical to follow up in a timely fashion.

Make sure the prospective customer knows you will be in touch and be sure to get in touch when you said you would.

If uncertainty remains, this is another chance to ask more questions or provide further information having done more research if necessary or refined your proposal.

If a sale has been concluded, the follow up is still crucial. It is your business's opportunity to check that the customer is happy with your service or product and to build loyalty and the long-term relationships which are so important to future growth.

6. How to be evaluate the success of marketing communications



Historically the marketing and PR sector has struggled to prove return on investment yet it has never been more accountable than it is today and in an increasingly complex marketing environment, with many new kinds of media and methods of reaching prospective customers, the question of how to evaluate is only going to gain in importance.

'Digital' is thought by some to offer a silver bullet while measures such as reach and frequency have been put aside in favour of return on investment or ROI and attributable revenue. But while the focus on real-time results tracking is certainly important and helps to ensure marketing spend remains flexible and correctly targeted, businesses should not allow it to distract from looking at the bigger picture and a on a regular basis.

Most importantly perhaps is to keep in mind that there is no one-size-fits-all platform which can do the job of evaluating for you. There are many solutions and competing platforms which might appear to answer to the question of ROI, but the reality is that unless these platforms or tools are tailored to specific objectives and KPIs which are clearly aligned to business goals, they will not measure what matters.

A clear process needs to be applied to align goals, objectives and metrics with measurement criteria, maintaining a focus on what happens as a result of what is happening as a result of traditional marketing activity, rather than simply online. Google analytics alone cannot tell you if a campaign has been successful.

Therefore, if your business's marketing communications efforts are to be evaluated effectively, you must ask early in the process, what does success look like? The campaign must then be designed with specific outcomes in mind, the KPIs which are set being benchmarked at the start and measured as an integral, on-going part of the campaign process.

It is also important to note that even if a marketing campaign does not produce the desired increase in sales initially, it may still provide valuable insight or information which will underpin a secondary campaign and drive sales in the long term.

Creating a framework for evaluation

AMEC's (International Association for measurement and evaluation of communications) Integrated Evaluation Framework is the industry's only best-practice evaluation model and is recommended as a model to follow.

It considers both organisational and communications objectives and relates evaluation back to how well the campaign has helped you to achieve these.

The framework looks specifically at the **outputs** of the campaign – these are the more traditional analytics you may have been used to in the past. These outputs refer to the work that has been done to communicate to your target audiences.

It also looks at the campaign's **out takes** which refers to what the target audience did with the outputs and how they responded to them. These two elements should be reviewed jointly on a regular basis – typically monthly.

Other metrics and milestones which you may wish to include with the framework would be:

- Marketing activity completed
- Coverage achieved
 - Overall sentiment
 - Message delivery
- Social metrics
 - Audience reach
 - Engagement
- Digital metrics
 - Website visitors / page impressions
 - Time on site / pages on site / downloads



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