10 Ways To Know If Your Marketing Is Working
10 WAYS TO KNOW IF YOUR MARKETING IS WORKING

1. You have a marketing plan that guides your activities and marketing goals that you are working toward.
2. Your marketing content addresses how you fix your customers’ worst pains.
3. You’ve said to yourself, “WOW, this is great stuff” while perusing your company’s marketing efforts.
4. You know – without even taking the time to think about it – what makes your company different from your competitors, and why your capabilities are remarkable.
5. Your employees know – without even taking time to think about it – what makes your company different from your competitors, and why your capabilities are remarkable.
6. You’ve taken the time to think about different buyer personas, and you know what message will resonate with different people at different levels of your customers’ organizations.
7. You have spent time building up a nice, solid list of customers and potential customers who want to hear from you on occasion.
8. You make a point to provide your customers and potential customers the information they want to know.
9. You have the data to show a positive marketing ROI on your investment.
10. You have a plan that guides how your sales people use your marketing material.

IF YOU ANSWERED NO TO ANY OF THESE QUESTIONS, THIS E-BOOK IS FOR YOU!
Your Marketing Plan Guides Your Marketing Activities and Goals

A marketing plan is a document that describes what you want to get out of your marketing and how you intend to achieve your marketing goals. Ideally, your marketing plan will be aligned with your business goals, so your first marketing conversation should begin with what you want to achieve as an organization. Then you can start to talk about how you can use marketing to get there. This chart gives an example of how your marketing objectives can be aligned.

1. Explain what makes your company different. Demonstrate the unique way in which you solve customer pain.
2. Define your target market (or markets, which is often the case).
3. Understand what makes your targets pound their heads on their desks (their biggest pains).
4. Figure out how your products or services will fix those pains.
5. List the benefits of your products or services. Note, this is NOT the same as #4.
6. Describe your messaging strategy (A positioning statement and key supporting statements).
7. Define your marketing methods. The best method will usually be an integrated method, meaning you’ll use many tactics that work together to generate results. Finding the right mix of tactics is key.

Unique Selling Proposition

A unique selling proposition is also called a value proposition. It’s what makes you different from everyone else. Being truly unique is difficult, so many companies use differentiators like lowest price, highest quality, exclusivity, patents, innovation, best after-market service, or longest warranty in their unique selling proposition.

Why your customers should buy from you. An explanation of the value you offer and the pain you solve.

Your Value Proposition Should Smack Visitors in the Face with Obviousness ~ PARDOT
#2 Your marketing content addresses how you fix your customers’ worst pains.

Having unique, customized marketing content is important.

- 90% of consumers find custom content useful (*The Custom Content Council*)
- 78% of consumers believe that organizations providing custom content are interested in building good relationships with them. (*The Custom Content Council*)
- 60% of consumers are more likely to be on the lookout for products when looking at content marketing. (*The Content Marketing Association*)

The best marketing material will showcase your expertise, position you as an industry expert, and demonstrate a keen understanding of what the customer goes through on a daily basis.

A good model to follow to create a pain-to-solution message within your marketing

1. Clearly define the pain that your customers experience, and that which your products are addressing in such a way that the customer wholeheartedly identifies with the pain. Your customers should be nodding their heads as they read your content.
2. Use reliable, convincing third-party data to confirm that the customer’s problem is critically important. You might show how others attempt to fix the same problem in a less effective, more expensive way.
3. Demonstrate how your solution solves the problem and eliminates the pain faster, cheaper, and more reliably than any other solutions.
4. Present proof through a case study that highlights how others experiencing the same pains have achieved a quantifiable return on investment.

How to identify pain

In order to create your pain-to-solution message within your marketing material, you’ll need to identify your customer pains. Big companies spend big money on surveys to identify customer pain. Smaller companies often don’t have the time or budget for this. Here are other ways to identify pain:

- Survey your own sales and service personnel
- Conduct surveys during training events or on-site calls
- Track conversations and requests from customers
- Conduct one-on-one customer interviews (formal or informal)
- Track customer support calls or warranty claims to identify common problems
- Take a look at what your competitors are offering
Good Content for B2Bs

- **Blog** – Easy way to present chunks of web content. Encourages conversations. Helps SEO.
- **e-Newsletter** – Permission-based way to regularly communicate with customers and potential customers.
- **White Paper** – Reports, typically 8-10 pages long on complex topics requiring a great deal of explanation. Can be repurposed as conference papers, research reports, or technical briefs. Great to showcase your thought leadership.
- **Article** – A flexible medium, both in length and format, the article opens opportunities for companies to address issues, trends, concerns and topics of immediate interest to their intended audiences.
- **e-book** – Think of it as a white paper on steroids: a report, generally 12 – 40 or more pages in length, that presents complex information in a visually attractive, reader-friendly format.
- **Case Study** – The case study is a document, typically 1 – 2 pages long that combines the first-person authority of the testimonial with the narrative structure of a story. Great for building credibility and trust.
- **Testimonials** – Quote directly from your customers.
- **Webinar/Webcast** – Online presentation, live or archived.
- **Video** – YouTube or embedded in web site – a great way to build interest and an audience.
- **Online News Release** – Services such as PR Newswire can post your press releases online for faster and more widespread distribution.
- **Digital Magazine** – The digital magazine offers the familiar magazine format with a new twist: it’s sponsored, produced, and issued by one company or brand.
- **Video blog (vlog)** – A regularly scheduled series of brief videos built around a topic of interest.
- **e-learning series** – A carefully planned curriculum of educational content that may be delivered through a variety of mediums, including podcasts, video, presentations, webinars, and more.
- **Mobile apps** – Known familiarly as “apps”, mobile applications come in two broad flavors: as native apps developed for specific devices (such as the iPhone, Android, Blackberry, iPad, etc.) or as Web apps (WAPS) that can be distributed without depending on specific marketplaces (but you need an internet connection at all times).
- **Book** – Companies like Amazon have made it easy to offer books – both in print and digital formats
- **Virtual Tradeshows** – Current technology and high-speed Internet connections enable the creation of lifelike happenings (complete with “lounges” and “exhibit areas”).
- **Road show** – Road shows are mini-conferences or tours that are typically conducted by a single organization, although related companies that don’t compete will often participate.
- **Screencast** – A combination of video, presentation and audio technologies, screencasts offer step-by-step instructions for otherwise complex tasks: using a new software, for example, or managing a complicated project.

70% of consumers prefer getting to know a company via articles rather than ads ~ Content+
If you find your own marketing material to be excellent and you think you just might make the next “10 Companies With Insanely Great Marketing” List, then you probably have great marketing.

If you’re not quite in the ranks of corporate marketing machines like Apple, Nike, and Budweiser, never fear. Here are some easy things you can do to improve your marketing.

1. Don’t try to solve every marketing problem you have in a single day. Pick one area that you can easily fix without breaking your budget. When that one is done, you can move on to the next.

2. Keep your integrated marketing plan simple enough to be managed well. Make your web site a top priority, as well as search engine optimization, to drive potential customers to your site.

3. Whatever you’re doing, do it well. Your efforts should be neat, clean, easy to read, and free from grammatical errors.

4. Set goals for your efforts. Define what success means, and understand how you’ll know if you succeed. If certain marketing efforts aren’t successful, eliminate them from the plan in favor of others that might generate more results.

5. Track your metrics. Use Google Analytics on your web site. Set up landing pages for each marketing effort, and have a well-thought lead nurturing strategy for all your marketing efforts.
YOU KNOW — WITHOUT EVEN TAKING THE TIME TO THINK ABOUT IT — WHAT MAKES YOUR COMPANY DIFFERENT FROM YOUR COMPETITORS, AND WHY YOUR CAPABILITIES ARE REMARKABLE.

Figuring out what makes your capabilities remarkable is not an easy exercise. Here are 10 questions to help you through the process.

1. Why did you get into business?
2. Who is your target audience?
3. Why do existing customers buy from you?
4. What would make a new customer buy from you?
5. List 5 benefits you provide.
7. Now list how those quantified benefits are better than any other competitor.
8. Explain why your customers care about any of that.

Now use all that to tell your story. Make it unique, and make sure it oozes with what you’re all about, and what you do for your customers (#2, as identified above. Your target audience.) Make it easy to remember.

Here is my own verbal version, which is different from anything you’ll see on my web site or brochures (except for this e-book).

I’m a consultant with The Marcommer. I help small- and mid-size industrial, engineering, and manufacturing companies like you find more customers through unique web strategies and content marketing, which guides your customers through the sales cycle toward a purchase decision. I focus on results, and if your marketing isn’t generating a return to cover your marketing efforts, you’re probably not doing the right marketing. Marketing — ultimately — should be free.
Internal marketing is probably much more important than external marketing.

~ Tom Stewart (Booz)

Having a consistent message throughout your organization is more important than you might think. A consistent message is a believable message, and your customers must believe in you before they will buy from you.

In order to achieve a consistent message throughout your organization, you need to make sure you’re communicating your message well internally.

Six tips for good internal communications

1. Create an easy, expected method of communication. Monthly email newsletter? Weekly roundup at the end of the day on Friday? Quarterly conference call? The right communication method will be different for every organization, but the key is to give it a set time and venue for every communication. Make it expected, consistent, and predictable.

2. Establish a goal for the effort. What is your purpose? Let that purpose drive your effort.

3. Target your staff or employees just like you would your customers. They are, after all, your internal customers. What are their pains? Tight budgets? Long hours? How can your marketing communications help ease their pains?

4. Inspire your people. And make your communications interesting. Keep your material succinct, and spice it up with a bit of (business-appropriate) informality.

5. Give your team a chance to participate. Let them write up a success story to present. Encourage comments or two-way conversation.

6. Track your success. Is the communication effort working, per the goal you established? If not, why isn’t it? What can you change to make it work?
You’ve taken the time to think about different buyer personas, and you know what message will resonate with different people at different levels of your customers’ organizations.

Buyer personas are fictional representations of your key customer targets. They are based on real data about customer demographics and online behavior, along with educated speculation about their personal histories, motivations, and concerns.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persona Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Background:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Basic details about role in the company</td>
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<tr>
<td>Key information about the company</td>
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<td>Relevant background info, like typical education or hobbies</td>
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<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persona’s primary goal</td>
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<td>Personal’s secondary goal</td>
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<tr>
<th>Pains</th>
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<tr>
<td>Primary challenges to persona’s success</td>
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<tr>
<th>Your role in solving the pain</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How you solve the persona’s challenges</td>
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<tr>
<td>How you help the persona reach goals</td>
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<tr>
<th>Quotes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Including real quotes from actual customers that represent your persona well will make it easier for other employees to understand your persona.</td>
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<th>Common Objections</th>
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<tr>
<td>Identify the most common objections your persona will raise during the sales process.</td>
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*Hubspot has a Buyer Persona Template, which I used as a reference for this page. You can check it out here: http://www.hubspot.com/free-template-creating-buyer-personas/
Once you spend time building up that nice, solid list of customers and potential customers who want to hear from you, the next step is to send them an email.

Email marketing is only one part of an integrated marketing communications plan. The best email campaigns take advantage of great content, web site landing pages, social media engagement, and lead nurturing.

Email Tools
First, let’s start with the tools. There are hundreds of email tools on the market. Some are standalone services and others are integrated into marketing automation software. The most common for small businesses are:

1. Constant Contact
2. MyEmma
3. MailChimp

I personally use MailChimp, because it’s free, but Constant Contact and MyEmma are both very good. They offer customizable templates and results tracking to help you gauge success. Constant Contact and MyEmma also offer more capabilities, like event setup and tracking.

Targeted Distribution Lists
The best emails are segmented in consideration of your targets. Generic, all-encompassing emails don’t do as well as emails that communicate a specific idea to a specific target. You might segment by industries, regions, or customer profiles.

Content Development
The actual content of your email can take many forms, but usually simple emails with a specific purpose are the most effective. You should always have a clear call to action located close to the top of the email. If you have to scroll down to see it, fewer people will click on it.

Driving Traffic to Your Web site
Email marketing is a great tool to drive traffic to your web site. It’s considered best practice to create a web site landing page for your major calls to action. For example, if you want your email recipients to click for more information about a widget, the link should take them to a dedicated landing page that provides additional information about that widget. The landing page might have a form to fill out to download an e-book.

Your email results and analysis tracking will allow you to see who is clicking on your link, and by that, you can create more targeted marketed efforts. If Joe Smith clicked on the link for more information about the widget, and then downloaded the e-book, you might decide to send another follow-up email offering a 30-minute online demo or an invitation to a lunch and learn. Through more and more targeted marketing, you are using email, in conjunction with your marketing content and web site, to guide your prospect toward a purchase decision.

Results and What They Mean

Open rate — the number of times your emails have been opened

Click-through rate — This number of subscribers who opened your email and interacted with it by clicking on links to visit your web site or view more about your products.

Bounce rate — This number means that your email marketing provider couldn’t deliver the email to a particular address. The server could have been down, or that person’s mailbox might be full.

Report rate — This means that someone received your email and marked it as spam. You can reduced this by only sending emails to people who have actually opted in to your email list.

Unsubscribe rate — If you notice a spike in unsubscribes from a particular email, you’ll need to analyze exactly what your subscribers didn’t like and avoid it in future campaigns.
You make a point to provide your customers with the information they want to know

The answer to that is easy. Customers want to know something that they already don’t know. Figuring out what they don’t know may be more challenging. Here are some ideas.

Describe how your customer can succeed:

- Good habits
- Market trends
- Best practices
- Resources
- Short cuts
- Tips and tricks

Describe what your customer needs to be aware of:

- Industry challenges
- Common mistakes
- Obstacles
- Problems and symptoms

That leads you to the next question ... How can you tackle those high-level topics in an interesting, relevant way?

You can tell stories. People love to hear about what others in their industry are doing. How did someone else succeed, and how can they copy it or modify it to make it work for their own unique issues?

You can answer questions your customers didn’t know to ask. Answer the questions your customers don’t know how to ask – what are some of the greatest challenges people face with your product? How can they be more successful with it?

You can address a specific challenge. Budgets are being cut. Regulations are getting tighter. Assets are wearing out. Experienced people are retiring. Whatever the challenge is, you can use your pain-to-solutions message to tackle it.
You have the data to show a positive marketing ROI (Return on Investment)

Marketing is overhead, and marketers like to spend money. And it’s very easy to track money spent, but it’s much harder to tie your sales and marketing efforts to your marketing initiatives.

According to Marketo, a leader in marketing solutions, 87% of senior marketers do not feel confident in their ability to impact the sales forecast of their programs and 1 out of 5 marketers do not measure their marketing results at all.

So if you’re not doing much with marketing analytics to assess your marketing return on investment (ROI), you’re part of a big group. However, it’s hard to place a value on something you can’t quantify.

Marketing ROI

When you consider marketing ROI, you should think in terms of establishing goals, designing measurable programs, and focusing on continuous program improvement. You can track marketing ROI in many ways.

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**Revenue Metrics:** Marketing’s impact on company revenue  
**Marketing Program Performance Metrics:** The incremental contribution of individual marketing programs. (Number of email signups, number of brand mentions during an event)  
**Customer Profitability:** Lifetime value of an incremental customer  
**Web Analytics:** Measures web visibility (Number of visitors, length of site visit) and compares against industry and competitor benchmarks  
**Public Relations:** Assesses the impact of corporate communications initiatives (Clipping reports, online page referrals)  
**Product Performance:** Comparatively measures the total sales and margins of individual products  
**Brand Strength:** Assesses brand preference against competing brands  
**Sales Tool Usage:** Measures the product marketing materials that are being used the most

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**VALUE PROPOSITION:** Why your customers should buy from you. An explanation of the value you offer and the pain you solve.

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<tr>
<th>Business Goals</th>
<th>Marketing Objective</th>
<th>Marketing Tactics</th>
<th>Marketing Measurement</th>
<th>Marketing ROI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase revenue by x% while cutting expenses by x%</td>
<td>Increase web site traffic by 10%</td>
<td>Use a content overhaul strategy and focus on analytics to understand what is working and eliminate what is not.</td>
<td>Get insight into what’s working, and what’s not. (Did you see a 10% increase in traffic?)</td>
<td>ROI results guide changes to strategies and tactics, based on activities with a higher ROI potential.</td>
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</table>
There’s a fine line between sales and marketing. Marketing focuses on a market full of opportunities, while sales focuses on individual opportunities. The line between marketing and sales support is even harder to distinguish. No matter where you draw the line in your organization, the fact remains that your marketing material will get much more use internally if it comes with sales support.

Create a product selling guide to supplement your material. It doesn’t necessarily need to be beautiful — it just needs to be effective. Outline the key messages, the personas of key customer targets and their pain points. Highlight your pain-to-solution message for each type of customer target. Some sales people are naturally strategic thinkers and will read between the well-written lines of your brochure or web site, but not all of them.

Script your presentations. Have you ever sat through a presentation where the speaker reads every glaring word on his projected presentation? It’s painful. By scripting your presentations, you can provide a bit of quick training to help guide your sales people away from reading the screen toward a more natural conversation. Plus, scripted presentations help keep your message consistent.

Communicate effectively. Sales people don’t have hours to spend digging through your web site for the latest sales material. Keep them informed with regular — but not intrusive — communications where they can quickly scan for any updates that need their attention.

Nurture the lead before sending it to sales. Your sales team won’t need to rely on your marketing material if a lead has been well-nurtured through the sales funnel. Use targeted marketing strategies to pull your customer target closer to the point of purchase by educating them with relevant material. By the time the lead reaches sales person, he or she can spend time writing up the purchase order, rather than showing off a glossy brochure.
CONCLUSION  KEY LESSONS TO IMPROVE YOUR MARKETING

✓ Create a marketing plan that ties back to your business plan.

✓ Use your marketing material to communicate how you solve your customers’ worst pains.

✓ Focus on marketing efforts that will have the most impact with the least drain on your resources.

✓ Take the time to understand your unique value proposition.

✓ Take the time to make sure your employees understand your unique value proposition.

✓ Understand your customer targets.

✓ Communicate with your customers. Track their responses and actions, and communicate with them again based on what those responses and actions are.

✓ Make sure your marketing material addresses your customers’ needs.

✓ Track your marketing ROI. Make adjustments to your marketing program accordingly to achieve ongoing improvement.

✓ Support your sales team.
Thank you for downloading this e-book!
If you are interested in more information, several other e-books are available at www.marcommer.com. Or, you can contact Marcy Tanniru directly at marcy@marcommer.com.

About the Marcommer
From branding to PR, brochures to web content, the Marcommer combines evocative messaging with persuasive copy to create an arsenal of sales and marketing tools that command attention. The Marcommer is a full-service marketing communications company that helps small- and medium-size B2B entities develop integrated marketing programs that generate results based on their unique objectives.

About the Author
Hyper-organized and detail-driven, but with a passion for the creative and a love for the clever, Marcy Tanniru creates her lists using multicolored markers and day-glo ink.

After 12 years of creating effective marketing communications for large, global companies, Marcy took a look at the industry and realized that the small businesses wanted the creative, revenue-generating marketing programs, but didn’t have the people to manage it or the budget to pay for it.

The idea for The Marcommer was born. Marcy left the corporate world to work with small- and medium-size businesses in November 2011.