**How to Create a Marketing Plan**

 **Introduction**

Successful businesses all have two things in common – a thorough understanding of customer needs and a total dedication to their customers.

This involves the process of knowing:

* Who their customers are
* Their customers’ perception of the company and their needs
* How to attract them back time and time again

The logic of this guide is that you must gather information about your business and get an insight into the way customers and prospective customers think and make ‘buy’ decisions. So take a day out to work on your marketing plan and set some targets.

At the end of a marketing day you should be in a position to:

* Have gathered information about existing and potential customers needs and wants
* Have facilitated a discussion about the marketing position the company should be in
* Know the unique selling points that this business has and how to take advantage of these
* Understand how to differentiate the business from competitors
* Produce a marketing plan

**So let’s get started:**

Writing a marketing plan for your business

A marketing plan sets out how you are going to put your growth strategy into practice. The marketing plan ensures that everyone in the business knows what you are trying to do and what they need to do to make it happen.

So let us think about drafting a plan and the key areas to consider:

1. Include your targets or objectives for the next 12 months. What are you trying to achieve?
2. Outline a budget and any deadlines which will help you focus on your priorities and commitment to achieving them.
3. Focus on communicating with existing and potential customers – set out when and how you will do this (to maintain customer awareness).
4. Outline how you are going to reach new customers and by what methods (social media, website, newsletter, mailings, calls, signage, events).
5. Build a schedule of marketing activities and start with key seasonal dates, time your marketing around these (if any) important dates.

We can provide a template for your marketing plan – please just ask.