Creating a Customer Focused Marketing Plan

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"Plans are nothing; planning is everything."
Dwight D. Eisenhower

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About Today’s Session

- A marketing plan helps business and marketing professionals in companies of all types and sizes to create a shared, focused strategy that is designed to improve marketing and sales effectiveness.

- This session introduces
  - key marketing and plan concepts
  - provides a framework for developing a customer-centric marketing plan.
Session Objectives

- Understand the role of the marketing department in a customer-centric environment
- Explain the process for developing a customer-centric marketing plan
- Review questions every marketing plan should answer
- Dragons and Quests: analyzing your situation
- Using the M.O.S.T approach to create a plan
- Mission, metrics, outcomes, objectives, strategies, and tactics
Common Company Challenges

- Lack of a shared, focused strategy
- Quality of positioning strategy
- Marketing and sales effectiveness
- Lack of plan (if it's not written down, there's no plan)
- No measures of success

Without strategy and planning, it's impossible to build a successful company
“Business has only two basic functions – marketing and innovation”
Peter Drucker, 1992
## Self-Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you have a written mission statement?</td>
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<td>2. Does your company have a written marketing plan?</td>
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<td>3. Does your company have a planning process?</td>
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<td>4. Do you feel confident that your customers’ requirements are accounted for in your plan?</td>
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<td>5. Is your plan grounded in an in-depth competitive understanding and analysis?</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Are the key assumption upon which the strategy hinges identified AND tested?</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Is everyone internally aware of the plan, the priorities, and onboard?</td>
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<td>8. Have evaluation metrics been agreed to?</td>
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<td>9. Is the performance of employees linked to the execution of the plan?</td>
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Every Business Needs 3 Plans

- **Strategic Business Plan**: Top down, longer horizon. The process of determining how the organization should expect to be positioned at some time in the future and what steps should be taken in the near term to move toward that positioning.

- **Operational Plan**: Bottoms up, fiscal year. Focuses on the fiscal year ahead and addresses what all aspects of the organization must do to achieve the operational plans objectives.

- **Marketing Plan**: Explains the strategies around the target market, product, channel, price, and promotion and details the implementation of these strategies that will cost-effectively generate the organization’s operational plans revenue goals.

Marketing Plans are Linked to Business Plans
The Role of Marketing

- Marketing is an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders.
  - AMA Definition of Marketing
Marketing’s Job

“Marketing has the main responsibility for achieving profitable revenue growth”
Phil Kotler, 1999

How do we do it?
Three ways to achieve our job

1. Find Profitable Opportunities
   - The process of acquiring/securing customers

2. Keep Profitable Opportunities
   - The process of retaining customers

3. Grow Profitable Opportunities
   - The process of increasing the value of your customer franchise and brand
Marketing Plan

- A process not a document
- It tells a story
  - It identifies the place and time (once upon a time in a far away land)
  - It identifies the characters – the good and the bad (there lived a beautiful princess kept captive by a dragon in a remote castle on the highest mountain in the land)
  - It tells how the current situation came to be – (A rival kingdom stole her when she was 10 and secreted her away, her family has been search high and low calling on anyone for aid)
  - It defines what must happen to make for a good outcome (A good fairy reveals her location and a noble band sets out to rescue her)
  - It establishes the challenges and what they must do to over come them
  - And it clarifies the outcome (And they all lived happily ever after)
- The final plan is not the most important reason for doing the plan
  - Probably only 25-30% of the effort is the writing
- What’s important is going through the process of creating your marketing strategy
- Emphasizes the company’s key advantages
The Value of a Plan

- Outline unique, meaningful marketing strategies that focus on the current needs and desires of the target customer
- Serve a blueprint, roadmap for action
- Provide focus
- Establish priorities
Marketing Plans Answer These Questions

1. What economic and business environment are you experiencing?
2. What opportunities and problems are you facing?
3. What business objectives do you expect to achieve?
4. What exactly do you sell?
5. Who are your customers?
6. Why should they buy your product or service rather than your competitors’?
7. How will you communicate your product or service to your customers?
8. Who will do what, when?
9. How are you going to measure your progress?
Answers involve the Ps of Marketing- aka The Marketing Mix

- Marketing Mix Defined: A unique blend of strategies, known as the Ps of marketing, designed to produce mutually satisfying exchanges with a target market

- The 6 Ps of Marketing
  - **Positioning:** The ‘place’ a product, brand, or entity occupies in the customers’ minds relative to competitive offerings
  - **Promise:** What can I count on from you?
  - **Product:** Includes the physical unit, packaging, warranty, after-sale service, brand name and image, value
  - **Place:** Concerned with how to make it convenient to buy the product
  - **Promotion:** Informing, educating, persuading, and reminding target markets about the offer
  - **Price:** What the buyer must give up to obtain the product
Attributes of a Good Plan

- Identifies a target customer group
- Explains what these customers want
- Develops a positioning strategy relevant to this group
- Creates an effective strategy is the key to success
Elements of a Good Marketing Plan

- Business Mission Statement
- Objectives
- Situation or SWOT Analysis
- Marketing Strategy
  - Target Market Strategy
- Marketing Mix
  - Product
  - Promotion
  - Distribution
  - Price
- Implementation Evaluation Control
Evaluating Your Previous Plan

- Did you have a plan?
  ___Yes   ___No
- If you did, how did you do against it?
  What worked? Why?
  What didn’t? Why?
- What measures of success did you use?
The Pre-Work – Understanding the Situation

- Market Analysis
  - Macro and Micro Trends
    - Track trends so you can capitalize on them by adding new products/services or modifying existing offers
- Customer Analysis
- Competitive Analysis
- Self – Analysis
  - SWOT
Situational Analysis

- A snapshot of your situation, your market, your customers, your company, the market, and competition at this point in time
- Demonstrates you’ve evaluated the situation and understand what customers want
- Integrate your findings into your plan
  - The market status of your products/services and a brief description of each product/service and its target market
  - Market and Sales trends
  - Customer Profiles and Personas
  - What your company does and how it operates, its strengths and weaknesses
  - Competition and SWOT
The More Facts the Better

- Nice to have time and resources to be thorough
- Not always possible
- If you can’t do your own research
  - Leverage third party research
  - Attend conferences, webinars, trade shows
    - Go where your customers and competition go
  - Talk to customers and prospects
    - Customer Advisory Boards
  - Read key publications
  - Use the web, blogs, etc.
Marco Environment

- The pertinent facts and implications related to economic, demographic, cultural, technological, and/or political forces that are outside your control but will have an effect on your business.
  - How do these impact your business?
  - What opportunities do they present?
    - Population trends
    - Insurance costs
    - Regulation
    - War
    - Interest rates
    - Unemployment
    - Gas prices
Trends

- Look for relevant patterns
  - Volume (i.e. flat, on the rise, etc)
  - Profitability (margin pressures, highly profitable low overhead)
  - Customer type (i.e. early adopters, followers)
  - Industry stage (i.e. emerging, plateauing)
- What might be some others?
Target Market

- All decisions are made within the context of the target market

Target Market = The group of people toward whom the firm decides to direct its marketing efforts
Target Market Strategy

- Attributes of an Attractive Market
  - High profitability
  - Rapid growth
  - Lack of government regulation
  - Insensitivity to price increases
  - Lack of competition
  - Availability of Technology

- Segment the market based on groups with similar characteristics
- Analyze the market based on attractiveness of market segments
- Select one or more target markets
Market Trends

- Capture the essence

Is your market growing? How fast?

Is your market flat?

Is your market declining?
Market Analysis – Details in Appendix

- History and Market Trends
  - Trend implications
  - What is one major trend in your industry?
  - Write it down?
- Market Outlook
  - What is the market outlook for your industry?
- Current Marketplace
  - Who are the current players? Buyers?
- Market Opportunity
  - How big is the market opportunity? Number of deals? Dollars?
- Growth Estimates
  - What are the growth projections and in what time frame.
- Market Drivers
  - Technology?
  - Economy?
Who’s the Customer

- Defining your target customer group is a marketer’s first step.
- Companies often create customer segments – customers who share a common set of characteristics.
  - Segments are often evaluated by:
    - substantiability,
    - identifiability,
    - measurability,
    - accessibility
- The target customer group is the group of people with the best fit for your offer.
  - Price, Product, Assurance/Comfort, Customization/Tailor Made
    - Each of these demand a different approach- Operational Excellence, Product Innovation/Leadership, Brand, Customer Intimacy
- Be able to clearly state which segments are best for you.
- Successful company know their customers, what they want, and how they’ll buy.
Know what’s important to your target

Answer these questions before you write your plan

1. What is the one thing your company could do that would have a dramatic impact on every one of your existing and potential customers?

________________________________________

2. What would your customers buy if they could afford anything they wanted?

________________________________________

3. What are the key drivers of success for your customer target group?

________________________________________
Know Your Customer

Create a profile of the idea customer
- Demographics
  - Size
  - Location
  - Industries

Psychographics
- How do they buy
- How do they decide to buy
- When do they buy
- Who buys? Who uses? How often? When?
- Criticalness of need/degree of pain
- Barriers to adoption/consideration

Personas too
About Your Competition

- Who are the Players
- What are their strengths and weaknesses
About the Competition

- Direct Competitors
  - Same customer problem
  - Same product category
  - Same market/customer segment

- Indirect Competitors
  - Same customer problem
  - Different product category
  - Same market/customer segment
About the Competition

Lots of players?

A few players with one large competitor?

Or Something Else?
How does each scenario impact your strategy?
Competitive Analysis Summary

- Be able to answer these questions when you complete the competitive analysis section in your plan
  - What drives your competition?
  - What are they doing/ can they do to out maneuver you?
  - Where are they vulnerable?
  - What actions could you take to out maneuver them? What will be their response?
About Your Company

- What is your current situation
  - Are you profitable?
  - Is your revenue increasing or declining?
  - Are you customers staying or defecting?
  - Are you living off your base or acquiring new customers?
  - Are your customers buying more from you than your competition?
How are You Performing

Plan

Revenue Trend?

Revenue Trend?

Revenue Trend?

Is there a gap – why?

• Too aggressive
• Market not really there
• Competition

Same analysis for profit
Your Growth Trends

- Are you growing faster, the same, slower than your market?
- If so, what are the implications?
- What gaps?
- What issues?
- What opportunities?
Your Situation

Which scenario looks like you? Why a gap?

- Service costs too high?
- Investments in new equip?
- Cost to acquire too high?
- Not enough customers?
- Customers defecting?
- Not enough margin?

- Lots of repeat biz?
- No competition?
- Low overhead?
- High margin customers?
Your Performance

- Are you customers staying, going, buying more from you?
- Are you acquiring more customers? Faster than before?

Number of New ctms
Decreasing, Increasing, Staying the same

Are your Customers Staying or Going

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th># Repeat Ctms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td># new ctms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ctm Trends

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Your Performance

- Is Your Share of Your Customers Business Increasing, Declining, Flat?
- Is Your Share of the Market Increasing, Declining, Flat?

Time

Deals/Ctm

Market Share

Time

Are they spending less, you’re getting more
Are they spending more, you’re getting less
Are they spending less, you’re getting less
Are they spending more, you’re getting more

Which box are you?
Are you taking share?
Losing share?
What Does It All Mean

- Summarize the take ways from your analysis – BE SPECIFIC
  - We have a revenue gap or not
    - Why
  - We’re growing faster than the market or not
    - Why
  - We’re keeping our customers and growing the amount of business with them or not
    - Why
- Create A SWOT
SWOT

- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
  - Evaluate each aspect of your company from your customer’s view point

- Things the company does well.
- Things the company does not do well.
- Conditions in the external environment that favor strengths.
- Conditions in the external environment that do not relate to existing strengths or favor areas of current weakness.
SWOT – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

- SWOT is used to assess your organization’s and competitor’s capabilities within the context of four questions:

1. What internal strengths do your organization or product/service have, compared to your competition, which will improve sales?

2. What internal weaknesses do your organization or product/service have, compared to your competition, which will hinder sales?

3. What external opportunities are open to your organization or product/service that will improve sales?

4. What external threats (over which your organization may have no control) are facing your organization or product/service that you may have to react to?
What’s the Story?

A marketing plan revolves around creating an advantage and then developing and implementing the tactics to ensure that customers/prospects realize that you have this advantage.
Clarify Your Differential Advantage

- You must have a compelling advantage associated with your company—something that is different about your company/product/service that is meaningful to the target.

- Why should customers buy from you instead of from your competitors?
Articulate Your Competitive Advantage

✓ What key customer advantage do you have that sets you apart from the competition?
✓ What 1-2 things that make us stand out?
✓ Which customers can validate your value proposition and competitive advantage?
✓ Who is willing to partner with you and why?
Write Your Positioning Statement

- Defines the way your company and product are important to your customers

- It is determined by your firm’s resources and capabilities in conjunction with the needs of the market
Positioning Statements

- Indicates
  - What your product is
  - Who is your target customer
  - Why your target customer should buy from you

- Provides guidance – every aspect of your marketing plan should reinforce your competitive position in the minds of your prospects and customers

- Each target customer group will need a different positioning statement
### Positioning Statement Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company Name</th>
<th>Tengo Internet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Market/Product Category</td>
<td>a customer hi-speed Internet Access Provider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits/Competitive Differentiator</td>
<td>provides Outstanding customer service and contract flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Segment</td>
<td>For the camping and hospitality industries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem/Critical Need</td>
<td>Who need to rely on amenities as a differentiator for creating a great customer experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive Differentiation</td>
<td>Unlike XXX whose products and business model doesn’t allow for flexibility, is more difficult to install, and doesn’t let the customer brand the service</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Take the Competition into Account

- What is their positioning?
  - List the target markets and why each competitor believes the target segment should buy its product

- How do the prospects see the differences between the competitors and you?
  - Do your homework-market research

- Respond to competitive threats by differentiating your product/service rather than by dropping your price or running new promotions
Message Map

- Primary messages you want to communicate about your company, your people/partners, your services/products, your customers, your market that support your value proposition

COMPANY     PEOPLE     PRODUCT     CUSTOMERS     MARKET
Dragons and Quests

- When you complete the analysis you know whether you are fighting dragons or embarking on a quest or both.
Now You’re Ready to Write Your Plan
Plan Outline

- Executive Summary
- Company Overview
- Marketing Objectives
- Situational Analysis
  - Sales Trends
  - Market Trends
  - Customer Trends
  - Competitive Analysis
  - SWOT
- Positioning Strategy
  - Strategy Rationale
  - Positioning Statement
- Marketing Strategies
- Marketing Tactics
- Implementation Plan
- Budget
- Appendix
MOST

- Mission and Metrics
- Outcomes and Objectives
- Strategies
- Tactics
Executive Summary

- A short capsule (500 words or less) of what you will be trying to do over the next year
- Summary should mention the company’s business, sales, and marketing objectives
- Executive Summary Test:
  - Can a new reader understand what your business does?
  - Is your target market identified?
  - Is the customer need identified?
  - Does the summary identify one or two factors in your market situation that are impacting your business?
  - Is it clear that your strategy is one you can implement?
Company Overview

- Description of the Business
  - 2-3 sentences describing your business

- History and Background
  - 3-4 sentences

- Target Markets
  - Deliberately chose a market you can compete in
  - TIP: Small companies often do better by concentrating on a small market where they can give more personal/customize service; this is their main advantage over large companies
  - TIP: Can you attack a market segment too small to interest a larger company
Tie the Plan to the Business Outcomes

- What are the three outcomes your company must achieve to be successful?
  - How will success be measured?

- Which of these is marketing expected to impact?

- What must the Marketing Organization do to make this contribution?

- What will convince the organization that marketing made a difference?

Write It Down
What Has to Happen to Solve or Increase the Gaps

- Your analysis serves as the basis for your objectives and strategies
  - Business Objectives
    - Close the revenue gap of X$ by YE05
    - Achieve a rate of growth (X%) equal to the rate of the market in two years
    - Increase share of customer wallet from X to Y in 18 months
  - The Business Objectives are the Foundation for Your Marketing Objectives
    - Reduce customer churn by X% in the next six months
    - Increase margin/doctor to X$ by YE
    - Increase # of specimens/doctor from X to Y this year
    - Add X# new doctors by?
Establish Your Metrics at the Outset

Keep the Job in Mind

- Find/Secure Profitable Customers
  - Acquisition
  - Market Share

- Keep Customers
  - Penetration
  - Lifetime Value

- Grow Customer Value
  - Monetization
  - Brand/Customer Equity

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O is for Outcomes and Objectives

- Marketing objectives should be tied to your company’s business outcomes.
- You need to understand what your company is trying to do and which of those things you can directly and indirectly impact.
Outcomes

- What are your company’s top 3-5 business outcomes?
- Which of those can marketing impact directly?
- Which of those can marketing impact indirectly?
- Which of those can marketing not impact at all?
- Those outcomes you can impact directly and indirectly provide insight into your objectives and performance targets.
Objectives

Marketing Objectives Must Be:

- Realistic
- Measurable
- Time specific
- Consistent with the organization’s priorities

“Our objective is to increase market share by 40% and to obtain customer satisfaction ratings of at least 90% in 2008.”
S is for Strategies

Strategy is a campaign to win a competitive situation, taking into account your resources, your competition’s resources and the nature of the battlefield to obtain a sustainable competitive advantage.

- Stated as a customer focus
- Based on what customers want
- Identify “HOW” the objectives will be accomplished
New Products/Services

Your answers to these questions will help drive your strategy:

- What new products/services will you introduce in the coming year?
- When will you bring them to market?
- What problem do they solve?
- Who are you targeting? Existing customers? New markets?
- How will you price the product?
- How will you distribute the product?
- How will you promote the product?
Marketing Strategies Tie to Corporate Strategies

- Typically strategies address these opportunities

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Present Product</th>
<th>New Product</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Present Market</strong></td>
<td>Market Penetration</td>
<td>Product Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Market</strong></td>
<td>Market Development</td>
<td>Diversification</td>
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Asnoff Matrix
Strategies Meet 5 Criteria

- Enable the company to
  - Meet customers needs and wants –means you must know what these are
  - Differentiate the company –means you must know the competition
    - If your customers/prospects can’t tell you what’s different and better about your company/product/service, you aren’t doing an effective job of positioning
  - Deliver marketing messages with high impact
  - Place the product so it’s easy for the customer to buy
  - Make the buying and using of the product comfortable

- The best way to create a marketing strategy is to find an opportunity

- Strategies need to produce meaningful business outcomes – sales, profits, shareholder value
Strategies Support Objectives

- Need to acquire more customers
  - Is the strategy to take customers away from a particular competitor?
  - Is the strategy to offer a better more accurate technology?
  - Is the strategy to partner with someone?
- Increase number of products/customer
  - Is the strategy to offer a special price break based on number of products
  - Is the strategy tied to some service quality issue?
T is for Tactics – The What

- **Role** is to bring about exchanges with target markets
- **Product**
  - Starting point - Includes physical unit, package, warranty, service, brand, image, and value
- **Place**
  - Product availability where and when customers want them.
  - Involves all activities from raw materials to finished products
- **Promotion**
  - Includes integration of personal selling, advertising, sales promotion, and public relations
- **Price**
Tactics have Three Tasks

1. Find prospects
   - Do you generate enough leads that you can afford to discard marginal leads?
   - Are a minimum of 50% of your leads viable buying prospects (will turn into qualified leads)?
   - Do new leads come in on a regular basis?

2. Nurture prospects
   - Do you have a process to contact active prospects/customers every 3 months?
   - Do you have a method for determining when a prospect is ready to buy?
   - Do your lead follow up programs tie in with other events designed to provide prospects with decision making information?

3. Create a memorable message
   - Can at least 50% of your customers/prospects state your marketing message?
   - Does your marketing message reinforce your major competitive advantage?
Buying Pipeline

- The stages of the pipeline will impact your tactics

- Contacts
- Suspects
- Leads
- Qld
- Leads
- Prospect
- Closed
- Deals
Pipeline Analysis

- What is a qualified lead?
- How many contacts/suspects
- How many suspects/prospect?
- How many prospects/qualified lead?
- What does it take to convert a lead to consideration?
- How is consideration measured? RFP? Customer Visit?
This includes the specific action plan, calendar, and responsible individuals content, and cost for each tactic.

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<tr>
<td>Purpose of Tactic</td>
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<td>Person Responsible</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Implementation Plan Date</td>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Person</th>
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Cost $
Budget

- This section should identify the cost for each strategy and its associated tactics
- You can have a big marketing strategy on small budget
Summary – Checklist for your plan

- Whom do you want to serve? How could you expand the boundaries of your customer set?
- What are their needs? Priorities?
  - If you were you customer what would your overall objectives be?
  - What would be your major concerns?
  - How could a supplier help you achieve your goals?
- What shifts/trends are occurring in your market?
- Can you provide quality product/service cost effectively? How can you add value to the customer?
- Are outside conditions right for your product/service?
- What is the most convenient way for your markets to use your products/services?
- What are the best ways to inform the market about the products/services?
- Who are your competitors? What companies do your customers regard as their best options?
- How will you measure if the market is satisfied?
- What can you do to make things even better?
- How can you become the customer’s first choice?
5 Minimum Components for Any Plan

- Business Outcome
  - Metrics
- Situation Analysis – most likely will require research
  - Current situation description
  - SWOT
  - Summary of main issues and opportunities
  - List of assumptions
- Marketing Mission and Objectives
- Marketing Strategies
  - Hammer out a strategy that addresses primary target market, buyers who ready, able and willing
    - May require research
  - Positioning – clarify the reason why people should buy from YOU (WIFM)
    - May require research
- Marketing Tactics
  - Identify concrete actions, timeline, resources (people, time, money)
Thank you

- Questions?
- For Information or to subscribe to our free monthly Metrics Newsletter

www.visionedgemarketing.com
Learn More - Available in the VEM Store

Gone Fishin’ For Marketing and Sales Alignment EBook - $19.95

Navigating Through the Maze of Marketing Plan Creation - $34.95
About VisionEdge Marketing

- Founded in 1999 and Headquartered in Austin, TX, VisionEdge Marketing, Inc. Serving over 75 customers and counting.
- VisionEdge Marketing, Inc. is a data-driven and metrics-focused marketing firm that specializes in improving marketing performance and helping organizations create a competitive advantage designed to attract, secure and retain profitable customers.
- Services include marketing performance management, marketing and sales alignment, product and strategic marketing, pipeline re-engineering, and professional development.