ROCKPAPERSIMPLE'S 2018 MARKETING PREP KIT

OUR WAY OF MAKING SURE YOUR YEAR IS AWESOME!





With the New Year just around the corner, the Rock Paper Simple Team wanted to give our friends some tools so they can be extra ready for their 2018 marketing! This prep kit is intended to help you understand your business better, put your goals down on paper and help you put your plan together for the coming year.

We know it can be hard to admit when you need help or when you're doing something wrong, but we suggest that you be completely honest when utilizing this prep kit because that's the only way it will work. Plus, you don't have to show your answers to anyone else (if you don't want to) so take a moment to read through and refocus on how awesome 2018 is going to be.

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Planning

"If you don't know where you are going, you'll end up someplace else." -Yogi Berra

Great things are accomplished when there is great vision... but executing that vision to make it a reality requires a keen understanding of where you are going, why you are going, and how you will get there. Many ideas never reach greatness simply because the vision lacked a clear understanding of how to make it a reality. Planning is essential to making your ideas and goals come to fruition. With a plan, you and those helping you attain your goals will be able to see your vision and stay on track.

Marketing can easily devolve into a series of meaningless unmeasured tasks that just keep you busy without you ever really knowing if it is making a difference. Developing a marketing plan is a crucial step for your business this year and every year. You should have a monthly and weekly plan that you and the rest of your team



can look at and adhere to in order to keep you in line with your marketing goals. Without a plan, your marketing strategy will slip through the cracks. You will feel the need to implement something, but since it will be last minute the execution may look and feel a bit rushed. This will not bring you closer to your goal and quite frankly it brings unnecessary stress. Help yourself and the rest of your team by planning ahead. Create a vision, make a plan, share your plan, and remember to leave some wiggle room for when those unexpected hiccups occur.

There are many important elements to creating a great marketing plan. You'll have to have a good understanding of your brand, target audience, goals, budget, marketing channels, and even analytics and data to keep track of how you are doing. This may all seem overwhelming at first, but once you have these items figured out, your marketing strategy will fall into place. Don't worry the Rock Paper Simple team is here to help!

The team here at Rock Paper Simple has put together a methodology for marketing to ensure we stay results-focused! Check it out below:

THE RESULTS-DRIVEN MARKETING CYCLE

7. OBSESS OVER THE ANALYTICS

REVIEW THE ANALYTICS AND DATA TO DRAW CONCLUSIONS. START THE CYCLE AGAIN!

I. DETERMINE GOALS

KNOW THE METRICS YOU WANT TO INCREASE AND YOUR SPEND BUDGET. THE STRATEGY WILL ALWAYS BE DETERMINED BY GOALS AND BUDGET.

6. ENGAGE YOUR AUDIENCE

LAUNCH THE CAMPAIGN AND BE PRESENT TO YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE IN THE RIGHT MOMENTS.

2. TARGET YOUR AUDIENCE

TARGET THE RIGHT AUDIENCE IN THE RIGHT MOMENTS. ADJUST TARGETING AS THE DATA LEADS.

5. DEFINE TONE AND FREQUENCY

BUILD YOUR MESSAGE AND DETERMINE HOW OFTEN YOU WILL SPEAK YOUR MESSAGE.

4. IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES BY CHANNEL

DETERMINE WHAT CHANNELS PROVIDE THE MOST OPPORTUNITY OF RETURN BASED ON DATA. 3. ANALYZE YOUR COMPETITION

REVIEW WHAT YOUR COMPETITORS ARE DOING AND APPLY ADJUSTMENTS AS NECESSARY.

Know Thyself

"If you aim at nothing, you will hit it every time." -Zig Ziglar

There are many elements to creating a great marketing plan, but the first step is knowing yourself/your business. This section of the kit will walk you through defining your target audience, getting to know your brand, and pinpointing who your competition is. All of this will be necessary to move forward with your plan and once it's refined your team will have a clear idea of what your company stands for.

Define Target Audience

Defining your target audience is essential for your marketing plan because it will help you aim your messaging to those who want to hear it or those who would benefit from it the most. Think about who frequently purchases your product or services, what stage in life are they, and who else may find use for your product or service.

Here are some items you should write down to begin your journey in defining your audience. Remember, this is just your target audience, the group that is most likely to purchase from you. It doesn't mean you can't sell to others outside of this group... it just means that is the group that is most ideal to market to.



Age

What is the age range of your average customer?

Gender

Does your offering appeal more to one gender?

Income What is their income range?

Interests

Does your audience enjoy Sports, Magazines, Dancing, Travel, etc?

Ethnicity

Does your audience typically belong to a specific ethnicity?

Geographics

Where does your audience live? Are they local to your area, the U.S. or international?

Education

Is your audience typically college-educated and if so, to what level?

Marital Status

Are they single, married, or does it matter?

Kids

Does your audience have children? Does it matter what age these children are?

Employment

What industry does your target work for? Do they have a specific type of job or employer?

Clubs or other groups

Does your audience participate in volunteer groups or other hobby groups?

Personality types?

Is your audience outgoing, reserved, organized, nurturing, etc?

Free-write: What else can you think of about your target audience? Who is that ideal, best client? Write anything else you can think of.

Really honing in on your target audience requires reviewing data and even performing additional research into your industry, but the above will get you further than most businesses ever get. The team here at Rock Paper Simple is happy to help refine what you come up with if you'd like the help! Let us know!

Define Your Brand

Now that you have a pretty solid understanding of who your target audience is, think about how well you know your brand. You should know what your brand stands for and what sets you apart from other brands. The better you know your brand, the better you can market it to those who want your product or service.

The brand that better knows itself and defines itself will always have the better edge when it comes to messaging and marketing.

Here are some questions that will help you really define what sets you apart from other brands:

What is the need or problem you are solving with your product or service?

What are your core offerings?

What is your unique value proposition? That one thing that truly sets you apart from your competition.

What else makes you different from other brands? Why does it matter?

And here are some questions that will help further define your brand:

Are there core things your brand stands for? What are they and how do they influence your offerings, your customer service and how you present your brand?

Define your brand personality. How does it act and sound? Does it have a certain way it should present itself? If so, define it.

Do you have specific things you and your team say to customers or prospective customers a lot? Write these down and make sure they are consistent.

Building a brand and a message is a process, but a process that will help you have a brand that is more cohesive. By focusing on the 4 Keys of a Marketable Brand, your brand can become a more effective brand and a more effective brand enhances your marketing efforts. Below is the Methodology for building brands we use here at Rock Paper Simple.

THE 4 KEYS

AUDIENCE

KNOWING YOUR AUDIENCE ENSURES YOUR BRAND LOOKS AND SPEAKS IN A WAY THAT WILL APPEAL TO THEM.

DIFFERENTIATION

DEFINING YOUR CORE DIFFERENTIATORS ALLOWS YOUR BRAND TO KEY IN ON WHAT TRULY SETS YOU APART IN THE MARKETPLACE.

IMPACT

3.

CREATING IMPACT THROUGH BOTH MESSAGING AND VISUALS WILL KEEP THE BRAND MEMORABLE.

CONSISTENCY

KEEPING THE BRAND CONSISTENT IN MESSAGE AND IMAGE WILL BUILD LOYALTY AND TRUST WITH YOUR AUDIENCE.

Know Your Competition

Note from Joshua Adams-

I was taught early on in my career the importance of knowing my competition and how my company stood apart and above them. I was in what I thought was the closing meeting of a very large account, sitting across from a very wise business owner who had seemed to take a liking to me. I was positive we had the deal... the biggest deal I had ever closed! Then he asked me a question... "so who is your competition... and why are you better?". I froze! I didn't know how to answer and I quickly named a few other companies in the area, but leaned on the cop-out answer of why we were better... Quality and Service of course! (WRONG ANSWER!). Everyone says their quality and service is better... and I knew it. I



lost the sale and will forever remember what that gentleman told me on his way out. "You've got to know your competition, kid".

Ever since, I have made it my business to know who my key competitors are and what they sell as their key strengths. I know where they stand in the marketplace and I can make decisions to differentiate us from them.

Always, always know your competition... kid.

List your Top Competitors:
What do they offer?
What is their Unique Value Proposition?
What are their strengths?
What are their weaknesses?

What are they doing well (in both service and marketing)?

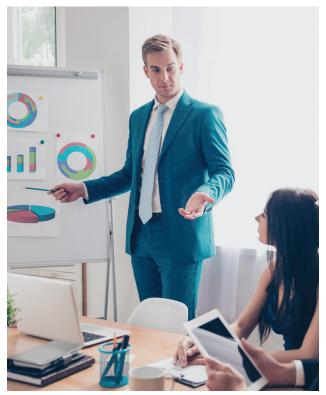
How can you position yourself ahead of them?

Once you've honestly answered these questions, you will have a clear idea of what you need to do to come ahead of your competition and it will help direct your marketing strategy.

Know Thy Numbers

For some of you this is the fun part, but for most it can be pretty daunting. You will not be able to measure the success of your marketing plan without knowing your analytics and sales data.

Gather data going back to the last 1-2 years and take note of the time of year when sales dropped or spiked and when your website had the most and the least traffic. Look at website traffic numbers to know which pages are most engaging to visitors and try to track what current marketing is working. You'll also want to look at your social media engagement numbers and how your sales numbers are split among specific offerings (which offerings generate the most profit?).This will help you to make that monthly marketing plan because you will see when and where you should invest more time and money.



Set Your Goals

"Goals allow you to control the direction of change in your favor." - Brian Tracy

All of your planning would be in vain if you do not set a few realistic goals for the year. Think about your numbers for the past year or two and write down a few generic goals that you would like this marketing plan to accomplish. We will get more specific shortly.

Now it's time to think about how you will measure the success of your marketing this year. Will it be through Revenue? Sales? Leads generated?

Take some time out to write down and decide on some KPIs (Key Performance Indicators). A KPI is a measurable value that will help you keep in line with your goals. A few examples of good KPIs are the number of leads, sales, sign-ups you would like to have within a certain time-frame. You will benefit from creating shorter time frames such as monthly or quarterly so that you can review and revise your marketing strategy as the year progresses.

Write in below the KPI's you've chosen and how much you'd like to see them grow in the first month of 2018, each quarter of the coming year and the entire year. Be realistic, but also ensure your goals stretch you and your team.



Set Your Budget

Setting a budget for your marketing is important because it helps you keep track of what your Estimated costs were and what your Actual costs are at the end of the year. The marketing strategy is always determined by the budget because it will define what and how much you can do. It will also help you to decide if you can focus on items that require a spend budget or if you have to focus on more time-intensive methods.

Ideally your budget will be planned for the year and broken into a monthly budget. You can adjust this budget based on the seasonality of your industry. For example, some tourism-based companies will do well to up their budget during spring break or peak travel seasons. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration and the Counsellors to America's Small Business, most companies should allocate between 2%-10% of their sales to their marketing budget.

Knowing what your goals are helps to establish a realistic budget. If you want to see larger growth, be sure to establish a larger marketing budget.

Use the Form Below to Create Your Budget for 2018:

Month	Budget
January	\$
February	\$
March	\$
April	\$
May	\$
June	\$
July	\$
August	\$
September	\$
October	\$
November	\$
December	\$

Your Annual Budget: \$ _____



There are various channels where you may or may not want to designate time and money to in order to implement your plan and reach your goals for 2018. Think about where you'll be able to reach your target audience and how they would like to be reached. Some examples of the many marketing channels include Search Engine Optimization, Paid Search, Social Media Marketing, Facebook Ads, Retargeting, Email, Collateral, Content Marketing, Video, TV, Radio, Newspaper, sponsorships, events, etc. If you're interested in learning more about these various channels, reach out to us and we'll be happy to help!

Write in below the marketing channels you would like to explore this year and why:

Refine Budget

Now that you've set a budget and you've decided what channels you want to use to implement your strategy, you need to decide how much you want to spend per channel annually and then monthly.

Review your budget and make sure you have set realistic budgets per channel. You can learn more about how much you should spend to achieve certain goals by speaking with a marketing expert. We have several here at Rock Paper Simple who would be happy to speak with you and you can even book a free 30-minute marketing consultation with us here: www.rockpapersimple.com/schedule

Use the spreadsheet on the next page for this, or download the <u>Excel Spreadsheet version</u> by clicking here.

	Want this o
Click Here!	chart as an l
lere!	Excel
	Spreadsheet?

Total Budget:						Channels
\$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ Jan.
\$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ Feb.
\$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ Mar.
\$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ Apr.
\$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ May
\$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ Jun.
\$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ Jul.
\$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ Aug.
\$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ Sept.
\$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ Oct.
\$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ Nov.
\$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ Dec.
\$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ \$	\$ 2018

Your Marketing Budget

Track Analytics

Make sure you measure everything this year! If you don't know if a marketing channel is working, you won't know if you should spend more or less on it next year. You chose KPI's earlier in this prep kit... make sure you have implemented ways to measure those KPI's as well as other important factors that could include phone calls, website leads, website traffic, form submissions, visits to your facility, leads, sales, etc. The more data you collect, the better informed you will be as you continue to make marketing decisions for your company.

There are many ways to track this data, from Google Analytics to form submission tracking, call tracking, CRM systems and good old fashioned asking "where did you hear about us from?". You want to be able to know if your money is working well for you or not so you can make wise choices about where to allocate your marketing money.



Everything we do here at RPS is measured. We know exactly which channels are generating what traffic, leads and sales so we know how to best advise our clients. We even measure this up against any data our clients can provide us, such as sales, foot traffic and more. This allows us to get even more accurate in terms of how to best steer the marketing.

When you know your numbers... you are more effective.

Implement



Hooray! You have a plan! It's time to implement that plan. There are many resources you can use to go ahead and get your plan going on your own. If you have a team who can help implement this plan, that's even better.

For some, implementing this plan on their own may seem like the most daunting task on their neverending To-Do list and that's okay. Marketing agencies like Rock Paper Simple can help you along the way. Whether you

would like an agency to walk you through the entire process or just have them help you with certain aspects that are not your forte, the right marketing agency can lift a weight off your shoulders when it comes to implementing your marketing plan.

We at Rock Paper Simple sincerely hope this Marketing Prep Kit helps you get 2018 off to a great start and even better finish. We know that this prep kit may have opened your eyes to marketing strategies you did not know before, so if you have questions give us a call and we'll be happy to answer them.

Give us a call at 321-626-2172 or <u>reach out to us via our website form</u>. Just say hello, tell us how awesome this prep kit is or request your free consultation... We look forward to hearing from you.

Here's to making sure your 2018 is AWESOME, from the whole team at Rock Paper Simple!

Schedule Your Free Consultation Today! Click Here