



SET YOUR MARKETING GOALS IN 10 SIMPLE STEPS: HOW TO PLAN FOR YOUR SUCCESS

Does this sound in any way familiar?

*Last year you declared that it was THE year to grow your business. You may even have made a to-do list that included things like "Make more money," "Find new clients," etc.

But despite creating your trusty list, life got in the way, as it is wont to do, so you're no closer to meeting your goal now than you were this time last year.

In fact, just thinking about what you (gulp!) didn't accomplish makes you a little uncomfortable and disappointed. You might even have talked yourself into thinking that you simply can't find the time to start working on your goals, what with all the last-minute client challenges, employee issues and hurried attempts to do any sort of marketing at all.*

The good news is that it doesn't have to be so difficult to reach your goals. If you know my work and/or subscribe to my newsletter, you know that I'm a planner at heart. It's the very best way to ensure that you will actually reach the goals you want to achieve this year ... and beyond.

Here is a simple, yet helpful method to plan for your own success. Just grab a pen and paper, and you're ready to roll!

1. Think about where you would like to be in 3 years. I pick 3 years because it is a reasonable amount of time in which to expect fairly large changes to take place -- such as achieving nationally known status as an expert in your field, a substantial increase in your net earnings or simply finding a better clientele that doesn't stress you out. Many of your goals may take a while to achieve, above and beyond a mere 12 months. (We all know how quickly a month can pass us by!)

So think long and hard about what you would like to achieve, first and foremost.

2. Why do you want to achieve those goals? What is your motivation? Because you really want to make them happen, or because you think you *should* achieve them?

Now is not the time to play "should've's." Instead, ensure that every goal on your list is motivated by the right goals, namely that you want to see them come true because they are ideal for your skill set and key strengths.

What's key here is to rule out goals that you have set for yourself that actually aren't in line with your value system and dreams. It's time to concentrate on what YOU want! This will save you many hours of time and frustration.

3. Make sure you're aiming for goals that are high enough! Many of my clients initially have a tendency to sell themselves short; only after discussing their potential do they see what they can truly achieve.

It's also important to ask yourself very seriously if you are simply planning not to fail. No, you don't want to take risks that will majorly undermine you if they fail, but you do need to take calculated risks that stretch you to new heights.

4. What will it take to get you there? You want to consider the steps that will get you to each of your goals.

If, for example, you are currently making \$45,000 a year and hope to achieve more than \$1 million in business in 3 years, you have to determine the changes you will make in your business model as a whole that will allow you to do so.

You might need to:

-- hire more employees to handle the increased business

-- stop trading hours for money (or as many hours for money) by starting to help groups of clients rather than individuals and/or branch out into information publishing

-- begin recruiting clients in ways that reach out to large quantities of targeted prospects rather than focusing on less time- and cost-effective marketing methods

-- expand your reach outside your local area

-- get to know people that can help you reach your goals

-- start weeding out the clients you don't enjoy working with and concentrating on the ones you do, who typically bring in more for you while requiring less handholding

-- etc.

Spell out the broad steps that you will need to make in order to move ahead, along with the amount of time it will take for you to achieve them.

5. Which skills do you need to gain in order to achieve those goals? If you want to make more money with your business with a minimum of expense, I highly recommend that you do the following:

-- Establish a clearly defined brand for your business, which you can use from this point forward as the foundation for literally all of your business decisions to follow. My High-Concept Brand Bible home-study manual will walk you through all of the steps in the process. <http://AvenueEast.com/brand/>

-- Improve your copywriting skills. Learning how to write effective sales copy is one of the very best ways to save yourself time and expense on your promotions. That's true whether you ever gain expert-level copywriting ability or continue to hire out all of your copywriting work in the future. Just knowing what to look out for is a tremendous help. My FREE sales letter tutorial is a good starting point. <http://AvenueEast.com/saleslettertutorial.htm>

-- Learn the ins and outs of direct marketing. This will allow you to reach a wider audience, and you will learn the nuances of sales psychology that cause your prospects to act quickly. (Don't worry -- you don't have to use cheesy hard-sell tactics, but you do need to learn how to motivate people to take action.)

-- Plan to expand your firm beyond your own capabilities? You'll need to learn how to manage staff, potentially handle more complex tax requirements for payroll purposes and other non-marketing related concepts that will directly result from your marketing decisions.

Make sure to list all skills that you need to improve upon.

6. Assess which goals are realistic to achieve. What is viable? What isn't? If you need to learn a lot of new skills, how much time can you realistically plan to dedicate to doing so? Do you have the financial ability to afford the training?

Secondly, are any of your goals contradictory? For example, if you wish to raise your income by selling more personal services and want to make 6 figures, will you be able to raise your rate enough in your market to realistically accomplish this?

Then, and only then, you'll be ready to ...

7. Create a 1-year plan. I started with the longer-term plan because it helps you visualize the things that you truly wish to achieve -- and allows you to see the significant gains you can make with concerted effort. However, you need to build some interim steps in the process, 1 year at a time. At this point you want to

outline the goals that you would like to achieve in that 1-year period.

8. Map out the steps that would allow you to achieve those goals. For instance, if your goal is to gain 12 new clients this year, what will it take to reach them?

Be very specific about what you plan to do at what point during the year -- along with how you plan to find the time to achieve them. It might mean hiring a virtual assistant, getting help from a marketing professional like yours truly and/or sending out mailings to clients and prospects on a monthly basis.

Oftentimes each goal has a number of subgoals, such as gathering names of prospects, getting design work done, joining local organizations and attending meetings, hiring a consultant and so forth.

9. Add the steps in your 1-year plan to your calendar. I use Microsoft Outlook solely for the calendar function, which allows me to set up reminders and manage my time more effectively. You can also use a paper calendar or Daytimer organizer -- it's not the medium that counts, but what works best for you!

Make sure to add an appointment to your calendar for each of the major milestones in your plan, and then commit to keeping them. If you let one slide, immediately reschedule it. If you're not committed to your own success, you can't expect to make progress.

10. Assess where you are once a month, and adjust your schedule accordingly. There's no sense beating yourself up if you suffer a minor setback; just find a way to get back on schedule the following month.

We all have professional and personal challenges that get in the way of progress from time to time -- illness, family matters, etc. Forgive yourself for serious matters that you cannot plan for; it happens to the best of us. If you suffer serious setbacks, it might be time to reassess what is feasible to accomplish in the near future.

If you do end up reworking your set of goals, go through these steps once again to ensure that you aren't setting yourself up for failure. Every successful business owner I've ever known (and frankly, every successful person I've ever known) has understood the value of putting yourself in a position to succeed!

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