



# Plan how to let your customers know about your products or services

You need to understand your market to sell your products or services at a profit. You will need to investigate how you market your products or services to improve your sales and marketing.

This information will help you to prepare plans that will persuade people to buy a product or service and help to improve your profits.

The detail of what you need to look at will depend on your type of business and the sort of customers you are trying to reach.

You also need to look at what your competitors are doing and think about ways to win more business.

This involves making sure that you:

1. find out about the market for your business's products or services
2. produce a plan for marketing
3. decide how you will judge the success of your marketing and sales

## What you need to do

- decide what you hope to achieve through marketing and match this to the targets you have set for your business
- prepare forecasts for marketing and work out the cost of marketing activities
- decide a reasonable time to reach the marketing targets
- find out about possible marketing and promotion methods and opportunities
- prepare a detailed budget for marketing and decide what the benefits to your business will be
- use your findings to produce your marketing plan and include all the information to show how you have reached your decisions
- decide how you will deal with things that do not go according to your plan
- decide what things you would look for to see if your marketing plan was successful
- decide what information you will use to judge your marketing performance
- decide how often you will review marketing performance to see if you need to change any of your targets
- think about where things might differ from the plan, and think about how you would deal with this



## What you need to know and understand

### Marketing targets

- why it is important to set targets for marketing and sales
- what information you need about the market for your products or services
- what targets to set for marketing and for your share of the market
- how to set targets for marketing which will include considering:
  - your position in the market;
  - sales and gross margins;
  - profits and profit margins;
  - cash-flow;
  - products or services;
  - competitor activity;
  - fashion and customer trends;
  - the image of your business;
  - using resources; and
  - changes in technology

### Marketing methods

- why marketing and promotion is important
- different ways to promote a product or service. (For example publicity in local press, radio and TV, personal recommendation and endorsement.)
- different types of marketing. (For example advertising, sending publicity materials direct to customers, selling to customers face-to-face or public relations.)



## Marketing plans

- how to produce a plan for marketing
- what you should include in a marketing plan:
  - what the market is
  - what customers need and want
  - your forecasts for your business
  - what type of marketing you will use
  - how much the marketing will cost
  - what the products or services are. (For example name, size, quality, design and packaging.)
  - what the price of products or services should be. (For example discounts, credit terms, special offers and alongside competition from other similar products or services.)
  - who will be involved in marketing. (For example you, your staff or outside agencies.)
  - how and where products or services are to be sold. (For example wholesale, in shops, mail order or through the Internet.)
  - how you will present the product or service to customers

## Marketing performance

- how to judge whether or not you are meeting marketing targets
- how to include some flexibility in judging success, to take account of what actually happens
- how to set up your business to make sure that you can get information about marketing easily
- how to identify the points at which business differs from the plan. (For example higher or lower sales figures, more or less demand from customers.)