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PROMOTION TOOLS

Here you'll plan not only the message you want to use, but also the tools you'll use to spread it to the world.

Advertising

Set your advertising strategies to portray exactly what you are going to communicate in your message. This should be based on the positioning you've established and should be tested and refined until it says exactly what you need it to say. It has to portray your product in the right light and bring to mind the right image.

For this section of your marketing plan, clearly describe the creative strategy. Include the following:

- Advertising promise - The promise you are making to your audience in your advertising
 - Support for the promise - Bulleted statements that support your claims
 - Advertising tone - The emotional images conjured by your message that are appropriate for both the product and your audience
 - Rationale - Statements referring back to your product/market research that back up your creative strategies

There is a whole set of tools for public relations and publicity, just as there is for advertising. These include:

- news releases
- feature stories and interviews
- exclusives
- opinion pieces
- photos
- speeches or appearances at seminars, conventions, etc.
- local, regional or national talk shows and other programs
- online chats and forums
- community involvement

There are two elements to a PR plan:

- What you want to communicate

- A hook to make it newsworthy and interesting

Promotions and Events

A promotion, as opposed to advertising, is based on incentives to act, such as a two-for-one sale, a price discount, or a free gift with purchase. Promotions are useful for encouraging potential customers to try your product and hopefully increase your base of loyal customers.

Here are some examples of promotion types used by marketers today:

- Price discounts/sales
- Coupons
- Samples
- Rebates
- Sweepstakes/games
- Packaging
- Events

Media plan should:

- specify which media you will be using to carry your advertising message, such as magazines, newspapers, direct mail, Internet, etc.
- detail the specifics, such as which publications
- detail even more specifics, such as which issues, times, dates, etc.
- list the budget for each vehicle
- describe the rationale behind each selection

There are three steps you should take when setting your budget. When you get all three results, set your budget based on comparisons of each finding.

1. Set your budget based on your plan's goals and objectives and the schedules you have recommended.

2. Look at the industry average of marketing dollars spent as a percent of sales for similar companies in your industry. There should be data available for the average in your industry. Using this second method will let you see if your budget appears to be realistic in comparison to other similar companies. This figure will help you determine if your budget is too high or low compared to the industry average.

3. Go through a third exercise which involves estimating your primary competitor's advertising and marketing budget based on what you know about their activities.

This is a good way to help you be more competitive and possibly gain more

market share.