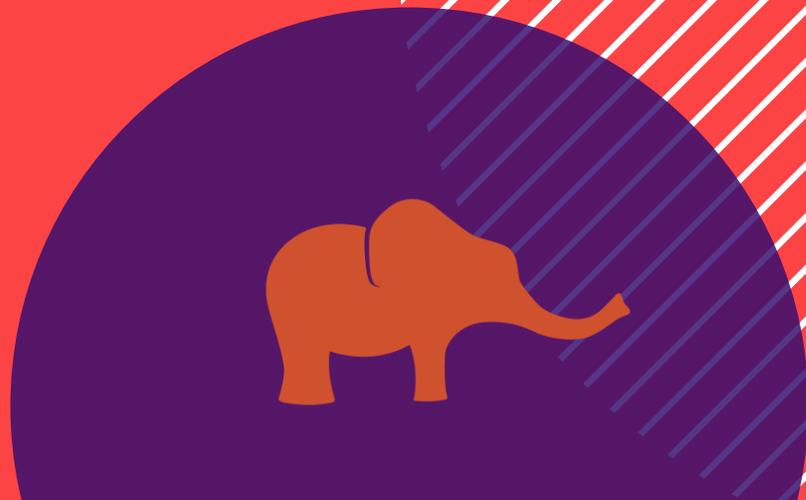
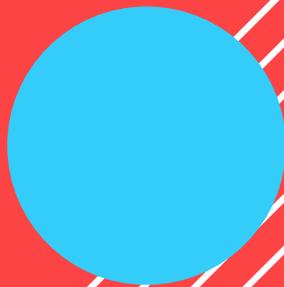


A ROADMAP TO GUARANTEED MARKETING RESULTS



What can the right marketing plan achieve for your business?

Achieving business success with marketing starts by defining clear, actionable goals.

This seems obvious, but we are often surprised at how many companies are willing to put tremendous time, energy, and resources behind marketing without any measurable way to evaluate the outcome.

Considering the increasing number of platforms, distribution channels, data analytics providers, and applications that are available to help with some aspect of marketing, it's no wonder companies become overwhelmed to the point of paralysis. Or worse, they end up wasting countless hours and dollars on ineffective "random acts of marketing" rather than investing in a strategy that can deliver measurable marketing and business success.

Establishing the right goals helps to guide your decision making, and ensures you'll get a return on your investment in marketing.

Begin by setting SMART goals.

At HELLO Marketing, we use the tried-and-true SMART goal system to help our clients get on the path toward marketing success. Here's how we define SMART:



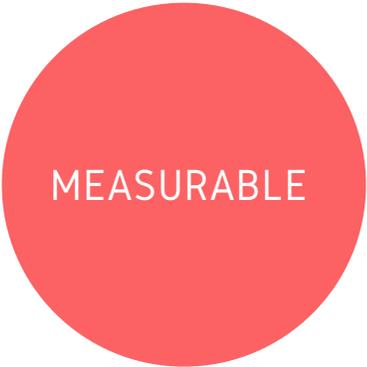
SPECIFIC

"Increase visibility" or "generate more leads" are not goals.

They're a wish list and will remain so unless you can put enough parameters around it to focus your efforts and make it actionable.

What exactly does "visibility" mean? Overall website sessions? Visits from a particular geographic location? Similarly, how do you define a lead? Do you consider all web form submissions leads? Or only the people who submit your Request a Quote form? Do you have a lead scoring system in place, or will you qualify leads by revenue, role, industry, and/or level of interest?

Make your goal quantifiable.



MEASURABLE

How will you know if you've achieved your goal? Make it quantifiable and based on real data that you can track. It's best to review your own historic metrics to set a baseline and reasonable projections.

In the absence of good marketing data — something that is all too common — platforms such as HubSpot and MailChimp provide accessible (and often free), industry-specific benchmarks you can leverage instead. (For a more complete list of resources, WordStream published an excellent blog on this, found [here](#).)



ACHIEVABLE

Be realistic.

If you've never spent a dime on marketing, have no idea what SEO stands for, and haven't updated your website in a decade, it's unreasonable to expect 100,000 visits within three months.

We suggest collaborating with others in your organization to set budgets and timelines, and factoring in sales and marketing information you may already be tracking, such as close rates and market penetration.



RESULTS FOCUSED

Focus on outcomes.

Instead of jumping into tactics, think about what you want to accomplish. There are a million ways to promote your brand, but if you're clear about your specific goals, you can choose marketing activities that explicitly support the desired result. For instance, if you want your website to deliver leads, focusing your marketing efforts on social media posts won't help much. To bring in leads, you need content that addresses your prospects' needs, and forms that collect prospects' contact information in exchange for that valuable content (more on that to come).



TIME-BOUND

Deadlines have a way of actualizing plans.

Set a timeframe for your goal based on what you can realistically achieve.

Hopefully, accountability is part of your company culture. But if not, we suggest sharing your deadline with someone else in your organization. You'll be more likely to hit your numbers if you know someone's paying attention.

Know (I mean really know) your audience.

The next step is to put time and energy into learning all you can about your target audience.

There are multiple layers to knowing your audience — a blend of demographics, anecdotal input, and focused data gathering that will shed light on the buyer's journey and their intent to buy.

BUYER PERSONAS

Everyone thinks they know their buyer. In reality, most business owners only know what their salespeople can tell them about their buyer.

That means everything before a prospect engages with a salesperson remains unknown — and often, some of what happens during the sales process may also be more than a little hazy.

Effective buyer persona development can be hugely illuminating for organizations because it reveals many important details that you would never know otherwise. That's why it's so valuable for guiding tactical, budgetary, and general strategic decisions. In fact, we've written an entire guide on this topic.

Download our Guide to Buyer Persona Development.

To develop buyer personas right, you need to think beyond basic demographic information like age, education, or even job function. While those basics can be useful when designing ad campaigns, they don't provide a lot of insights into what motivates people to purchase or how they make a decision to buy — two keys to marketing success.

Instead, we suggest conducting interviews with a targeted sample of buyers. Here are our top tips for getting it right:

Choose the right sample.

Pick no less than 10 customers who have completed the purchase process within the last 60 to 90 days. (Recency is key!) If you're using a CRM to track your sales, you should be able to include interviews with deals you lost. These interviews are often the most valuable, especially when you have developed a good relationship with the prospect.

People are often willing to do the interview as a concession for not going with your company.

Probe.

When a buyer says, "We weren't happy with our previous vendor, so we switched," ask them to tell you more about it.

What were they dissatisfied with, how were they impacted personally, and what were the consequences for their organization?

Get extremely specific.

If you ask someone to recount their buying process, you'll most likely get a pretty useless answer.

But if you ask that same buyer to describe, step by step, what happened to motivate them to put time, energy, and dollars into choosing a new analytics software, you're on your way to really understanding the pain points and trigger incidents that drive a purchase.

Aggregate & conquer.

Rather than automatically grouping personas by role, consider organizing them by similar behaviors, processes, motivators, etc.

At HELLO Marketing, we record the interviews and analyze the transcriptions line by line, to distill the persona into 5 key insights.

IDEAL CUSTOMER PROFILES (ICP's)

|

Ideal Customer Profiles are not buyer personas.

Buyer personas identify unique motivators, buying processes, behavioral traits, and visions for success. ICPs help you define, in a broad way, the types of accounts that are likely to become your best and most valuable customers. It's smart to dedicate your best sales and marketing resources to attract and nurture these types of leads.

You can use ICPs to inform specific marketing campaigns, your overall marketing strategy, your buyer persona research, and even your customer service policies. That's why it's best to define your ICP in collaboration with your sales, marketing, and sometimes customer service teams.

Ideally, you'll come together to identify what indicates an ideal customer: information like company size, industry, annual revenue, and location.

You'll also want to dig a little deeper and uncover characteristics that might contribute to a better fit, such as the culture of an organization or the presence of (or lack of) a certain role or department in a company.

A great way to begin is to create a list of companies you have been most successful serving. What characteristics do they all have in common that make them a successful customer? We suggest setting a quarterly meeting to reevaluate your ICP and update your list of target accounts. e bit of body text

Build the strategy.

You know what you're aiming for (your goal).

You know who you're aiming for (your audience).

The next step is to turn that intelligence into a plan that will bring you business success.

There is opportunity at each phase of your customers' experience with you:

- The **ATTRACT** phase, when you're getting the prospect's attention and making them aware of how you can help them.
- The **ENGAGE** phase, when you're actively engaged in selling to your prospect.
- The **DELIGHT** phase, after you have made the sale and are providing great service to keep your customer happy, getting them to refer you to others, and possibly continuing to sell them new products and services.

AAA Approach

HELLO Marketing's AAA approach can help you develop a smart and measurable strategy to build business success at each stage. Here's how it works.

1. ASSESS: Determine where to focus

Take stock of your current business reality by analyzing how well you're managing each phase of the customer life cycle: Attract, Engage, and Delight.

How strong are you at attracting new prospects? Do you need to generate more traffic and leads? If so, then you will need to employ a Demand Gen Strategy.

OR...

Are there plenty of people in your sales funnel, yet you have trouble closing? Is there a problem with engaging and qualifying prospects? If so, then you may need to consider a Conversion Strategy.

OR...How delighted are your customers? What is your customer retention rate? Do you get referrals from your clients? If not, then a Customer Service Strategy can improve your bottom line.

Look at any existing data you have and see what patterns the data may reveal. Where are the biggest gaps or hurdles for you, your prospective customers, and your current clients?

BE DILIGENT IN YOUR ASSESSMENT! Companies tend to overlook the opportunities to improve the Engage and Delight phases, which can often make a bigger and quicker financial impact than focusing on finding new business in the Attract phase.

Once you decide on your focus, you can then design a marketing campaign or offer to address areas where you have been falling short. And that is where content (the information you share with customers and prospects) comes into play.

AAA Approach

2. ADDRESS: Develop content that meets the needs of your audience

Here you will create content that focuses on your target audience's problems and concerns. If you've been even moderately tuned into the marketing-scape (yes, we just made that up), then you'll know that content is the centerpiece of every effective marketing campaign. No matter the tactic or channel, if the information (content) you are sharing isn't compelling to the right people, you'll be wasting your time and resources.

The key to effective content planning is to consider your prospects' pain points and the critical questions that buyers have at each phase of their buying process.

If you have successfully developed buyer personas, you'll already have a strong sense of what those questions might be. Your highest-converting content assets will answer these questions in a way that helps to move the buyer through the journey and one step closer to purchase (or keeps customers buying from you for the long term).

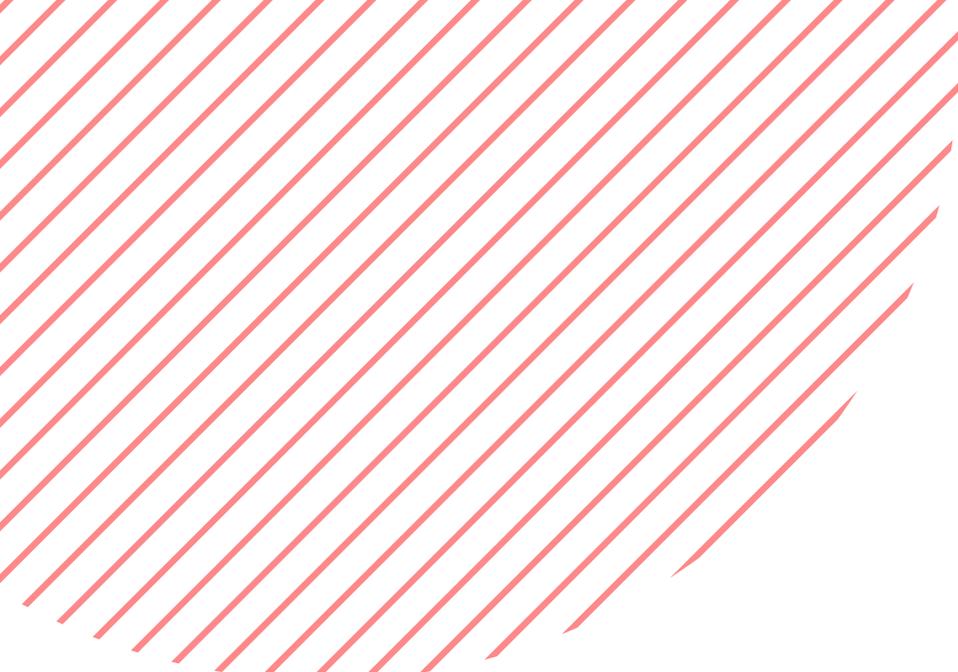
Planning content strategy is a big subject all by itself. If you'd like to learn more, here's a helpful resource: [Content Strategy: The Missing Piece in Your Marketing Plan](#).

AAA Approach

3. ASSURE: Determine your distribution / communication channels and feedback loop

If you think of your content as the arrow, headed straight for your target audience, then the tactics you choose for getting your content in front of your audience are the bow. If you're going to achieve success, you need to communicate your value where and when your audience wants to see it, ensuring the success of your plan.

Let's look back at three business phases and types of strategies for each.



ATTRACT

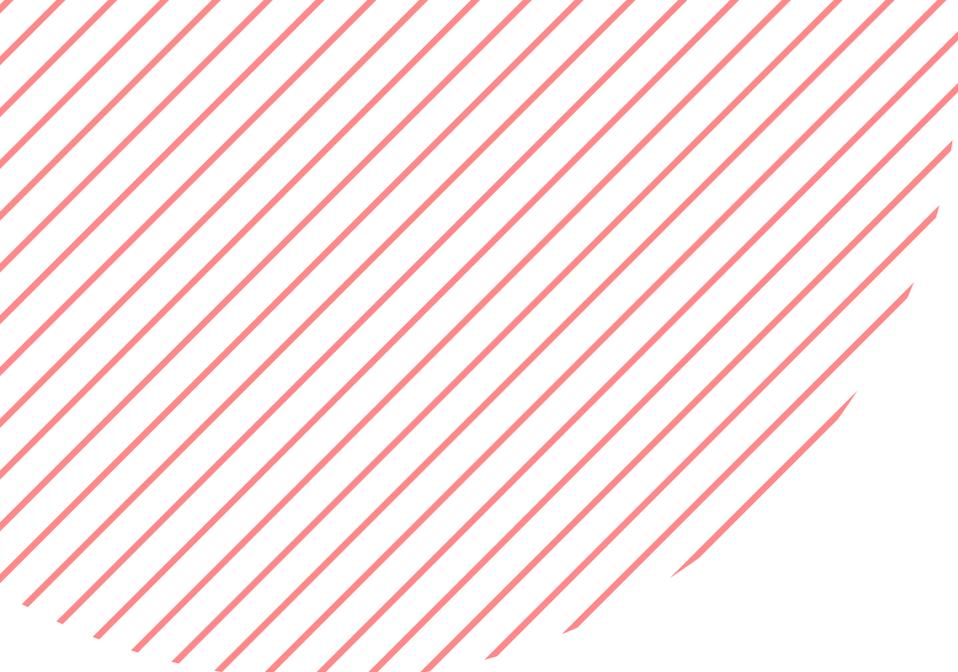
requires a Demand
Generation strategy

Marketing tactics for a demand generation strategy might include SEO, events, trade shows, paid ads, social advertising, content syndication, or PR. A lot of variables go into choosing the best approach, and the same plan is not going to work for every business.

For example, search engine optimization or SEO (attracting website visitors with keyword-optimized content) is a long-game tactic that once was highly recommended for every business. That is not always the case today. If you have a niche business or are an established company in a small market, investing in SEO has a good chance of paying off in higher visibility and increased traffic to your website, and doing so fairly quickly.

However, if your business is in a large and very competitive space, where buyers are looking for the best price and all companies are competing to get to the top of the list, key phrases are also very competitive. That means it can take longer — and more money — to get noticed by the right audience.

While we would not say don't do SEO — after all, having an optimized website is always a good thing — in this case your demand generation strategy might benefit more from investing in paid advertising or hosting events, which offer a very targeted way to get in front of your ICP and buyer personas.



ENGAGE

requires a Conversion strategy

If you are struggling to turn leads into customers, you might already have good traffic to the website, but you need help converting the leads to win their business.

One problem might be that you have not included effective conversion opportunities on your website. In other words, there is no easy way for potential customers to engage with your salespeople, other than sending an email to a generic info@ email address.

Encourage engagement with targeted calls-to-action (CTAs) that drive visitors further into the site and/or allow them to convert by providing their contact information in exchange for access to valuable content or a sales quote.

Let's say you are trying to get people to request a quote. You need to provide a CTA in intelligent and accessible places. And, you need to provide an easy way for visitors to do just that when they click on the CTA — for example, by building a landing page with a form that gives them what they are after.

Here's another complication: businesses often don't know which website pages visitors are going to most often, which pages visitors are looking for, and what may be preventing visitors from finding what they need and engaging with you.



more on ENGAGE

That's why when HELLO Marketing optimizes a website for conversion, we analyze how people are moving through the current website and ultimately where they want to go. From there, we make recommendations such as calling out certain pages earlier in the process so that visitors can find them more quickly and easily. Think of "leading the horse to water".

In addition, engage prospects at each stage of the sales funnel by including a CTA offer targeted to each stage. For example:

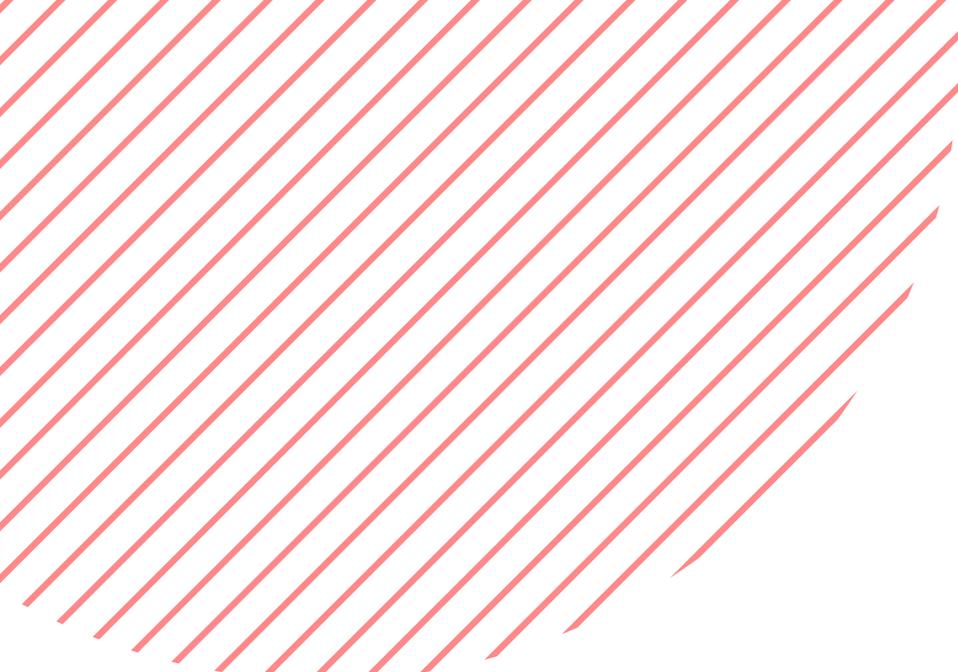
- Top of the funnel offers could be pop-ups that offer very high level, popular content.
- Middle of the funnel offers might be a toolkit or an assessment that addresses an obstacle the prospect is facing at that point in their buying process.
- Bottom of the funnel offers might be to request a quote, a consultation, or a callback.

Once a prospect has reached your defined sales qualified lead (SQL) stage, that is where your sales team takes over. Now the question becomes, how effective is the team and what more do they need to convert prospects into clients?

- Do you have a good sales process in place?
- Are you tracking prospects using a CRM system?
- Have you established useful, identifiable deal stages?
- Have you assessed your deal stages and sales pipeline to pinpoint where leads are dying, and why?

Once you've identified any issues, you can take steps to improve the process and eliminate the places where prospects are falling through the cracks. For example, you might:

- Use marketing automation to improve follow up on early-stage marketing leads
- Improve lead hand-off by better defining roles or reorganizing your team
- Provide content that sales can use to address common prospect pain points and help SQLs move closer to a purchase



DELIGHT

requires a Customer Service strategy

Once someone becomes a customer, how do you keep them and increase their lifetime value or profitability? That's your goal during the delight stage. This is the time for renewal and upsell strategies, as well as creating opportunities to get customers to refer you to new prospects.

As the marketing landscape continues to shift, more and more we find ourselves advising businesses to invest in their customer experience. If you do "delight" right, it often can be a better investment than any other marketing effort (especially during difficult market or economic conditions).

However, we do find that delight is another place where things can easily fall apart. That's because companies often don't invest in understanding what it takes to keep a customer as much as they invest in getting a customer to begin with. Nor do they have baseline metrics in place to track where customer experience may be falling apart.

But what if businesses took the opportunity to understand if, where, and why the delight process may be failing to deliver on its promise to customers?

The fact is, you can use some of the very same research-based tactics used with sales prospects to understand who your existing customers are and what they want, need, and expect. Then you can apply the same skill set to continuing to please them and encourage them to promote your business to others.

more on DELIGHT

For example, implementing a tactic such as net promoter score (NPS) surveys can help you understand how well you are doing at retaining and pleasing customers. NPS surveys give customers the chance to tell you what is and is not working about your business and about their personal experience as your customer. These surveys also allow you to gather baseline data to determine if there are areas for improvement.

For instance, the survey might reveal that customers are happy during the sales process but experience a lapse when they are handed off to account management. Perhaps no one reached out to them once they made a purchase or they didn't know who to contact when they had a question or problem.

Once you've identified areas for improvement, you can apply some of the same marketing tactics for implementing a solution, such as:

- **AUTOMATE.** Use automated emails to send every new customer a friendly welcome letter including important contact and process information to simplify doing business with you. As with any marketing campaign, you can test different versions and features to see what customers like best.
- **ALIGN GOALS.** If your teams don't have the same idea of what makes customers happy, there can be a breakdown as a buyer moves from sales to account management to customer service. Help all your teams make sure their goals are in harmony with each other and the customer experience.
- **SHARE HELPFUL CONTENT.** Do customers report being confused by product features? Share information to help them get the most from their purchase. For example, you might offer instructional webinars, podcasts, and videos. Or create emails, newsletters, blogs, and social media posts featuring topics that help existing customers overcome hurdles or prevent problems.
- **ENCOURAGE REFERRALS.** You can even set up a formal referral program to turn word of mouth into actual new business leads. For example, you can use a tool such as Ambassador to allow customers to earn reward points for making referrals, or offer a discount on a future purchase when they refer a potential customer.



and even more on DELIGHT

As part of a customer delight strategy, it's important to continuously gather feedback. So, for example, you might want to do quarterly NPS surveys to see if changes you've made have resulted in improvements in customer satisfaction — and in turn, their willingness to refer to you other potential customers.

Naturally, the profitability and lifetime value of a customer doesn't only include referrals. If your account managers are making customers happy and if the managers are well trained, you can also have opportunities to upsell.

However, an important and often overlooked aspect is, have you provided ways to upsell? For example, if an account manager hears about a customer gap or uncovers a new need, what is the manager's next step? What add-ons can you provide that add value for the customer? And does the account manager have the training and tools to offer the solution?

It all goes back to the voice of the customer. Creating ways to regularly engage with customers after the sale is a great way to take stock of how you're doing, identify the missing pieces of the puzzle, and offer new and better ways to continue helping the customer.

Track & manage your results

We really can't say it enough: for each of the different strategies you use, you want to be sure you're putting your money in the right places and seeing a return on your investment.

So for marketing success, it's crucial to:

- Establish the key performance indicators (KPIs) for each strategy
- Decide how you will measure them
- Have a tool in place to help do it

Spreadsheets are helpful to a certain extent. But with all the software and tools that are readily available, it's easy to find one that will make it easy to track, analyze, and act on your KPIs and other critically important metrics.

For example, there are marketing automation options that let you create unique dashboards to track and analyze all of your marketing plan tactics. These days, Hubspot lets you access all your data in one place and run a complete array of reports to track things like email performance, landing page conversions, CTA click-throughs, SEO performance, and more.

By putting the right metrics in place and having a method to track them regularly, you'll have a way to both measure ROI and help keep your strategy on target.

Marketing success can be yours

When it comes to creating a marketing strategy for your business, there are a handful of things you need to do to make smart decisions. Ultimately, success depends on:

- Having actionable goals
- Really knowing your audience
- Being clear about what it is you want to accomplish and how you'll track it
- Measuring your ROI

If you're still unsure about what strategy you should be focusing on or which area of your business deserves the most attention, we are happy to help steer you in the right direction.

Take us up on our offer of a free (really, no sales pressure convo at all) 30 minute phone conversation. We are happy to answer your questions.

Schedule now by emailing Lauren Canning at Lauren@hellomarketingagency.com

