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***The Marketing Plan***

By Jack Miller

**It might seem that marketing plans are based on acronyms and abbreviations.**

**PESTEL**

**SWOT**

**4 P's, 5 P's, 7 P's**

**4 C's, 5 C's**

**In developing your marketing plan you need to evaluate the Political, Environmental, Social, Technological, Economic, and Legislative climate of your market and implications for your product or service.**

**You need to analyze your strengths and weaknesses, your opportunities and threats.**

**Be sure you have a plan for the traditional 4 P's of marketing: product, price, promotion, and distribution. Okay, marketing people are creative, so they say "place" when they mean distribution. And they keep adding P's. People. Process. Positioning. Packaging. Some would argue that the new P's were already included in the original 4 P's, but let's not quibble.**

**Finally, be sure you research and analyze the 7 C's: company, cost, customer, climate, collaborators, communication, context, commerce, connection, community. . .**

**Okay, that's more than seven, but marketing people are creative. We'll let the accountants do the counting.**

**So, you need a marketing plan.**

**Why do you think you need a marketing plan? Is to convince senior management, or sales, or finance, or manufacturing that you know what you're doing? Then you need lots of P's and C's, and numbers, and charts, and binders, and all that stuff.**

**But for the moment, let's forget about that. You have a product you want to sell, and it's not selling well enough. Why not? And what are you going to do about it?**

**Have you asked customers why they buy what they buy? Why they buy from you or why they don't?**

**Why should they buy from you? Is your value proposition clear? Is it clear enough to you that you can explain it? Is it compelling? How do you know if it's compelling?**

**I can remember a case where we had a product that was demonstrably superior to the competition and was priced slightly lower than the competition, and yet it didn't sell well. Why not? Because the difference was not compelling enough or convincing enough to get customers to change.**

**I can remember another case where we were testing a new marketing campaign, and some of our people were disappointed to learn that the target customers didn't change suppliers very often, Perhaps only once in three or four years. But to me this meant that as much as one-third of the market was "up for grabs" every year.**

**Do you understand why customers change suppliers or products? Do you know what drives them to that decision, and what process they use to select a new supplier?**

**So why isn't your product selling well enough? Maybe your value proposition isn't compelling. Fix it. Or maybe you're not delivering the message effectively. Fix it.**

**Change the product, or the price, or the target customers or market segments, or the distribution, or the way you deliver the message. But before you go changing things make sure you know what's working and what isn't.**

**And most important make sure you know why – make sure you have the Need to Know™ market intelligence.**

**And, by the way, don't be surprised if some of the answers relate to the 4 P's.**

**For Need to Know™ market intelligence, to understand what they buy and why, what makes them change suppliers, and what process they use to make those decisions, contact Market-Intell.**

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