

Auditing Your Marketing Plan--Considering the Oil Spill **by: Sarah McCartan, Insight Marketing**

Life happens. Life happens fast. We live in a world of change. Just as each of us are individually faced with having to respond to the external forces in our lives each day, businesses, no matter what the size, must act with the same readiness to assess arising situations and adjust accordingly.

Taking proactive steps rather than relying on reactivity is pertinent to succeeding in this fast paced world, and the only option in countering disaster. The ever-pressing oil spill is not only affecting sea life and individuals' lives; it is affecting the economy as a whole, an economy that has already been in a recession for a lengthy stint of time. Sure, you may have a marketing plan in place already, but when was the last time you adjusted it, and does it still offer a strategic fit?

Businesses in today's world should consistently be ready on the offense with both eyes open, peripheral vision included. Here are a few points to consider in auditing your marketing plan; be sure to add these to your checklist.

#1 SWOT it Out -- Consider specific goals and objectives set in place. Do these still present a strategic fit for your company and fall in line with the direction you are headed? Identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats using a SWOT matrix. Based on your findings, decipher creative ways and form conclusive decisions on how to take advantage of the opportunities that present themselves, even amidst the high levels of threat that exist.

#2 Offer a Hand -- Consider a community involvement program, a way to not only promote yourself and increase your revenues, but to aid in helping where you can.

#3 Be on Target -- Consider your target. Is there a new group emerging? Consumer demand tends to shift in the wake of disaster, possibly presenting the need for expanded services or products to feed the new needs of your existing target.

#4 Search and Research -- The backbone of any good marketing plan, or any plan for that matter, is research. Here at Insight we thrive on primary research initiatives such as conducting focus groups, and have won awards for research pieces we have done. But, secondary information is readily accessible and will provide you with knowledge that will enable you to make informed adjustments to your plan in a timely manner. This pre-existing secondary data can be both qualitative and quantitative in form, and may be found internally or externally.

Wherever you choose to start, start now in auditing your plan, keeping in mind, here at Insight we have marketing solutions tucked up our sleeves that are both creative and functional, waiting for you, to keep you on your feet.



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