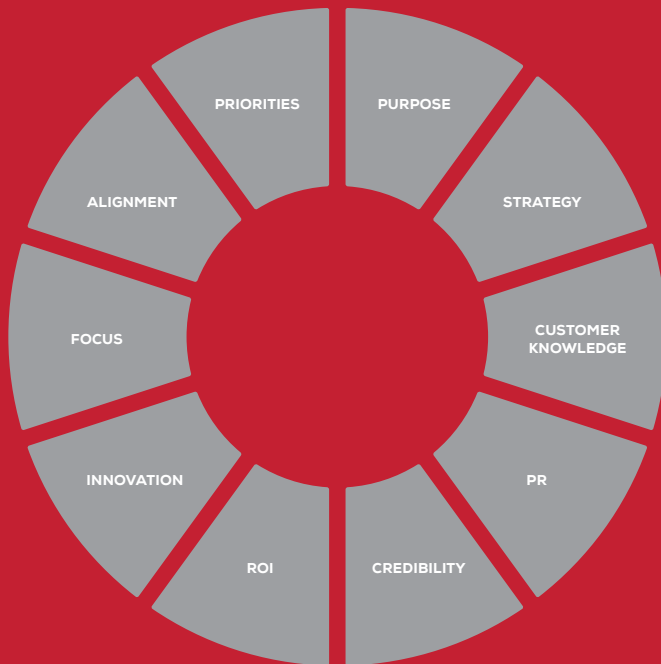


Marketing & Communications Effectiveness Guide:

A SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR PUBLIC SAFETY AND HEALTHCARE LEADERS



BECAUSE YOUR MARKETING MATTERS.



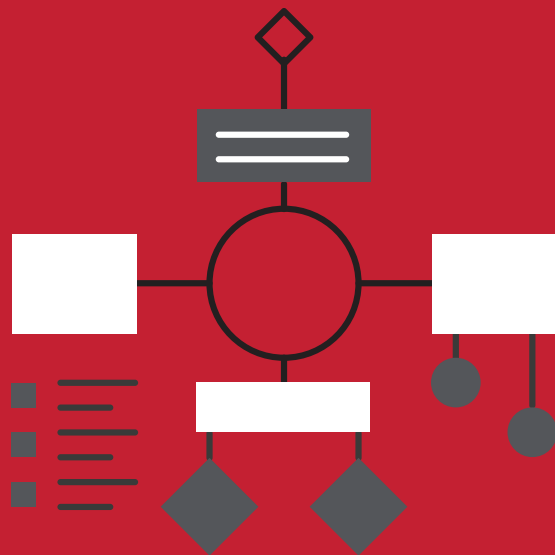
In today's crowded and increasingly competitive market, differentiating your brand is no longer a luxury; it's a necessity. The most impactful way to do this is through your organization's marketing and outreach efforts.

So...how's your marketing doing?

How well are you articulating your organization's purpose? Are you really connecting with your customers, or just talking at them? Is your marketing team aligning tactics with the organization's larger business goals—or just "checking boxes" to move things along?

In our experience we've found what really helps drive a company is a well-defined marketing strategy that includes all of the elements listed on the left. A complete and thorough plan acts as a wheel that can help move the company toward its goals faster.

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS



We created this ten-question assessment as a way for leaders to think about and rate their organization's branding efforts and reputation.

Each page describes an element we consider critical for success, offers a takeaway you can implement today, and asks a question about your organization's effectiveness in that area.

Select where on the scale, from Needs Improvement to Excellent, you think you rank. Though subjective – and perhaps simplistic – the exercise of noting your impression for each element offers a real snapshot of how you, and likely your colleagues and customers, view your organization.

At the end of the assessment, take a look at your responses and see if your organization is at the level you'd like to be, or if there are a few areas that could go from 'good' to 'great.'

We encourage you to spend some time with this assessment and answer the following questions honestly.

What you discover may surprise you.

WHAT'S YOUR ORGANIZATION'S PURPOSE?



COMMUNICATING YOUR VISION AND PURPOSE IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT.

Without a clear direction of what your company is working toward, marketing efforts could be at odds with the rest of your company.

At best, your message is inconsistent; at worst, inauthentic. You have a unique story to tell about how your organization is going to improve the world.

- A clear vision and purpose conveyed to the marketplace allows your company to genuinely align with your current and potential customers.**

ASSESSMENT: PURPOSE

Does your leadership routinely convey the organization's purpose and vision to the marketing department?

How well do prospects and current customers know your vision and purpose?

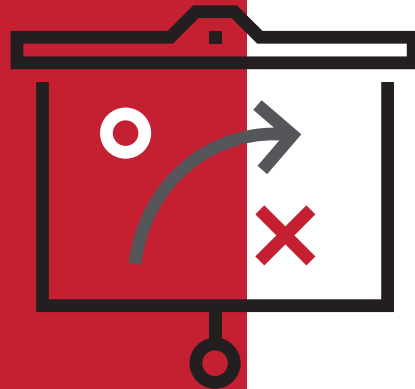
NOTES:

NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

AVERAGE

EXCELLENT

DO YOU (REALLY) HAVE A MARKETING STRATEGY?



A TRUE MARKETING STRATEGY IS A BLEND OF LONG-TERM PLANNING AND PRIORITIZING TACTICS.

Like the two sides of a coin, you need both a strategic and tactical approach. The strategic approach ensures that long-term marketing efforts support the company’s business plan, ties to the organization’s purpose and reason for existing, and is grounded in reality.

The tactical approach gets into the details – think advertising, conferences and social media. Tactics are more operational in nature; they’re how you execute the ground game. When there is an imbalance between the strategic and tactical approach, companies tend to lean too far on the tactical side.



If you find yourself using “what we did last year” as a starting point, you likely need to reset the scales and think more strategically.

ASSESSMENT: STRATEGY

Does your organization seek input beyond the marketing team when creating a marketing strategy?

How well does your marketing strategy balance both company goals and tactical activities?

NOTES:

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HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR CUSTOMERS?



HAVING CUSTOMERS IS OBVIOUSLY VITAL TO AN ORGANIZATION'S SUCCESS, BUT *KNOWING YOUR CUSTOMERS IS ALSO CRITICAL.*

When you really get to know your customers, you can uncover needs they may not know they have. You can also discover new opportunities to better tailor your products or services and improve your chance of out-performing the competition.

It's a good practice to routinely check in on customer satisfaction. However, to go deeper and get the more unvarnished truth, it's best to have an independent third party conduct anonymous in-depth interviews with both your current and prospective clients.



At the very least, when planning a new product launch or setting a new strategy, make sure you know what's on your customers' minds.

ASSESSMENT: CUSTOMER KNOWLEDGE

Is market or customer research part of your process for a product launch or new initiative?

What is your company's reputation among current, prospective and former customers?

NOTES:

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WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU SHARED SOME GOOD NEWS?



IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY, YOUR ORGANIZATION WILL EVENTUALLY ENCOUNTER BAD PRESS.

To minimize the impact, organizations need to constantly “fill the tank” with good news.

Positive stories can come in many variations: customer case studies, coverage of your innovative product or service, community service and causes your organization supports, interviews with key leadership on important topics, etc. Even without a crisis or bad press, positive stories about your organization are vital for success. It’s important that those stories are meaningful and genuine.

- ✓ **Avoid highlighting activities that are trivial or focus on your organization in a self-serving way.**

ASSESSMENT: PR

Does your organization regularly “fill the tank” with positive stories and coverage?

When you do have positive coverage, do you maximize mileage and awareness internally and externally?

NOTES:

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DO YOUR CUSTOMERS TELL YOUR STORY?



MOST ORGANIZATIONS SPEND TIME TALKING ABOUT THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS, INNOVATIONS AND AWARDS.

They may have the CEO say why their products or services is the best.

But smart companies let their customers say that on their behalf. They identify innovative customers and success stories. Then they let those evangelist customers tell the story – on the company website, in ads, articles, videos, or any combination. There are two main benefits to this approach:

- ✓
FIRST your prospective customers are hearing about how great your company/product/service is from their peers – who are also your best referrals. That’s huge, especially in public safety and emergency communications.

- ✓
SECOND the third-party credibility that customers naturally bring goes a long way to building trust with your prospects. And trust is the most important brand attribute you can have.

ASSESSMENT: CREDIBILITY

How well do you enlist key customers to tell your organization’s story and successes?

Do those testimonials come across as genuine?

NOTES:

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DO YOU LOOK BEYOND THE METRICS TO EVALUATE YOUR MARKETING'S EFFECTIVENESS?



IN OUR EXPERIENCE, COMPANIES FALL INTO THREE CATEGORIES IN MEASURING THEIR MARKETING'S EFFECTIVENESS – LOW, MEDIUM AND HIGH PERFORMERS.

- 

Low performers typically determine their marketing investments based on what they did last year, what their media partners tell them they need or what the competition is doing. Very little is done in the way of measuring those investments because they aren't really tied to sales goals.
- 

The medium performers measure their investments in things like digital campaigns and advertising with metrics such as page views, sales leads or form submissions, to name a few.
- 

High performers evaluate those same metrics, but also look at trends over time, tying their marketing investments to the company's revenue and growth goals, and calculating the long-term value of a customer rather than the initial sale.

ASSESSMENT: ROI

Are you collecting both short- and long-term data to monitor trends and budget marketing activities most effectively? Would you consider your organization's marketing efforts to be high performing?

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ARE YOUR MARKETING STRATEGIES PLAYING IT TOO SAFE?



SURPRISINGLY, MARKETING IS ONE OF THE LAST AREAS THAT A COMPANY WILL TAKE RISKS IN.

Without a thorough understanding of the customer base, market trends or engagement with the industries they serve, companies tend to default to doing the same, safe activities year after year.

Leaders who look at their marketing spending as an investment as much as a cost center, however, constantly question how to get the best return for the dollars they spend both today and in the future.

- 
They challenge the status quo, inspire their teams and offer the opportunity to take risks in pursuit of making a big impact.

ASSESSMENT: INNOVATION

How often is your marketing team encouraged to do something they've never done before?

Does your culture support risk-taking and challenge people to be more creative?

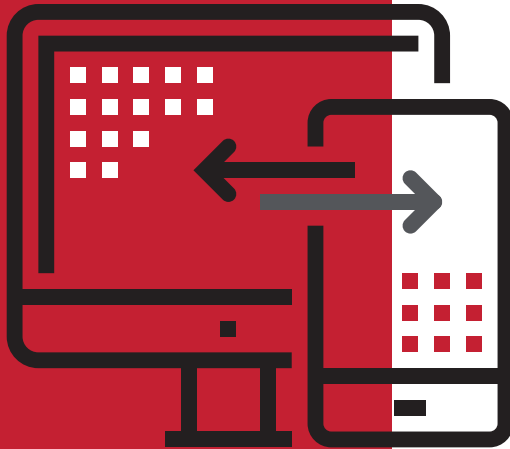
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ARE YOU SPENDING TOO MUCH TIME IN THE DIGITAL WEEDS?



THE TOOLS FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING ARE CHANGING RAPIDLY.

It's easy to want to start "doing stuff" in digital marketing because you can – whether or not it supports the overarching strategy. And many activities may seem low cost at first, until you start to account for staff time.

Too often, senior leadership is distracted by digital activities, like building a new website, because the people doing the digital work don't understand the market or the strategy and require extra guidance. This means leaders are pulled away from running the business and brought into the digital weeds.

- 
Make sure you have people – internal or external – who will align these activities with the strategy.

ASSESSMENT: FOCUS

Do your digital marketing activities help achieve company goals?

Are you able to keep senior leadership out of the digital marketing weeds?

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CAN'T SALES AND MARKETING JUST GET ALONG?



AS OFTEN AS MARKETING TEAMS SUPPORT AND HELP SALES, THEY CAN ALSO OPERATE IN SILOS WITH THEIR OWN GOALS AND STRATEGIES.

In some cases, such as government departments and non-profits, marketing often works independently. But in a commercial enterprise, it's devastating – not to mention a waste of time and money.

In well-tuned organizations, marketing and sales are in alignment, working together to achieve business objectives. Sales understands the key role of marketing and the impact of marketing activities on 'making the numbers.' Conversely, marketing prioritizes efforts that positively impact the organization.



When working in harmony, both sales and marketing are more effective and efficient – and better positioned to achieve sales and revenue objectives.

ASSESSMENT: ALIGNMENT

Are your website, collateral materials, event strategy and other activities supporting your organization's sales goals? Does your sales team feel marketing is making a positive impact on its sales success?

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ARE YOU FOCUSING ON WHAT'S URGENT, OR WHAT'S IMPORTANT?



ORGANIZATIONS USUALLY CHOOSE TO TACKLE WHAT'S URGENT RATHER THAN WHAT'S IMPORTANT.

We constantly put out fires and don't always get to activities that are less urgent but more important.

In the realm of communications and marketing, too often the majority of time is spent on tasks that are urgent, but less important. For example, staff may focus on cranking out e-newsletters and social media posts, but don't take time to develop a comprehensive communications strategy. Or they may put off building a new website because it's extremely time-consuming and distracting. Marketing must spend time on projects that are vitally important to the organization's success, but not necessarily urgent.

- Finding a way to manage both important and urgent activities is key for any organization's success.**

ASSESSMENT: PRIORITIES

How well does your team focus on what's important rather than what's urgent?

Do your long-term strategic pursuits get enough attention?

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SO ... HOW DID YOU DO?

Did you identify areas where your organization is excelling?
Great! The highest-performing, most innovative organizations usually do.

But if you're like most leaders, you've also probably identified a few areas that could use improvement. Sometimes the fix is as simple as renewing your focus. Other times it means investing additional time and resources to get your marketing rolling.

If you found yourself hovering near average, recognize the good work you've done—but also realize this is where complacency often creeps in. The message blurs. Opportunities are missed. The customer connection fades.

We'd love the opportunity to brainstorm the best ways to take your marketing and outreach efforts to the next level.

Let's make a difference together.



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We believe in doing work that makes a difference. We team up with small startups, large companies, government agencies and non-profits to help them connect with the public safety and healthcare fields.

Let's make a difference together.



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