

Use the simple Top Ten checklist below:

Fill the answers below and you will have started your marketing plan

<p>1) What are your business objectives?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you want to increase sales and profit?• Do you want to lengthen your season?• Do you want to expand and grow?• Do you want to launch a new product or service?• Do you want to improve customer satisfaction? <p>Set yourself realistic and specific goals, so you know what you want your marketing plan to achieve.</p>	
<p>2) Who are your current customers?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand the size, value and motivation of your current customers.• The more you know about them - their age, gender, social status, where they live, what they do for a living, their needs, wants, habits, likes, dislikes, interests, income, influences and instincts - the better your chances of developing a product or service for which they are going to be willing to pay.	
<p>3) What is special about your business and what you offer?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make sure you are clear about what your business is offering and why anyone would pay for your product or service.• In order to stand out, you need to identify what gives you a business advantage and why a customer would choose you rather than a competitor – this is called your USP (Unique Selling Proposition). Don't forget visitors are often looking for that something special, unique and authentic to make their stay/experience memorable. Look at Thanet's Shared Story [link to this]. How does it help to convey the unique destination you are in?	
<p>4) Who is your competition?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• By analysing your competitors, you'll not only get a better idea of what you're up against, you'll also turn a critical eye on your own business.• Think about what makes you different from your competitors. These competitors could be other tourism businesses in the UK, so also think about how your location in Thanet can help you stand out	

compared to other destinations.	
5) What successful marketing have you done before? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn from previous experience by reviewing the effectiveness of your past marketing activity, or ask others what marketing channels they have found useful – many businesses are happy to share. • By knowing what has worked and not worked, you will avoid previous mistakes. 	
6) What are your businesses strengths and weaknesses? And what are the opportunities and threats for your business? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now you have done your research, you can identify the strengths and weaknesses of your business. • Remember that you also have to consider how wider factors may impact on your business. For example, in the recent recession, we have seen the staycation trend and the resurgence of nostalgia for seaside resorts, which is a great opportunity for Thanet businesses. Thanet is changing as a destination with the opening of Turner Contemporary, the Ramsgate Tunnels, and Dreamland, as well as a range of new hotels, restaurants and independent shops – how do these changes help your business? • You will need to do an analysis of your Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT), so you are able to maximise on the opportunities and reduce the threats to your business. * 	
7) What customers do you want to target in the future? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The best marketing is targeted marketing – do not try and attract everyone because then you are at risk of appealing to no-one. • That is not to say you might not have several different types of customers that you want to target with different messages and at different times. • Don't forget your existing customers, because happy customers are easier and cheaper to reach, more likely to return, tell others and buy more. 	
8) Which marketing channels are the best ones for your target customers?	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are countless ways in which you can promote your business, from leaflets to press releases, from adverts to promotions. Yet some are more suitable than others depending on what you want to offer and who your customers are. • Think about the cost, resources and reach of each marketing channel. Making informed decisions will ensure you will be more effective. 	
<p>9) What are your key marketing messages that will appeal to your target customers?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your marketing message is what grabs your potential customers' attention, tells them what you can offer them, why they should trust you, and why they should choose your business over others. • Do not just list facts, but also share what experience your business and Thanet as a destination can offer. Don't forget that the Thanet Shared Story can help. The biggest mistake businesses make is to tell people what they do rather than how they can benefit them. So remember to sell the benefits of your business, and not the features. • Remember, your brand is not a logo; it's who you are, what you're about and what you stand for. Think of Microsoft versus Apple; Microsoft sells a plethora of product features, Apple sells a lifestyle and emphasises how its products make your life easier and more enjoyable – that's why they're more desirable. 	
<p>10) How do you know if you have been successful?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once you've developed your plan, you need to manage and evaluate it to make sure you're staying on track. Don't forget to ask each of your customers how they heard about you. • For each marketing channel, i.e. social media, website, advertising etc., you should be able to put some mechanism in place to monitor its success, whether it is the redemption of a special offer, number of hits to your website (using an insight tool such as Google Analytics), sign ups to your newsletter etc. • Ask yourself - Were my business objectives met? Did this activity work? How do I 	

<p>know that? Do I need to change anything? If we repeat this next year, how could it be made more beneficial to the business?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You can only improve what you're doing if you take stock of what impact your activities are having.	
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