



MARKETING PLAN TEMPLATE

Why develop a marketing plan?

A marketing plan helps you focus your time, energy and dollars. When you develop and stick to a plan, you don't do haphazard and one-off initiatives that often don't provide the payback expected.

A marketing plan gets you to:

- stop and think about your business in terms of where you are today and where you want to be tomorrow;
- prompts you to do some homework on your market potential; and,
- may get you to try some creative ideas that no one else has thought of.

What are your business objectives?

Before setting your going forward business objectives, have a clear understanding of your current situation.

- Define current sources of business: _____

- What lessons have you learned so far? _____

- Consider your strengths & weaknesses: _____

- Set your next year's objectives: Volume? Number of new clients?

- What % should come from:

Current client base either repeat or referral	_____ %	Volume _____
Referral sources other than clients i.e. realtors, financial planners or other	_____ %	Volume _____
New acquisition clients	_____ %	Volume _____

Marketing Plan Components

- Assessment of current situation and results
- Objectives for the upcoming year
- Objectives for current clients, referral sources, new acquisition clients
- Marketing strategies and tactics to achieve those objectives
- Competitive review
- Target market definition for new acquisition clients
- Mediums to reach those target markets
- Messaging that will motivate those target markets, and products that will fit their needs
- Plan and budget
- Assessment of results



Business from Current Clients

Determine your strategies and tactics:

EXAMPLE	
Strategies	Tactics
Stay in touch with database	1. MA CRM program
Increase closure on pre-approvals from x% to x%	2. Supplemental contacts ie. email update after each Bank of Canada rate meeting to variable clients
Leverage satisfied clients	3. Segment clients into groups and target supplemental communications accordingly
Encourage visits to Web site	Contact all preapproval clients twice
Focus on debt consolidation for acquisition clients	1. Client referral contest + ask all clients for referrals
	2. Get testimonials and use where appropriate, ie. personal brochure, Web site
	Include Web address on all materials and keep site current
	Advertise monthly in local paper and hold twice-yearly seminars on improving credit

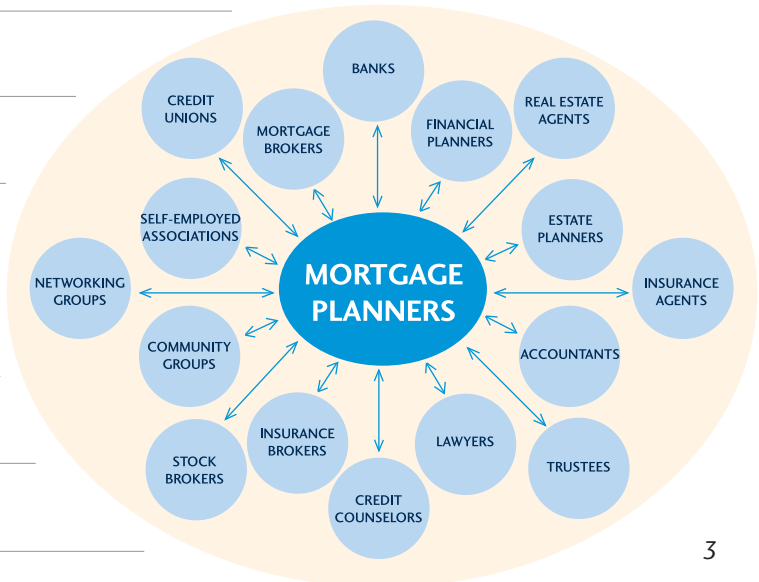
Your Strategies	Tactics

Business from Referral Sources

Realtors and financial planners are important, but be creative to identify other potential sources of business:

- Plan for established sources: _____

- Plan to develop new sources: _____



New Acquisition Clients

It's much easier to get business (repeat or referral) from an existing client than to get a new client. Therefore, you need to do some homework and make sure you are prepared to tackle the aggressive world of client acquisition.



What's your unique selling proposition?

- Do you have a personal marketing package? Highlight your years of experience, background, education, your mission statement, who is on your team, what you offer, where you are located, and include a paragraph about you i.e. mention your family or hobbies.
- Do you have a professional picture?
- Plan for personal marketing package: _____

- Do you have a systematized program for staying in touch from the time you first speak with a prospect to the time of funding? i.e. a prior to funding CRM. Preapprovals are the easiest clients to lose along the way because of a lack of communication!
- Plan for prior-to-funding contact:



Do you know what your competitors are doing?

- Do they have a market segment locked up that makes it unattractive for you to consider?
- Comments on competitors:





Define Your Target Markets

Consider a person who has never heard of the sport of baseball. Now imagine this person going out on the field to pitch. If that person didn't know anything about the strike zone, he could be throwing the ball anywhere – outfield, infield, or may never throw it at all.

If you haven't defined your target market, then you also don't know where the strike zone is. You will definitely be more successful if you know where to throw your pitches. Push yourself hard to be creative, and do some research to determine if you can become a leader in a particular segment.

Markets to Consider

- Sub prime
- Debt consolidation
- Equity-rich for tax-deductible mortgage
- Immigrants
- Specific self-employed segment i.e. trades, franchise owners (be creative!)
- Pre and first-time buyers
- Second/dream home purchasers
- Retiring/Retired
- Divorcees

Primary target markets for client acquisition:

Find the Best Medium and Set a Budget

As a rule of thumb, you should consider spending about 20-30% of your total budget if you plan to acquire new clients and aggressively grow your business. Otherwise about 15% for moderate to strong growth.

- Does one of your target markets have its own publication?
 - Can you contribute an article?
- Would they attend a seminar?
- Can you reach them via a tradeshow, radio, newspaper, web, direct mail or mail drop?
- Consider non-traditional mediums i.e. outdoor (i.e. bus shelters, benches, bus wrappers).
- Can you create an alliance i.e. work with landscapers and do joint marketing.
- Be sure to cost out all tactics that you plan so you can determine your overall marketing budget. Can you do joint marketing and split the costs?



Remember:

- Advertising in papers and on the radio must be a long-term commitment. Don't place an ad once unless it's a specific purpose ad i.e. promoting an anniversary, event, or other one-off initiative.
- Mail drops/door hangers are a mass market strategy. You need to do a very large drop and can expect a low return i.e. 0.5%-2%. Achieving 2% is considered very successful. Remember though, clients may still call you at a later date and the activity still marketed you and built your brand.

Define Your Message

- What message will motivate this group?
- Focus in on the primary need that your offering will solve.
- Have clear contact information. Try not to include too many contact points. Have one number and one email address. Always include your internet address if you have a site.
- What products will meet the needs of this group?
- See what the marketing group has already developed for your market segment. If nothing is available they can work with you to develop a custom piece.

Medium, messaging and budget for reaching target markets:



Determine your results:

You are going to want to assess what worked and what didn't. Perhaps something that didn't work just needs to be reworked and retried. As best you can, track your costs and results associated with all of your marketing activities.



Sample Plan – Ongoing Activities

New Clients

- Pre-approval postcard to all expiring preapprovals that you haven't heard from.
- Relax postcard one month prior to fundings.
- Thank you cards to all new clients (MA CRM) plus a gift basket

Referral Sources

- Thank you card to referral sources when a referred deal funds with a \$x restaurant gift card
- HTML email rates to realtors at each rate change, which will include value-added information

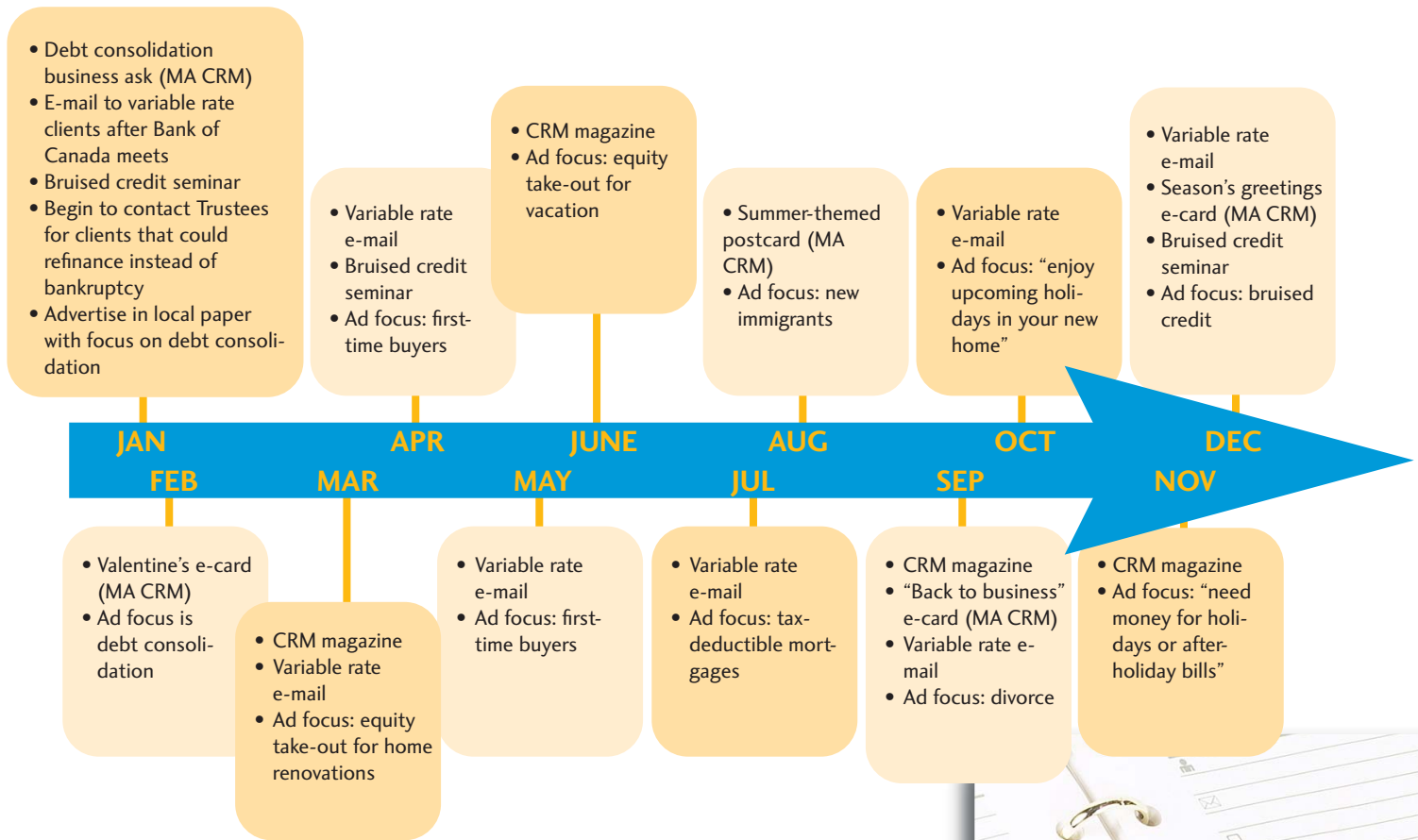
Existing Clients

- MA CRM program
- Client referral gift cards – \$x gas gift card with each funded referral.

Brand Building

- Monthly ghost article in local paper.
- Add new content to website

Sample Plan – Scheduled Activities



Other Considerations

Talk to your peers. If you have an idea, chances are someone has tried it. Your myNext or MA VP or Business Director can really help you there. They know who has done what and it's their job to help you. So be sure to talk to them.

Don't be afraid to make mistakes. Learn and move on. Adjust as needed and keep moving toward your goal. Believe in what you're doing; be aggressive and enthusiastic.

Always develop your skills. The market is becoming more competitive. Those with the greatest skills will stand out.



See back page for Your Action Plan.