

Sales plan template

This sales plan template is provided as a guide only to help you develop a sales plan for your business. Your plan may require more or less information than we've set out in this template.

As you work through the template, please refer to the results of your research and to your business plans.

This template contains questions to help guide to writing the information for each element and section. After you record your answers, you can delete the questions.

Markets and marketing

The best sales results are based on sound market research and marketing research. Thus the first element of a good sales plan is a summary of your markets and marketing.

Answer the following questions and then use your answers to write the information for each section.

Summary of your business's target market segments

How many clients are in each market segment?

Who are the people in each market segment?

Where are they located?

How do they make purchasing decisions?

Where do they find information to make purchasing decisions?

What classification have you given to each market segment (according to previous sales volume or potential sales volume)?

Factors affecting future sales, learned through market research

Why there is a demand for what you're selling

How do your products and services meet the needs of people in your target market?

Is there a market niche that is not being satisfied?

Are people in an existing market satisfied or looking for a change?

Can you offer clients something that will satisfy them?

How much competition is in this market?

Your present market position, including any strengths, weaknesses, opportunities or threats

How does the market perceive each of your products or services?

How does the market perceive the competition's products and services?

Is the product you're marketing new or established?

Do your current premises and locations appeal to your clients?

How do your premises and location compare to your competitors' premises and locations?

How do you set your prices (including discounts, specials, package deals and stock movement)?

How do your prices compare to your competitors' prices?

How do you currently promote and market your business?

Which promotional and marketing activities are working?

Which promotional and marketing activities aren't working?

How do your competitors promote and market their businesses?

What works for them?

How does the appearance of your premises affect the market's perceptions of your business?

How do your staff affect the market's perceptions of your business?

Are there any unique characteristics of your business, product or service?

How much money do you have available for marketing?

Describe your existing client base.

Who are your suppliers and distributors?

What is your price structure?

What are your profit margins?

Using the information you've provided above, describe your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats:

strengths:

weaknesses:

opportunities:
threats:

Your competitors' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

Using the information you've provided above, describe your competitors' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats:

strengths:
weaknesses:
opportunities:
threats:

Impact of current or anticipated marketing conditions

Are there any predicted major changes on your target markets that may impact your future sales?

If so, please describe these predicted changes.

Are there any opportunities or threats that may arise out of the changes you expect in the next six to twelve months or longer?

If so, please describe these opportunities or threats.

Are there any outside factors (physical, economical, socio-cultural and technological) that may affect your future sales?

If so, please describe these outside factors.

The results you expect your marketing to achieve

What are your marketing objectives?

Specifically, what are the measures of achievement contained within your marketing objectives?

Assumptions

By summarising your basic assumptions you can see when your sales forecast (and, thus, your sales plan) needs updating.

What are your assumptions regarding the number of clients you currently have?

What are your assumptions regarding how rapidly your marketplace is changing?

What are your assumptions regarding the capabilities of your competitors?

What are your assumptions regarding the resources required to continue your business operations?

What are your assumptions regarding the costs of materials and labour?

Do you have any other assumptions that affect your sales plan?

Sales history

To forecast sales, we recommend that you also summarise your sales history.

What were your previous years' sales, by appropriate products and product lines and by appropriate time periods? (You may decide to specify these time periods by week, month, quarter or year, depending on your business's requirements.) You can use the tables below to record your answers.

Product or product line:	
Time period	Sales

Product or product line:	
Time period	Sales

Product or product line:	
Time period	Sales

Product or product line:	
Time period	Sales

Sales forecasts

Once you've analysed your markets and marketing, your assumptions affecting your sales plan and your sales history, you have the information you need to forecast your sales.

Since new businesses have no previous sales to examine, they have to base their forecast on their markets and marketing as well as on their assumptions.

Your sales forecast is a month-by-month prediction of the level of sales you expect to achieve by product or product line and market segment. When developing your forecast, we recommend you be realistic about the amount of sales you'll make, given your current markets and market and marketing research results, your assumptions and sales history.

Asking for your salespeople's input in developing your forecast can help you make the forecast as realistic and accurate as possible.

How many new clients do you gain each year?

How many clients do you lose each year?

What is the average amount of sales you make to each client?

Are there particular months where you win or lose more clients than usual?

How many products do you sell per year? Per month?

How many sales do you make to each market segment per year? Per month?

How many sales per month do you expect to achieve by product or product line? (You can use the following tables to record your answer.)

Product or product line:	
Month	Sales
July	
August	
September	
October	
November	
December	
January	
February	
March	
April	
May	
June	

Product or product line:	
Month	Sales
July	
August	
September	
October	
November	
December	
January	
February	
March	
April	

May	
June	

Product or product line:	
Month	Sales
July	
August	
September	
October	
November	
December	
January	
February	
March	
April	
May	
June	

How many sales per month do you expect to achieve by market segment? (You can use the following tables to record your answer.)

Market segment:	
Month	Sales
July	
August	
September	
October	
November	
December	
January	
February	
March	
April	
May	
June	

Market segment:	
Month	Sales
July	
August	
September	
October	
November	
December	
January	
February	
March	
April	
May	
June	

Market segment:	
Month	Sales
July	
August	
September	

October	
November	
December	
January	
February	
March	
April	
May	
June	

Have you asked your salespeople for their input in developing your forecast?

Sales targets

The purpose of your sales plan is to develop strategies and identify activities necessary so you meet your sales targets. It's usual to include your sales targets in your sales plan.

*While your sales forecast shows the sales you **expect** to make, your sales targets are the number of sales of a certain product or product line you **need** to make to return a certain gross profit. You can develop sales targets:*

*by product and product line
for the upcoming year, quarters and months.*

List your sales targets below.

Once you've listed your sales targets, compare them to your sales forecast. Are there any gaps?

If so, you can focus on these gaps when you develop your strategies and tactics in the next element. Alternatively, the gap might indicate a seasonal trend, for example. You could then adjust your sales targets for that month to reflect this forecast (so long as you'll make the sales you need by setting higher targets another month).

Strategies, tactics and measures of achievement

To achieve your sales targets, you develop strategies and tactics for achieving these targets. Your sales planning strategies are necessary so that you can focus your efforts as well as your salespeople's efforts. Your sales plan strategies are closely linked to your marketing plan.

What motivates your clients to buy your products?

What motivates your salespeople to sell?

Strategies and tactics

Your sales plan tactics relate more to the performance of your salespeople than to your marketing activities. You can set up strategies and tactics according to market segment.

You can use the following table to identify your strategies and tactics for achieving your sales targets.

	Strategy	Tactics
Attracting new clients in a particular market segment		
Getting your existing clients to buy more and more frequently		
Improving your profit margin		
Retaining your existing clients		

Measures of achievement

Measures of achievement are numeric measures of success. These measures of achievement can help you measure:

*the success of your strategies and tactics
how well your salespeople are applying your strategies and tactics.*

Measures of achievement include your sales targets but also might include:

*individual sales targets for each salesperson
call patterns for each salesperson according to market segment
conversion rate of prospects to clients.*

What are your measures of achievement?

How will you gather these measures of achievement?

Action plan for meeting your sales targets

The purpose of developing an action plan for putting your sales plan strategies and tactics into place is to help you meet your sales targets.

Some of your sales plan strategies and tactics may be similar to your marketing strategies and tactics. If so, some of the actions you identify in your action plan may be the same.

Use the table below to develop your action plan.

Begin by identifying the actions necessary for implementing your strategy and tactics. Then specify who is responsible for implementing the action, when it will start and finish and how much implementation will cost.

Be sure to include any necessary actions for ensuring your salespeople, other staff members, suppliers and production people are informed.

Action	Person responsible	Cost	When

Budget allocation

You probably won't be able to implement the actions in your action plan without spending money on them. This element of your sales plan involves checking what funds you need to implement your actions. Then either you allocate budget or refine your plans so far.

Record the sum of all your individual selling activity costs below:

Sum of individual selling activity costs (my budget allocation):

Have you conducted a cost benefit analysis of each individual selling activity cost?

Using the Sales Plan

Communicate and carry out the plan

The first step in using your sales plan is communicating it and carrying it out. We recommend that you:

Discuss your sales plan with your salespeople

Alert your suppliers to any impact your sales activities might have on the orders you place with them

Check with your production people that they can produce the volume that your sales plan expects you to sell

Alert other appropriate staff as to the contents of your sales plan.

You can make provisions for each of the above in your action plan.

How and when will you discuss your sales plan with your salespeople?

How and when will you alert your suppliers to any impact your sales activities might have on the orders you place with them?

How and when will you check with your production people that they can produce the volume that your sales plan expects you to sell?

How and when will you alert other appropriate staff as to the contents of your sales plan?

Have you included provisions for each of the above in your action plan?

Have you included any additional costs in your sales budget?

Monitor progress

We recommend that you monitor progress as you go and that you adjust your actions (and sometimes your plan as well) depending on the results you're getting. Then you find out in a timely way when your strategies, tactics or actions need changing.

Answer the following questions.

What measures of achievement are you going to check?

How frequently?

Adjust the plan

If you're going as well as you planned, you may need to adjust something.

Answer the following question.

What will you do if, as a result of your monitoring, you find that your plan isn't working?

Monitor changes

We recommend that you keep circling through Monitor progress and Adjust the plan until you reach the end of your sales plan.

When will you monitor any changes you make to your plan?

Evaluate effectiveness

After you've made it to the end of your sales plan, you can improve the results of future selling activities by evaluating the plan's effectiveness.

We recommend that you consider the following questions at the end of your campaign.

Did you meet your sales targets, including the measures of achievement you specified?

Did you stay within budget and timelines?

Could you have done anything better?

We also recommend that you make notes regarding what worked and what didn't so that you can use this information for future sales plans.