



Marketing Blueprint:

Your Guide to Creating a Broadband Services Marketing Plan

We understand the challenges you face as a broadband service provider (BSP) marketer. You are responsible for a seemingly endless array of initiatives and activities, from developing strategies and executing campaigns to drive revenue, to enhancing the subscriber experience to increase satisfaction, to creating a positive brand perception to build loyalty, to engaging with the community to raise visibility and foster goodwill—and everything else in between. You need to manage a wide range of stakeholders, keep abreast of trends shaping customer demands, navigate complex regulatory requirements, and fend off competitive threats from both emerging and traditional players. And, of course, you need to deliver amazing results with relatively limited budgets and resources.

To help you excel in your marketing efforts, we've put together a series of marketing-specific guides that explore some of the foundational elements of marketing. This marketing blueprint focuses on **creating a marketing plan**.

What is a marketing plan?

Think of a marketing plan as the roadmap that lays out your marketing strategy and the related tactics you will undertake over a specific period. When developing your plan, you'll want to identify how your marketing activity aligns with and contributes to your company's overarching business objectives. For instance, if one of your company's business objectives is to increase revenue by five percent in a year, you will want to detail how marketing will help attain that goal. Or, if reducing operating expenses (OPEX) is a major organizational priority, your marketing plan incorporate tactics that will help you decrease new subscriber acquisition costs.

It is important to note that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to marketing plans. They can range from all-encompassing, year-long plans to smaller, more strategic plans that incorporate only a few marketing elements or channels. The specifics and tactics will vary based on what you are trying to achieve, but this blueprint draws on best practices to outline the various elements you should consider.

Why is it important to create a marketing plan?

A marketing plan is vital in defining what you want to accomplish through marketing, how you will execute it, and how you will evaluate your success. A critical first step in your marketing plan is clearly defining the objectives—what you want to achieve, the metrics you will use to measure success, how your marketing programs correlate to your overall business success, and the possible barriers to success. Many BSPs have limited marketing resources and budgets, and a structured marketing plan helps to ensure that you are focusing on what's essential and provides a guide to reach your marketing goals.

USE CASE: This Michigan electric and communications cooperative undertook an omnichannel marketing program with the primary goals of driving new subscriber acquisition and upselling existing subscribers to higher service tiers. The result? Through coordinated marketing efforts, the cooperative grew its subscriber base by 18 percent, increased the percentage of subscribers in top-tier plans by 250 percent, and boosted annual revenue by 23 percent, demonstrating the significant impact marketing can have in achieving critical business objectives.

Who is your target audience, and who are you competing against?

When building a marketing plan, you need to define who the audience is. You will want to understand the demographics, psychographics, and motivations for both current subscribers and prospects. Creating personas of your target audiences can help you develop a better picture of their challenges and needs. As a BSP, you have a wealth of subscriber data at your fingertips; the trick is mining that data to glean the insights that will inform your marketing strategy.

You will also want to assess the competitive landscape to identify your current competition as well as those that may pose a threat in the future. Do not make the mistake of dismissing non-traditional competitors; for example, in recent years, several large technology companies explored delivering broadband connectivity via balloons or unmanned aerial vehicles, and there are surely other innovators on the horizon. You can amass this information through desk research, subscriber surveys, and internal resources such as your sales and customer service teams.

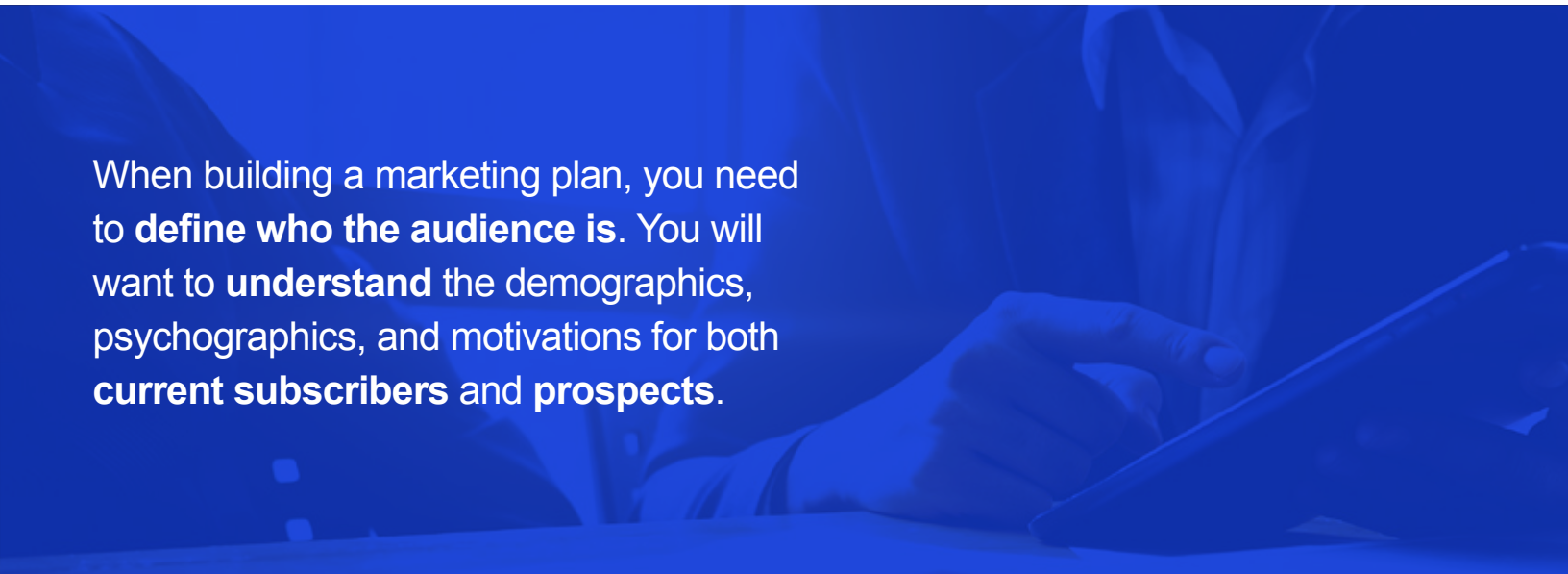
USE CASE: This Western U.S. service provider, competing in an increasingly crowded broadband services market, needed to differentiate itself. The BSP developed personas to help segment its subscriber base and target them with customized packages that would address their specific Wi-Fi requirements. The result? The BSP ran three different upsell campaigns, resulting in a return on investment (ROI) of up to 300 percent, and increased adoption of its premium Wi-Fi service to 50 percent of its subscribers.

What is the timeline for your marketing plan?

When creating a marketing plan, you'll want to establish the timeline for your program. Many marketers set their strategies in conjunction with the overarching annual corporate strategy, so they would have a year-long marketing plan. If it feels too ambitious to create a full-year plan, it may be easier to break it down into a quarterly plan, with 30-60-90-day mini-plans within that.

Regardless of the time horizon that you set, you will want to map your marketing plan against the cadence of your business, identifying key inflection points against which you can align your activity. Examples include new product or service launches, expansion into new markets, new network buildouts, or community support initiatives. You will also want to ensure you build in regular checkpoints to evaluate progress and make any necessary course corrections to meet your objectives.

USE CASE: When this Tennessee-based cooperative set a goal to sign up 5,000 new members by the end of 2020, the marketing team developed a year-long marketing plan to drive subscriber acquisition. The result? Through a multi-channel approach featuring email, social media, and web marketing, the company was able to go above and beyond that aggressive target: they reached 10,000 new members in about 18 months.



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Where are you going to concentrate your marketing activity?

An important step is determining your budget; unfortunately, budget plays an important role in dictating the scope and scale of marketing plans. Whether you take a bottom-up (requesting funding based on the activity you want to undertake) or top-down (receiving a fixed amount from your finance team) approach to budgeting, it's essential to have a clear idea of your overall spend so you can prioritize your activity accordingly. You'll also want to track your detailed spend so that you can measure return on investment.

Once your budget is established, you will then need to determine what marketing elements will your marketing program encompass—email marketing, advertising, paid and/or organic social media, direct mail, SMS marketing, PR, events (live and/or virtual), outbound calling, etc. The key to success is selecting the marketing mix that will help you best address your target audience. Do you want to engage with millennials who may be heavy streamers or gamers? They would likely respond better to social media or SMS campaigns. Are you trying to reach more mature audiences who may not be as tech-savvy? Direct mail or traditional advertising may be an approach you want to take.

And then you need to choose your weapons—what resources and tools will you need to execute your plan? If you're running email marketing campaigns, you'd want to invest in an email marketing platform, such as Mailchimp. For paid social media programs, you'd want to look at tools offered in platforms like Facebook or social media management platforms that allow you to schedule content and track engagement. These are just two examples of the vast range of platforms and services you may need to utilize for your marketing program.

USE CASE: This Canadian BSP leveraged the powerful Mailchimp—Calix Marketing Cloud integration to simplify email marketing processes such as generating audience segments, managing email lists, and crafting focused messaging. The result? The three-person marketing team was able to create a larger number of campaigns with distinct, targeted messaging than they ever thought possible, with open rates more than 160 percent higher than the industry average of 31 percent.

How will you evaluate the success of your plan?

For any marketing plan, it will be critical for you to evaluate the success of your plan. You'll need to monitor your progress against essential marketing KPIs (open rates, click-throughs, unsubscribes, bounce rates, page views, engagement rates, media hits, etc.) and measure ROI. Based on this performance, you may adjust your tactics and use insights gained to optimize other campaigns you may be running concurrently. At the end of the marketing plan period, you'll want to conduct a post-mortem/debrief to evaluate your achievements against objectives and distill key learnings.

USE CASE: This Kentucky communications cooperative undertook marketing programs targeting subscribers who were continually hitting service limits. The result? Their first upgrade campaign garnered a 56 percent take rate—and service limit hits have decreased by 54 percent.

How Calix Can Help You?

Calix provides the marketing platforms, partnerships, and resources to help BSP marketers succeed, starting with Calix Marketing Cloud. Explicitly designed for BSP marketers, Marketing Cloud automatically combines behavioral and transactional data, enabling you to target and message effectively.

With Marketing Cloud, you can discover actionable insights on subscribers, simplify subscriber data analytics to reveal subscriber preferences, and elevate your business with targeted data for campaigns. Offering unique capabilities like ready-to-go audience segments, the platform allows you to drive marketing campaigns that can immediately increase ARPU, increase retention, identify qualified prospects, and provide an unmatched subscriber experience—all while delivering a compelling ROI on your marketing dollars.

Marketing Cloud integration with leading marketing technology and social media platforms such as Mailchimp and Facebook make it easier than ever for small marketing teams to execute world-class marketing campaigns. These integrations simplify and streamline processes like managing and exporting target lists, creating look-alike audiences for acquisition campaigns, and monitoring and optimizing campaign performance and ROI, all within a cohesive, easy-to-use platform.

Calix also provides a full range of Market Activation content and tools, including the Electronic Content Builder and Market Activation Video Editor (MAVE), to help you quickly, easily, and cost-effectively run omnichannel marketing campaigns that showcase your brand. And with Premier Customer Success Services for Marketing teams, you have the expertise and guidance to help you raise the bar on your marketing.

CALIX IS COMMITTED TO YOUR MARKETING SUCCESS—[SIGN UP FOR CALIX MARKETING ACADEMY](#) TO GAIN VALUABLE INSIGHTS AND BEST PRACTICES ON EVERY ASPECT OF MARKETING.

