

7 Steps to a Minimalist Marketing Plan

A marketing plan is critical to every company. If you don't have a plan in place yet, commit to taking just one hour to create a "Minimalist Marketing Plan" so you can rely on more than just luck to make sales and move forward.

"By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail."

– Benjamin Franklin

"A goal without a plan is just a wish."

– Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

"If you don't know where you are going, you'll end up someplace else."

– Yogi Berra

"Unless commitment is made, there are only promises and hopes; but no plans."

– Peter F. Drucker

Everybody knows you need a marketing plan, but sometimes you're running so fast you don't have the time. Below are seven steps to a minimal plan to help you get started. Many other things should follow, such as a logo, a real website, social marketing plans, and more... but this is a good start. Of course, this *Minimalist Marketing Plan* is not a replacement for the real thing.

1. Designate a marketing person

If your company consists of more than just you, take the time to discuss who should be the "marketing face" of the company. It's fine for everyone to be out in the world talking about the company, but be sure you have a unified voice, and someone who is the main face to the world, and who is ultimately responsible for your marketing.

2. Get a real domain and email addresses

Nothing says "amateur" like using a generic email address for your business. It is easy and inexpensive to get your own domain. If you are using a Gmail, Hotmail, or other generic email address for your business, stop *right now*. Here are my blog posts on this topic:

- [Your Business Name and Domain](#)
- [Choosing a Domain](#)
- [Your Email Address and Your Brand](#)

3. Get a website

Even if you have nothing else in place, get a website up that includes at least the name of your business, a carefully-crafted (and spell-checked!) sentence or two about what you do, and contact information, including your email address. Yes, your final website must have much more than this, but having this bare-minimum site online is better than no web presence at all. Be sure to consider this an intermediary step and plan to get a *real* website as soon as you can. If you are your own web developer, then here are my blog posts on this topic:

- [Five Steps to a Website](#)
- [WordPress vs. Weebly](#)

4. Write messaging for your company and key products

Messaging is a critical part of any marketing plan. You need to have a clear description of what your company does, and of your top products and services. If you don't have a lot of time right now, at least make sure you have messaging for your overall company. After all, if you find yourself in a one-minute elevator ride with a potential customer or potential investor, you have to be ready! Here are my blog posts on messaging:

- [Messaging 101](#)
- [Communities and Exclusivity](#)

5. Create a company style guide

Even if the only thing it contains is the right way to spell the names of your company and key products, do yourself a favor and create a style guide for your company. Doing this now will help you avoid having to clean up inconsistencies later. Here's my blog post about creating a style guide:

- [You Need a Writing Style Guide](#)

6. Set pricing for key products and services

Will you have a set hourly rate for everything you do? Will you have different pricing for non-profit organizations? Will you have discounts in place for bulk purchases? Make these pricing decisions and write it down to save yourself from having to figure it out from scratch every time someone asks you "How much?"

7. Set an initial marketing budget

Now that you have the basics in place, take a look at your finances and see if you can set aside some cash for marketing. There are some things best left to pros, and you will want some budget for that, among other things.

Ready to get started?

Here's a checklist: no more delaying!

Task	Done!	Notes
1. Designate a marketing person	<input type="checkbox"/>	Designated person:
2. Get a real domain + email addresses	<input type="checkbox"/>	Domain name:
3. Get a website	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scheduled launch date:
4a. Write messaging for your company	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4b. Write messaging for your key products	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Set pricing for key products and services	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Create a company style guide	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. Set an initial marketing budget	<input type="checkbox"/>	Budget this quarter: Next quarter:

