



Balkan-Mediterranean
Programme
BALKANET



COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING ROADMAP TOOL

**FOR NEW, INNOVATIVE SMES
IN THE AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD SECTOR**



**PROJECT
“BALKAN NETWORK OF
IDEAS FOR SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION
IN THE AGRI-FOOD SECTOR”**

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1. INTRODUCTION

A strategic roadmap is a time-based plan that determines where your company is now, where it wants to go, and how to get there. The roadmap is basically a purely visual expression of the strategy, which the organization prepares and presents information related to future plans in an easy-to-follow way. Strategic roadmaps are a common approach to the planning process. They are an effective tool for managers to use when communicating and linking strategic initiatives to business plans. The roadmap acts as a way to focus and guide the company's efforts to achieve important goals. There are many types of road maps. They are all basically a kind of a plan for directing efforts towards achieving a predetermined goal. The process of making strategic decisions is the main factor determining the future success of a company. The right and sustainable solutions, especially in the field of agriculture and food, require timely and appropriate information gathering and decision making. The strategic roadmap assumes that the various departments and individuals in the organization have vital information when it comes to decision-making. For example, the technological knowledge and ideas for innovations in the field of the company's activity belongs to people from lower levels of the organization, while the authority and competence for their proper planning, financing and implementation are in the hands of the top management. The roadmap describes activities such as objectives, deadlines, indicators, etc. It also shows the practical steps needed to reach the desired goal. It takes into account the interdependence between the steps and provides alternatives, which helps to optimize the process, allocate resources and minimize risks. The first stage is to define and describe the long-term vision of the company. As we will describe below in this practical guide, the vision is, in short, the desired future state to which you want to bring your company. The second step is to express several messages through which to communicate the vision, set specific goals, etc. For smaller companies, their first roadmap is a good reason to focus on strategic planning. The roadmap itself is not a static tool. This means that several iterations of the process may be needed to see the full benefits of the strategy and its implementation. It is a tool for cooperation in the development of strategies and their subsequent implementation in order to achieve the desired future state. Companies all around the world, regardless of their size and scope, use the roadmap tool in their efforts to respond to the ever-changing business environment by formulating business strategies for innovation and successfully adapting to the increasingly difficult and complex business environment. The roadmap allows an assessment of the technological changes and business opportunities that are most important for the company's well-being.

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3. LINKS TO THE AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD SECTOR.

3.1 The importance of existing business models in the agriculture and food sector.

The business model describes how a trading company generates revenue and profits and, generates value for a business. The business model describes the process by which the product is sold or the service is provided for a fee. While the business models themselves were part of past business practices, the concept of the business model came to the fore with the development of the Internet in the mid-1990s, especially used to describe the business practices of Internet companies and e-business firms; the concept was innovative or controversial. New business models, especially those that are possible through technological change, allow the creation of new and competitive enterprises in the existing business environment.

The following can be mentioned as traditional business models:

- "Manufacturer's model" - a manufacturer produces a product and sells it to customers at a price higher than its production costs.
- "Store model" - buying a product at a low wholesale price and offering customers a high retail price.
- The "broker model" - acting as an intermediate factor, is used as an intermediary between the manufacturer and the wholesaler and / or the retailer and receives a brokerage commission or the difference between purchases and sales.

Each model can be useful and appropriate depending on the subject of activity and the ultimate goal of the company. In most cases, companies working in the field of agriculture and food concentrate the above business models.

For the purposes of the Handbook, we will use as a basis the "Manufacturer's Model" - companies producing differentiated and homogeneous agricultural products.

3.2 Links of the business model concept with the company's profile.

Today's concept of marketing today explores the needs and desires of the consumer as a leading unit. It is focused on supplying the market of goods and services with such products that can actually meet these needs and desires in the best way possible. Marketing begins with the identification of consumer needs, and continues to the creation of the respective finished product or service. After the adaptation of the product or service, and only if the above activities are performed correctly, the product or service is ready to take its place on the market.

In other words, products and services are created and tailored to consumer preferences and needs. Failure to comply with these criteria leads to almost certain failure.

The focus of this concept is namely the customer-oriented behaviour. Marketing begins with assessing customer needs and planning the production of goods that meet those needs in the most effective way. This also applies to all other marketing activities such as pricing, packaging, distribution and sales promotion. This is called marketing integration. Integration consists of developing a product that can meet the needs of consumers, taking promotional measures so that consumers can get to know the products, their characteristics, quality, advantages, even disadvantages; product pricing, taking into account their purchasing power and willingness to pay; packaging and classification of the product to make it more attractive, and taking sales promotion measures to motivate consumers to buy the product, as well as taking various other measures (incl. after sales service) to meet the needs of the consumers.

The main goal of all the efforts is to achieve maximum profit through maximum customer satisfaction. The successful implementation of these measures will lead to high customer satisfaction, therefore more sales, which will inevitably have a positive impact on the profit figures in the company.

It should be noted that historically, marketing has been applied by companies producing packaged goods to the general public. It is known that these goods are mainly food products and raw materials. Even before events such as the Industrial Revolution, the production of food and raw materials was the main livelihood of many people, some of whom later established themselves as major players in the industry, and their companies continue to exist to this day.

3.3 Segmentation of the business model and its components.

The Agricultural marketing can be divided into two major sections:

Marketing of differentiated agricultural products - marketing of branded products

Marketing of homogeneous agricultural products, or the so-called agricultural marketing.

The basis for the existence of these types of marketing in agribusiness are the raw materials produced by agriculture. During the various stages of production, some of these raw materials are used as foodstuffs and resources for production, and the other part is put through various processing activities, and placed on the market as finished goods. In this case, the word agro means that the marketing strategy is applied in the production of goods of agricultural origin.

Due to the fact that the production of differentiated agricultural products is carried out mainly by the food industry, their marketing is also called “**processed foods marketing**.” On the other hand, the marketing of agricultural companies producing homogeneous and undifferentiated goods is called “**Agricultural marketing**”. Another name for agricultural marketing is “**marketing of agricultural raw materials**.” The differentiation between the two types of marketing is whether the product is branded or not. Some agricultural companies specialize in the production of differentiated agricultural products, aimed at certain, predetermined market segments. These companies have the opportunity to apply all concepts, that belong to the classic marketing. On the other hand, there are companies offering undifferentiated products without a brand. Their marketing opportunities are severely limited.¹

Specific features of agromarketing

In the current conditions of oversaturation of the market with different types and qualities of goods and services, the marketing of companies engaged in agribusiness is becoming more expensive and resource-intensive. Farmers working in economically developed countries charge an average of about 25% of the final sale price. The remaining funds are redirected to cover production costs, as well as the costs of increasing the added and consumer value of the product. About 77% of the increase in the prices of finished products in the agricultural sector is due to increased investment in marketing. The remaining 23% of the increase is due to an actual increase in farmers' production costs.

An important fact to note is that, unlike non-food products and food products with a longer shelf life, a large proportion of unprocessed agricultural products and a smaller proportion of processed products can be stored in a relatively short period of time. This fact creates the need for very good coordination inside, as well as in the overall system of product sales channels. This set of features imposes some important limitations in the field of decisions related to the pricing and marketing policy of the company.

The agricultural producer is at a relatively long distance from the end user. The value of most food products doubles by adding the value of the journey from the farm to the supermarket. Throughout this journey, the product is influenced by various market actors who have nothing to do with the farmer. The possibilities for individualization of the product through the appearance and packaging increase with the increase of the value of the product.

It is important to emphasize that agricultural marketing plays an important role not only in stimulating production and consumption, but also in accelerating economic development. Its dynamics are of great importance for promoting economic

¹ Agricultural Marketing, Rangel Trendafilov, Antoaneta Simcheva, Chapter 2: “What is agricultural marketing”

development. For this reason, it is described as the most important multiplier for agricultural development. The effective marketing system of agricultural enterprises leads to optimization of the used resources and the overall management of the production. It can also contribute to increasing the trade surplus by reducing losses resulting from inefficient handling, storage and transport. A well-developed marketing system can effectively allocate available stocks of modern raw materials and thus maintain a faster growth rate in the agricultural sector. That's why creating an effective marketing roadmap is a great [way to improve the efficiency of the farm](#).²

3.4 Criteria for the selection of a successful business model.

Thanks to advances in technology today, the choice of business models is greater than ever. You can start a business part-time or full-time, at home, online, on your own or in a rented room. The key is to choose a business model that fits your life plan. This will determine the right level of risk (some models involve more risk than others), some are practical in terms of the financial resources required, others are the only possible option for achieving the set goals. Every business model you choose has its pros and cons. Some of them suggest the need for more investment to start, more time, more energy-intensive and resource-intensive overall process, etc. Others, on the other hand, are designed to be less engaging and suitable for people who have not had contact with their own business until now.

4. ANALYSIS OF THE DIFFERENT ROADMAP MODELS

In this chapter we will pay more attention to the road maps as a practical tool. We will define what a road map is, and we will describe its specific characteristics. We will list the types of road maps, with their respective elements and goals.

4.1 What is a roadmap?

The roadmap is a high-level, strategic document that is created and maintained to convey the strategic vision and goals of a product or a task. Roadmaps are used for product development, marketing strategies, services, IT solutions and more.

The roadmap is a strategic tool that defines a goal or desired end result, and includes the main steps, needed to achieve them. It can also serve as a tool for communication between the different levels in an organization.³ The roadmap is a powerful tool for strategic planning. It is an integral part of the creation and implementation of various strategies and innovations in many organizations. It is purely graphic in nature and it is essentially designed for collaboration between different departments and teams in a given organization. The strength of the roadmap

² Agricultural Marketing, Rangel Trendafilov, Antoaneta Simcheva

³ <https://www.productplan.com/roadmap-basics/>

lies in its flexibility, which can provide clarity and alignment with specific needs at all levels, as well as even facilitate cooperation between the organizations involved.

4.2 What are its main advantages?

The roadmap is a flexible and adaptive tool that can meet the needs of any business, organization, or sector. In it, decision-making is based on consensus and is transparent, which facilitates key stakeholders in working on and coherent decisions. This makes it a proven tool designed to improve communication between teams, organizations and stakeholders. Visual presentation of the results facilitates communication in organizations. The use of a roadmap has the potential to include a wide variety of objectives including harmonizing the organization's commercial and technical strategies. Something that often proves to be a prerequisite for problems in many organizations.⁴

4.3 What are the different types of roadmaps?

The most common and most widely used types of road maps include the following types: Market-strategic (Marketing), visionary, technological, platform, product (input-output product). Each of these types is suitable for specific cases. They can also be combined if necessary to achieve a broader picture.

- **Market-strategic (marketing) roadmap** - the marketing roadmap is a visual way to capture and communicate marketing plans. Covers aspects such as:

- Alignment - uniting all parties and teams around the idea of your marketing strategy, and the work needed to achieve it.
- Coordination - helps to coordinate the teams covering the different stages of the plan. Facilitates synchronization between different levels and participants.
- Visibility - facilitates informing the whole organization about future activities from the plan, such as when the next marketing campaigns will take place, product launch dates, etc.
- Impact - helps track progress and shows the effect of implementing the strategy.
- Communication - allows the sharing of information between management, teams, stakeholders.

- **Visionary roadmap**- Visionary roadmaps aim to describe trends in industry and society as a whole.

- **Technological**- technological roadmap, unlike the technological one, aims to describe the trends not in general, but from a purely technological point of view,

⁴ <https://www.ifm.eng.cam.ac.uk/ifmecs/business-tools/roadmapping/roadmapping-at-ifm/>

such as: new technologies, innovations in production, etc. This allows the organization to show readiness to adapt to the ever-dynamically changing technological world.

- **Platform-** The Platform Roadmap is aimed at IT companies. It aims to show the plan for working with the various software and hardware platforms of the company.

- **Product, Internal and external-** Product roadmaps are used to organize the launch of different editions of a company's products, what are their characteristics, what features will be added, what other changes will be.

- **Internal - product-** roadmaps can be used to prioritize development, communication between different departments and management, and last but not least, prioritize development.

- **External product roadmaps-** are used to communicate with customers, partners, the press and analysts. They are based on the same principles as inside information, but are significantly more limited.⁵

In conclusion, regardless of the type of roadmap and the industry for which it is used, roadmaps have become imperative for achieving the company's goals by offering simplified visualizations showing how different departments overlap and where their goals intersect. In addition, roadmaps allow the company to compare its progress and failures in real time and quickly identify what problems lie ahead and where changes can be made.

5. MARKETING COMMUNICATION ROADMAP

Marketing communication acts as a brand promoter and initiates a dialogue with consumers on behalf of the marketer. That way, marketing communication allows marketers to overcome the physical nature of their products or the technical specifications of their services to give products and services added value (Keller, 2001). Marketing communication plays an important role in building and maintaining relationships with stakeholders and in using these relationships in terms of their brand and equity. Communication is at the heart of human relationships. Marketing communication is a collective term for all communication functions that are used in the promotion of a product or service. Its purpose is to add value to a product - both for the customer and for the company. Marketing communication is one of the main elements of the four "P's", so well-known from marketing textbooks. There, it is described as "Promotion". With the help of marketing communication, marketers aim to inform consumers, directly or indirectly, about the products and services that their

⁵ <https://280group.com/product-management-blog/compelling-product-roadmaps-tips-best-practices/>

companies offer, their qualities and characteristics. Marketing communication acts as an intermediary between marketers (on behalf of the company) and consumers on the other hand. That way they can inform them about all the qualities of the products they promote, creating added value. Marketing communication plays a very important role in building, maintaining and raising the level of relationships between companies and stakeholders.

The ultimate goal of marketing is to generate an intense connection between the consumer and the brand. Brands have become a focal point of many marketing efforts of companies and are seen as a source of market power, competitive advantage and higher returns. The importance of the brand concept in many cases unfortunately even the concept of the product itself. A product set brings tangible benefits, but one mark offers both tangible and intangible benefits. In marketing, the term "brand" is usually applied to companies, products and services, and marketers generally assume that brands can be described in terms of perceived quality, image, and so on.

A product brings certain tangible benefits, but a brand offers both tangible and intangible benefits. Through effective marketing communication, marketers could maintain a lasting relationship with consumers and in turn can increase the value of the products they promote.

Recently, the marketing environment of industries has begun changing very rapidly due to the increasing market power of consumers, the complex dynamics of competition and the influence of the media on consumer opinion. This makes it difficult for marketing experts to formulate a complete brand strategy for long-term profit. In this context, marketing communication plays a vital role in the overall branding strategy of the company. Through marketing communication, marketers try to "set in stone" their brand in the minds of target consumers, which, therefore, increases their desire to buy the so promoted products. The distinctiveness of a brand in the eyes of consumers is not a property of the real product, but a product of the brand⁶. Synergy is needed to achieve a strong brand image.⁷ In his model of the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) process, Duncan describes marketing communication as a continuous, circular process that creates brand value in the form of sales, profits and equity.⁸

⁶ Reid et al, 2005

⁷ Shimp, 2000

⁸ Duncan

5.1 What is a marketing communications roadmap, and how can it help us?

As we have already described in the different types of roadmaps section, the marketing communications roadmap is a visual way to capture and communicate marketing plans. It covers aspects such as alignment, coordination, visibility, impact and communication.

- **Alignment** helps unite all parties and teams around the idea of your marketing strategy, and the work needed to achieve it. The work on a project is very often done by several teams responsible for its various aspects. In some cases, a project may require working together and sometimes externally. In more complex and large-scale projects, the work can be divided between different organizations, unrelated to each other. This imposes the need to equate the concepts of the individual units to the general one, unified concept. In such situations, no matter how well the general idea is communicated, refractions can always occur from different teams, which in turn is a prerequisite for inefficient future work.

- **Coordination** helps coordinate the teams covering the different stages of the plan. Facilitates synchronization between different levels and participants. Coordination is at the heart of a company. Coordination means keeping all team members organized and working to achieve one goal. In fact, experts say that ineffective communication and coordination are the main contributor to project failure in one third of cases. It may also lead to a negative impact on project success in more than half of the cases. Coordination is one of the most important elements for any company. Coordination is needed in connecting different activities, as well as maintaining cooperation with team members. All activities are interconnected. So team coordination is the main driver that connects overall organizational growth. Team coordination is the pillar that lays the foundation for employee collaboration.

- **Visibility** facilitates informing the whole organization about future activities under the plan, such as when the next marketing campaigns will take place, product launch dates, etc.

- **Impact** helps track progress and shows the effect of implementing the strategy. The last step in any planning process is to monitor and evaluate progress.

Keeping track of all costs, sales, and profits is not enough to get a broad enough picture of how you came to these results, nor will it give you any essential information about what you need to change to improve your performance. Both progress and decline in a company happen in many different ways, which are good to be taken into account. Another positive effect of the impact function is the increased motivation of the staff. When employees realize that they are contributing to the company's success, they will feel more satisfied from their work. If, on the other hand, they see that the

organization is lagging behind, and this is communicated to them in an appropriate way - they will realize the need for more work, and this will motivate them even further.

-Communication allows the sharing of information between management, separate teams and stakeholders.

To develop the full potential of the team, the environment must be such that everyone can express an opinion, present their ideas, ask for help and be given the opportunity to take a measured risk. Open communication is also fundamental to the success of the team - to measure the performance of the team you need to provide good feedback, to accept constructive criticism, and this can be done with a level of trust built by direct, honest communication. The positivity of communications affects the energy of the team. Conversations that focus on needs, desires and interests are full of energy, and constant complaints about what irritates and angers the team members might come as demoralizing and demotivating. To encourage and strengthen team communication, leaders must be able to listen and respond appropriately.

5.2 Guidelines and criteria to create a marketing communication roadmap

As described above, the marketing communication roadmap is a simple and graphical expression of a company's marketing plan. To get to that point, however, the company needs a comprehensive business plan. The business plan sets goals for the entire organization according to a specific time frame. These goals are both quantitative and qualitative, such as return on investment, competitive goals, efficiency goals, corporate social responsibility goals, etc.

5.2.1 Guidelines and criteria to create a marketing communication roadmap

The marketing plan contains marketing goals and the strategy for achieving these goals, as in gaining market share, number of products and distribution channels. It is the starting point of the marketing communications plan, which should determine how and with what tools and resources the marketing goals will be achieved. Unlike the business plan, which is planned for about 3 years in advance and the marketing plan with its validity of 1 up to 2 years - the marketing communication plan usually covers a period of only one year. In order for the marketing communication plan to be sustainable and maximally effective, it is necessary to clearly answer three questions before starting:

- What message would you like to communicate to your future clients?
- What you would like your future customers to know about you?
- What is the mission and purpose of your brand?

The first step in creating a marketing communication plan is to establish the mission of the campaign and introduce it to your team. In short, the mission is a public

statement or a statement of the company's future intentions. For example: "Our company exists to provide (this) (this) and (that) through our product or service." **The next step** in building a plan is to identify the results that must be achieved for the company to be successful. Any goal that is set in this case must be directly related to achieving these results. **The third step** is to establish the target group of potential new customers. It should be noted who they are, what is the need that the company seeks to meet, as well as to build their demographic and psychographic segmentation. Criteria such as age, gender, social status, etc. need to be taken into account in this segmentation process if it concerns individuals if, on the other hand, the product or service is targeted at corporations, the sector in which the company operates, its size, number of employees, financial status, at what level it operates, etc. must be taken into account. There are many tools that aim to help in this process, and they are readily available. From online tools like Google Forms and Survey Monkey, to companies and businesses that specialize in this area. **The fourth step** to building a successful marketing communications plan is to identify your Unique Selling Offer or the so-called Value Proposal. The unique selling offer is what will set your company apart from your competitors and show the strengths of your product, brand or service. You can use it both at company level as well as for a specific product that you place on the market. By choosing the right approach, you can much more easily formulate your marketing strategy and create effective and influential messages, branding, content or even make complex marketing decisions. **Step five-** plan an effective strategy for information and positioning. Inventing an attractive way to inform your future customers will take up a place in their minds. The last sixth step is to start active communication of these elements in space. Use different communication channels. Nowadays, there is definitely no shortage of such. One of the most effective communication channels are online platforms such as a web page, Google Ads, Facebook / Instagram / Twitter ads, Email marketing and others. Offline communication channels can be, for example, participation in meetings, seminars, fairs, exhibitions, etc.⁹

The marketing communication process consists of a number of integrated activities aimed at identifying the target audience and subsequently implementing a well-coordinated promotional program. The purpose of this whole process is to generate the expected response to the target group. Marketing communication also aims to address all issues related to customer preferences, to create a first impression, to fully inform consumers, and to create the image of the brand or the product as a whole. As always, there are some limitations that this process imposes. It is extremely expensive and to some extent short-term given the dynamism of the market. Recently, marketing communications are being used by more and more companies in all possible sectors. That way, companies build a relationship with their customers at all stages of

⁹ 6 Steps to an Effective marketing communications plan- Ronan Keane, June 16 2019

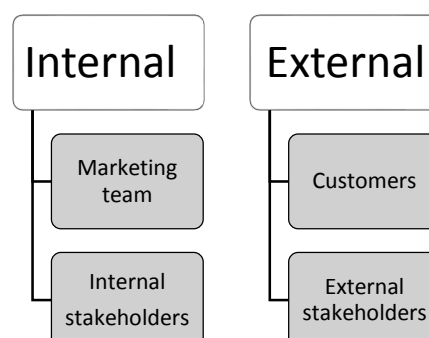
product lifecycle. From pre-sales, through the process of growth, maturity and the inevitable decline. Due to the differences between different types of users, marketing communication is developed and specialized for different segments and niches. Marketing experts should be well acquainted with the concept of marketing communication roadmaps.¹⁰

Creating a roadmap for marketing communications is often considered a difficult and even impossible task. The truth is that its creation is not very challenging. In order to be able to create a roadmap for marketing communications as easily as possible, a conscious, thoughtful and linear approach must be adopted.

Attention should be paid to each element individually. From defining the target group and setting strategic goals, to setting a network of goals to guide the team in creating the roadmap. Another important requirement for the effortless creation of the roadmap is to work actively with the stakeholders. Teamwork in this case is critical. When compiling such a document, the work of experts from different fields is needed in order to achieve optimal efficacy.

5.2.2 Identification of the target audience for the roadmap

Like the product or service you want to provide to your customers, the roadmap has its target audience too. Different groups of people are always associated with the product, so you want to accurately communicate different information to those groups. The target group will guide you to what type of content to include, the form of the content, and how detailed should it be. So, as a marketing manager, you can either create multiple roadmaps for each group of people or compile a single strategic document for everyone. Let's look at the types of audiences for which a roadmap can be made.



¹⁰ <https://www.businessstudynotes.com/marketing/principle-of-marketing/explain-the-marketing-communication-process/>

The marketing communications roadmap's target groups can be **internal**- aimed at the various teams within the organization as well as top management, and **external**- aimed at customers, partners and external stakeholders in general.

The roadmaps intended for use by members of the internal target group are intended to communicate information necessary for the proper performance of the tasks of each department. This means that the information in them must be specialized depending on which department it is directed to. Roadmaps intended for external parties usually take the form of presentations due to the fact that they do not contain internal information. They should be written in accessible language, easy to understand, clear, and contain as much information as possible about the benefits of the main purpose of the roadmap. Externally oriented roadmaps very often do not contain deadlines and other binding messages. The choice of the exact target group (stakeholders) on the roadmap must also be taken into account. Just as when creating a marketing plan or a strategy, when creating a road map, it is necessary to keep in mind who it will be aimed at. It can target one or more of the following stakeholder groups:

- Management Board, whose function is to control the day-to-day operations of the company to ensure efficient operation;
- Members of the board of directors who jointly control the activities of the organization;
- Investors and financial teams that aim to provide and manage capital;
- Product team;
- Sales team;
- Operations team.

Narrowing down this list of stakeholders will help to further understand what your target group's priorities are. It is important to emphasize that the roadmap is aimed at them, and specifying the priorities of each of the stakeholders in preparing the roadmap is extremely important. The aim should be to inform them about your strategy, the details that are important to them, and to answer any questions they may have in the future. There are many different types of stakeholders, and each has its own motivation. While they all work towards achieving a common goal, namely the well-being of the company, they are focused on different aspects of that goal.

Setting a strategic goal

When setting a strategic goal, it is not the goal of the marketing strategy that you plan, but the goal of the roadmap itself. You need to set a specific goal on the roadmap itself, what is the purpose you are creating it with. Whether you are looking for additional funding, additional production resources, or something more unusual, such as vertical integration of a company, or buying shares from one, it is important to describe in detail how the included items and their sequence affect all stakeholders. The scope of the roadmap should also be determined at the earliest possible stage and details should be provided for both short-term plans and possible future options.

Assigning tasks

The use of tools such as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) will help to accomplish the tasks and achieve the ultimate goal. The ability to measure the impact of decisions is a plus for the overall process. This quantifiable analysis of the results justifies the associated costs. This in turn justifies the approach of the marketing team.

Teamwork

Working on a marketing strategy should be a joint endeavor. All stakeholders must be involved. Productive, complete communication and teamwork support important decisions in the organization. Start by defining who will be in charge of controlling the whole process. Clarify what the tasks of each stakeholder are and who is responsible for their accomplishment. Regular meetings with stakeholders, as well as communicating critical moments can help to avoid conflicts and the negative consequences that come with them.¹¹

5.2.3 Defining the elements of the marketing communication roadmap

The Marketing and Communications Roadmap acts as a solid foundation for all future marketing activities of your company or product. As already mentioned, it will allow you to plan in detail the path you need to walk and what to do on this path to achieve success. It is very important to be able to create your own roadmap for marketing and communications. Every business itself is different, and in order to achieve any positive result, the roadmap must be prepared personally for your business, with all its features. It is easy to find ready-made examples of road maps on the Internet but copying will not lead to the expected results. Creating a comprehensive roadmap based on specific products and target groups is the best way to do it. Having an idea of the overall direction you are headed to, as well as a list of

¹¹ <https://www.productplan.com/how-to-marketing-strategy-roadmap/>

activities that must be achieved in order to successfully implement the plan, means you actually you have a real opportunity to focus on the right issues, and making the right decisions at the right time.

From everything described so far, the advantages of a well-developed road map become clear. How important can it be for the development of marketing plans, how important they are for teamwork and uniting different departments and teams around our common idea and how operational managers have the final say in what elements should be included in the roadmap. But when working with such documents, managers are not always able to select the exact elements to be included in their roadmap. Not everyone knows what a roadmap should look like, what elements it contains, how these elements are arranged and visualized, how to read them and what information they should convey.

Basic elements of the roadmap for marketing communications¹²¹³

The marketing communications roadmap may contain different types and numbers of elements. It can cover large-scale campaigns or small initiatives. Once you decide what to include, you can organize and prioritize these ideas and start implementing them. Some of the key elements of the marketing roadmap that we will look at are the following:

1. Company mission:

Describing the mission of a company determines its purpose and task, and in general its reason for existence. At a minimum, the company's mission is to determine who its main customers are, to identify the products or services that are produced and provided to the target group. The mission statement reflects each aspect of your business: the scope and nature of the products you offer, prices, product quality, service quality, market position, growth potential, use of technology and your relationships with your customers, employees, suppliers, competitors and the community. A clearly defined mission is vital for the company. The presence of such has an impact on the motivation of employees and partners. It can help them understand the general direction in which the company is moving, which will make the decision-making process way easier and more efficient. The mission must be sincere and realistic, to fully express the purpose of your organization. The purpose should describe the reason why you carry out your activity s well as the passion that was invested when creating the company, whether it is an international corporation or a small, family business and so on. There are some specific features in the content and explanations of the mission that can attract more customers and become one of the factors that can inspire your most enthusiastic employees. If you have decided to write

¹² 2020 [Vengreso](#)

¹³ 2020 [Lighter Capital](#)

your mission yourself, keep in mind that it is important to include answers to the following questions:

- What is the purpose of my business?
- Who do I serve? Who are my clients?
- What needs do I meet?
- Which values fit my business?

2. Objectives:

The marketing communications roadmap should start with setting your business goals short and long term. By setting clear goals, you can create a marketing plan that aligns with those goals and then develop a strategy to get there in the shortest amount of time.

3. Information for future clients:

Your customers are the most important part of the marketing communications roadmap. As you plan your marketing strategy, researching and interviewing your current customers should be a priority. Consumer research helps you understand the most important details about them. For example, if you are currently trading through paid advertising on Facebook, but your customer analysis reveals that most people find you through mentions on Twitter and Reddit - it's time to include this in your roadmap, change your tactics and save on your budget. Talking to your customers also helps you understand what type of content you need to create and what their needs and concerns are. This means that you can address exactly these needs and issues in your marketing strategy.

4. Competition analysis:

Although we should not focus too much on competition, it is always good to keep it in mind. Analyzing the competition we can get an idea of the state the market is in, to get deeper into the specifics of the client's business, to find the seemingly invisible moments that are important for this industry. The analysis helps assess the place of the project in the respective market and what strategic decisions should be taken. Competitive analysis is a necessary step in doing business and can help everyone realize their own mistakes, market mismatches, inaccurate consumer judgment, gaps in the business plan, or the emergence of new "uncovered for" needs. It is good to do it periodically, as the frequency depends on the dynamics of the specific market.¹⁴

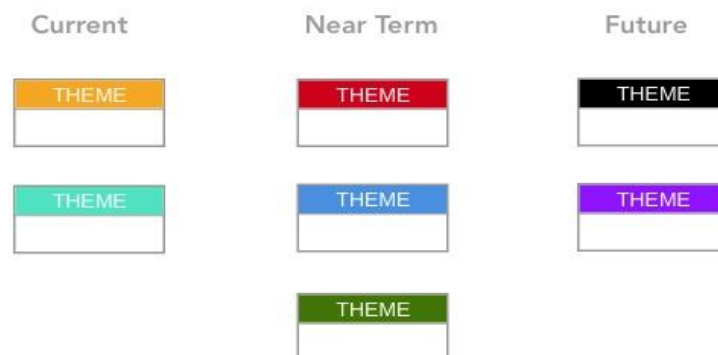
5. Widescale timeline:

As mentioned above, every marketing manager should have two tools readily available: a project plan and a roadmap. The purpose of the project plan is to note

¹⁴ 2015 - 2020 Anagami.bg

deadlines, tasks and the necessary resources for their implementation. The aim of the roadmap is to broadly show current, short-term and long-term priorities. Because the roadmap often communicates the marketing strategy in the long run, this means that it often discusses future changes that may not be necessary in a given period. However, changes in the business, the competitive landscape or the understanding of what will satisfy the customers may lead to the need to change the plans entered for future periods. This creates the need to provide an opportunity to allocate additional resources for possible changes, both in the plan and in the roadmap. To avoid this potential difficulty, the following solution can be proposed.

Instead of talking about specific problems and specific solutions in the roadmap, it is more appropriate to focus on broader topics (problem areas, opportunities, etc.). For example, instead of mentioning a feature like "Directly informing customers about our new service," you can mention a topic like "Raising our customers' awareness." You do not mention exactly how you can inform them, but you indicate that you will focus on this area. Instead of mentioning specific delivery dates, use broader deadlines. Instead of specifying a hard date to launch a function, divide the focus areas into time frames, such as Current / Near Term / Future. In this way, the organization is not under pressure from the promises to customers and internal stakeholders. It can rather give the best value in relative time frames as the team adapts and changes.¹⁵



Copyright: OpenClassrooms.com

Other marketing teams prefer to use another method - breaking the roadmap into quarters. A quarter is defined as a period of three months. There are four quarters of the year: Q1 is from January to March, Q2 is from April to June, Q3 is from July to August, and so on. The use of three-month deadlines may be more restrictive than broad-based targets. If you make a commitment to deliver a specific theme or feature in Q1, you may be dissatisfied if that commitment is violated. For this reason, the use of quarterly time frames for customer-oriented (i.e. public) roadmaps is not

¹⁵ How to build a roadmap- [OpenClassrooms 2020](https://openclassrooms.com/en/paths/104)

recommended. If you are going to use a quarterly roadmap, consider informing stakeholders that the dates involved do not constitute a real commitment.

"You can't make a roadmap addressing consumer issues if you don't know anything about the users themselves. By deviating from the invention of various functions (which can be performed regardless of whether customers have a real need for them), the roadmap requires a deep and comprehensive analysis of customer preferences. "

6. Topics:

Many experts describe the topics as "high level consumer needs". It should be noted that in this description, the topics are considered as more comprehensive and generalized problems or needs, rather than as specific problems and goals to be solved or fulfilled. The topics identify the areas on which the company's efforts should focus and support the communication of the marketing strategy to internal and external stakeholders and partners without concentrating efforts on just one problem, opportunity, or solution.

In their simplest form, topics are groups with similar characteristics or initiatives. Ideally, the topics describe the value to customers - what they will receive. "Improving the shopping experience" is an example of a customer-focused topic, and in this topic you would group the initiatives that will make it a reality. Topics help keep the roadmap on a high-level, especially for long-term and vague initiatives. One advantage is that you can include, exclude and modify them without significantly affecting the roadmap. This is a better way to keep managers and stakeholders on the same page and focus on the big picture.

How are the topics written? Topics should be goal-oriented. If you can first align the goals of the executive tasks, it is easier to create topics that are consistent with those goals. As part of the process, it is important to discuss the indicators and KPIs that determine whether the goal has been achieved.

How can you choose topics that understand consumer needs? It is also possible to first identify the topics and at a later stage to determine which functions or solutions address this topic. This can be achieved by analyzing the client and his needs, problems and needs. Author and User Experience expert Jared Spool describes how you shouldn't start setting topics on your roadmap unless you know what your customers are interested in:

For example: If a survey shows that our customers seem to need to strengthen the feedback between them and the company, you can include the topic "Improving

customer care" in your roadmap.¹⁶ How can we then choose topics according to consumer desires? There is a wide range of tools and ways to determine the desires and needs of users. Some of them can be surveys, market researches, customer interviews, requesting feedback, analysis of how to use products already on the market, if any. Systematic selection and grouping of user needs and preferences would significantly support the process of selecting roadmap topics. At first glance, an analysis of consumer preferences may show that, for example, several people may have similar desires, which will not help in any way. However, delving deeper into the analysis may reveal that this is not just an overlap of opinions between two people, but it rather may come as a potential new subgroup to be included in the analysis of the target audience. Customer feedback will need to be studied in depth, given the larger strategic picture, before a topic based on this feedback is developed.

7. Objectives and key results:

Objectives and key results (OKR) is a strategy for setting goals within an organization. The goal of OKR is to unite the company, team and personal goals into measurable results, while allowing all team members and managers to work together in one direction. One of the main roles of the CCR is to ensure that all team members know what is expected of them during their work. OKRs must be publicly available so that all teams within the organization, as well as stakeholders, can work in sync. The OKR consists of a list of three to five high-level objectives. Under each goal there should be between three and five measurable key results. Each key score can be evaluated with a score of 0-100% or 0 to 1.0.

Example 1: Structure of OKR

Goal 1: Raising public awareness of our new products

Key Outcome 1:	Establish the company and its products online
Key Outcome 2:	Implementation of dynamic analysis of coverage and impact on the target group
Key Outcome 3:	Reaching a minimum of 500,000 people through online communication channels
Key Outcome 4:	Receive product feedback from at least 50% of customers

OKRs are usually part of the quarterly planning. Although most use CCRs on a quarterly basis, some companies set annual or monthly CCRs. It is said that if there is one team management practice that every manager should apply, it is namely the implementation of OKRs. They are known to be an extremely efficient, easy and inexpensive goal-setting system. OKRs improve the overall performance, focus and

¹⁶ <https://openclassrooms.com/en/courses/4544601-build-a-product-roadmap/5016576-roadmap-element-3-themes>

culture of the company. They communicate to all stakeholders - internal and external. In case of disagreement and if necessary to add results / goals - the list can be edited easily. That way, a common understanding will be achieved, which in turn will improve the effectiveness of the tool.

In the process of work, team members regularly update their performance indicators. Usually, this happens on a weekly basis. A goal can be considered fulfilled when at least 80% of its results have been achieved. There are theories that if the results are met 100%, then the goals may not be ambitious enough. The OKR list should be reviewed regularly and, if necessary, edited. When OKRs are used regularly, they can be easy to use and implement. The inspection and review of the OKR should not take more than a few hours per period. However, it is a good idea to carry out this review more often, especially if the activity takes place in one of the more dynamic sectors. Making frequent checks of the progress in the implementation of the OKR allows for easy and painless adjustments, if necessary.

Marketing roadmaps can be used for a wide range of purposes. It is important to think about the audience to which the roadmap is aimed and the information to be transmitted. For example, you may want to create a high-level roadmap that shows and explains your strategic marketing goals and initiatives, or you may want to create a detailed roadmap that shows the timing of providing programs and campaigns to sales teams. Determining what you want to communicate with your roadmap will help you choose the right items to focus on.

6. ANALYSIS OF THE PHASES AND THE ACTIVITIES OF THE MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS ROADMAP

6.1 Marketing roadmap, phases and proposed activities

The Marketing Communications Roadmap highlights the key projects and priorities for the marketing to follow in implementing the marketing strategy. Marketing communication roadmaps often describe priorities in different channels such as content, digital marketing, organization of events and initiatives, etc. In the process of working on projects, the marketing team often has to work on several activities at once. As it is already known, the roadmap arranges all tasks in a clear, graphical form, highlighting the most important ones. This helps organization and communication between the stakeholders involved, sharing ideas and suggestions, and providing feedback. As with any plan or roadmap, a starting point must be set. In the next few pages, we will discuss in detail the most important phases that need to be clarified before moving on to creating a roadmap.

6.1.1 Analysis

Analysis of your current position

Everything about the organization should be described in detail - what is its subject of activity, its basic values and goals, analysis of the target in detail, and what needs, desires and problems does it have. Another useful thing that can be included is to describe the market situation, in which market the company is located, what is the brand strategy, how the company is quoted in the market, what are the main goals, etc. This analysis will give the doer a basic idea of what to focus on in the process of working on the roadmap.

- In-depth analysis of the competition

Analyze your competitors. Find out who your direct and indirect competitors are, where they are, analyze their structure, study their products and their customers. What preferences, what needs and what requirements do they have. It would be a good idea to compare them with your organization. Using publicly available sources, you can build a picture similar to the one described in the first point.

- Build a list of strengths/weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis).

The SWOT analysis assesses the strengths, weaknesses, as well as the opportunities and risks of a project. It is mainly used for planning control. SWOT analysis is a great tool for highlighting points in a project. This approach is used to study certain activities of a project, to optimize their potential and to assess risks. Each SWOT analysis itself can be different depending on the situation and there is no standard set of questions that should be included in its creation. In order for the SWOT analysis to be comprehensive, it is necessary to prepare lists of opportunities and threats and lists containing the strengths and weaknesses of the organization. The list of opportunities and threats is derived from the analysis of the elements of the external and internal environment. They help the organization to identify market opportunities as well as possible threats arising from the environment.

SWOT analysis of a company in agricultural sector:

Strenghts	Weaknessess	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Climate stuitable for horticulture•Product is excellently quoted on the market•Low labour cost•Fertile soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Limited access to finance•Underdeveloped infrastructure•Soil degradation and inadequate natural drainage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Numerous opportunities to increase efficiency•Constantly increasing demand in the region•Increasing the purchasing power of the population	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•High competition in the industry•Unexpected climate change•Political instability

- Set easily measurable goals.

Taking into account the information described above, as well as using the information from your business plan, if any, set between three and five measurable goals, which are described in the roadmap. These goals must correspond to the overall idea of the company's development. The SMART method can also be used to set these goals. SMART is a popular acronym used in project management and management to set goals and set goals. The goal, determined in accordance with the SMART principles, must be: Specific; Measurable; Attainable; Relevant, Time-bound. The SMART concept helps us to formulate practical and reasonable goals.

- Define your strategy.

Define a strategy for the implementation of each of the goals set by the company. The strategy is a detailed, high-level description of the activities you need to perform to achieve your goals. It should emphasize priorities and plans. The goals should be built in accordance with the already described OKR model.

- Develop an action plan.

The action plan is a detailed list containing all the steps or tasks that need to be completed in order to achieve the previously set goals. Drawing up an action plan is an essential part of the strategic planning process. To create an effective action plan you need to include the following elements:

- Detailed description of the goal to be achieved;
- Tasks / steps to be performed to achieve this goal;
- People who will be responsible for the process;
- When everything will happen in time;
- What resource will it take;
- And how progress will be measured.

Example of an Action plan

In order for your plan to be effective and sustainable over time, you need to analyze it often and adjust it if necessary. Given the ever-changing market, customer preferences and the environment in general, you need to keep up with them, and be ready to respond in a timely manner with the necessary adjustments and changes in the direction you are going towards. Modern marketing conditions suggest the need for experimentation. You need to carefully monitor the entire environment in which your marketing project takes place. In the era of digital marketing, which in itself is extremely dynamic and susceptible to various influences, you need to constantly follow

new trends and changes in the digital environment. Ads on social media, blogs and articles, SEO (Search Engine Optimization), product positioning, and the relatively new in Bulgaria the so-called. Influencer marketing is one of the main channels for advertising a company's products and services. The above group is extremely fast changing and needs a lot of attention from marketing teams and management.

- **Timeline**

What is a timeline? The timeline is a chronological order of predefined steps and events. In most cases, it is a graphical line with dates, events, or actions arranged on it. It is very important for project managers to have the skills to build a proper and both graphically and technically correct timeline. It shows which phases have already

Final goal: Closing the production cycle on the farm by equipping a workshop for processing the obtained milk and turning it into cheese / yellow cheese (Bulgarian Kashkaval) Budget - BGN 246,000. 09.04-20.05.2020.						
	Activity	Person in charge	Start	Finish	Funds in thousands	Desired outcome
1	Research and development of processing technology	Kalin	09.04.2020	09.05.2020	5	Developed and adapted technology for cheese / yellow cheese production
2	Researching for an offer for production facilities	Alexandra	31.04.2020	09.05.2020	-	Supply with equipment and machines at the best possible price
3	Purchase and installation of equipment	Stanimir	10.05.2020	20.05.2020	231	Equipment- Purchased and ready for operation
4	Commissioning, test period and start of production	Kalin	20.05.2020	31.05.2020	11	Final start of production work

passed, what is underway now and what needs to be done in the future.

The elements of the timeline depend mainly on the project itself. There are some standard elements that a timeline must contain.

1. The tasks to be performed;
2. Their dates;
3. Their duration (term);
4. The dependence between the individual tasks.

There are many different types of timelines. They are characterized by the different arrangement of the pillars (vertical or horizontal), and states (static or interactive).

According to the location of the poles, the timelines are divided into:

1. Gantt chart - Gantt timeline is the most popular and widespread type of timeline. It is characterized by a horizontal line that shows periods of time. All events and tasks are described on this line. This makes keeping track of current, future and past events extremely easy.

Gantt Chart

Task Name	Q1 2019			Q2 2019		Q3 2019
	Jan 19	Feb 19	Mar 19	Apr 19	Jun 19	Jul 19
Planning						
Research						
Design						
Implementation						
Follow up						

2. Chronological timeline - This is a type of timeline that is presented in chronological order from left to right. It is usually used to show the progress of a project.

3. Timeline with vertical lines - Usually this type reflects the time and a certain amount (e.g. money) spent during the period. Thus, if the project is based on financial gain or money raised, this timeline will show how much has been earned or raised over a period of time.

Depending on the condition, timelines are static and interactive. Static timelines are those that are drawn or printed on a solid carrier. Adding more information to them is complex, and can disrupt the overall appearance of the timeline - making it difficult to read and understand and reducing its effectiveness. Interactive timelines, on the other hand, are usually made in electronic format, using specially designed software tools, or using word processing and spreadsheet tools such as Microsoft Excel / Word, etc.

Often the most discussed issue in the creation of the roadmap for marketing communications is not related to the functionality of the strategy or its objectives, namely the graphic expression of the roadmap. In particular, the marketing team discusses whether the timeline should be included in the roadmap, how detailed should it be, and which audiences should be allowed to see these details related to all critical and less critical dates and deadlines.

Some team members may want to emphasize transparency by making the roadmap, along with its timelines, publicly available, while others prefer to avoid precise appointments.

In conclusion, it can be said that most entrepreneurs and managers should be well aware of the importance of the roadmap for marketing communications, which aims to provide a comprehensive view of the marketing strategy of the organization and how will it function and grow. For most organizations, attracting new customers and turning them into regular customers is essential to their success. The marketing communications roadmap facilitates this process. The specific goals of each marketing plan vary depending on the subject of activity of the organization. The marketing plan has four main objectives: Generating overall progress and securing greater market share, raising audience awareness of potential new brands of the company, focusing on products and services, and increasing direct sales.¹⁷¹⁸

6.1.2 Design

As already mentioned, the roadmap is a visual communication tool. It was created with the sole purpose of providing an opportunity to bring together all stakeholders, management and the entire team involved in the project. Presenting a roadmap that is difficult to read and incomprehensible to the target group roadmap will make the ideas, goals, and strategies to be presented extremely ineffective, difficult to understand, and therefore will undermine its purpose. Effective roadmap design has a great importance for its efficiency.

Sometimes a roadmap requires the process of collection of a huge number of ideas, descriptions, tasks, elements in one document. During this process, work must be done at low, micro level to ensure that the roadmap maker is sure that only the necessary elements are present. However, when creating a roadmap, keep in mind that there will be people who will see it for the first time, and this is often their first contact with your company. This means that attention must be paid to the design and how well is everything put together. Exactly how much information is contained in the roadmap? How many activities are you trying to collect in the given period? How long does this period actually last? Is attention paid to both the company's short-term and long-term plans? Here when the importance of the time period of the roadmap becomes clear. The roadmap is at its clearest state and the most effective when broken down into short, easy-to-digest sections, usually quarterly.

The description of the so-called Milestones and the addition of **key dates** allow you to add another layer of contextual information to the roadmap. "Important

¹⁷ <https://www.inc.com/comcast/your-marketing-plan-as-a-roadmap-to-customers.html>

¹⁸ <https://quinnovativemarketing.com/8-steps-to-create-a-marketing-roadmap/>

Events" are usually used to mark high-level achievements and moments that are of particular importance for the development of the strategy and the company itself. Key dates, on the other hand, belong to the internal goals and deadlines that must be met in order to achieve the "Important Events". Important events should stand out from other elements by marking them with more distinctive symbols and colors. From a design point of view, this phenomenon is called the "Color Hierarchy". When there are several different types of information in a road map, it is good to present it in different colors. This makes it easier to differentiate by the viewers. Especially if they are not well acquainted with the roadmap.

Important events should be used only for a specific purpose and it's best not to overdo it. Regarding their presence in the road map, they are of two types of important events:

Internal- which mark a significant event in the context of the road map, for example - the start of a marketing campaign, the opening of an updated website, the start and end of other campaigns and so on. These types of important events are rather and most often end results and the results of the road map activities. Visualizing these events emphasizes the effectiveness of a roadmap.

External ones- mark events that are not a direct result of the activities in the roadmap. However, they are not completely irrelevant in the context of the roadmap. They can be, for example, large exhibitions, conferences, fairs, etc. These events must be set visually different from the internal ones. Significant events are generally not defined for use in a single activity.

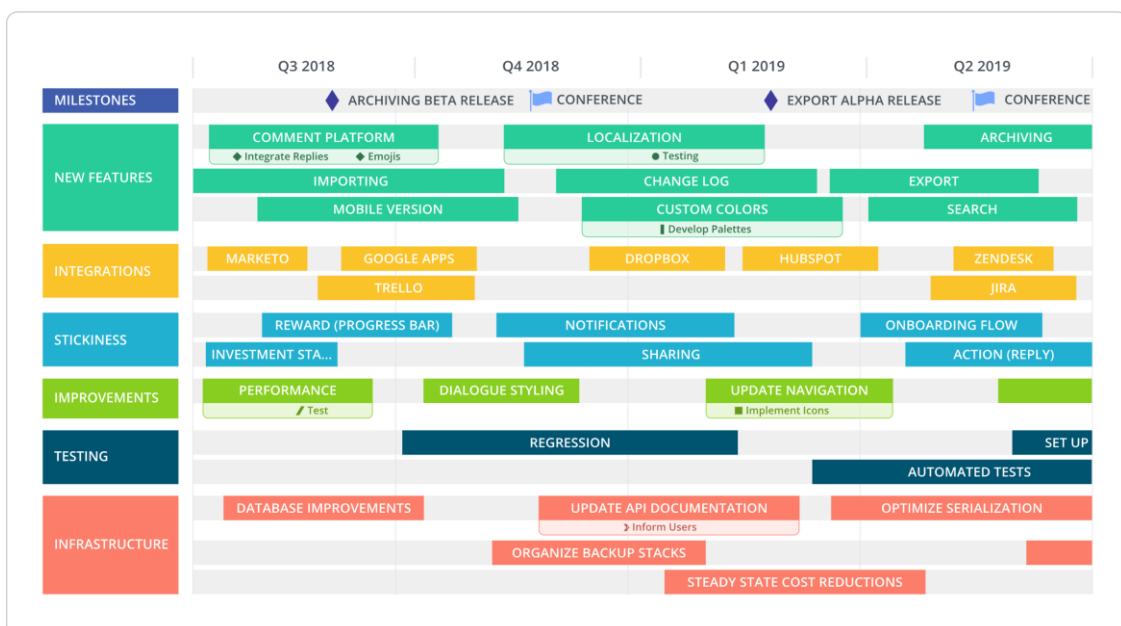


Illustration by: www.roadmunk.com, 2020

The key dates, on the other hand, are precisely determined for use within a particular activity. They are a part of the activities of the roadmap. They can be used to break down important events within the roadmap, such as the due date of a given result. In addition, they break down long elements of the roadmap to provide visibility on how progress is being reported. They also help create a union around the expected completion of each stage.

Create a grouped list of all activities in the road map. Roadmaps can essentially become quite complex and crowded with a variety of activities and tasks. It is most often an interactive, dynamic document, to which it is customary to supplement various things at all times. Lack of organization can throw off balance throughout the document and make it difficult to understand and monitor. Breaking down tasks into easy-to-follow groups prevents this. This list summarizes all activities in a format that is easy to view and track. It can be divided into:

- Activities by periods, month, year
- A list of tasks for each member of the team
- To be grouped by type of activity
- To be grouped by different stakeholders and their tasks, etc.



Illustration by Roadmunk, 2020

Use colors and icons. The roadmap contains colors that make it clearer and more purely visually attractive. The colors in a roadmap are also used to tell more about the activities on it. They have the opportunity to convey messages, to express connections, meanings and importance of the elements in it. The roadmap contains many activities that are interlinked, most of which are not clearly marked. Coloring these activities in several grouped colors makes their understanding easier and more

straightforward. Therefore, the use of different colors in road maps can be considered a good practice. The most common feature by which color activities are grouped is by status. Green is for the tasks with a “Completed” status, yellow stands for "in progress" and red for "late / delayed" status. Here's how using a simple tricolor palette would help greatly in sorting tasks and finding weaknesses on the map. Icons, on the other hand, can easily add information to the roadmap. The use of colors and icons is mandatory, especially for more complex and extensive road maps. In addition, these visual tools help to find information at a later stage when the need arises.

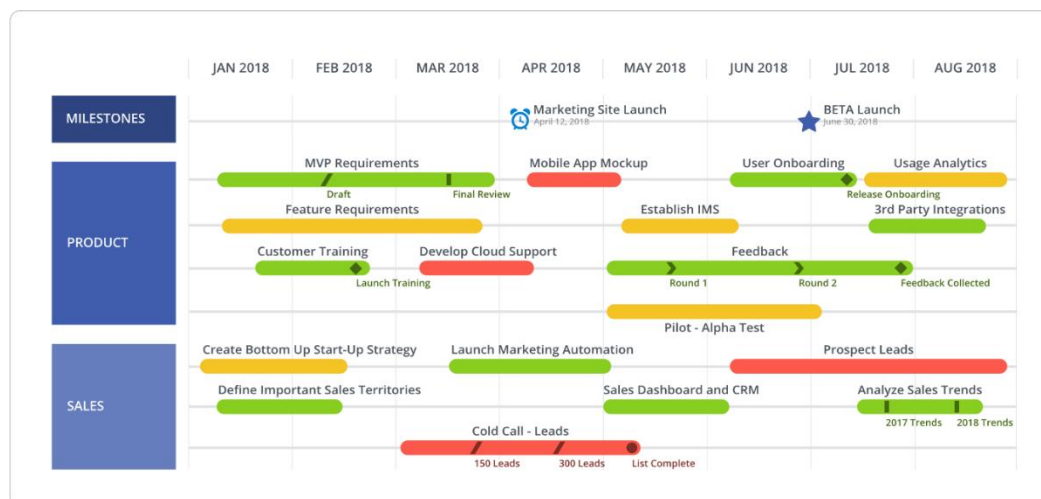


Illustration by Roadmunk, 2020

Use simple and clean labeling of the items. Economy of words is very important. The description and labeling of the various elements in the roadmap must be concise and, at the same time, sufficiently descriptive and clear. Thus, the proper and easy orientation of the readers, especially those who encounter the road map for the first time. An easy way to do this is to use abbreviations and acronyms. Footnotes, If necessary, can be placed at the bottom of the roadmap to describe what it means and explain it if necessary. However, this can easily turn from a useful tool into one that can unnecessarily burden people who are reading the map for the first time or are not familiar enough with the terminology. Abbreviations and acronyms should be used judiciously, as should all other elements of roadmaps.¹⁹

The font is also an important element of the roadmap. Using a large, easy-to-read font will make it easier to read and understand the document. The font should be taken into account if you plan to present the roadmap to a larger audience, using a projector or other type of large screen. Emphasize keywords and phrases by bolding, underlining, or italicizing them. People tend to skip when reading texts. Before they start

¹⁹ <https://roadmunk.com/guides/how-to-ace-your-roadmap-presentation/>

reading the text, they usually skip over it quickly. To combat this feature of the human mind, it is good to use these typographic accents when compiling the road map. A typographic accent refers to text that is bold, underlined, or Italianized, an accent that makes it stand out from the other text on the page. Many roadmaps use a typographic accent that emphasizes the most important phrase in each section. In this way, even people who quickly review the roadmap will come across the most important parts of it.

Implement parts of the company culture in the construction of the road map. Incorporating parts of the company's brand into the roadmap is a great way to add extra color to the roadmap while making it much more individual and original. This purely visual approach can help your team feel that they are working on something that matters to the company.

When designing a roadmap, **maintain a consistent theme and layout style**. At a first glance, a road map may seem very simple. To achieve this simplicity, however, the layout of the roadmap must maintain a uniform design and overall layout style. If this rule is not followed, then the whole roadmap would look chaotic and amateurish, which will lead to problems in the whole process from the presentation to the implementation.

Visualize the load that the execution of each step of the roadmap is going to cause. Visualization of the workload that will be caused by the implementation of the elements of the roadmap will be useful when it comes to assessing how to form working groups. Inevitably, some tasks will be more complex and demanding than others, suggesting that more people will be needed to complete them. Creating such a schedule in the roadmap will make it easier to organize working groups.

Things that should not be allowed when compiling a roadmap for marketing communications:

- The orientation of the road map **must not be allowed** to go off centre. It should be concentrated entirely and only around the strategic plan. All activities and tasks related to it must be at the center of the roadmap. In any case, you will need to consult the roadmap during the integration of this strategy, and the presence of activities and goals that are not related to it creates unnecessary static noise. Additionally, if you present the roadmap to the board or other stakeholders, centering all the goals and activities around the overall strategic plan will show the roadmap readers that the creator actually knows what he is doing, which in turn will improve the chances of success.

- It **must not be assumed** that when creating a roadmap for marketing communications, everything will go according to plan. Therefore, all final planned results should not be tied to a final date. When you put end dates in the roadmap,

there is a huge chance that they will not be met. If, on the other hand, the nature of the information described in the roadmap suggests setting dates, it is a good idea to set them so that, in unfavorable circumstances, they can be changed or completely removed to avoid to misunderstandings.

6.1.3 Implementation

Building a marketing communications roadmap is the first step in the whole implementation process. You have built a marketing plan, entered it in the roadmap, presented it to all stakeholders and teams from and outside the organization. What is the next step? Logically, the next step is the implementation of the plan. All actions and the implementation of the plan are entirely in the hands of the managers. The process of implementing the marketing plan begins with the orientation in the business environment. It is necessary to think about where the company comes from, from what position it started, what is happening with the competition, and how it can hinder or assist in the successful implementation of the business plan and last but not least, to clarify once again what is the final purpose of the company. One of the most important first steps is to delegate rights and assign tasks to all employees who will be involved in putting the plan into action.

In order to determine who should do what, all tasks should be distributed among the team members. This distribution points to who should all the progress and situation reports go to, ho is responsible for answering questions and solving problems, what is the deadline in which to complete their tasks, who to ask for feedback and so on. At the same time, it must be carefully assessed whether the company has the planned funds and resources - capital, human resources, communication infrastructure, storage space, if needed, vehicles. If something turns out to be missing, you need to determine what it will cost and how long it will take to find it. For example, if it turns out that there is no one from the

THE MARKETING PLANNING PROCESS



company, who can adequately perform a task, then hiring a new employee can, at best, take about a month and a half. All this must be considered before starting work on the implementation of the plan. It is important to link the planned marketing budget to sales and revenue forecasts before moving on to implementation, and if there are significant discrepancies between expectations and reality, consideration should be given to regulating the budget. This in turn would ultimately lead to a change in sales revenue in the coming periods. Costs must be constantly monitored throughout the implementation process. Tracking should cover the results in as short periods as possible in order to be able to adjust the marketing plan so that it is not a burden, but on the contrary - to help achieve the overall goal of the company. Otherwise, with reduced revenues at the end of the period, the company may be disproportionate to other marketing and advertising costs. Another important element in implementing the plan is to meet regularly with all parties involved to discuss progress, the problems they face, to clear up any concerns, issues, to talk about potential proposals, opportunities and, in general it synchronizes teamwork.

6.1.4 Evaluation, control, and monitoring

The evaluation, control and monitoring of the marketing plan guarantees the optimal utilization of your investment. If you do not have accurate information about the effectiveness of the marketing strategy, it may turn out that the investment you are making is meaningless. It is important that the entire implementation of the marketing plan - from start to finish - is closely monitored through the use of different types of tools. These tools can be helpful in finding insufficiently effective marketing measures that are included in the plan. These strategies must either be modified or eliminated altogether. By regularly monitoring the implementation of the marketing plan, you ensure that any investment in marketing that you make will be beneficial and justified.

Control is a key component for implementing the plan. It has the complex and responsible task of establishing whether the planned actions were implemented on time, with the required quality and whether they led to the expected results. In general, there are two types of control: operational (or ongoing)- related to day-to-day operations and strategic- verification of the implementation of long-term objectives, followed by, which is carried out after the relevant activities have already been performed. It aims to establish the compliance of the achieved results with the set goals. There is a third, less common type of control and it is the preliminary one. It takes place before the start of the activities. The aim is to detect potential errors in the plan in a timely manner and to prevent improper spending of capital. Depending on its type, control can be strategic, tactical and operational. In this case, the most important control is the strategic control. It aims to assess the extent to which the marketing plan has the right goals and reveals the problems in time so that they can be corrected

before they cause damage to the company. Strategic control is carried out in four directions:

- Control of environmental conditions- these are legal, political, social and demographic changes, inflation, interest rates, technology development and the emergence, change in consumer desires and more.

- Control of the implementation of the strategy. It aims to assess how well the strategy is being implemented and whether there is a need for change and adjustments or not.

- Strategic review. It consists in analyzing all events, influences outside and inside the company, which could in some way negatively affect the marketing strategy.

- Assessment of sudden and unexpected events. This is a variety of the above several types of control. It is aimed at creating activities to assess various events that are not foreseen and that require drastic and potentially destabilizing changes in the implemented strategy.

To monitor as effectively as possible, you need to choose the most appropriate tool for the task. It is a good idea to choose a tool that is appropriate for the strategy you are implementing. For web-based initiatives, a tool like Google Analytics would do a great job. There are many other web traffic monitoring tools available, paid and free. For other types of initiatives you can apply the coupon system. Customers can enter a randomly generated code in the form of a coupon against a token discount. By using a system for tracking and issuing coupons and vouchers, you will be able to monitor whether the product promotion strategy is working and whether adjustments are needed. Other web-based tools can be, for example, counters on the company's website, analytical tools of various social networks. They can provide extremely useful information on whether the strategy fully meets the set goals. In addition to pure quantitative coverage analysis, these tools also offer qualitative analysis such as demographic and psychographic analysis, which could also give us information on whether the targeting activities are successful. Due to the fact that monitoring can take too much time and effort, if done properly, it is a good idea to delegate this obligation to an individual team member to give it the attention it needs.

The consumers reaction is also not to be ignored. It should be tracked before, during and after the start of the marketing campaign. Since the ultimate goal of implementation is understandably aimed at increasing sales, it is necessary to monitor how each action affects consumers, as they are the most important factor in the success of a business. In many cases, if a marketing campaign aims to promote and inform the public about a product or service, the company cannot be informed accurately enough about the effect of that campaign. Therefore, it is a good idea to seek feedback of the consumers and take their opinion on whether the strategy works and whether they would change something. Customer feedback is often ignored,

despite the proven benefits. Sending a simple email or posting a survey on social media can give a lot of answers.

Finally, the importance of abandoning ineffective strategies must be emphasized once again. Many companies seem to be afraid of this, refusing to realize that abandoning a poorly functioning and ineffective marketing strategy is the most logical, rational and effective action to take. The implementation of a failed one-year marketing strategy, no matter how expensive or time-consuming it was to create, would lead to much worse results than abandoning it in its early stages and reinvesting in its modification, or the creation of a completely new one.

6.2 Communications roadmap

When your company has a new product or service that it wants to introduce to the market, or a new initiative is launched, you will in any case have to communicate the information about them to your target group. For this to happen effectively, you need to have a so-called communication plan. In order to create a roadmap for communications, there must be a plan already in place. The basic principles overlap with the principles of creating a marketing roadmap. The roadmap is a pure graphic expression of the communication plan and in elements and design does not differ much from that of marketing. However, there are some differences when it comes to creating a communication plan that will later become a roadmap. This plan is a tool that guides the company during the introduction of a new product, service or company campaign, helping it to stay on track and work on achieving its goal in a predetermined way. It is an essential tool that ensures that your organization will send a clear, specific message that will lead to measurable results, as well as help increase the effectiveness of overall methods of communicating with customers. Creating a communication plan can take too long if you have no guidance. Therefore, below we will consider several phases for creating a communication plan.

6.2.1 Identification of the target audiences

Step one: However, before we identify the target group, it is good to determine the target market you are targeting. To be successful, several questions need to be answered:

- What problem does this product or service solve;
- Who is most likely to have this problem;
- Are there different groups with different needs in this segment.

Once you have answered these questions, you will be able to resort to the classification of the target group. It can be done according to the following criteria:

- Businesses or individuals- B2B or B2C;
- Geographical location- at local, national or global level;

- Demographic distribution- age group, gender, income, education, etc.
- Psychographic distribution- emotional state, values, fears, etc.
- Generation
- Stage of life- pregnant women, retirees, families, students, young people, etc.
- Behavior- can be used for interests such as the need to rent agricultural machinery, or vice versa - delivery of gourmet food at home.

Once the target group is classified, the specific target groups of users are defined. It is usually based on common features that have already been characterized. Now it is the marketing goals that need to be defined. If you have set the above-mentioned Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), you can consider this step to be completed. They will help you focus on your marketing efforts and achieve your goals more easily. The second step is to create the so-called "consumer personas". These are imaginary users who are created based on your real customers. They describe people and their needs, habits, fears and objections. They can be created in many ways, but combining several of the following will allow you to get to know your potential customers. The criteria by which you can create your user personalities can be the following:

- Purchase history- you can track how often consumers order products from you, what products they order, how much they are willing to invest and so on.
- Data collection analysis- Using tools like Survey Monkey and Google Analytics, find out what your customers like, what attracts them, what stops them from buying something, how much time they spend wandering in their choices, how much time they spend on social media, which social networks do they use so you know where to focus with advertising, view data from your email lists, etc. All these actions will contribute to building a better idea of your customers.
- Consumer research has the potential to be an extremely powerful tool and should not be overlooked. Find out if your and the customer's idea for the desired product match, what they would like to buy, what they want to see.
- Analyze the competition- study how your competition works, find out what they offer, is it better or worse than what you offer, what are their channels of communication, how do they communicate, etc. Every single detail of their method of work can be useful to you and point you to things you can change. The first source of information you can use freely is the trade register.

Once you have an idea and you have completed the above steps, it's time for marketing. With all this information, you can create the right ads targeted to the right people and using the right tools. This will give you a significant advantage over the competition.

Example:

Target audience one: People, mostly young (26-35, accounting for about 92% of the total number of users), high-income, pursuing a healthy lifestyle. Clients with higher education, high computer literacy, strong activity in social networks are predominant. 95% Facebook users, 81% Instagram, 32% Twitter users.

Before you start building a buyer profile, analyze your target audience well. Here are some ways to identify your target audience – you can conduct a survey of your current customers to learn more about them. There is a large number of tools available to facilitate this process. Online survey platforms, such as Google Forms and Survey Monkey, are very easy-to-use tools through which you can conduct surveys. When conducting surveys, it is good to include various questions to clarify the demographic, sociological, and psychographic characteristics of the audience. However, if you have a website or location on Google Maps, you can use Google Analytics to get detailed information about who is entering your site and what action it takes, how much time they spend there, where do they come from, who redirects them, what device do they use and many other useful information. After you finish analyzing, it would be nice to summarize the results in a short paragraph or slide that describes the details around the target audience.

Step two: Analyze other potential recipients of information. The target group of users is not the only reception center to which information will flow. Various channels for potential communication can be, for example, news agencies, governmental and non-governmental organizations and others. Another very effective communication channel that has established itself in the last few years are social networks and video sharing platforms. For now, they still offer an alternative and new look at the communications of new products or services. Communicating to organizations like these can significantly increase public awareness of the product or service you offer.

6.2.2 Establishing of the information to be provided, identification of the target audiences and communication channels

Choosing the right channels to communicate your strategy to help you reach your target audience and build a strong relationship with them. Nowadays, there are a large number of communication channels and choosing the channels to target and concentrate on is more difficult than ever. Therefore, it is important to be guided by the analysis of the target group, which in this case is a critical factor for the success of this endeavor. Below we will describe the most important channels of communication.

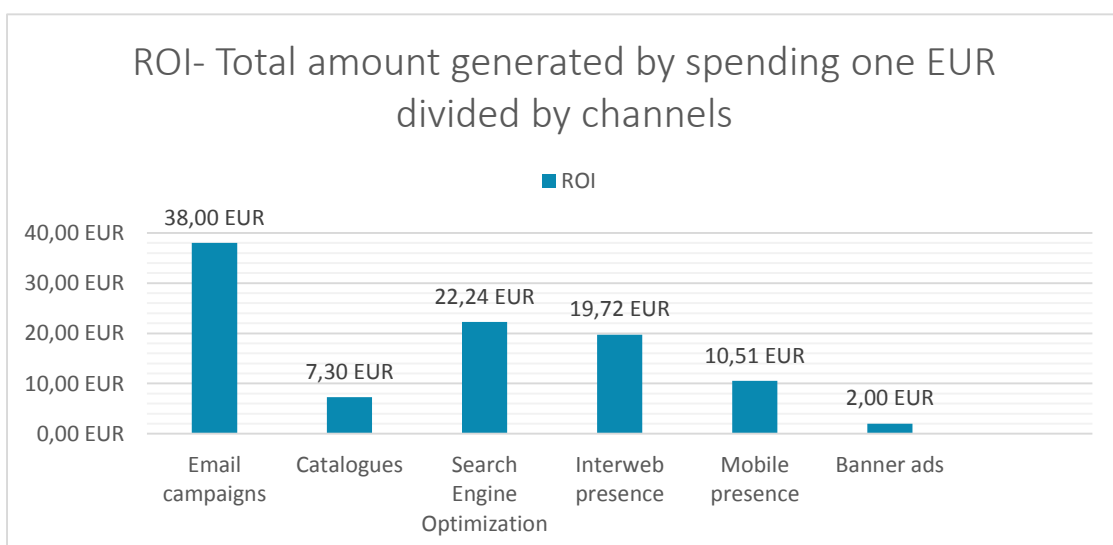
6.2.3 Channels for communication with your clients

1. Blog

Adding a blog to your company's website, or even if it is not attached to it according to Express Writers analysis could increase the rank of your website or the blog itself by nearly 440%. Blog posts are a great way to connect with users who are interested in a particular type of product. Through the blog you can share various information such as news about the company and its products, articles, guides and more. Creating a blog can be of several types. By integrating it into the company's website, or by using a separate tool and creating a blog separate from the site. The first method is easier, but takes away from the effectiveness of the blog. It consists in making it easy to find and at the same time differentiated as a blog. Simply put, a blog is essentially a separate information sharing platform from a website. If the blog is integrated into the company's website, it is good for it to be actively communicated on the platform as such. Otherwise, the blog can very easily be accepted as a news column, which it is not. If you have decided to create a blog that is separate from your website, or if you simply do not have a website, you can use a number of free tools to help you. Some of them are: Sumo, Sendinblue, Canva, Grammarly and others. The good thing about them is that they are extremely easy to use and most of them are free.

2. Marketing by e-mail or the so-called. Email marketing

An important piece of information that is good to know if you are unsure whether to start an email marketing campaign is that according to Imagination, these campaigns have a return on investment of about 3800%. For one euro spent for the campaign, 38 Euro are generated in the form of sales.²⁰



²⁰ ©2020 The Imagination Group Ltd

Some proven effective and applicable email types can be:

- Email news, which aim to keep subscribers up to date with the latest news from your company.
- Offers for sales, discounts, promotions, etc. Sending such emails tends to encourage recipients to make a purchase. Focusing on exclusivity and promotion can only increase their motivation to invest in your products and services.

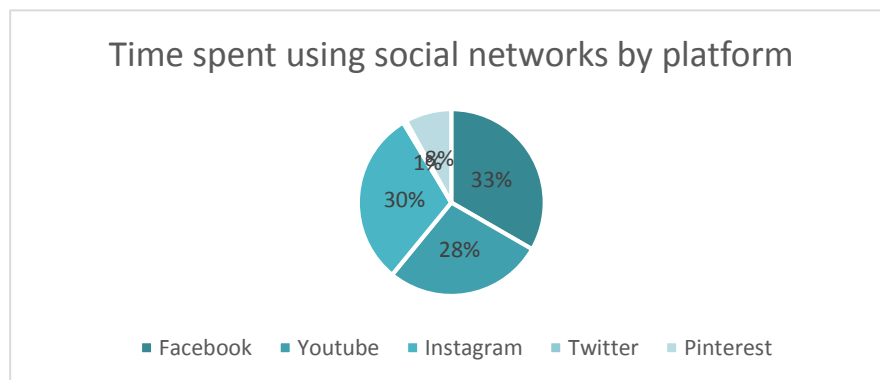
3. Social media

Social media marketing (SMM for short) is a form of internet marketing that involves creating and sharing content on social networks in order to achieve marketing and brand goals. Social media marketing includes activities such as posting photos, videos and other content aimed at influencing the target groups. It can be both organic and sponsored (paid). Paid marketing in these networks consists of paid or the so-called "Sponsored" content, which, unlike ordinary publications, is not aimed at the already established base of followers of the company, but at users who, according to the given criteria, meet the target group of the company, but who are not yet direct followers of the company page in the given network.

The first step in building the part of the communication strategy covering social networks is to clarify once again what your exact goals and expectations are from this, so-called "Social strategy". Some of the questions that should be answered in the social strategy are first of all what you hope to achieve through the marketing campaign in social networks, then you need to define your target group once again, which social network to concentrate on, and what message you would like to convey to the target group through this marketing campaign.

Second of all is to decide which social network is best suited for your company's marketing purposes. For example, a company focused on the production of organic food and cosmetics will benefit the most from its focus on social media, centered around sharing photos and videos such as Facebook and Instagram, first of all, because the products are aimed at end users, and the said targeted customers are the main users of these networks, and on the other hand, the fact that food and similar products can best be described visually, in the form of photos and videos. If, on the other hand, your company offers services and products aimed at companies, marketing efforts should be focused primarily on more professionally oriented social networks such as LinkedIn. There, the services can be described in more detail and in depth.

Today, the world's population spends an average of about 153 minutes a day using social media. South America and Africa are leading by about three hours a day, followed by North America and Asia with two hours and sixteen minutes a day. Europe, however, ranks last with an average of about an hour and fifteen minutes. This, however, does not detract from marketing this environment in any way. It should not be forgotten that these figures are growing on a yearly basis and these environments will become more and more favorable for advertising. The leading social network with the most time spent in it is Facebook, with about 58 minutes spent and 1.4 billion active users daily. In second place is the video sharing platform Youtube with about 48 minutes and 30 million active users per day. The third place is Instagram with 53 minutes and 500 million daily users. Twitter is with one minute and 100 million daily users and last is Pinterest with 14.2 minutes and 70 million users on a **monthly** basis. Of the professionally oriented social networks, LinkedIn has less than a minute spent per day, 17 minutes per month and 200 million monthly users.



Social media marketing can help achieve multiple marketing goals such as increasing traffic to the company's website, building a dialogue between customers and the company, raising customer awareness and overall brand and product popularity, creating a corporate identity, and a positive image of the brand itself and improving communication between the company and the target group.

In order for your social marketing campaign to be successful you need to consider a few useful tips.

- Plan well what content will you offer in social networks. As it has already become clear, you must have a pre-prepared social marketing plan that contains points related to the specifics and type of information that you will communicate to the target group. It should be interesting and useful. Information should be published regularly, at least twice a day. This information can be in the form of photos, videos, infographics, articles, manuals, surveys, useful facts and more.

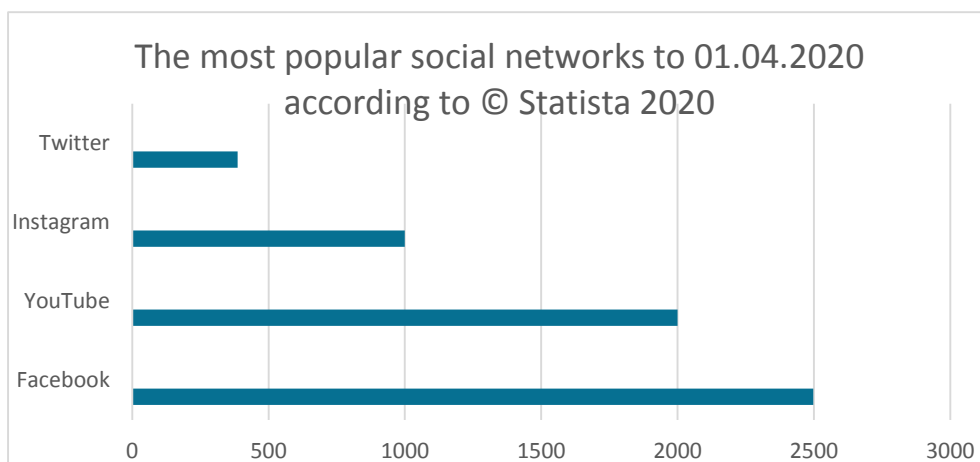
- Social networks are a great way to share content created by you and directly related to your products and services. However, they can also be used to share content that is not directly related to your company, but that your users may find useful. This

can only work in your favor, as it is appreciated by your followers. Providing useful information that comes from a source other than you can show you in a good light and create a sense of trust on their part.

- Watch what the competition is doing - in any case, it is important to keep an eye on what is happening to your competitors and how they deal with social networks. This way, you can learn from them and find potential opportunities for change and improvement in your strategy.

- Follow the analytical tools provided by social networks. You would not be able to measure the success of your strategy if you did not turn to the analysis tools provided by the social media platforms. They will provide you with information on how your social media pages perform. This information contains data such as the number of visitors, time spent on the page, a sample of how many people have opened any links that you may have provided to your website, store, or other web pages, content that may be of interest to them and much more. Another tool you can use is Google Analytics. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Analytics is an extremely powerful tool that can be used to track traffic and other useful information both to your website and to your social media accounts.

3.1. How to chose the right social network to concentrate onto?



1. Facebook

Facebook is a social network, well known to over 90% of the world's population. It is an informal, easy-to-use sharing platform. However, its nature implies an active marketing strategy. Posts should be regular, and contact with users should be active and continuous. This is required because people spend more and more time on Facebook, and in order for a marketing strategy to have a lasting effect, it must be designed to have continuous activity on behalf of the company. Posts, photos, videos, surveys, etc. must be published daily. Otherwise, there is a possibility that the

competition will overshadow you and all efforts will be ineffective and subsequently put in vain.

2. Youtube

Youtube is the most famous and popular video sharing platform in the world. It can also be an extremely powerful and effective marketing and advertising tool. Here are some interesting facts in this regard:

- 76% of business people who regularly watch video content on YouTube say that they form their attitudes based on the opinion of influencers from the platform;
- 65% of the audiences of a video form their attitude towards a brand based on a video from an influencer who followed on YouTube;
- 85% of all YouTube subscribers review new uploads within 2 days.

The platform reports nearly 3.25 billion hours of views on average per month, due to both the quality user experience and the advertising opportunities through the Google AdWords platform, with which YouTube wins the sympathy of advertisers as well. Youtube and its integration with Google AdWords allow you to target your ad to a specific audience, by targeting by demographics (age, gender, social status, location, etc.) or interests (to specific services or products). With the keyword setting option, you can improve your video's ranking in search results. With retargeting lists, you can re-irradiate an audience, such as people who have visited your site in the past 30 days or who have watched a particular video or subscribed to your channel.²¹

3. Instagram

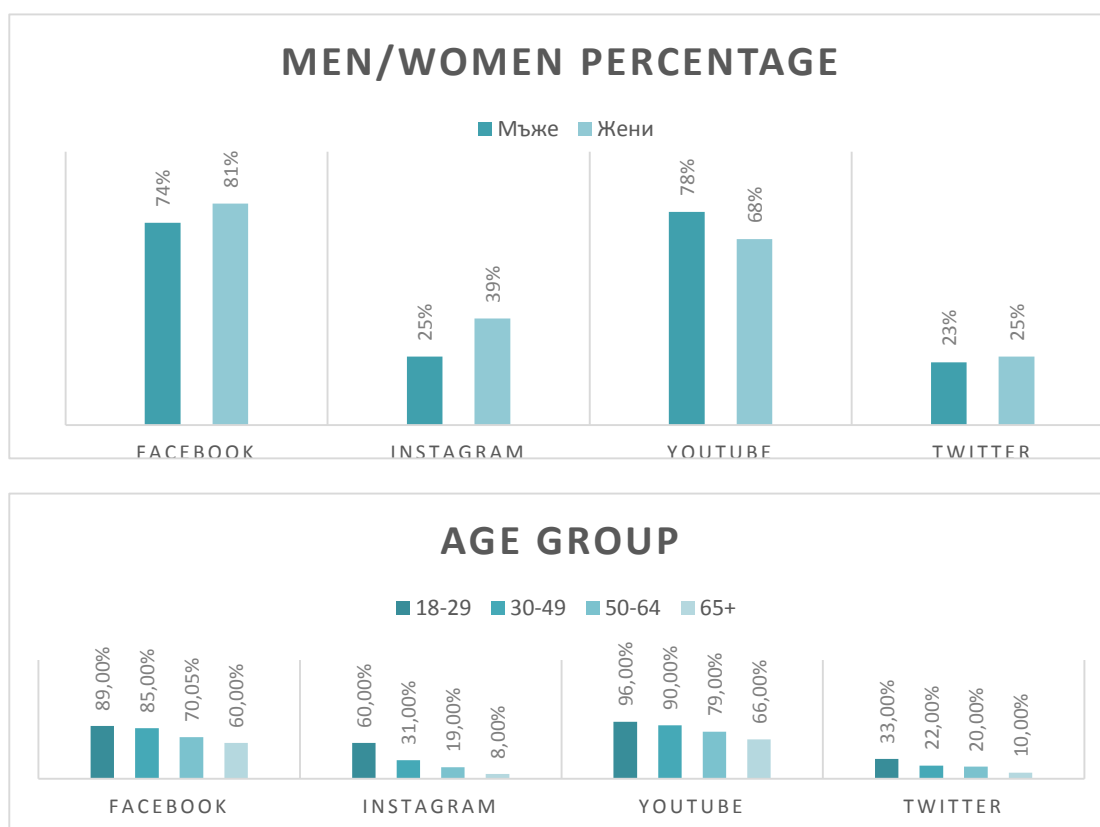
Instagram is slowly but surely catching up with Facebook in popularity. The platform has over 800 million registered users, of which 500 million use it proactively, sharing more than 100 million images every day. This means that the time they spend in the application on a daily basis has increased significantly. A survey conducted by SimilarWeb in 2018. shows that, on average, each user spends about 53 minutes a day on Instagram. This makes the platform extremely favorable for advertising. The nature and design of the platform is made so that the ads have a very high viewing rate. Therefore, even if you decide to invest only in Instagram, you will be able to achieve good results. Many experts place Instagram advertising as times more effective than any other type of advertising. According to the latest data, Instagram ads have the highest return on investment (ROI) of all other social networks.

²¹ <https://next-consult.com/bg/post/youtube-marketing>

4. Twitter

According to Wikipedia, Twitter is a social network taking a form of a micro-blog service that allows users to send and read status messages known as tweets. Tweets are text-based messages of up to 140 characters, stored on the author's profile page and sent to other users (followers) who have subscribed to them. The sender can restrict access to their status messages to a circle of friends or allow open access to them.²² Twitter is not a widely used platform in Bulgaria for a number of reasons. The first and main reason is that the platform is entirely in English, as is the case with the majority of users, the posts have a limit of 140 characters and there is no emphasis on sharing photos and videos. The network itself is designed to allow users to share short snippets of information or to share an opinion. All these facts make Twitter inaccessible and incomprehensible to a large part of the Bulgarian population. Twitter users in Bulgaria are most often highly educated, young people, most often businessmen, influencers, IT employees. This means that twitter has the potential for B2B (business to business) marketing, but in this case it is not relevant enough for the agricultural field, which is why we will not analyze it as a potential communication channel.²³

Short demographic analysis of the main user of each of the abovementioned social networks:



²² <https://bg.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twitter>

²³ <https://coschedule.com/blog/communications-plan-template/>

Internal communication channels 2425

Many companies neglect the importance of effective internal communication in communicating with their target groups. It can increase productivity by keeping all members of the organization informed about everything they need. Internal communication, divided into appropriate channels, helps to allocate roles and tasks in the team, to set goals in general, to set deadlines, to disclose important information and so on. Through the internal flow of information, the members and employees of the company are informed about the process and nature of work, company rules and procedures, company culture and ethics, their rights and obligations, their social privileges and much more. Communication can help motivate, build trust, create a shared identity and strengthen a sense of responsibility. Internal communication enables employees to share opinions and suggestions, to share problems and achievements. Through this communication, employees can understand what the organization they work for is, what its mission, vision and values are. All this will improve the tone and condition of the whole organization, helping it to achieve its goals.²⁶²⁷

Internal communication channels

Internal written communication channels

- Emails
- Memos
- Instant messaging platforms

Oral communication channels

- Face to face meetings
- Phone communication
- Video conferences

²⁴ <https://learn.g2.com/communication-channels>

²⁵ <https://coschedule.com/blog/communications-plan-template/>

²⁶ <https://www.dotbg.bg/article/6431296>

²⁷ <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/wm-principlesofmanagement/chapter/channels-of-business-communication/>

Written communication channels:

Written communications include emails, emails, notes, letters, documents, reports, newsletters, spreadsheets, and more. They are among the less important business communications. In written communications, the transmitter must provide sufficient context for the text to be easily interpreted. The recipient should be asked to ask for an explanation if necessary. The sender of the email cannot take it for granted. Most people receive too much email and sort and filter it quickly, which can sometimes be wrong. Written messages are effective when transmitting large-scale messages. People are limited in the amount of data they can absorb at one time, so the main advantage of written information is namely that it can be studied over time. Reports can include supporting data and detailed explanations when it is important to convince the recipient of something. Written communications can be carefully crafted to convey exactly what the sender wants to say. Formal business communications, such as letters of employment offers, contracts and budgets, proposals and quotations, should always be made in written form.

1. Email messages:

Email messages can cover a very wide range of tasks. These can range from messages about an upcoming meeting, to file sharing and reaching someone who is usually difficult to find on the phone for a number of reasons. The range of message styles just as wide and this fact must be taken into account. Sending an email to a colleague with whom you have regular correspondence consisting of several emails a day can be short, informal and informative. On the other hand, if you need to pass information to your manager or group manager, the style of speech and structuring of the email is receive more time and attention from the sender. Emails are a convenient way to communicate, but they need to be given the attention they need. When used as a communication channel, consideration should be given to whether the topic can be discussed online or whether it will be more productive to discuss it face to face. Some important decisions need to be discussed using different methods of communication - mostly verbal.

2. Written reminders:

Written reminders or so-called Memos (from Memorandum) are one of the most widely used means of communication in the corporate environment. Its main purpose is to serve as a reminder or to give certain instructions for something. Reminders are not aimed at someone individually, but rather at a larger number of people. They are a kind of mass aimed internal communication. A reminder can be written in the following cases:

- As a reminder
- To highlight an event

- To remind of an event
- To report some significant event for the organization
- To transmit information or instructions

Reminders have been used in organizations for more than a century. There is certainly a reason for this. The reasons for this are that they can be an extremely effective way of mass communication, which at the same time is not associated with high costs. Another reason is that they are simple to compile and understand. They are accurate and specific and easily reach a large number of people. They are also easy to go back to, which makes them a good option if there is a dispute over whether something has been communicated or not.

3. Instant messaging in chat platforms:

The use of instant messaging platforms is another option for informal internal communication. These messages are usually specific and focused on a topic. They do not include the formalities of email communication. Using them, colleagues can create groups (usually by departments and teams) in which groups can quickly and easily share files and information. Important publications or the so-called posts can be easily pinned to be easily visible at any time. These platforms also allow the free use of emojis and animated images, which contribute to informality and emphasize freedom of communication. Undoubtedly the most important advantage of this type of communication is that, if necessary, the information published on the platform can be easily accessed if further reference is needed.

Oral communication channels:

Oral communication channels are a highly effective way to achieve dialogue. When feedback is needed, questions and explanations are likely to arise, the most effective method of communication is invariably oral communication. Oral communication channels are based on speaking. They are the richest mediums and include face-to-face meetings, personal presentations, conferences, group presentations, telephone communication, video meetings, conferences, speeches and lectures. These channels have the ability to deliver low distortion messages because body language and voice intonation also have an impact. They allow immediate feedback from the receivers of the communication. They are also the channels that require the most effort on the part of the transmitter, especially when it comes to a conversation involving a large number of data receivers. Oral channels are commonly used in organizations when the message is likely to create anxiety, confusion, or an emotional response in the audience. For example, a senior manager has to deal with rumors of layoffs or dismissals. This allows the recipient (audience) to receive immediate explanations and clarifications.

1. Face to face meetings

Meetings between several members of the organization, regardless of their position, are an excellent way to communicate more sensitive topics, which should initially be discussed by two or more people. In discussing such issues, achieving dialogue is of paramount importance. Personal encounters allow the potential of human communication to be unleashed, ranging from voice intonation to non-verbal means such as body language and so on. These signs and features are most effective when communication is done face to face. Therefore, when combining serious and sensitive issues, it is best to meet face to face.

2. Communication by phone

Telephone communication between colleagues in an organization is also an effective method of internal communication. While in face-to-face meetings, non-verbal cues are easily recognizable, in a telephone conversation they are absent. The intonation and style of speech, however, are clearly visible in a telephone conversation. An effective phone call can last from seconds to tens of minutes.

3. Video connection

Thanks to the Internet and communication technologies, people no longer have to be physically together to experience the effects of personal contact. Video conferencing services allow many users to attend a meeting. Topics discussed during video calls may be the same as those discussed in person. It simply gives users the opportunity to be together even if they are not physically in one place.

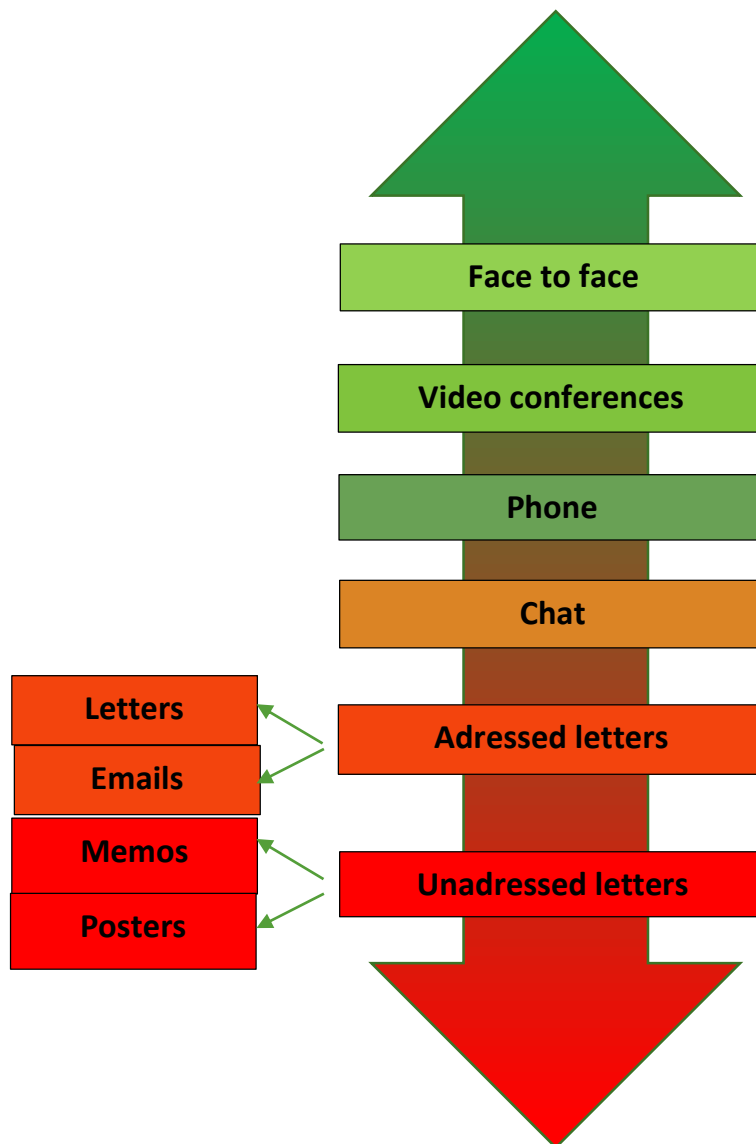
Oral communication channels provide the members of an organization with the opportunity for personal contact, the benefits of which are lacking in written messages. Using technology can be convenient, cheap and fast, but for now, nothing can replace personal contact.

Which channel is preferable?

Simply put, the best channel is the one that most effectively delivers the message so that it is understood as intended by the sender. More serious messages require a rich medium (Oral communication); Simple, routine messages don't need such rich media. If you want to inform your department about something as simple as an informal meeting to congratulate yourself on achieving a goal - sending a simple email is the best idea. Email is one of the weak mediums, but it works very well when the content of the message is neither complicated nor too engaging. On the other hand, a phone call is the more appropriate channel for an excuse to cancel, for example, a lunch appointment. This way, the host can hear the sincerity in your voice and may express his disappointment or offer to reschedule the meeting for another date.

A good rule of thumb is that the more emotional the context of the message, the richer the medium should be. Even face-to-face business meetings can be tracked and transcribed in writing to ensure that both parties are on the same page. If the meeting leads to an assignment or agreement, the written transcription will be a useful document for future reference.

The following graph illustrates the different types of communication and how effective they are:



Presentation of the pros and cons of each type of communication:

Channel	Pros	Cons
Oral communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The transmitter has the ability to build a rapport more easily and efficiently • The decision-making process is accelerated due to the possibility of instant feedback • Can be used to transmit sensitive and confidential information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The spontaneous nature of oral communication can lead to misunderstandings • There is no written nature and you have nothing to turn to if you need a reference
Written communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The message can be used as a reference if needed • Can be viewed repeatedly • Can be forwarded • Can be used for formal and informal purposes • Electronic written communication can take place in real time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is static • The communicator does not receive immediate feedback • It is not possible to determine whether the message was received successfully • There is no guarantee that the receiver has understood the message

6.2.4 Creating and allocating a budget for marketing communications

The marketing and communication budget forms all the costs that your company will make during its marketing campaign. The budget is a critical element of any business plan and as such it will guide you through all the steps of the marketing strategy. It is very important that it is considered and judged carefully. Your marketing budget as well as your ROI. Your marketing budget should describe how much, where and how will you invest in terms of the marketing activities you will perform. If you do not budget the funds that will be invested in marketing, it is very easy to lose track of the activities in which you have invested. Also, in the absence of a properly established budget, it will impossible to analyze their effectiveness in the form of ROI. If you own a large company, the lack of a budget for marketing and communications can harm both the company and the employees, as any loss for the company is transferred to all

parts of it. These activities must follow a budget, otherwise they will not only be ineffective, but may have a negative impact on the company. A well-established marketing budget, however, has the potential to help you with the process of planning, implementing, and subsequently monitoring and measuring results.

Before you start planning and budgeting your marketing and communications activities, it's a good idea to learn in detail about how industry and market research is done, how competition is analyzed (which we already covered), how marketing is audited, and how records the performance of marketing activities.

Analyze and estimate what your income is and how much to set aside for marketing.

Analyzing your revenue is the first step to creating a well-planned marketing budget. You need to consider how much capital you have to invest in marketing activities. You can calculate this amount by determining what the total income is and what the amount of working capital is. Overheads may be included, but they should be limited to rental costs, material and machinery costs and wage costs. Every company is different in itself. Once all expenses are included in the bills, you can resort to determining your budget for marketing activities. The definition itself could be quite complicated. If you don't estimate your budget well, you can spend either too little or too much. The first will lead to unsatisfactory performance of marketing activities and a large balance of available funds, from which there is no practical benefit. Implementing an effective marketing plan is of great importance to the success of your business, therefore, proper budgeting is critical. According to many marketing communications experts, a marketing investment should be within about ten to fifteen percent of your company's total turnover. These numbers, however, refer to companies already established in the market. If you are just starting out or have not carried out activities related to marketing and promoting your business or products, it is good that these figures are higher. In these cases, it is good to invest significantly more of your turnover in marketing activities, as this will give a better start to your company, and this is important.

To be effective, your marketing budget must cover a large number of variables, especially those that directly affect your customers. Other costs that the budget should cover are, for example, the resources needed to develop and design strategies and their accompanying roadmaps, the man-hours required for this, and last but not least the prices of advertising media such as banners on websites, email marketing and so on. Your marketing strategy will be the main expense in your marketing budget. When building this budget, you will need to think carefully about every aspect of where and how exactly you want to invest. The guidelines depend directly on the type of business you are developing and in which sector you are located. For example, if you work in online commerce, much of your budget will be focused on paid advertising, targeted

publications, email and direct marketing, and online presence in general. If, on the other hand, you work in the sector of production of niche goods and services, the more organic marketing approach will take the place of active online promotion. Depending on the circumstances, you can also hire a marketing agency and transfer the bulk of your budget to it so that it can carry out all the activities. The construction of a comprehensive, holistic marketing campaign that will include all the points indicated in the marketing strategy will be in their hands. In essence, the marketing budget must determine how best and most effectively to implement your marketing communications strategy. Through budgeting, you can forecast all potential future expenses so that you can set aside funds to cover them without destabilizing your financial situation. Otherwise, if you do not create such a plan, as we have already written, you will be wandering unnecessarily, spending money indiscriminately and unintentionally.

Budgeting marketing communications is part of the broader process of marketing planning. Your marketing strategy will determine how you will achieve your marketing goals. The marketing communications strategy describes how you will deliver your key messages to your target audience. The purpose of this budget is to achieve the most efficient use of communication and marketing funds, which in turn will indirectly lead to a high return on investment.

The budget covers the direct and indirect costs of communication programs under one denominator. The information budget combines activities such as writing materials, design, printing and distribution, and more. The budget for events will include various costs related to its implementation - rental of exhibition space, design and creation of a stand and other related elements, entertainment costs, accommodation and transport of guests, catering, publicity of the event as additional costs for staff who will attend the event.

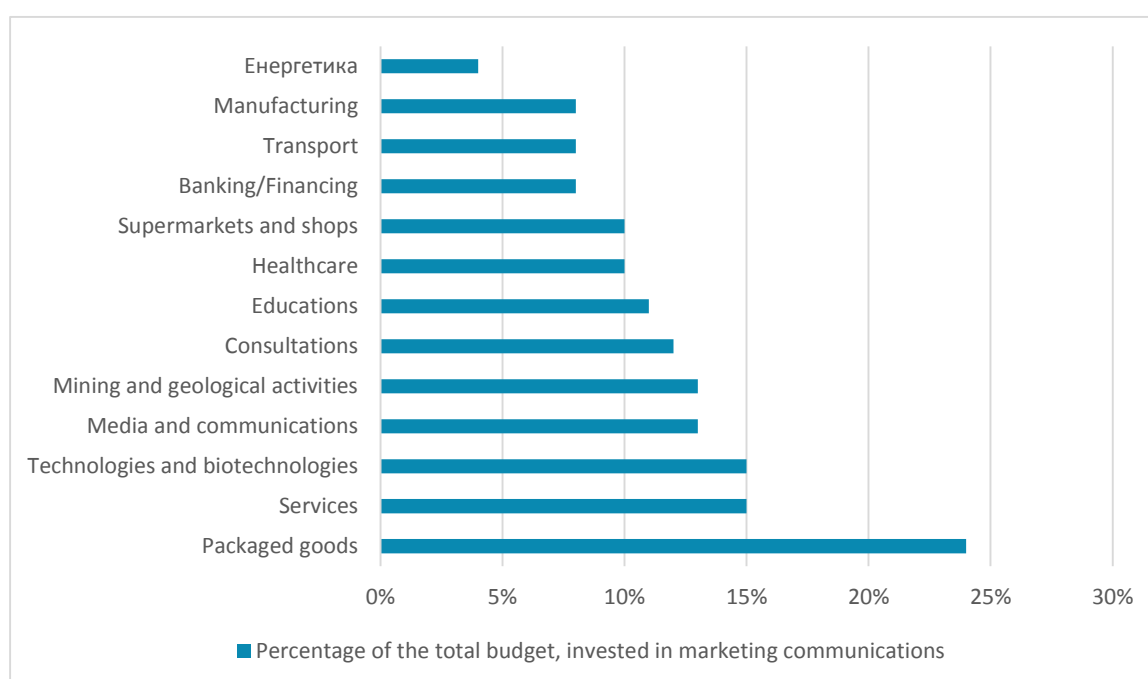
Budgeting can identify potential places where adjustments can be made to optimize marketing communications costs. Integrated marketing communications use a continuous flow of messages and visual means to achieve your goals. If you decide to outsource this task, you can reduce the cost of administrative activities and invest the money saved in more activities. Budgets allow you to track planned expenses against actual expenses. To manage your budget effectively, make sure your suppliers invoice regularly and keep you informed of any cost increases. To achieve your budget goals, you may need to request pro-forma invoices for long-term projects. As the budget year draws to a close, you must ensure that all invoices for this year's work are submitted and approved, even if the work has not been completed. Communication priorities may change in the next budget year and you may not have the means to implement critical projects. The marketing communications budget can also be used to measure the effect of implementing a marketing communications strategy. It will allow you to use

methods such as measuring changes in brand perception, number of sales, consumer interest in direct marketing, increasing the number of visitors to the website and social media pages, etc. These indicators help compare the effectiveness of the approach taken by the company.²⁸

What can the different methods for creating a marketing communications budget be?

Companies can invest different amounts in their marketing campaigns. They can vary according to the industry and their level. The implementation of a successful marketing communications strategy in a packaged food company can contribute to 20-30% of sales, while in a company offering software services this figure is rather around 10-15%. Packaged consumer companies spend the largest percentage of their total marketing budget, followed by consumer services, technology software/biotechnology, communications/media and mining/ construction. The companies that spend the smallest part of their marketing budget are those that work in the transport and energy sectors.

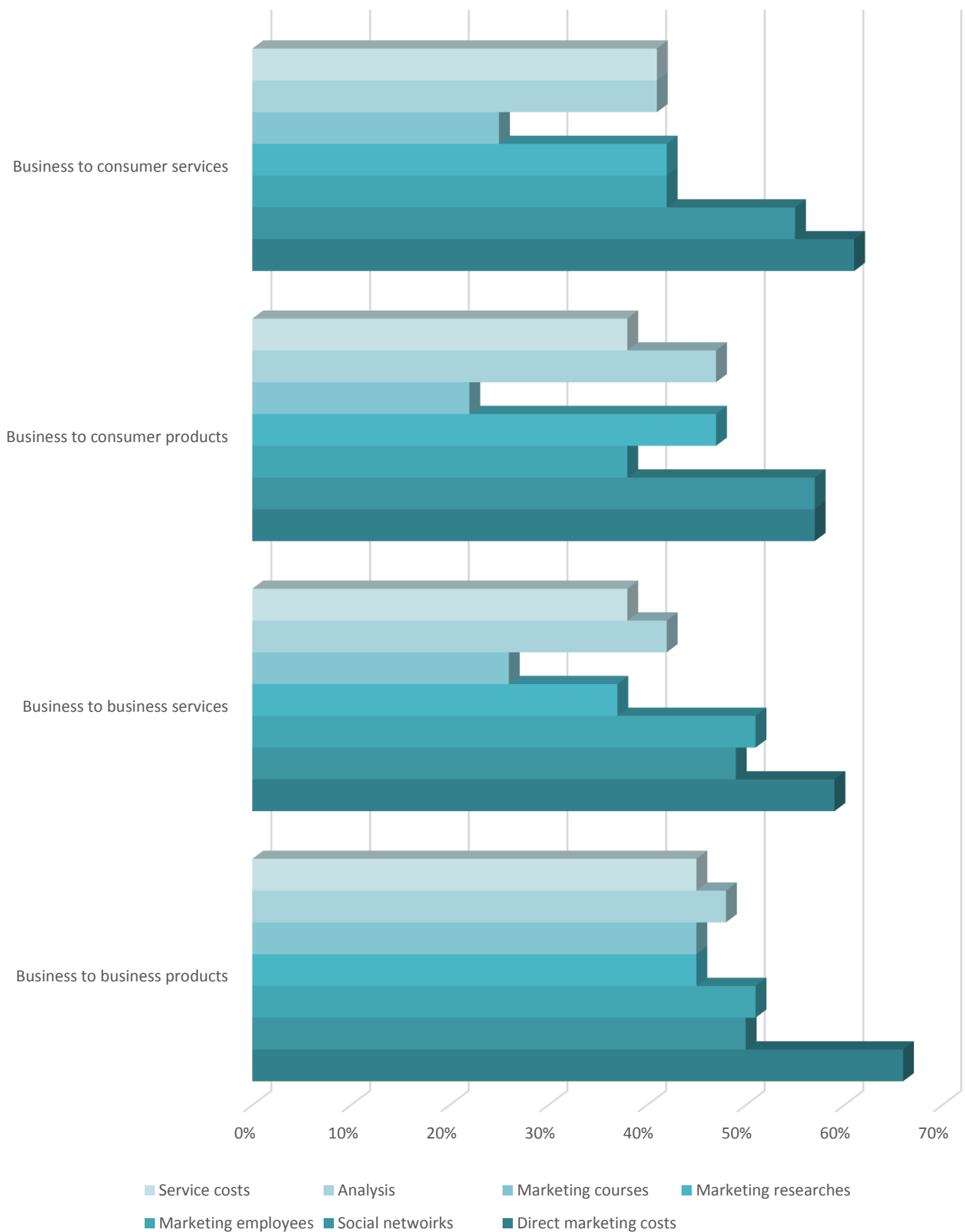
Marketing budget by industry:



Most of the activities envisaged in the marketing budget, as already mentioned, differ from company to company. A good example of this is that about 50% of companies actually allocate the funds that marketing employees need to receive. Other companies integrate this cost into general or administrative costs. In the following graph we will show what marketing budgets include depending on the type of company.

²⁸ <https://www.relativemarketing.co.uk/blog/importance-of-marketing-budget/>

Activities most often funded in the implementation of marketing communication strategies:



The choice of marketing strategy and organizational design moves the planning process to the preparation of the actual plan and its accompanying forecast and sales budget. The preparation of the plan includes several activities, such as choosing a cycle and frequency of planning, determining the nature and scope of the annual plan, choosing a format for the plan, forecasting revenues and estimating costs. Globally, marketers spend 8.9% of their budgets on digital visual ads and 5.3% on sponsored social media posts. The optimal marketing budget is one in which marginal or gradual sales increases are equal to marginal costs for the combination of marketing components. This concept is difficult to apply because factors other than promotions also affect sales. Isolating the effects of the marketing mix can be a very complex task that requires in-depth situational analysis. Therefore, more operational budgeting techniques are used. The methods used in practice to determine the budget include:

- "Affordable" method;
- Percentage of sales method;
- Competitive parity model;
- Method of goals and objectives

1. "Affordable" method:

Many companies determine their marketing budget based on what they think they can afford. This budgeting method is very simple to implement as it does not include the part with calculating sales percentages, analyzing competition and goal setting. In this method, the head of the marketing department requires an amount set aside by the finance department and then begins to plan how to spend it. Another option that applies is the one in which the person in charge of the marketing process negotiates that amount.

This method of determining the budget does not take into account the role of marketing as an investment and its direct impact on sales volume. This leads to inaccurate and uncertain annual marketing budgets, which make long-term market planning difficult.

2. Percentage of sales:

This method calculates the budget as a percentage of sales and is therefore not fixed. The main problem with this method is that it does not take into account the relationship between marketing efforts and results. This can lead to small marketing investments when sales are low, and to large investments when sales are high. However, this is not very effective. It is precisely in cases where sales are declining and people seem to be losing interest in products or services that investment in marketing needs to be rethought and a way to be found to improve the situation. This method

offers the best approach only as a guide to how much and where to spend. In addition to using the percentage of sales method to establish their overall budget, many marketing managers also retain up to 10% of this amount as a reserve to deal with unexpected marketing events and various new, unforeseen goals of opportunity in their marketing plans.

3. Competitive parity method:

This method of budgeting is based on actions taken by competition. Marketing costs are driven by how much competitors spend. The main disadvantage of this method is that differences in marketing strategies between companies may require different marketing budgets. For example, BASF uses an intensive distribution strategy, while BAYER targets customers by distributing through selected agriculturally oriented and department stores. Comparing the marketing strategies of these two companies does not make much sense, as their marketing goals and positioning strategies are different. This can be said for any industry. According to a Cision report, global content marketing revenues exceed 273 billion euros by the end of 2019. Many midsize businesses closely monitor their competitors' marketing activities and combine this information with any industry standard data from trade associations or accounting sources to arrive at the final version of the marketing communications budget that best suits their companies. In some market sectors, which are stable and well distributed, the major players adjust their budgets to each other to prevent shocks or the aggressive entry of a new player. In general, setting a budget relative to that of the competition implies that your competitors know better what the marketing budget should be. This is a passive and devoid of active position method, but for many companies it is quite enough.

4. Budgeting based on the set goals and activities:

Using this method, the marketing budget is formed according to the goals that are formulated and the planned marketing activities to achieve them. This method requires a high level of expertise because it is not easy to calculate what budget will be needed to achieve a certain goal, for example a 10% increase in sales. It consists of three stages: setting communication goals, defining specific strategies and tasks to achieve the goals, estimating the costs of performing the tasks, and the calculation which determines the budget. The method of goals and objectives calls on marketers to develop their marketing budgets by defining their specific goals, defining the tasks that must be performed to achieve these goals, and estimating the costs of performing these tasks. This is the most widely used approach to marketing budgeting. Management defines communication goals to determine the tasks needed to achieve the set goals and estimates what costs will be required for all this. This method best reflects the company's experience and know-how, and can best reflect the company's creativity in defining and conducting marketing activities.

5. Based on history – following last year's budget:

This method requires a very good assessment of the return on marketing activities from the previous period, and highlighting the successful activities. By testing your marketing activities, you will determine which ones are successful and which ones are not. You should emphasize those activities that have proven to work, as well as new ones that would contribute to your further development. Marketers who test their marketing activities perform better than their counterparts. According to an international study, testing marketing activities achieves a 68% higher return compared to activities that have not been tested. A variety of this method is the adjustment of last year's budget to the growth of inflation.

6.2.5 Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are activities that serve to ensure that the implementation of campaigns runs smoothly and as effectively as possible, while also enabling potential problems and opportunities for correction to be identified. Both are essential elements of effective marketing communication management pitfalls. They assess the progress of the campaign, as well as the factors that determine this progress.

Monitoring is a process of observing the implementation of the campaign, the progress towards the goals of the campaign, external factors related to the campaign, as well as previously unknown opportunities and risks. Evaluation combines monitoring data as well as findings to assess the effectiveness or likely effectiveness of a campaign and its various elements. While monitoring is an ongoing process that accompanies all campaign activities, evaluations are more limited in time and specific interventions are usually carried out at the end or at certain times (e.g. in the middle of the period) during the campaigns. When and how monitoring activities and evaluations are carried out must be decided at the planning stage of the campaign. Ideally, campaigns and analysts and those responsible for monitoring the implementation of the marketing communications strategy should work together when planning monitoring activities. A balance must be sought between what is required to make a rigorous analysis and what the organization actually needs. Even small campaigns with limited resources can apply monitoring and evaluation tools that can increase its effectiveness. In addition to providing vital information on issues that determine the success or failure of the campaign, monitoring and evaluation can enhance communication between campaign stakeholders.

Main stages of the monitoring process in the project implementation process:²⁹

Project case	Elements/Documents	Monitoring
Programming	Based on operational documents	Selection of indicators for monitoring in the operational programs
Identification	Preliminary study to ensure that all problems are identified and alternative solutions are addressed.	Development of indicators to serve in the subsequent development of the project
Development	Standard form (project proposal). Accompanying documents.	Preparation of measures and organization for project monitoring. Selection of indicators for project monitoring - logical framework. Activity plan and resource plan.
Midterm Evaluation	Acceptability, priority, compatibility, applicability, economic and financial evaluation.	Availability and compliance of indicators for products, results and impact
Implementation	Tender procedures and documents for selection of contractors, execution contracts, physical performance, payments.	Start of monitoring. Financial statements and interim progress reports. Monthly meetings with contractors. Periodic meetings with the governing bodies. Visits and control of contractors.
Final evaluation	Assessment of the degree of achievement of the set goals and the way of spending the funds.	Final report. Monitoring of achieved final technical and economic parameters.

Monitoring can also be defined as a continuous function using systematic data collection on pre-defined indicators, indicators which should provide management and

²⁹ Monitoring, control and evaluation of the implementation of infrastructure projects in the public sector, University of national and world economy (UNWE), Tatyana Daskalova PhD. Sofia, October 2015

key stakeholders with indications of the degree of progress and the extent to which the objectives have been achieved. That way, the progress, activities-part of the project, and therefore their overall impact on the organization are being actively monitored.

The evaluation, on the other hand, can be defined as the process of determining the value or significance of an activity in order to assess the extent to which the objectives requiring that activity or whether the activity itself and its implementation can justify the resources invested in it, like whether the result will be sufficiently sustainable over time and whether it is generally worth investing financial and human resources in it.

The two activities can be considered synergistic. The information obtained from the monitoring alone is not sufficient to make an adequate assessment. While the information gathered from monitoring activities can be used for current purposes related to the management process, relying on this information alone can lead to inaccuracies and distortions, as it covers only certain dimensions that are analyzed. Unlike monitoring alone, evaluation has the potential to provide a more balanced interpretation of results. The evaluation process, however, is a time-consuming and expensive process, and due to this fact it is good to use it with thought. One of the most common approaches is to assess which activities and aspects of the company's strategy need more in-depth analysis through evaluation and which of them do not require such in-depth analysis using only monitoring approaches.

DEVELOPING AN EVALUATION AND MONITORING PLAN:

As with everything so far, a detailed plan must be followed in the monitoring and evaluation process. The development of a monitoring and evaluation plan is of great importance before starting any evaluation and monitoring of the project activities. This will give a clear plan of what questions need to be answered. The planning will help the teams carrying out the analysis activities what information they will collect, how they will collect it, what indicators it will follow, how the monitoring data will be analyzed and used and how the result of the monitoring and evaluation activities will be disseminated. It must not be forgotten that the data obtained through monitoring and evaluation will be extremely ineffective if there is no real plan to work on.

To build a successful monitoring and evaluation plan, it is good to follow a few simple steps:

Step one:

The first step in creating an effective monitoring and evaluation plan is to identify the goals that the marketing communications strategy must achieve. If you start planning the monitoring and evaluation strategy after you already have a marketing communication strategy, it is very likely that you already have set goals,

which is even better. However, if you have not set specific goals, a monitoring and evaluation plan is a great way to start. As already mentioned above, goal setting is done by identifying and betting on what we want to achieve in order to consider the strategy successful. This is done by asking a few questions:

- What problem do we want to solve;
- How will we do it;
- And how will we know if we have completed step two.

By answering these questions, you will be able to clarify what you should expect from the strategy, how it will help, and how you will judge whether it is successful or not. Below we will explain clearly and simply what the questions and answers would look like in practice. Lets suppose your company concentrates on the production of bio pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers and more.

Problem

- Tendency for soil degradation caused by the use of artificial treatment chemicals, groundwater pollution and the transfer of these chemicals into the food itself.

Answer

- Development, achievement of large-scale production and promotion in order to fully impose the use of organic preparations in the agricultural production of cereals, fruits and vegetables.

Indications for success

- Imposing on the market, increasing sales by at least 150% from previous periods;
- Stimulation of the competition and activation of the market with organic treatments, making them more accessible and effective

Step two:

Defining indicators. Once you have set your goals, it is time to define the indicators which to guide you in determining the progress towards achieving them. The indicators should be a mix between what is achieved in the implementation of the strategy purely technically and administratively, as well as what the final effect is.

- Technical indicators: Their goal is to monitor the progress of the strategy by answering the question - "Are we moving according to plan?". Some examples of such indicators can be:

- Development progress
- Number of organizational meetings and gatherings
- How many developments have been approved and how many have not

- End-effect indicators: They help to monitor how successful the strategy is in achieving the goals. The question answered by these indicators is "Did the strategy activities lead to changes?" Examples of such indicators are:

- What percentage of farmers know about the company and its products;
- What is the increase in sales;
- How current customers have responded to inquiries about their satisfaction with the products;

These are just a few examples of indicators that can be used to measure the success of a marketing communications strategy.

Step three:

Set data collection methods and timeline. Once the monitoring indicators have been created, a decision must be made on what the data collection methods will be and how often different data will be recorded to track the indicators. This should be communicated and discussed between the employees responsible for the implementation of the strategy, the stakeholders and the financial management of the company. The source of the monitoring data depends to a large extent on what each indicator is trying to measure. Below is a table that provides some examples of what data can be collected and how it can be done.

Data that has to be acquired	Sources
Process and progress of the implementation	Campaign specific
Statistics	Statistical documentation
Level of target groups and subgroups outreach	Customer feedback forms
Effectiveness of the media campaigns	Reports from social networks, and places where marketing campaigns usually take place

Once it has been determined how the data will be collected, it is also necessary to decide how often it will be collected. This will be influenced by the requirements of the investors, the available resources and the duration of the campaign. Some data will be collected continuously by the program (such as sales), but they will be recorded every six months or once a year, depending on the monitoring and evaluation plan. After answering all these questions, a table like the one below can be made to be included in the monitoring and evaluation plan. This table can be printed out and all staff working on the program can be consulted on what information is needed and when.

Indicator	Data source	Period
Sales on a national level	Sales team data	Every six months
Sales on an international level		
Public awareness about the company's mission	Marketing team	Yearly
Awareness of the target group		

Step four:

Delegate and set roles and responsibilities. The next element of the M&E plan is to delegate rights and responsibilities, as well as to assign team roles. It is important to determine this from the early stages of planning. In many cases, these roles are assigned to people who are part of several different departments. This will allow them to form a team that is competent and able to work effectively. The financial part is left to a member of the financial team, the sales part is left to an employee who deals with this, the marketing part in the same way and so on. Data management roles should be decided with the participation of all team members so that everyone is on the same page and knows which indicators are assigned to each and every one of them.

Step five:

Create a plan to analyze and compile the final report. Once all the data has been collected and recorded, it will need to be analyzed and compiled and then entered into a form describing the final results of the activity. The purpose of this form is to serve as a tool for internal and external information and reporting the results of the strategy. The monitoring and evaluation plan should include a section detailing what data will be analyzed and how it will be presented.

Step six:

The last part of the monitoring and evaluation plan describes all the details of when, how and to whom the data will be communicated. The data alone are not the ultimate goal of this analysis. Data must be collected, analyzed and transmitted for a specific purpose. The numbers themselves do not mean anything. Before you begin, you should consider the following: How will the data obtained through these activities be used to inform stakeholders and staff about how the implementation of the strategy affects the company's progress and prosperity; How this data will be used to improve the current strategy and all other future strategies and how the findings will be used to increase the competitiveness of your company.

The M&E plan should include plans for internal dissemination (within the organization itself) as well as for wider dissemination to stakeholders, including

investors. For example, the project management team may want to review the data on a monthly basis to make program decisions and develop future work plans, while meetings with investors to review the data and progress of the program may take place either every three months, or annually. The distribution of printed or digital materials can take place at more frequent intervals. These options should be discussed with stakeholders and your team to set reasonable expectations and develop dissemination plans at the beginning of the program. If these plans are in place from the beginning and become routine for the project, meetings and other types of periodic reviews are much more likely to be productive.

7. CASE STUDY AND CONCLUSIONS

Founded in 2010, AgriTech18 is a relatively new player in the market of servicing agricultural machinery in northwestern Bulgaria. They started in a small workshop in the Vratsa region. Over time, they built a network of regular customers, namely large farmers in the region, modernized and expanded their services by buying modern equipment, as well as additional space that is used to expand the workshop space. They started with a staff of two people and to date they exceed 15 people. Mechanics are highly skilled young people. Five of them have higher engineering education, the rest are graduates of mechanical engineering schools in the region. They are headed by two senior mechanics with a total of more than 50 years of experience in servicing agricultural machinery. In the process of work they decided to grow by doubling the capacity of their workshop and began to offer services to both large farmers and now small farmers. They realized that this niche is not well developed. In the north-western region there is no established service for small agricultural machinery, and there is definitely a need for one. This is due to the fact that agriculture is becoming the main livelihood of more and more people in the region.

The problem they are facing at the moment is precisely how to show their future customers that their service exists. How, through what channels, how much it will cost, and what risks it carries are the main questions facing them as an organization. Small farmers must be informed for the existence of such a service by preparing an appropriate marketing strategy and its subsequent implementation. Due to the relatively small budget planned in advance for marketing activities, the managers decided not to rely on external assistance, but only entirely on themselves to create and implement a strategy to promote their services.

The solution they both come up with is to build a marketing strategy, then build a roadmap, and then start implementing the strategy. As both of them realize that the activities of the strategy and their correct implementation are of utmost importance, they will rely on a marketing communication roadmap to observe consistency in the integration of the marketing activities. By creating the road map, they will determine the target group, the vision of the company, they will set the strategic goals and

determine the channels through which the activities for promotion of the workshop will take place in. Contrary to the rule that the roadmap is a high-level tool that should include activities covered by many specialists in different departments of large corporations, the managers were able to build an excellent roadmap containing everything needed without unnecessary elements to achieve the ultimate your goal. One unmentioned advantage of the roadmap as a tool is that it can be easily adapted to many different types of companies. Whether you are a small farmer or a multibillion-euro consulting agency, the roadmap can be tailored to serve you in the most efficient way. Its elements can be changed, added, excluded, and as long as this is done adequately, with intent and analytical thinking, its effectiveness will remain intact.

At the first stage of the creation of the road map, the company specified and set the definite business strategic goal with which the activities are carried out. Then tasks and key results were set properly. The list of tasks and key results in their case was short and precise, with clearly defined goals.

Goals	Objectives	Results by the end of the year
Advertisement and marketing activities	Implementing a proactive marketing process	Increasing the number of serviced agricultural holdings by between 100-150%; Increasing the number of serviced individuals and small farmers by at least 550 to 1000%
Internal organization goals	Work on the equipment and infrastructure of the workshop space in order to create a friendlier environment for customers; Improving the company's reputation among existing customers;	Creation of a customer waiting room and its equipment; Improving the situation in the service, the space around it and the adjacent areas in order to improve the image of the company; Conducting inquiries to current and past customers in order to show interest, as well as to find places where changes can be made.

In order to, however, fulfill these tasks, especially those involving customer service and increasing sales, additional activities had to be planned. In order to increase sales of services for large agricultural holdings, it is necessary to emphasize on communication with existing customers, to undertake activities to advertise the

service in places such as agricultural magazines and newspapers, agricultural websites and to start to participate more in various fairs, festivals, conferences and more. To make this happen, the company began actively promoting the activity in the local and national agricultural media, bought banners on several agricultural sites, created sponsored posts on social networks and targeted them to the appropriate groups - in this case, owners of large farms. In order to further stimulate the interest of large customers in the company's services, the managers started introducing a system for discounts and promotions based on the order size.

In order to increase sales of services to small farmers, which was the main goal of the company, the managers took the most tangible actions. They created a location on Google Maps so that their future customers could find them easily, commissioned an external company to create an interactive web page that contains the message and purpose of the company, as well as more information regarding the company, its subject of activity, history, portfolio and a Q&A section. They introduced large discounts in the price of the repairing and maintenance services of small agricultural machines. They built a system for additional discounts for customers who bring a friend or colleague. In order to raise awareness about the service, a plan was created to increase their social network activity. Their existing page was updated, a fee was paid for the sponsored display of the page, in addition, several sponsored publications were built, which were targeted to the group of potential customers. This, in turn, did not lead to an immediate, but rather a smooth and gradual increase in the flow of new customers, and subsequently, by the middle of the reporting year their number increased exponentially as at the end of the year, the set percentage in the part with key objectives and results was achieved almost entirely.

The role of the roadmap in the creation and subsequent integration and implementation of marketing activities by the two managers of the company is very important. Through the roadmap, they had the opportunity to set, plan and execute marketing and advertising activities in the best and most effective way. Following the guidelines for creating this tool, they were able to formulate their marketing strategy, fully and accurately identify their target groups, and target them in the most appropriate and effective way, on the right places at the right time.

The combination of all these activities had an extremely beneficial effect on the state of the company. When analyzing and evaluating the strategy, it becomes clear that the goals and objectives have been fully implemented as planned. The increase for companies using the services of the service was achieved at 100%, while that for small farmers saw an increase of almost 820%, which is more than satisfactory in their case.

In conclusion, we can emphasize that the roadmap for marketing communications has proven and continues to prove that is an extremely useful,

comprehensive and effective tool that can be used by companies of different types and sizes, serving them to plan and follow the implementation of their marketing communication strategies. In marketing, each global strategy and individual initiative must be detailed and well thought out. First of all, a marketing idea must be well visualized. Fortunately, today marketers have the ability to visually present and track their tasks. The roadmap for marketing communications serves exactly for this purpose.

First of all, a well-designed roadmap visualizes marketing problems and helps to track every step so that nothing gets lost. Each task is preceded by clearly defined goals. Today, the roadmap for marketing communications is crucial for marketing managers because the market situation, technologies and customer behavior can change by the minute. And when all you have to do is clearly written and easy to follow, the risks seem less daunting and easy to overcome. The marketing roadmap is a clear action plan that describes the main stages of developing a marketing strategy and its integration in the company, as well as what is needed to implement it effectively. It is often visualized using a special tool or roadmap management service.

When a company creates a new product or a service, they always face with several questions: "How to use the social networks?" "How to direct more people to our website?" "How to get more customers to buy from our e-shop?" "How will the market and competition react?" Without careful planning, a marketing campaign can be chaotic or improperly conducted, leading to a loss of customers and unnecessary investments. Therefore, it is important to create a plan for marketing communications in the form of a roadmap in advance. The main goal of any company is to develop continuously, finding more customers and generating more revenue. As a business owner, you will always have a limited budget to use for digital marketing activities. Creating a well-defined strategy and roadmap for your digital marketing strategy will help you grow your business.



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