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## Strategies for Your Web Site Marketing Plan

By Bobette Kyle

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Based on the strategic marketing plan book "How Much for Just the Spider?"

How strong are your Web site strategies? Do they move your business toward achieving your objectives or overall goals? Think of your strategies as a framework that clarifies the approaches you will take in meeting your Web site's objectives. They are more specific than the objective, but do not include exact details. After developing the strategic framework, you will fill in the details with tactics (I will leave tactics discussions for later, in part four of this series.).

You can increase your strategies' effectiveness by taking into consideration the business environment you operate in – both online and offline. Two approaches to analyzing the business environment are to complete 1) an industry analysis such as Porter's Five Forces and 2) a situation analysis such as a SWOT analysis.

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Porter's Five Forces  
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A formal industry analysis, such as Michael Porter's Five Forces, is more in depth than simply looking for trends and general industry information and can help you better develop successful strategies.

Michael Porter's Five Forces can provide insight into both your online and offline competitive environments. In the Five Forces Model, Porter explains that in any industry there are five forces that influence what happens within the industry:

1. Existing companies,
2. potential new companies,
3. substitutes for products offered,
4. the suppliers,
- and 5. the customers.

These five forces combine to make up the business environment. By studying the structure of and dynamics between these forces, you can discover opportunities for improving upon your strategies.

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Porter designed his basic model to be applied to an entire industry. The same analytical method, however, could also be used to study a narrower universe, such as online presence within an industry. When developing your Web site marketing plan, for example, you can identify the "forces" as:

- \* Competitors: Those sites that offer the same product, service, or information as your site.
- \* Potential new entrants: Your site—less off—line competitors as well as new companies entering the industry via a Web site.
- \* Customers: Visitors and potential visitors to your Web site and your competitors' sites.
- \* Suppliers: Those companies that supply you with the products (or parts if you are a manufacturer)

and/or services offered on your site. Other suppliers are the Web hosting, software, and other vendors that supply Web— enabling technology.

- \* Substitutes: Other means and sources for the same products, services, or information as your Web site provides.

Using these definitions for the five forces, you can get a clearer picture of the business environment in which your Web site competes. Be aware, however, this is not a true Five Forces analysis. This analysis only borrows Porter's forces to lend structure. His full analysis goes beyond the information gathering and cursory analysis explained here. By fully utilizing Porter's strategic methods you can gain an even clearer picture of the industry, resulting in sounder strategies. To fully appreciate Porter's model, study his two classics, "Competitive Strategy: Techniques for Analyzing Industries" and "Competitive Advantage: Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance".

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SWOT Analysis  
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In a SWOT analysis, you identify strengths, weaknesses, market opportunities for your company, and threats to your business. You then use the analysis to develop strategies that will minimize the affect of your weaknesses on your business while maximizing your strengths. Ideally, you will match your strengths against market opportunities that result from your competitors' weaknesses or voids.

When completing a SWOT analysis, you may find it helpful to create a table identifying observations relative to each SWOT component for both your company's site and your competitors' sites. In the table, note Internet—related activities such as trade organization participation, search engine inclusion, and outside links to the sites. Then, from the table you create you can spot your company's strengths and weaknesses as well as opportunities and threats to your business.

Often, opportunities arise as a result of a changing business environment. As you study your competitors, be on the lookout for these opportunities. Some situations that could represent opportunities for a company include, but are certainly not limited to:

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- \* New technology is created, but the competition has been unable to deliver acceptable customer service.
- \* A customer segment is becoming more predominant, but their specific needs are not being fully met by your competitors.
- \* A customer, competitor, or supplier goes out of business or merges with another company.

Once you develop your strategies, you will be ready to choose tactics for your Web site marketing plan.

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Other Articles in this Series  
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In the first two article of this series, "Developing a Web Site Marketing Plan" and "Your Web Site's Objectives", I discussed the marketing plan in general, then developing Web site objectives. In this, the

third article in the series, I took a closer look at developing effective strategies. The final article is devoted to choosing tactics for your plan.

Part One: "Developing a Web Site Marketing Plan"

Part Two: "Your Web Site's Objectives"

Part Four: "Choosing Tactics for Your Web Site Marketing Plan"

### **Developing a Web Site Marketing Plan**

**By Bobette Kyle**

#### **Developing a Web Site Marketing Plan by Bobette Kyle**

Developing a Web Site Marketing Plan

Part One of a Four Part Series

Based on "How Much for Just the Spider?"

by Bobette Kyle

For many of us, finding the time and commitment to complete a marketing plan for our Web sites is difficult. There are so many other obligations vying for our attention it is tempting to push planning to the back burner. Giving into that temptation, however, means putting your business at a disadvantage. Your marketing plan is the compass by which you navigate. As opportunities arise or your business environment changes, the objective and strategies in your marketing plan will point you

toward the best action. Without a marketing plan, you risk becoming unfocused in your marketing and are only guessing what might be best for your business.

In this article, you will learn the parts to a marketing plan. I will also point you to some marketing plan resources. In parts two through four of the series, I will discuss objectives, strategies, and tactics for your Web site marketing plan.

To be most effective, your Web site marketing plan should be a part of your business marketing plan. By aligning online marketing with your offline efforts, you can better achieve overall company objectives. Additionally, you will present a consistent style and message across all points of contact with your target audience.

Your Web site marketing plan's focus will be partially determined by your site's status. If you already have a site in place, your plan can focus strictly on marketing issues – how to most effectively market using your existing site. If you have a site that needs improvement, your plan should incorporate enhancements into the site's design in conjunction with marketing activities (While you may not think of these enhancements as "marketing", in this case, they are instrumental to an effective plan.). If you do not yet have a site, you can create one while developing your Web site marketing plan, with your plan focused on launching the site. In any case, remember that your objective, strategies, and

tactics will change over time as your situation and focus change.

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Parts of a Marketing Plan  
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The Web site marketing plan is similar to a business marketing plan, but with a narrower focus. Completing a marketing plan includes developing strategies and tactics (also called action plans) that, when implemented, will help you reach your marketing objectives. Objectives, strategies, and tactics are each progressively narrower in scope.

The objective addresses the "big picture". In general terms, your objective answers the question "How will I overcome my main marketing challenge(s)?" If your company's main site– related challenge is figuring out how to use your Web site to help build

client business, for example, an objective for your Web site marketing plan could be "To enhance online client service as well as build site awareness and interest with clients."

Strategies support your objective. Your strategies define the general approaches you will take to meet your objective. For example, strategies to support the above objective could include 1) improve online communication, information, and education, 2) build awareness of and interest in your company on the Internet, and 3) communicate the Web site's existence and advantages to existing clients.

Tactics are where the action takes place – these are the things you will do to bring your strategies to life. Tactics for strategy 2 in the above example (improve online communication, information, and education) could include 1) sharing experience and observations in your industry through participation in discussion boards, 2) offering an email newsletter, and 3) listing/submitting your site to targeted search engines and directories.

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Marketing Planning Tools  
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The specifics of developing a marketing plan vary according to the source. All can be effective when used correctly. Some sites and software that can help you in developing your marketing plan are below.

### Sites

eSOLO's Marketing Action Plans, <http://www.esolo.com/mapslist.php3> , can help you to come up with strategies and action plans (tactics) to support common marketing objectives.

The Web Site Marketing Plan's Marketing Plan Resources page, <http://www.websitemarketingplan.com/sr3.htm> , includes several links and descriptions of sites with marketing plan information.

### Software

Each of these software titles takes a slightly different approach to developing a marketing plan.

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- Plan Write® for Marketing,  
[http://www.businessplansoftware.org/marketing\\_plan.asp](http://www.businessplansoftware.org/marketing_plan.asp)
- WebQuest Pro, <http://www.webquestpro.com/>
- Marketing Plan Pro, <http://www.bplans.com/marketingplans>

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Other Articles in this Series  
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In this, the first article of the series, I discussed the elements of a marketing plan – objective, strategies, and tactics. In the remaining three articles I will take a closer look at objectives, strategies, and tactics you can consider for your Web site.

Part Two: "Your Web Site's Objectives"

<http://www.websitemarketingplan.com/sr8.htm> autoresponder:  
mailto:ObjectiveArticle@WebSiteMarketingPlan.com

Part Three: "Strategies for Your Web Site Marketing Plan"

<http://www.websitemarketingplan.com/strategies.htm> autoresponder:  
mailto:StrategiesArticle@WebSiteMarketingPlan.com

Part Four: "Choosing Tactics for Your Web Site Marketing Plan"

<http://www.websitemarketingplan.com/TacticsArticle.htm>  
autoresponder: mailto:TacticsArticle@WebSiteMarketingPlan.com  
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