ALLOCADIA

# The Marketing Planning Crash Course

## Create a Strategic Marketing Plan in Five Steps

### 1 Align with Corporate Strategy

Planning based on business objectives ensures every marketing tactic moves the needle forward. Ask yourself:

1. What are the executive team's top priorities?
2. What pipeline and revenue numbers are we aiming for?
3. What adoption rates or implementation goals are set for the product?

### 2 Set SMART Marketing Goals for Measurable Results

SMART goals align expectations and plans, coordinate team efforts, and hold everyone accountable for achieving results. They are:

- **S** pecific
- **M** easurable
- **A** ttainable
- **R** elevant
- **T** imely goals

Two rules to help you succeed in goal setting:

| 1 | 2 |
| --- | --- |
| Re-evaluate at least every six months. | Prioritize resources. No more than 3–5 SMART goals. |

### 3 Create an Action Plan to Hit Strategic Targets

Determine the investment mix for your strategic targets, and use ROI reporting to build a data-driven list of potential activities that best support your goals.

### 4 Organize Your Program Calendar to Support Strategy

Host a kick-off meeting to define the key stakeholders in each project, their roles, and deliverables. Don't forget to include:

1. An integrated calendar showing how various team's activities align
2. Important holidays in relation to project launches and milestones
3. Scheduled check-ins to measure results and optimize

### 5 Execute, Then Iterate, to Keep Plans Fresh

Armed with your conversion rate, think of ways to optimize programs. Dig into which stages opportunities drop out of, and tweak programs directed at that stage.

## Three Ways to Make Finance a Trusted Partner

### 1 Get Comfortable with Accounting Basics

Understanding finance's processes, enables marketers to better report their SMART strategic targets as contributions to business goals. Aligning on budget management keeps spend organized, making it easier to pivot and execute on various scenarios.

Teach each other the fundamentals:

- **Accounting 101** – define processes and rules around submitting invoices and POs.
- **Marketing 101** – compare and align how marketing organizes spend vs finance's broad general ledger codes.

### 2 Speak Finance's Language

Using ROI to talk about marketing investments clearly demonstrates how marketing's decision-making aligns with overarching company investments and revenue strategies.

ROI helps marketers build the best version of plans to support strategic targets and understand where to put trigger points for scenario plans.

### 3 Spend to Plan

Earn finance's trust by sticking to your planned budget. If a situation arises where actuals will look very different from forecasts, be proactive and bring it up right away. Honesty is the best policy.

## The Why, When, and How of Scenario Planning

### 1 Why Scenario Planning Matters

Scenario planning is the most effective form of risk management. Be flexible and roll with any changes. In times of crisis, it's the only way to reduce uncertainty to a manageable set of plausible ways forward.

### 2 When to Pull the Trigger on Scenarios

Identify tipping points that trigger an alternate plan. These points are either:

1. The moment before a scenario is critically necessary
2. The moment current plans become irrelevant

Bookmarking 5-10% of total marketing budget as a slush fund makes flipping between plans easier.

### 3 How To Do Scenario Planning Right

Begin with these spend management questions:

- What additional activities would you run with 10% or 20% more budget?
- If the budget is cut by 10% or 20% what would you change?
- Which planned activities can be scaled up or down and how fast?
- Are any programs time-sensitive?

Marketing should always be outcome-oriented. Look for multiple paths towards the desired outcome within your resources. Then apply those scenarios against your marketing organization's strategic goals. Will any scenarios impact revenue goals?

During a crisis, sort plans into three categories:

**High risk** – programs directly conflict with current market conditions

**Medium risk** – programs with an uncertain future due to various factors

**Low risk** – programs that can still succeed

Pause high risk initiatives, and game-plan for anything that seems plausible including worst-case scenarios. McKinsey recommends preparing at least four scenarios to prevent internal biases favouring the "Goldilocks scenario."