

Marketing 101: Creating Your Studio's Marketing Plan



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When it comes to fitness studios, marketing (and *good* marketing, at that) is absolutely crucial. But starting from scratch and making a comprehensive marketing plan that will help your business succeed is... overwhelming. So, whether you've decided to begin the journey of opening a fitness studio or are looking to create a marketing plan for your existing studio, we put together this guide to help your business thrive — and help you turn your love of exercise into a career.

1

Perform a Situation Analysis

Creating a snapshot of your studio's
current offering and differentiators

The first section of your marketing plan is something we like to call a “situation analysis.” Essentially, it’s a snapshot of your studio’s current situation.

In order to properly analyze the situation, you’ll need to ask yourself a few initial questions. What products or services does your studio provide? And how do those products or services differentiate your studio from the competition?

On a related note, it’s important to understand your company’s **strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats**. Strengths and weaknesses refer to your studio’s internal factors. Strengths could include anything from a strong leadership team to the unique value proposition of a certain product or class. Weaknesses, on the other hand, can be anything from operating in a highly saturated market to a lack of experienced staff.

Unlike strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats are external. Maybe there’s an expanding market for your studio’s specific type of classes (an opportunity), or maybe a competitor’s studio is threatening your company’s ability to gain market share (a threat).

You’ll also need to understand your niche market in order to position your studio competitively, but you’ll see more on that in a few chapters.



2

List Marketing Goals

Outlining short- and long-term goals for your business

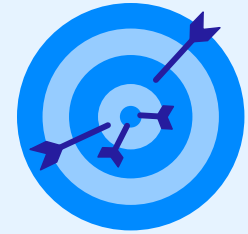
Marketing goals are not just far-fetched desires — they're stepping stones to success and financial achievement. If you don't have a way to gauge your studio's marketing efforts, how will you know if your strategies and tactics are truly working?

So, what do you want your marketing plan to achieve? When contemplating marketing goals, **make sure they meet the SMART criteria:** specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-specific. Whether it has to do with sales dollars, number of units sold or ROI on advertising costs, having these goals is crucial in measuring success later on.

If it's helpful, split up your marketing goals into **short-term and long-term**. Short-term goals, as the name suggests, are goals that can be achieved within days or weeks, while long-term goals can take several months (or even years). Long-term goals are essential to creating your ultimate vision and they often serve as a guide for your short-term goals. However, short-term goals are far more actionable and are what you'll be focusing on a daily basis.

Some examples of short-term goals might be new clients, website traffic or follower counts on social media pages. Long-term goals, on the other hand, may be more along the lines of reputation, studio awareness and name recognition.

Remember that the long-term is just a series of short-terms. If you're consistently meeting your short-term goals, you might just start to realize that the long-term isn't quite as long as you thought.



SMART
goals
—
Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Realistic
Time-specific

3

Define Audience and Customer Profile

Identifying who you are reaching
in order to market effectively

People want
to support
businesses
that reflect
who they are.

Developing a simple, one-paragraph profile of your prospective customer is your next step.

Who are they? Be specific. A good way to start is to **visualize your ideal client**. Imagine who you want coming to your studio. You can even go as far as creating a fictional client avatar and giving him or her a name.

Include things like their gender, age, salary, location and marital/family status – and in addition to these more basic demographics, **dig into their lifestyle** a bit. Are they traditional, or less so? How often do they work out, and how much are they willing to pay? Are they aggressive and motivated by an intense challenge, or more timid and inspired by things like tranquility and mindfulness?

Narrowly defining them in this section is crucial, as this definition will guide future marketing and public relations campaigns. People want to support businesses that reflect who they are – so the more clear-cut you are about exactly who you're marketing to, the easier it will be to figure out tactics and strategies that will resonate.

For even more on this, check out our article: [How to Figure Out Your Target Audience](#).



Develop Your Position and Brand Strategy

Creating an internal North Star
to guide your brand

Introducing your brand to the world is a huge moment, and deciding how you do so may just be one of the most important business decisions you'll make. That's why it's so important to create a **brand positioning statement** and strategy before you bring anything to life creatively. Think of this like your brand's "elevator pitch" that explains how your product or service fills a customer's needs better than your competitors.

In previous chapters, we talked about conducting a **situational analysis** and **defining your audience**. Once you have a complete understanding of these two things—how your brand is currently positioned in the market and who your target customer is—you'll need to figure out your **unique value proposition**, or why people would want to attend classes at your studio over others. It's also helpful to do **research on competitors** and ensure that both your strengths and your competition's weaknesses are reflected in your positioning statement.

This internal positioning statement will be the basis for your positioning strategy, and your strategy will provide the fundamentals for your studio's advertisements and creative. So, gather this information and research, sit down with a pen and paper and literally write it out.

Strategy and positioning are important, but remember that it's crucial to remain focused on **effective and honest communication** no matter what you do creatively. An innovative and creative campaign will ultimately have no value if it doesn't communicate honestly and effectively to the public, so don't let the importance of authenticity get lost in the shuffle.

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5

Determine Communication Tactics

Speaking to your audience throughout
the sales cycle

This section is arguably the most important piece of your marketing plan. Now that you've figured out what you want to do and who you want to market to, it's time to figure out exactly how you'll do it.

It's important to note that successful businesses never just stick with one marketing tactic. They follow a marketing and communication plan that enables them to **try new things** and analyze the results to see what is working.

You'll likely be marketing to people at different stages of the sales cycle. Some people have already been exposed to your marketing messages and are very close to actually committing to your studio. For this group, things like loyalty programs, events and permission-based emails are often successful. For "cold prospects" who know little to nothing about your studio, you may consider less personalized tactics like email marketing or advertising on social media.

We've actually [asked our partners](#) which tactics they found to be most effective, and the top three were word-of-mouth, paid social media and physical signage. However, along with any strategies you decide to use, one that should always be part of your plan is **interpersonal sales contact** — because while billboards and emails and social media are highly valuable, there's nothing quite like fostering a connection with a potential customer by communicating with them face-to-face.

Top 3 sales tactics:



word-of-mouth



paid social media



physical signage



Set Your Budget

Allocating time and money to support
your marketing strategies and tactics

The first step to spreading the word about your studio and ultimately increasing revenue is investing in your marketing efforts. Like

any budget, a marketing budget is a balancing act. Here are a few factors to consider to ensure you're making the right spending choices.

You can't spend money you don't have, so the obvious first thing to consider is your **annual revenue**. If you don't yet have the data to forecast your annual revenue, experts advise contributing between 12% and 20% of your gross revenue to marketing. Once your studio has established a client base and name recognition, this number can decrease to as low as 6%.

Participate in **competitive analysis** by looking around to get a sense of what other fitness studios in your area are doing, because it may differ by location. In a highly competitive metro area like New York City, you'll likely have to spend more on branding and design than a studio in a smaller city might.

When it comes to figuring out where to put your marketing dollars, do a ton of research and run tests to **analyze the return on investment** for your studio. As previously mentioned, ClassPass partners reported that the most valuable forms of marketing in terms of ROI were word-of-mouth, paid social media and physical signage. So, no matter what your budget looks like, look to those three areas first when considering where to invest and how much.

At the end of the day, marketing is essential to the success of your studio. So when you're deciding on a budget, adjust your tactics until you have an affordable mix — and with so many different strategies out there, there's a mix to fit even the tightest budget.

For even more on this, check out our article: [How to Determine Your Studio's Marketing Budget](#).

Experts
advise
contributing
between
12% and 20%
of your gross
revenue to
marketing.



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ClassPass is an all-access membership to a global network of studios, gyms and wellness providers. It connects people to a variety of experiences, including strength training, yoga, cycling, Pilates, dance, sports, meditation, massage, spas and more.

Join the world's leading marketplace for studio fitness, gym and wellness providers and start maximizing your revenue. We'll help you get discovered by a global community searching for their next great fitness or wellness experience: yours.

Get started