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# Six-Sentence Marketing Plan

by Barry Koren, AIA, PhD



**First I'll exercise, then have breakfast,** then go to the library. Next week I'll be away from the office most of the time seeing key prospects. May of '96, I'll be on my way to Jakarta with my wife for my first pleasure and marketing adventure in that part of the world.

Planning, like selling, is something that everyone does. I keep my marketing plan brief so that I can recall it and use it instantly. I keep it simple so that I can change it as I move along with our rapidly changing, turbulent economy. Six sentences are enough to capture the essence of any plan. Here are the areas to cover.

## 1. Have a Marketing

**Goal.** Like the basket in basketball, the goal is what you strive to accomplish in your marketing. It is why you are marketing. It helps you separate the important from the mundane. It helps you

focus, gives you cause for celebration, and builds your self-esteem. Pick a broad goal like getting an increasing base of clients, or a specific one like five calls a day to targeted prospects.

## 2. Target a Market or

**Niche.** Name the market that you are targeting, say public schools. Or better, name the niche you want to "superserve" by providing highly customized services, say Korean private schools. Or even better, have the sentence describe your vision for that niche. *Pat just called from Seoul announcing that we've been selected to do three schools: we've become an international practice!*

## 3. Know the Benefits to

**Prospects.** Why should a prospect retain you rather than your competition? Your competition can be other firms, or it can be your prospects' lack of knowledge about the services you offer.

Check that these benefits are real to you and that they click in the minds of prospects that you call. For instance, my sentence reminds me that my at-your-office workshops are an inexpensive, customized, powerful, convenient low-risk-high-gain alternative to workshops at a hotel.

## 4. Use Marketing Tools

The phone, business cards, gift baskets, audio tapes, news releases, enthusiasm, books, refreshments, invoices, marketing materials...The more

tools you use, the more effective your marketing efforts will be. State yours in a sentence.

## 5. Develop an Identity.

Identity is not a phony image. It is automatically honest and a statement of who you are. Not what you want to be. If you're not there yet, don't act as if you were. For example, we're a dependable firm that's been around for 30 years. We're not the first to try new things, but when you give us a job you can be sure that it will be done right. Take it a step further and put it into a pithy statement, as ITT Hartford Insurance does when they say *"When you need us most. We're at our best."*

## 6. Workout a Budget.

You can price your marketing budget the way you would a building project, starting with a particular budget, say 5% to 10% of gross sales, and then working out what you can do within that budget. Or you can start with the marketing activities that you want to carry out and figure out what it will cost. Or you can start with what you spent last year and either keep it the same or change it. 8% of projected gross revenues will be designated for marketing.

**Process.** The six sentences aren't a one-shot deal. They're part of the process illustrated in the diagram. We're now at the point marked "Here" and want to get to the point marked "Goal 1." We pursue Goal 1 along the first line segment shown and after a little while decide we need to change direction to get to this goal, so we travel along the second line

segment. Things change, of course, and we decide to pursue Goal 2 instead. No problem. We just change some of the sentences. We can feel our way, determining our path of action and goals as we go along and see the results that we are getting.

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x Here

x Goal 1

X Goal 2

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Maybe you won't be able to get all six sentences down at once. Please don't let that stop you. Put down in writing all six entries--whether on your computer or a napkin. It is not enough to think about them. Fill in the sentences that you know about right now. If you haven't figured out "identity" yet, leave it blank, or better, scratch down the first words that come to your mind. You can always change it.

## Conclusion:

Tomorrow I'm going to be at my computer all day and late into the night. The trip I mentioned to Jakarta is a vision part of my plan. Last month as my wife, two boys, and I sat around the kitchen table, we talked about the trip and renting the house. The trip is attractive and imaginary, and I'll be on the lookout for opportunities to make it happen. Right now it is only a phrase in one of my six sentences

And now I have a question for you. Is there room for improvement in your firm's services? Are there any actions you can take now? By commenting, please let all of us know your reactions, or if you have

any stories, news, or marketing tips that you want to share.

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## References:

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