

KEO Marketing

MARKETER'S GUIDE



5 Critical Steps for Planning Your 2018 Marketing Budget



Insight Selling
Education Marketing



Inbound
Lead Generation



Outbound
Account Based Marketing



Content Marketing
Mobile Local Social



Marketing Automation
Lead Nurturing



5 Critical Steps for Planning Your 2018 Marketing Budget

Introduction

2017 has ushered in many new marketing approaches, techniques, and tools. Based on ever-evolving developments in technology, marketers have numerous options to consider when creating marketing plans and budgets for 2018. The basis of developing a solid marketing plan has not changed, and remains focused on increasing brand awareness, creating positive perceptions, and generating qualified sales leads that convert to closed deals and increase revenue. There are, however, many new components to consider when developing your plan and allocating an appropriate budget.

This Marketer's Guide provides 5 steps you should take when planning your 2018 marketing budget:



1. ALIGN THE MARKETING PLAN WITH THE BUSINESS PLAN

Marketing activities are intended to benefit your business' bottom line, whether that's directly or indirectly. Therefore, it is essential to build your marketing plan based on business goals and objectives. You will need to ensure all department heads are fully aligned and leading their teams toward the same strategic vision for growth. Be sure the executive team is invested in the value of the marketing plan and will fully support you throughout the year.

The answers to these questions will greatly affect the mix of marketing activities in your plan and how you allocate funds to each so be clear on the desired outcome before you begin.

What are the key goals for the year?

- Expand into new markets?
- Grow your existing customer base within the same market?
- Increase the life-time value per customer?
- Reposition your brand?

Sales and marketing alignment delivers, on average, a 36% improvement in customer retention and 38% higher sales win rates, according to a survey by CRM provider, Act-on.

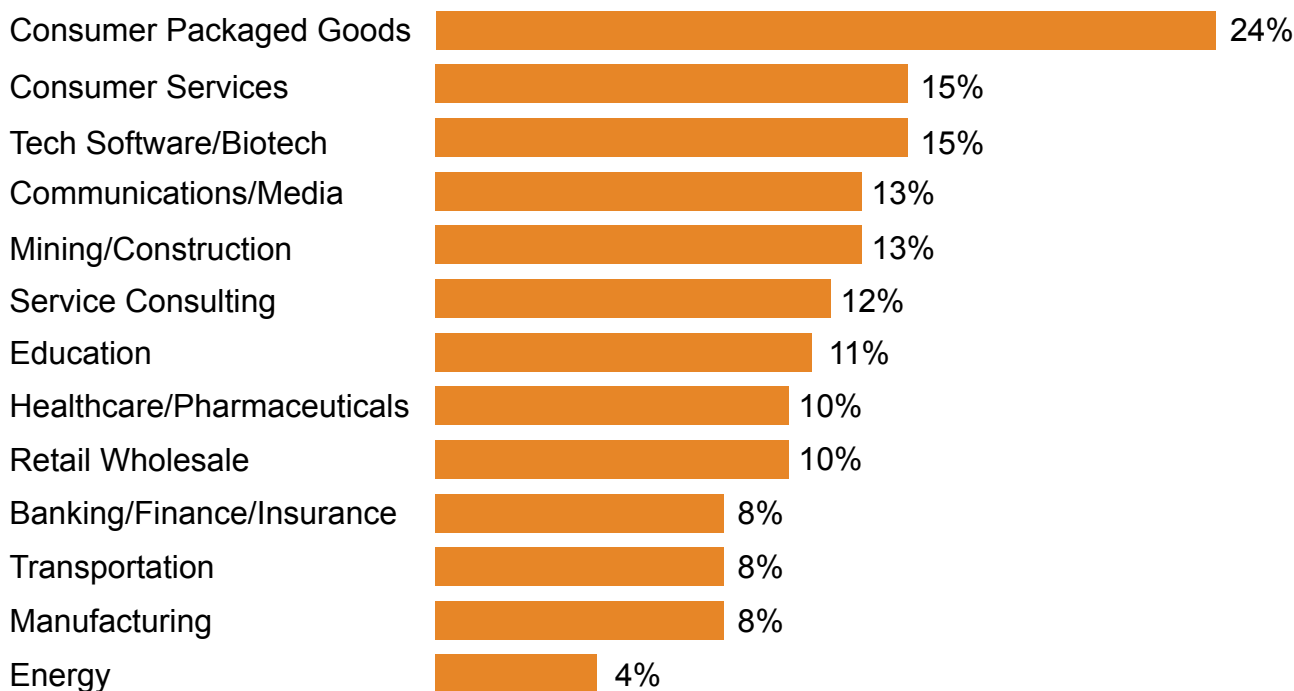
2. IDENTIFY YOUR OVERALL MARKETING BUDGET

Once you have aligned your company goals with your marketing goals, you will need to identify your marketing budget so you can develop a detailed marketing plan that supports your company vision.

Determining the annual marketing budget can be handled in a variety of ways within organizations. Be prepared with as much information as possible when beginning this conversation including the current year's and previous year's marketing budgets. If there are significantly greater expectations for the coming year such as purchasing and implementing new technology, responsibilities for a new division, etc., point that out early in the process. It is also helpful to provide industry averages to help support your case.

Figure 1: Marketing Budgets By Industry

Marketing accounts for what percentage of your overall budget?



Source: The CMO Survey Deloitte Digital

A graphic at the top of the page features a target with three arrows hitting the bullseye. The background is a light blue gradient with faint circular patterns. The text '3. IDENTIFY THE MOST EFFECTIVE MARKETING TRENDS AND TECHNOLOGIES' is overlaid in white, bold, uppercase letters.

3. IDENTIFY THE MOST EFFECTIVE MARKETING TRENDS AND TECHNOLOGIES

Now that you have goals and a marketing budget defined, take time to learn about new technologies available to amplify your efforts. Each year, new user preferences and new technology innovations dictate changes that businesses should adapt to stay relevant and competitive. There are several exciting marketing trends emerging that will make a strong impact on marketing plans throughout the next year.

Business Intelligence (BI) – The influx of actionable customer and target market data is one of the most significant factors influencing marketing strategies today, and this trend will continue to grow. With BI data, for instance, you may discover that small businesses are more likely to respond to campaigns that include video than large enterprises. Further, you may be able to correlate those response rates to a higher conversion rate by tying **marketing automation** information together with your deal tracking and accounting systems.

Research BI tools with specific objectives in mind. Know what information you want to capture and how you will use it. If you consistently collect, review, and act on **business intelligence** data, you will almost certainly improve your results.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) – There are multiple places where AI plays in the new world of marketing automation. Chatbots are one example that is growing quickly. Chatbot solutions provide automated responses based on contextual scenarios and previous answers that have been “learned” by the tool.

Account Based Marketing (ABM) – **Account based marketing** is extremely valuable for companies who have a goal of maintaining and growing their existing customer base. The purpose is to select the most profitable customers and further strengthen those relationships by communicating in a one-on-one fashion and providing tailored information to meet those customers’ needs and increase their lifetime value.



Influencer Marketing – This tactic is growing in usage and can be an effective approach to reaching your target market. After having moved through an era where corporate marketing meant professional, formal, and perfect, people are now hungry for authenticity. They want to hear from real people, thus the growing value of influencers. Consumers believe their words more than words directly from a company. The key to **influencer marketing** is complete transparency.

Video – Video continues to generate significantly better results than static images or copy alone. Marketing spend on online video is up 114% since 2014. There is an evolution in the quality and style of the most successful videos, however, including the preference for live streaming. Live video is more appealing to brand audiences: 80% would rather watch live video from a brand than read a blog, and 82% prefer live video from a brand to social posts, according to livestream.com.

Mobile - When a question or need arises, our phones are far and away our most trusted resource with 96% of people using a smartphone to get things done, per thinkwithgoogle.com. **Having a website optimized for mobile visitors should be a top priority.**

With 60% of American adults using smartphones and tablets to search for local product and service information, you will want to determine whether Geofencing is right for your company. This **local search** technology pushes customized campaigns to your target market when they move into a specific, pre-determined geographic region.

Not all marketing trends will apply to your marketing planning, but it is essential that you understand their value and put thought into whether they may be worthy of a trial. Brainstorm with your team about possible uses for each new technology to gain new perspectives. Be creative.



4. ANALYZE INDUSTRY BUDGET TRENDS

According to Forrester research, digital marketing is pacing at a healthy 11% compound annual growth rate between 2017 and 2021. This investment will be spent based on informed decisions that result from BI analysis. Companies that haven't yet invested in the tools and technology to reap this type of information will likely invest in the technology to better position themselves for the future. Increases are also expected in the production and distribution of video and AI solutions.



5. BUILD YOUR MARKETING PLAN AND ALLOCATE YOUR MARKETING BUDGET

After thorough research and planning, it is time to put together your 2018 marketing plan and budget. There are a few internally focused items to check as you take these final steps.

Examine last year's plan and metrics.

- What were last year's marketing strategies?
- How effective were they in achieving their intended purpose(s)?
- Where would you like to make improvements?
- Where is your industry headed?
- How do prospects within your target audience move through the buyer's journey?

Evaluate your resources and allocations.

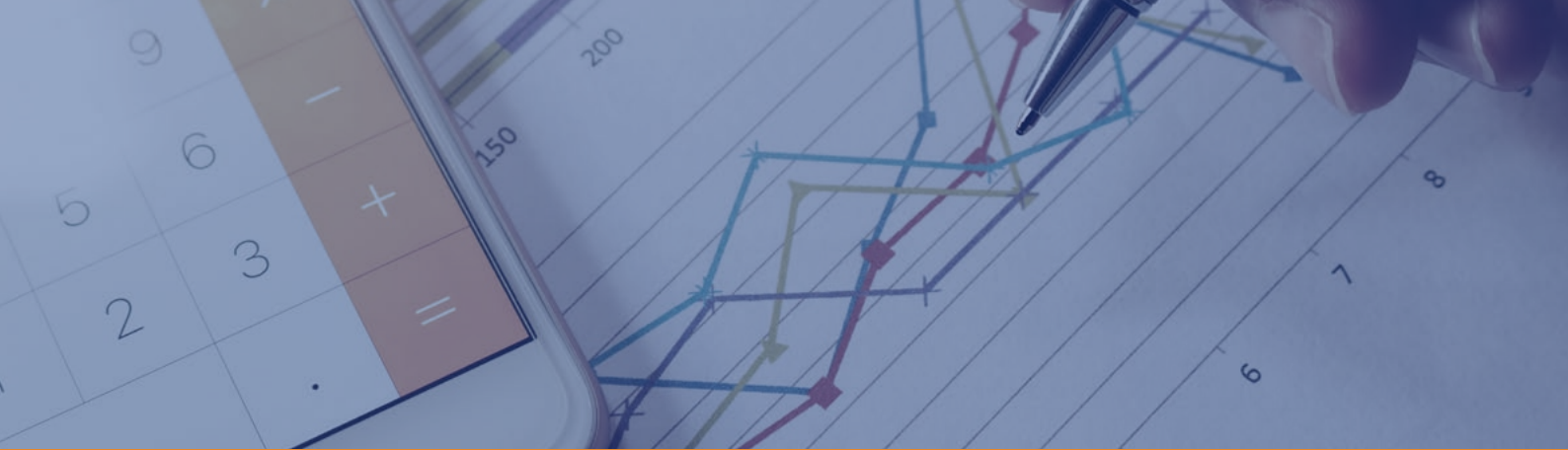
- What is the cost and how will it impact the marketing budget?
- How many people will be needed to implement and support it?
- What is the time necessary to implement it?
- How will the expected results be used to improve other marketing efforts?



✓ Build out strategies and tactics based on company goals.

Depending on each goal, identify the most appropriate strategy and then drill down into clear, measurable tactics. Based on the results from your current year's activities it is important that you do not abandon effective campaigns.

- Awareness/Brand-building
 - Goal: Increase audience propensity to purchase.
 - Example tactics: content marketing, **influencer marketing**, **public relations**, **SEO**, mobile ads, social media, radio, **display advertising**
- Demand Generation
 - Goal: Provide qualified leads
 - Example tactics: **inbound marketing**, **video**, mobile, **marketing automation**, **SEO**, **email marketing**, appointment setting
- Sales Empowerment
 - Goal: Empower the sales team
 - Example tactics: expanded **content marketing**, case studies/use cases, downloadable collateral
- Sales Velocity and Customer Retention
 - Goal: Incremental revenue from key target prospects and current customers
 - Example tactics: Account Based Marketing, BI analysis, chatbots, marketing automation, **social media**
- Metrics and analytics
 - Goal: Targeted results/ROI improvement
 - Track your conversion rates at every stage of the process and research **business intelligence** tools to help better direct your marketing plans and spend



Take Action

Developing your marketing plan and planning your marketing budget is step one. As mentioned above, starting early and getting full buy-in from the executive team and other department heads is crucial at this stage so that you can begin 2018 with momentum.

Stay ahead of the game to put yourself in the best possible position to be successful. If part of your plan is to research new technology investments for 2018, start early. Product review cycles take time, and it is not a decision that should be taken lightly. Implement your solution as soon as fiscally possible so that you can start off the new year with full measurements and tracking in place.

Report, Analyze, and Adjust

Implement monthly and quarterly reviews with your marketing team and with your peers across the company. It is critical to share reporting with all stakeholders to keep them aligned and in support of ongoing marketing plans. Analyze the data, and do not be afraid to adjust your strategies or tactics if the data suggests better results with modifications. Get comfortable with an agile marketing approach.





About KEO Marketing

KEO Marketing is an award-winning business-to-business (B2B) **marketing agency** in Phoenix. KEO Marketing develops and executes successful marketing strategies and plans that significantly grow business. Some of the world's largest brands depend on KEO Marketing for marketing programs that deliver tangible and substantial results.

For more information and to request a complimentary marketing consultation, [contact us](#) today.

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