

Getting the Marketing Materials You Really Want

We all want effective marketing materials. We want our brochures, flyers, and trade show materials to impress our clients. Whether you produce marketing materials internally or utilize an outside resource, you need to address these issues up front to get the results you really want.

Use the topics and questions below to guide your marketing communication projects. With this approach, what you end up with might just bear a striking resemblance to what you had in mind in the first place.

1. **Product Description** — What are the main features, benefits, and competitive advantages?
2. **Target Audience** — Who are the primary users? What are the characteristics of your readers? Note that primary users, readers, and decision makers may be from separate audiences.
3. **Primary Decision Makers** — What do they already know about your company and product/service? What will convince them to buy? What negative cost or quality impressions do you need to overcome?
4. **Marketing Strategy** — What do you want to achieve by using these materials (e.g., simply presenting features and benefits, surprising readers with a product or service they did not know existed, convincing readers to buy, or dispelling myths and competitive claims). What corporate identity or themes should the material convey? Will this piece fit with or depart from previous marketing materials?
5. **Timelines** — When is the material to be completed? Who needs to review drafts and at what time? When will you have all the content together and approved for design? Is this project tied to a product announcement? Is this piece to be distributed in conjunction with a trade show or conference?
6. **Budget** — Who pays? Has a budget been established?
7. **Dependencies** — Are there any contingent conditions (e.g., setting up third-party vendor relationships, obtaining customer testimonials, and identifying other people who have input or review authority regarding the strategy)? What about trademark and copyright issues or pricing information?
8. **Collateral** — What forms of collateral would the client like to see — photocopied Q & A, product flyer or brochure, slide presentation, multimedia presentation, CD-ROM, videotape, trade journal article, advertising, press release, information on the Internet?
9. **International Requirements** — Does the piece need to be translated? Are there non-standard paper-size requirements (i.e., A1, A2)? What cultural differences need to be accounted for? Will overseas personnel need to review this material? If so, how will draft distribution and review cycles be handled (e.g., mail, e-mail, overnight service)? Could there be delays at customs? How will this all affect timelines?
10. **Print Quantities** — How will the material be used? As leave-behinds for the sales force, as part of a direct mail campaign, for conferences or trade shows? What is the projected shelf life?
11. **Distribution** — What distribution arrangements must be made? Do field offices need this piece before a formal product announcement? Where will these materials be stocked?