



Marketing SWOT Analysis Questions

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES & THREATS ANALYSIS

that you need to ask (and answer) to “SWOT” your way to marketing & business success

1. What is your business?
2. Who are your customers?
3. How do you find customers?
4. How do you sell to them?
5. What products & services do you sell?
6. Who are your competitors?

Also see [Ranseen Marketing's SWOT Analysis Tips](#) and [Ranseen Marketing's SWOT Worksheet](#).



I. What is your business?

What business are you in?" What do you do for a living?

- When you sit next to a stranger on your next flight, your son or daughter's sports game, a dinner party, a civic function, etc. and he or she asks what you do, what do you say?
- Then, what is your 30-second (or less) "elevator pitch" describing your business to a potential prospect? And your 2-5 minute pitch (assuming you might get that long)?
- What do you tend to emphasize more initially: the benefits or the features of your business...and its products and services?
- Does your audience get it—quickly?
- What do they ask or not understand?
- Does your pitch include your USP (Unique Selling Proposition) that make you different than your competitors?
- How do others (in your company) describe your organization – is there a consistency? Do you know?
- How do others (outside your company) describe your organization – is there a consistency? Do you know?

Other company background:

- How has your company evolved (brief company story)?
- What and who makes your business really tick?
- How has the company reached its current level of success?
- What are your main business objectives?
- How is your company doing right now relative to those objectives?
- What are your expectations for the future?
- Have there been significant, recent changes in your business?
- Right now, what does your company do best?
- Where do you really need to improve?
- What are the biggest opportunities you have in the short term?
- What threats do you face...and what worries you if anything about things you can't control?
- What key assumptions have you made about your business?



See this overall business recent data metrics (including trends) if available:

- Overall Sales revenues and cyclical patterns (e.g. over 2-3 years)
- Overall Profitability
- Other metrics related to specific business objectives



III. Who Are Your Customers?

....and how well do you know them? Do you know them well enough and are so close to be able (in sports vernacular) smell the type of gum they are chewing (actual buyers and prospect)?

- What do your current customers look/ behave like, and how do you group or categorize them?
 - What is a profile their B2C individual demographics (age, sex, income, ethnicity, location, etc) and/or B2B business demographics (type, industry/segment, size, location, etc)
 - What is a profile(s) of your best/ideal customer(s)? And why?
 - What is a profile(s) of your worst? And why?
- What are their “pain” points/key needs that you effectively address?
- What others do you not address (or not do very well)?
- Why do they decide to choose you?
- Why do they decide not choose you?

- Do current customers tend to stick with you?
- Buy additional products/services from you after the first one?
- What types of customers are repeat customers?

- Who in your business spends time the most time with customers and knows them the best?
- What do your customers say about your company, your products, and your services?
 - Word-of-mouth, informally?
 - Testimonials?
 - Internal surveys?
 - 3rd party market research?
 - Other...?

- What’s a typical “new” customer worth in the short term...and longer term?
- How much do you depend on existing clients and their recurring business/revenue?
- How much does your business depend on a single customer or small handful of customers (who generate disproportionate share of your revenues)?

- If you have lost customers in the past 12 months, why?
- Do you ever “fire” any customers? (especially if you’re in a service business)?
- Do you have any serious customer issues right now? If so, what are they?



- What are your current “sweet spot” market(s) and why? Is there any low hanging fruit left in the marketplace?
- Who (and where) are other customers/markets with the best potential, and why?
- Who (types of individuals/titles) do you sell to now?

- How do you track customers and relevant information about them now
- What type of CRM (Customer Relationship Management) System do you use?
- How useful is it?

- Who are the types of prospects/customers who find you online now? Do you capture that web traffic data? If not...
 - If you were trying to find your type of company/products/services on the web (and didn't know your name/brand) what are some of the search phrases keywords that you would type into Google, Yahoo, MSN, or another search engine?
 - What do you think others would try?
 - What business category(s) do you know/believe others put you in?

See this Customer related information & recent data metrics (including trends) if available:

Over a reasonable timeframe...e.g. the past 6-12 months (and ideally 3 years for trends)

- Revenue/profits per customer segments and product (types)/service (types)
- Recurring customer business
- New customer business
- Customer retention rates (e.g. if a service business)
- Customer testimonials, customer stories or customer case studies
- Customer satisfaction surveys
- Other customer/prospect market research
- Website traffic data (per keyword, domain, geography, etc)



III. How Do You Find Customers?

What do you do, proactively, so that new prospects are attracted to your products & services, can find you, or you can find them – as well as get the attention of existing customers to buy more?

- What marketing types/vehicles work best have consistently worked best for you and why...e.g. online, print, telemarketing, networking/personal contact referrals, mass media, etc ([Ranseen Marketing's SWOT Worksheet](#))?
- Why have specific Marketing campaigns been successful?
- What Marketing types haven't worked and why?
 - Not tried?
 - Not tried for enough time and/or not enough money invested?
 - Poor Marketing execution?
 - Poor Sales follow-up?
 - Other?
 - DNK?

- Do you have a current Marketing Plan?
- What marketing initiatives are you using now and/or have planned?
- What other marketing initiatives have you considered trying that you have not used before?
- Do you have a set budget for Marketing (separate than Sales)?
- Do you think you spend enough on Marketing your business...or too much and why?

- What your main marketing/sales pitch and USP (Unique Selling Proposition) and how well does that work? That is, how are you different?
- If you could be known for one thing in your market, what would that be?
- Does your company have a tendency to try and be all things to all people (in your markets)?

- How does your company define "Marketing?"
- What are your top Marketing:
 - Strengths
 - Weaknesses
 - Opportunities
 - Threats

- Is there a separate Marketing function in your business?
- What is the relationship between Marketing & Sales activities in your company?



- Does Marketing or Sales or another function make the key pricing for your business?
- What marketing results do you track and how?
- What 3rd parties, if any, do you use in your Marketing efforts and how would you rate their performance?

See this Marketing related information/data metrics (including trends) if available:

Please complete the Please complete the [Ranseen Marketing's SWOT Worksheet](#)

- Marketing Plan
- Marketing budget and expenditures e.g. YTD

What are your current referral sources (in rank order and approximate %'s and or \$) that generate your sales Leads & actual sales?

	Rank	Leads	Gross Sales	Profit	ROI
Networking/Word-of-Mouth Referrals					
Current Customers ^{*1}					
Telemarketing					
Website/Online marketing (by type)					
Trade Shows					
Print Advertising (by type)					
Media Advertising (by type)					
Distributors/affiliates					
Direct sales (retail					
DNK					
Other_____					

^{*1}That is, current customers buying additional products/services, contract renewals, etc.

- Other TBD



IV. How Do You Sell To Them?

How do Sales actually happen, orders occur, and deals get closed (usually after you've got a prospect/customer)?

- What is your typical Sales process and cycle?
 - What does your Sales "funnel" look like now?
 - What are the typical conversion %'s from unqualified prospect/lead...to qualified...to final sale
- "Where" do final sales/orders happen?
 - Retail brick & mortar store(s)
 - Personal sales contact
 - Phone sales contact
 - Online e-commerce
 - Other
- How are Sales presentations made?
 - In person
 - Email
 - Online/interactive
 - Other
- How does Sales follow-up with prospects?
 - In person
 - Phone
 - Email
 - Other
- How quickly does Sales follow-up with prospects?
- How often does Sales follow-up with prospects?
- How much do you rely on these to generate sales (and who handles them):
 - Price quotes?
 - Proposals?
 - Formal RFP's to generate business?
- What company resources are devoted to Sales and are they adequate?
- Do you have dedicated Sales staff (and how many)?
- How is your Sales function organized (by geography, types of products/services, individual Sales functions, etc)?
- Are your Sales people on the same page with Marketing (and vice versa)? If not, why not?



- Do you have adequate Sales staff to adequately cover your market(s)
- Which Sales people sell most successfully and why?
- How much does your sales pitch vary, salesperson to salesperson?

- What Marketing tools does Sales use/not use now and why?
- What does your sales funnel look like right now?
- Why do you win specific types of sales--and lose others?
- What message(s) resonating with prospects right now?
- Not resonating?

- How much leeway does Sales have in varying pricing/prospect?
- How much is price an issue in all, most, some or none of your sales pitches?
- What questions do prospects most often ask?
- What is your biggest hurdle(s) in most sales?

- Do you sell via other distributors/partners (and how does that work)?

- How sophisticated are your Sales people in using information online to assist them?
- What is your Sales tracking process?
- Who manages/controls your prospect database?

- How involved is Sales with Customers on an ongoing basis – after the initial sale?
- How successfully do you re-sell (additional products/services) into your customer base)?

- How are Sales staff compensated (salary only, commission only, combination, etc)?
- How effective is your Sales compensation system?
- Do your sales incentives match your business strategy and growth objectives?
- What is your Sales training program?
- What is your Sales turnover rate?

See this Sales related information/data metrics (including trends) if available:

- Sales funnel activity (current)
- Sales presentation(s)
- Sales proposal(s)
- Sales (product/service) demonstrations
- RFP(s)
- Sales budget
- Other TBD



V. What Products & Services Do You Sell?

Specifically, what of value do you offer the marketplace now...at what price(s)?

- What are your best product(s)/services and why?
- What are your worst product(s)/services and why?
- What real business problems/"pain points"/needs do your product/services address and help solve?
- What makes your products/services different, better than the competition?
- What products/services are your biggest revenue producers and profit producers and why?
- What (current) products and services have the most (future) potential why?
- What product(s)/service(s), if any, should be axed and why?
- Do you pitch any products/services you say you offer but either don't sell any of and/or can't deliver (at least at this point)?
- Do you have any serious issues with your products and services at this point? (performance, customer service, unprofitable pricing, etc)?

- Specifically, what else, if anything, should your company be offering?
- Who makes the key products/services development decisions in your company?
- What new products/services are in the pipeline?
- How much time, effort and money is your business investing in developing new products and services?

- What is the rationale(s) for your current pricing strategy?
- What is your overall pricing position and why?
 - High end
 - Low end
 - Mid-range
- What types of pricing tactics do you use? e.g.
 - Discounting
 - Bulk purchasing
 - Customer or "members" pricing
 - Special pricing Offers
- If you sell services, do you price by--
 - Time/hour?
 - Flat rate/project?
 - Other?
- Do you change prices often?
- If so, do you tend to increase or decrease prices?



- How does your pricing compare to competitors?
- How price sensitive are your customers/markets, and how important is price in the sales equation?
- How often are you involved with a competitive bidding process?
- How much does your company depend on responding to price quote requests
- How well are bids and price quotes handled?
- How are final (internal) pricing decisions made?

See this Product and Services related information/data metrics (including trends) if available:

- Product/Service descriptions
- Product/Service price sheets
- Products/Services by items sold, revenues, profits (or estimated)



VI. Who Are Your Competitors?

Who are you going head to head with in the marketplace...and what other external factors could impact your Sales performance?

- Who are your real competitors?
 - Similar firms, and who are they?
 - Others who do some of what you do/or a lot more than what you do, and who are they?
 - Prospects who do have (something similar to) what you offer (in-house)?
 - Prospects' own status quo (who don't have what you do)?
- Overall, how competitive is your industry?
- Who beats you most often in sales situations and why?
- How do you do in competitive/bid situations versus when you are the only firm being considered?

- What have you learned from your competitors?
- How well do you know their product/services and marketing/sales approaches?
- How do your products/services and prices stack up to theirs?
- What do you like about your competitors that could be incorporated into your business?

- What do competitors do to “reposition” your company?
- What do you do to reposition your competitors?
- What information do you regularly track on your competitors?
- How much do you worry about your competitors?

- How (if at all) is your business impacted positively or negatively e.g. by external (usually) uncontrollable factors such as--
 - Your local economy
 - The overall U.S. economy
 - The global economy
 - Interest rates
 - Currency exchange rates
 - The U.S. and/or global stock market
 - Energy prices
 - Raw materials prices
 - Talent availability
 - Government regulations
 - Other regulations



- Major developments in other industries
- Others?