

Tactic #16

Marketing HealthCheck

Questions to guide your Marketing for 2024

Tech is fast-paced and ever-changing, and embracing a marketing mindset, rather than building a marketing function, is no longer a choice but a necessity for sustained success. This guide is built around our ethos, that marketing is business – a crucial driver of strategic direction, innovation, and growth.

Here, we delve into the core aspects of strategic marketing, from aligning with business goals to fostering a culture of continuous learning and adaptation. Our goal is to help tech leaders move beyond traditional marketing boundaries, demonstrating how marketing can be a powerful catalyst for growth, efficiency, and long-term success when fully integrated into every facet of the business.

Whether you're a startup preparing for growth or a more established company looking to refine your strategy, this guide offers a framework to ensure your marketing is purpose fit for your company's age and stage of growth.

When to Use This Guide:

- **Strategic Planning:** Ideal for annual planning sessions or when setting new business objectives.
- **Growth Phases:** Particularly useful when your company is entering new markets or looking to scale.
- **Budget Reviews:** Use this guide during budget cycles to assess and reallocate marketing spend.
- **Performance Analysis:** Apply these insights when reviewing marketing performance or KPIs.
- **Team Evaluations:** Leverage this guide when assessing the need for marketing resources or external partners.

Understanding Your Company's Growth Stage

Each tech company has a unique set of growth requirements, so it's crucial to identify the stage of growth your company is currently in. Different stages require different marketing focuses and strategies. Here are some guiding questions to help you tailor your approach to the marketing health check:

Early Stage

- **Product Development:** Is our product/service still in the development phase?
- **Market Fit:** Are we in the process of identifying and understanding our target market?
- **Initial Customer Acquisition:** Are we focusing on acquiring our first customers and validating our product in the market?
- **Resource Allocation:** How are we managing limited resources regarding budget and personnel?

Growth Stage

- **Sales Efficiency:** Are our sales processes optimised for efficiency and scale?
- **Customer Acquisition:** Is our focus on expanding our customer base rapidly?
- **Market Penetration:** How effectively are we penetrating our target market segments?
- **Scalability:** Are our marketing efforts scalable to support rapid growth?

Late Stage

- **Market Expansion:** Are we looking to expand into new markets or segments?
- **Fundraising:** Is securing additional funding for expansion a current priority?
- **Talent Acquisition:** Are we scaling our team to support late-stage growth?
- **Brand Evolution:** How are we evolving our brand to align with our expanded market presence?



Step 01.

Strategic Alignment

Marketing isn't just a supporter of business strategy; it's an integral part of formulating it. Market and customer insights drive product development, business expansion plans, and even operational decisions.

Key Questions:

1. How does our marketing strategy actively influence and align with our overall business strategy and objectives?
2. How are market trends and customer insights regularly integrated into our strategic planning?
3. Does our marketing strategy reflect and adapt to changes in our overall business direction?
4. How does marketing contribute to identifying new business opportunities or potential shifts in the market?

Success Looks Like: Marketing insights are a driving force in shaping the company's product development, business expansion, and operational decisions.

Action Steps:

Integrate Insights: Regularly feed market insights into strategic planning sessions. → **Align Objectives:** Ensure marketing objectives are directly contributing to broader business goals. → **Strategic Review:** Continually reassess alignment as market conditions evolve.

Step 02.

Customer-Centricity

The entire business revolves around understanding and meeting customer needs. Customer insights and feedback guide everything from product design to post-sales support.

Key Questions:

1. Are we leveraging customer insights across all aspects of our business, from product design to post-sales support?
2. How do we ensure customer feedback directly influences product development and service improvements?
3. Are we actively mapping and understanding our customers' evolving needs and pain points?
4. How do we measure the success of our customer-centric initiatives and their impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty?

Success Looks Like: The entire organisation is aligned around understanding and fulfilling customer needs, informed by robust customer insights.

Action Steps:

Gather Customer Feedback: Implement systems for continuous customer feedback collection. → **Infuse Insights:** Use these insights to inform decisions across all departments. → **Enhance Customer Experience:** Regularly review and improve the end-to-end customer experience.

Step 03.

Full Funnel Responsibility

Instead of just focusing on top-of-the-funnel activities like lead generation, marketing takes responsibility for the entire customer journey, ensuring smooth transitions between marketing, sales, and service.

Key Questions:

1. Does our marketing approach encompass the entire customer journey, ensuring seamless transitions between stages?
2. How are we measuring and optimising each stage of the customer journey for effectiveness and efficiency?
3. Does our marketing strategy include tactics for post-purchase engagement and customer retention?
4. How do marketing and sales teams collaborate to ensure a seamless customer experience from initial contact to post-sale?

Success Looks Like: Marketing effectively oversees and optimises the entire funnel, from lead generation to post-sales engagement.

Action Steps:

Funnel Analysis: Conduct a thorough analysis of each funnel stage. → **Improve Transitions:** Develop strategies to ensure smooth marketing, sales, and service handovers. → **Optimise Journey:** Continuously refine the customer journey for efficiency and effectiveness.

Step 04.

Revenue & Growth

Marketing is directly tied to revenue generation and business growth. There's a greater emphasis on ROI, customer lifetime value, and revenue metrics than traditional marketing KPIs.

Key Questions:

1. Is our marketing strategy directly linked to revenue generation and business growth, focusing on ROI and customer lifetime value?
2. How do we track the direct impact of marketing activities on revenue and sales growth?
3. Are we using predictive analytics to forecast future revenue impacts of current marketing strategies?
4. How are customer lifetime value and acquisition cost balanced and optimised in our marketing efforts?

Success Looks Like: Clear demonstration of marketing's impact on revenue, focusing on long-term customer value and business growth.

Action Steps:

Track Revenue Metrics: → Focus on metrics that directly relate to revenue and growth.

Align with Sales: → Ensure marketing and sales strategies are jointly focused on revenue goals.

ROI Analysis: → Regularly assess marketing initiatives for ROI and adjust as needed.

Step 05.

Product Development & Innovation

Marketing plays a proactive role in product development, bringing in customer feedback, market trends, and competitive insights to shape product strategy.

Key Questions:

1. How does marketing contribute to product development and innovation, integrating customer and market insights?
2. How is marketing involved in the early stages of product development and ideation?
3. Are we effectively using market research to anticipate future customer needs and trends for product innovation?
4. How do we validate marketing-driven product ideas or features with real customer data or feedback?

Success Looks Like: Marketing plays a key role in shaping product strategy, backed by customer feedback and market trends.

Action Steps:

Collaborate with Product Teams:

Establish strong ties between marketing and product development.



Market Research:

Conduct ongoing market and competitive research.



Feedback Integration:

Systematically incorporate customer feedback into product innovation.

Step 06.

Cross-functional Collaboration

Marketing becomes a hub that collaborates closely with sales, product development, customer service, and even finance. This ensures consistent messaging, efficient processes, and optimal customer experiences.

Key Questions:

1. How effectively does marketing collaborate with other departments like sales, product development, and customer service?
2. What formal processes exist for marketing to collaborate with other departments on joint initiatives?
3. How does marketing share insights and data with other departments to inform their strategies?
4. Are there clear communication channels and joint goals established between marketing and other functions?

Success Looks Like: Marketing is a central hub, ensuring consistent messaging, streamlined processes, and optimal customer experiences across departments.

Action Steps:

Strengthen Internal Communication:
Foster regular interdepartmental meetings and communications.

→ **Unified Strategies:**
Work towards shared goals and integrated strategies.

→ **Feedback Loops:**
Establish systems for continuous inter-departmental feedback and improvement.

Step 07.

Operational Efficiency

With the “marketing is business” mindset, marketers are also concerned with streamlining operations, reducing costs, and improving efficiencies, just as any other business function would.

Key Questions:

1. Is marketing contributing to the overall operational efficiency of the business, focusing on cost-effectiveness and process optimisation?
2. How are we using marketing automation or technology to improve process efficiency?
3. What metrics or KPIs are we using to track and improve marketing operational efficiency?
4. How does marketing contribute to overall cost savings and operational improvements within the company?

Success Looks Like: Marketing strategies and operations are streamlined for maximum efficiency and effectiveness, contributing to overall business performance.

Action Steps:

Review Processes: → Regularly audit marketing processes for efficiency.

Cost Management: → Implement cost-effective strategies and tools.

Benchmarking: Compare operational performance against industry standards.

Step 08.

Culture & Employee Engagement

Marketing plays a role in shaping the company culture, ensuring every employee understands and is aligned with the brand's values and mission.

Key Questions:

1. Does our marketing strategy play a role in shaping and communicating the company's culture and values to employees?
2. What initiatives does marketing lead to promote internal understanding and engagement with our brand values?
3. How are we measuring the impact of marketing on internal culture and employee morale?
4. Does marketing play a role in internal communications, and how does it reinforce company culture?

Success Looks Like: A strong, cohesive company culture where every employee understands and is aligned with the brand's mission and values.

Action Steps:

Internal Branding:
Use internal marketing to reinforce company culture.



Employee Engagement:
Create initiatives that align employees with brand values.



Culture Champions:
Encourage leaders and staff to embody and promote the company culture.

Step 09.

Continuous Learning & Adaptation

Rapid market environment changes mean continuous learning and agility become core tenets. This involves constant market monitoring, feedback loops, and iterative strategy development.

Key Questions:

1. Are we fostering a culture of continuous learning and adaptation in response to market changes?
2. How do we stay abreast of and respond to rapid changes in marketing technology and consumer behaviour?
3. What systems exist for continuous learning and professional development within the marketing team?
4. How often do we review and adapt our marketing strategies based on market feedback and performance data?

Success Looks Like: The company rapidly adapts to market changes, focusing on continuous learning and iterative strategy development.

Action Steps:

Market Monitoring:
Maintain ongoing market and competitor analysis.



Agile Methodology:
Implement agile practices in marketing planning and execution.



Feedback Loops:
Establish mechanisms for regular feedback and learning.

Step 10.

Sustainability & Long-Term Vision

Instead of short-term campaign-centric thinking, the focus shifts to long-term brand building, sustainable growth, and creating lasting relationships with customers and partners.

Key Questions:

1. Does our marketing strategy prioritise long-term brand building and sustainable growth rather than short-term gains?
2. How are we integrating sustainable practices into our marketing strategies and operations?
3. What steps are we taking to ensure our marketing supports a long-term, sustainable vision for the company?
4. How do we balance the need for short-term marketing wins with our long-term brand and relationship-building goals?

Success Looks Like: Focusing on sustainable practices and long-term relationships with customers and partners leads to enduring brand strength.

Action Steps:

Long-Term Planning: Emphasise long-term goals in marketing strategies.

→ **Sustainable Practices:** Implement environmentally and socially responsible marketing practices.

→ **Relationship Building:** Focus on lasting relationships with customers, partners, and the community.

When you take the lens that marketing is business, it becomes clear that the role of marketing extends far beyond campaigns and communications.

It's about nurturing a marketing mindset that permeates every aspect of the business, aligning with and enhancing overall strategy, operations, and culture.

By embracing these principles, CEOs and founders can ensure that their companies are responsive to the immediate demands of the market and positioned for sustainable growth and success. Remember, in the old world, marketing is a department; in today's world marketing is a mindset.

At SwayTech we're embracing new ways of working, uniquely suited to injecting both strategic and execution capabilities into Kiwi Tech businesses.

Whether you're a tech CEO, a visionary founder, or a senior marketing leader, we can help you sharpen marketing strategies, from prepping for that all-important raise to maintaining that post-raise momentum or powering up your next growth targets. We journey with you to define solutions that pack a punch and deliver lasting impact, even if marketing is not your happy place.



We'd love to have you as part of our professional network, follow us on [LinkedIn page](#). We're all about building and sharing knowledge, and supporting Kiwi Tech businesses to grow.

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