

# Is there a one-size fits all sample marketing plan?

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Marketing plans delve into mission statements, financial obligations, target market, industry lifecycles...and that's just the rough draft. They provide an overview of your company's current systems and projected goals. How in-depth depends on what you want and the amount of information to include.

That said, people turn to a pre-existing marketing sample to draft their own marketing plan. They hope it'll show exactly what they want in the exact way they need. But there isn't a one-size fits all sample marketing plan to use, and here's why.

A look at some samples

To start, let's look at a few sample marketing plans. They differ in length, detail, appearance, and headings. They're mock ups of companies in different industries with different marketing requirements, but they do have a few sections in common.

Houghton Mifflin Company

This sample marketing plan begins with its executive summary. Throughout, the plan dives into an environmental analysis, SWOT analysis, the marketing mix, and evaluation — performance measurements and related budget. In total, it's 11 pages long.

This company is small (think Mom and Pop shop) who sell scheduling type products. It's a competitive market so they need a strong brand identity in order to stand out. Detailed SWOT analysis, emphasizing their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities — and how to utilize each for stronger growth — fits their needs perfectly.

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## Palo Alto Software

This sample is 27 pages long and less “artistic” than Houghton Mifflin Company’s marketing plan sample. They start with a simple executive summary, use SWOT analysis, and heavily focuses on industry market, sales, and target market analysis — no environmental analysis to be found.

Considering they’re a consulting company who markets technology, diving deep into all marketing methods and trends makes sense.

What’s similar in these sample marketing plans?

Both have an executive summary at the beginning, explaining what they do and what the point of the marketing plan is. And while a few focussed on different types of analysis, the point was to identify the strong and weak points directly related to their industry.

And environment analysis isn’t as important to the consulting agency, for example. And while marketing and targeting are important to the mom and pop firm, if they’re only starting to get off the ground, it’s important they understand their current place in their industry.

The important takeaway

A sample marketing plan highlights key problems and strengths related directly to the business. Copying a sample marketing plan, word for word, can’t do this for your business. That’s not to say samples can’t be useful — if you pick and choose what will benefit your business, you can create a great guideline to follow.

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If you are going to use a sample as a guideline, study a few. Examine mockups. Find one that covers the areas you absolutely need to explain, expand upon, and use to find success in your business. A sample marketing plan only leads you in a direction; your marketing plan will be a blueprint to success.

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