

Marketing: where to start

BUILT ON

Start with Why (S. Sinek) · Obviously Awesome (A. Dunford) · Building a StoryBrand (D. Miller) · The 1-Page Marketing Plan (A. Dib)

Goal. This template is for an owner who does marketing at random: a few posts, a few referrals, an ad now and then, and no idea which of it works. You write down why your company exists, what you do and for whom, a message a client understands in five seconds, and one channel for 30 days. At the end you have one decision: where, the one thing you do each week, and the one number you watch.

In 15 minutes. After this you have three sentences and a 30-day plan, not a finished brand. The time is our estimate, not measured. The test on strangers doesn't fit in 15 minutes; it goes into the decision as "I will check."

1. **Why (fields 1 and 2), 4 minutes.** Write three facts from the real story of your company: a moment when the problem you solve hurt you or a client; a client whose work you are proud of; something you turned down or do differently, even though it costs you. From them, finish: "We believe that ..."
2. **What you're compared with (field 3), 2 minutes.** Answer: what would your best clients do if you didn't exist? Write up to three answers, the most common first.
3. **One sentence (field 4), 3 minutes.** Write: the client's problem, then a short name for what you do, then the result for the client. No company history and no list of features.
4. **One channel (field 6), 3 minutes.** Pick one channel for 30 days, where your best clients are or where they came from. Write one action a week and one number to watch.
5. **Test (field 5), 2 minutes.** Pick three people from outside the company and a date when you will show them the message for five seconds.
6. **Decision, 1 minute.** Write one line: "I decide that ... Who ... By when ... I will check ...". For example: "I decide that for 30 days I do marketing only through office building managers, with two conversations a week. Who: me. By when: from Monday, review after 30 days. I will check: how many inquiries came from this channel (today 0, target 2) and whether 2 of 3 strangers understood the message."

Why only one channel: it is a start for a firm that does a bit of everything, not a plan forever. Dib warns that a business with a single source of clients is brittle, so after 30 days you decide: keep it, change it, or add a second.

Instructions (full version) (about 60 minutes, an estimate; the test on three people comes separately, usually within a few days)

1. Write three facts from the story of your company and finish "We believe that ..." (fields 1 and 2). Facts, not slogans: who, when, what it cost.
2. List 3 to 5 clients who understood you fastest and are happy to recommend you. Ask what they would have done without you (field 3). If you don't have five such clients, the whole thing is a hypothesis to test.
3. Write the three-part sentence (field 4) and check it with the three five-second questions (field 5).

4. Choose one channel, one weekly action and one number (field 6).
5. After 30 days, read the number and decide: keep it, change it, or add a second channel.

Template fields

Field	What you write
1. Three facts	(a) The moment when the problem we solve hurt me or a client: when, what happened. (b) A client whose work we are proud of, and what changed for them. (c) Something we turned down or do differently from others, even though it costs us.
2. Why	"We believe that ..." (one sentence). Check (yes/no): it is a belief or a cause, not a promise to the client ("fast," "cheap") · it is not making money (money is a result) · it follows from the facts in field 1.
3. What we are compared with	Names of 3 to 5 best clients. What they would have done if we didn't exist (up to three answers, the most common first).
4. What we do and for whom	"When [the client's problem] ... We do [a short name]. So that [the result]." It can be more than one sentence, but the part about what we do should be short.
5. Five-second test	Show the message to three people from outside the company for five seconds, then hide it. Ask: what do they offer? How would it make my life better? What do I do to buy? Passed when at least 2 of 3 answer all three in their own words. Circle every word only someone in your industry knows, and replace it.
6. One channel for 30 days	The channel (where the best clients are, or where they came from) · one action a week (specific, doable in an hour) · one number to watch, today and the target · review date · decision after 30 days: keep, change, add a second.
7. Decision	"I decide that ... Who ... By when ... I will check ..."

Fictional example (the firm and the numbers are fictional, for this template)

An office cleaning company, 14 people.

- **1. Three facts.** (a) The owner spent 6 years at a firm managing an office building and took calls every week from tenants saying the cleaning hadn't come again. (b) A law firm of 12 people left its previous cleaner after a cleaner was turned away at the door following a change of security. With us it has had the same two people for three years. (c) We turned down a tender to clean a shopping center, because we couldn't guarantee the same people.

- **2. Why.** "We believe that an office where nobody has to remember the cleaning is an office where people work more calmly." Check: a belief, not a promise (yes), not making money (yes), follows from facts (a) and (b) (yes).
- **3. What we are compared with.** Best clients: the law firm, two architects' offices, an advertising agency, an IT firm. Without us: a part-time employee who cleans "when there's time"; a large cleaning company with a call center; the team cleaning after hours.
- **4. What we do and for whom.** "When the cleaning in your office happens one week and not the next, and every new cleaner means explaining everything again, you lose time and patience. We clean offices of up to 30 people, always with the same two people. So nobody at your company has to think about it."
- **5. Five-second test.** Fictional result: 2 of 3 people answered all three questions. One asked what "up to 30 people" means, so the headline now says "offices of up to 30 people." The test was repeated after the change.
- **6. One channel for 30 days.** Channel: office building managers, because tenants call them when the cleaning fails. Weekly action: two conversations with managers, using the message from field 4. Number: inquiries coming from this channel in a month (today 0, target after 30 days: 2). Review after 30 days.
- **7. Decision.** "I decide that for 30 days we do marketing only through office building managers, with two conversations a week. Who: the owner. By when: from Monday, review after 30 days. I will check: how many inquiries came from this channel, and whether 2 of 3 strangers understood the message."

From us. The idea of "why" is Simon Sinek's (*Start with Why*, ch. 3 and 13): it is a purpose, a belief or a cause, not making money, and you find it in the founders' past rather than invent it; he claims that people buy "why," and he supports that mainly with company examples, so we treat it as a hypothesis for the test to check. The question "what would they do without you" is from April Dunford (*Obviously Awesome*), the three-part sentence and the three five-second questions are from Donald Miller (*Building a StoryBrand*, parts 1 and 3), and looking for clients where they are and measuring where they come from is from Allan Dib (*The 1-Page Marketing Plan*, ch. 3). Sinek advises starting with why and Miller with the client's problem, so in the five seconds on a page we put the problem first; what we added is three facts instead of a survey, the pass mark of 2 of 3, and a single channel for 30 days.

When to call us. Call us if:

- after 15 minutes you have two different sentences for "what we do and for whom," and three strangers give three different answers to the three questions;
- you don't have five clients you can call your best, and you don't know whom to ask what they would have done without you;
- you are about to spend more than one client's monthly revenue on a website, ads or an agency.

The first call with us is 30 minutes and free. Bring your three sentences.

Prompt for your AI. This prompt works in your own ChatGPT, Claude or Gemini account and knows only what you tell it; our own method, built on what your company knows, is what we do in a Diagnosis.

You are a calm coach. Take me through the "Marketing: where to start" card, the 15-minute version.

Rules:

1. Ask one question at a time and wait for my answer.
2. If an answer is vague, ask for a number, a date or an example.
3. Never invent anything about my company or clients. Write what I don't know as "to check".
4. Don't write my sentences. You may offer two options; I choose.

At the start, tell me: "Do not paste passwords, account numbers or personal data."

Questions: (1) three facts from my company's story, then "We believe that ..."; (2) what my best clients would do without me; (3) the client's problem, a short name, the result; (4) one channel for 30 days, one weekly action, one number; (5) three people for the five-second test. At the end, write one line: "I decide that ... Who ... By when ... I will check ...".

Want to do it with us?

Want an outsider to check your message and your choice of channel? In a Diagnosis we do it with you, on your clients and your numbers:

5 business days, 4 900 PLN.

We'll go through your template on a 30-minute call. Free of charge.

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The examples in the templates are fictional. The times given with the instructions are our estimates, not measurements.