

A Simplified Marketing Plan That Works!

By Dr. Jeanette Cates

When I started my first business in 1981, I researched business plans and marketing plans. I looked at all of the formats and read a lot about the purpose of creating a business plan. But I never got enthused enough to do it.

When I launched my speaking business in 1997, I reconsidered a business plan and a marketing plan. Again, they looked too complex - like a lot of "overkill" for my one-person operation. But I soon found that I needed some type of plan that would remind me of where I was going and how I planned to get there.

For the past several years I've been using a simplified marketing plan. And it's been working for me. It may inspire you to do something similar - or at least do something! Here's how it works.

At the beginning of the year (or during my planning period for the year), I list the goals for my business. I try to look at all of the facets of the business. For example:

1. Book X speaking engagements.
2. Give X free speeches.
3. Generate \$X in consulting fees.
4. Increase website traffic to X page views per month.

Then I list the key factors to my success for the year and assign a code for each. For example:

- * Increase online visibility. Code V
- * Deepen my credibility. Code C
- * Emphasize my experience. Code E
- * Generate passive income. Code I

Finally, I outline the audience(s) I want to serve, assigning a code to each.

Speakers Code S

Authors Code A

Consultants Code C

Small business Code SB

Now I'm ready to put my plan into action steps!

At the top of the first page, I list the first goal: Book X speaking engagements. Then I list as many activities that will contribute to that as possible. Here are some I've listed this year:

- * New professional photo
- * Monthly contact with key advocates
- * Monthly postcards with tip to meeting planners
- * Demo video updated; distribute to speaker bureaus.
- * Timeline for each engagement.
- * Send press releases for each engagement, as appropriate.
- * Specific series of follow-up activities for each engagement.

In addition, I list specific prospects that I want to target this year.

I repeat this process for each goal, listing any marketing or sales activities I need to do under the goal to which it applies.

Next, I go back and code each activity. First with the Key Factors code. Will this activity contribute to my visibility? Credibility? Experience? Or Passive Income? An activity can have multiple key factors. If I find an activity that doesn't contribute to one of my key factors for the year, I ask myself whether or not this is an appropriate activity for this year. In many cases, I'll discard it or lower its priority.

Finally, I go through each activity and code the audience(s) for which it will be appropriate. Most activities can apply to several audiences, but I'll often find that I'm ignoring one of my targeted groups for the year. Again, I ask if there are additional activities I should be doing to serve them better or is it appropriate to ignore them for this year.

As a format I've found that this works well for me:

Task	Key Factors	Audiences	Deadline	Date Complete
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And since I have a staff, I add an additional column for who will do the activity.

At this point, I have my basic plan. All that remains is setting the deadlines for each activity. These deadlines, in turn, dictate my daily activities. If I find myself doing something that isn't in my marketing plan, I stop and ask "Should I be doing this at all? If I should, why didn't it show up in my marketing plan? Where can I add it or should I stop doing it?"

Overall, my entire plan is less than 10 pages long. I try never to set more than 10 goals for the year, since that seems so overwhelming! So it keeps it short. I review the plan monthly, noting the activities I have completed and noting progress on those on which I'm working. I'm always amazed at how much I do get done on the plan - even if I never complete all of the tasks I've set out to do.

Having a plan is a key element to preparing for success. The format that your plan takes is entirely up to you. But if you haven't found one that works for you, try this one. Then modify it so it works even better for you. I'd love to hear what's working for you!

Jeanette S. Cates, PhD is the creator of the Online Success System and author of *Online Success Tactics: 101 ways to build your small business*. Dr. Cates is a frequent speaker at state and national conferences, with more than 300 presentations to her credit. Her fast-paced, information-packed presentations and her knack for explaining cutting-edge technology in easy-to-understand terms have gained her the reputation of being The Technology Tamer™. She has taken that same experience and applied it to the Internet to become your Online Success Guide.

As the owner of TechTamers, she has developed a full line of learning materials, including more than 100 technology-based workshops, ranging from Introduction to eLearning to Web-Site-in-a-Day™. In addition, she has authored numerous tips booklets, special reports, ebooks, and audio albums. In 2001 she launched Tech4Speakers.com, a site dedicated to helping speakers use

technology more effectively in their presentations, products, productivity, and online presence. Jeanette is a Certified Technical Trainer and is conversant with more than 200 software programs. She is also a Trainer with Enlightened Millionaire Institute. She edits the InfopreneurLibrary.com, an online resource for people who create and sell Information Products. In addition, Jeanette and her staff manage more than 20 different websites.

Dr. Cates holds a PhD in Instructional Design and Technology and an M.Ed. in Adult Education, both from the University of Texas at Austin. She earned a B.S. in Business Administration from Trinity University. She is listed in Who's Who of American Women and is a member of Women in Technology International and the National Speakers Association. Jeanette has been featured in *PC World*, *Computer Shopper*, and *TechRepublic*, among other technology-related publications.

TechTamers is a consulting and training firm, based in Austin, Texas. Founded by Dr. Jeanette Cates, TechTamers works with business owners who want to turn their Website into Gold! TechTamers' clients range from A to Z – from Apple Computer to the San Diego Zoo, and include many independent business owners who look to TechTamers for strategic and tactical support of their online businesses.

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