

A SPARK GROWTH GUIDE

The Marketing Maturity Guide.

A practical way to see where your marketing stands, and what to build next.

SPARK
– *growth marketing*

Six areas. Four stages.
About 15 minutes.

BEFORE YOU START

See the gap between where your marketing is and where the business is headed.

Most growth stage businesses have marketing that has grown the way the business has grown: one good decision at a time. A website built when the company was smaller. A brand that made sense three years ago. A few channels that work, and a few that nobody is quite sure about.

That is normal. It also means the marketing may no longer match where the business is going.

This guide gives you a plain way to see the gap. It takes about 15 minutes, and it works best if you complete it with one or two colleagues, because different people see different parts of the picture.

How to use it

01

Read the four stages

They are on the next page, and give you a common language for the rest of the guide.

02

Score the six areas

Choose the description that sounds most like your business today, not the one you hope for.

03

Add up your score

Use the scorecard on page 6 to see what your total suggests, and what to fix first.

04

Test any partner

Use the ten questions at the back with any marketing partner you speak to, including us.

There are no right answers here, and no shame in a low score. A clear view of where you are is the useful part.

> Growth does not come from doing everything at once. It comes from doing the right things in the right order, with a consistent and disciplined approach.

THE FOUR STAGES

Where does your marketing sit today?

Every business sits somewhere on this scale, and different parts of the same business often sit at different stages. That is worth knowing before you spend another dollar.

1



Ad hoc

Marketing happens when there is time. Activity depends on one or two people, and results are hard to explain.

2



Active

Plenty is being done and some of it works, but the pieces operate separately. The message changes depending on where you look.

3



Structured

There is a clear position, a plan and a rhythm. Most channels support each other, and someone owns the outcome.

4



Integrated

Strategy, brand, digital and campaigns run as one programme. Marketing is measured against commercial results and adjusted as the business moves.

Stage 4 is not always the goal. A business that is just starting out may sensibly sit at stage 2 while it builds. What matters is that where you are is a decision, not an accident.

SIX AREAS

Score each area from 1 to 4.

Tick the statement that is closest to the truth today. If two seem to fit, choose the lower one.

1 Positioning and messaging

How clearly does the business explain what it does?

1 AD HOC	We describe what we do in different ways depending on who is talking.	◯
2 ACTIVE	We have a tagline and some key messages, but they are not used consistently.	◯
3 STRUCTURED	We have a clear position and agreed messages that sales and marketing both use.	◯
4 INTEGRATED	Our position is grounded in where the business is going, tested with clients, and shapes every channel.	◯

2 Brand

Does your brand reflect the business you are becoming?

1 AD HOC	Our brand was created for an earlier version of the business and is applied inconsistently.	◯
2 ACTIVE	Our logo and colours are consistent, but the brand does not yet reflect how we want to be seen.	◯
3 STRUCTURED	Our brand reflects our position and is applied consistently across everything we produce.	◯
4 INTEGRATED	Our brand is a genuine asset that clients recognise and that supports higher value work.	◯

3 Website and digital platform

How hard is your website working for the business?

1 AD HOC	Our website tells people we exist but does little to help them decide.	◯
2 ACTIVE	Our website is current and works well, but it is not built around the audience we most want.	◯
3 STRUCTURED	Our website is built for a clear audience and produces enquiries reliably.	◯
4 INTEGRATED	Our website, CRM and automation work together, and we know what each page contributes to revenue.	◯

4 Demand generation

Where does new business come from?

1 AD HOC	Most new work comes from referral and reputation. Marketing activity is occasional.	◯
2 ACTIVE	We run several channels, but each is managed on its own and results are patchy.	◯
3 STRUCTURED	Our channels follow a plan, with clear targets for enquiries and pipeline.	◯
4 INTEGRATED	Channels are planned together, budgets move to what performs, and we build long term visibility as well as short term leads.	◯

5 Measurement and reporting

How do you know what is working?

1 AD HOC	We look at numbers occasionally, and mostly by feel.	◯
2 ACTIVE	We have reports, but they focus on activity such as clicks and posts rather than outcomes.	◯
3 STRUCTURED	We track enquiries, pipeline and conversion, and review them regularly.	◯
4 INTEGRATED	We see performance live, review it monthly with the right people, and change course quickly when something is not working.	◯

6 Ownership and team

Who is accountable for marketing results?

1 AD HOC	Marketing sits with whoever has time, and nobody is accountable for the result.	◯
2 ACTIVE	Someone owns marketing, but relies on several suppliers who rarely speak to each other.	◯
3 STRUCTURED	There is a clear owner and a coordinated team, with a plan everyone has agreed.	◯
4 INTEGRATED	One accountable partner or team holds the whole picture and reports on outcomes, not activity.	◯

YOUR SCORECARD

Add it up, then read what it suggests.

AREA	YOUR SCORE (1 TO 4)
1. Positioning and messaging	
2. Brand	
3. Website and digital platform	
4. Demand generation	
5. Measurement and reporting	
6. Ownership and team	
Total (6 to 24)	

6 to 11

FOUNDATION

Build the foundation first

Your marketing would gain most from a clear position, a brand that reflects where you are headed, a website built for the right audience, and a 12 month plan. Doing these in the right order saves money later, because everything that follows is built on something solid. **This is what we call a Marketing Foundation.**

12 to 18

MOMENTUM

Close the gaps, then build momentum

You have real assets. The priority is joining them up: sharpening the message, strengthening the weakest one or two areas, and putting a rhythm of measurement and review around the whole thing. **Usually a focused foundation piece, then ongoing support.**

19 to 24

EXTEND

Protect and extend

Your marketing is working as a system. The value now is in staying close to the business as it changes, testing new opportunities, and keeping accountability high. **Ongoing growth support is usually the right fit.**

Whatever your total, any area you scored as 1 is worth fixing first.

PUTTING IT IN ORDER

The right things, in the right order.

Once you know where you are, the temptation is to fix everything at once. Resist it. Most of the marketing that disappoints was not badly done. It was done out of sequence, with a website built before the message was settled, or campaigns running before anyone agreed who they were for.

1

Understand

Get clear on where the business is headed, who you most want to serve, and what a good year looks like. Everything else is built on this.

2

Position and message

Decide what you want to be known for and say it the same way everywhere. This is the step most businesses skip, and the one that makes every other step cheaper.

3

Build the brand and platform

Make sure the brand and the website reflect the position you have chosen, and are built for the audience you want more of.

4

Plan and budget

Agree what activity is right, in what sequence, at what level of investment, and how you will measure it. A 12 month plan with a budget is enough.

5

Run, measure and adjust

Deliver the plan, report on outcomes as they happen, and review monthly with the people who need to make decisions.

If your scorecard showed several areas at stage 1 or 2, **start at the top of this list.** If you scored mostly 3 or 4, you are probably in the last step, and the gains come from measurement, discipline and staying close to the business.

TEN QUESTIONS

What to ask any marketing partner.

A good partner will welcome every one of these. The answers tell you as much about how they work as any proposal will.

1. Who will actually do the work, and how senior are they?
2. How will you get to know my business before you recommend anything?
3. Who will be my single point of contact?
4. What will you report on, and how often?
5. How will marketing decisions connect to revenue, pipeline and enquiries?
6. What happens if something is not working?
7. Do you start with a strategy, or with the services you sell?
8. How will you work with the tools and people we already have?
9. What will you need from me and my team?
10. If you are not the right fit for us, will you tell me?

About Spark Growth

Spark Growth is an integrated marketing consultancy and managed services company in Fremantle, WA. We work with business leaders to understand where their business is going, then build the marketing strategy and execution capability to help them get there. Every engagement is led by senior specialists, working from one strategy, with one point of contact and one accountable team.

NEXT STEP

Bring your scorecard to a first conversation.

The first conversation is about your business, not our services. We will tell you honestly whether we can add value, and if we cannot, we will point you in a better direction.

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