

SOSTAC (developed by PR Smith in the 1990s) is a marketing planning model which helps businesses plan marketing strategies or campaigns and implement them.



SOSTAC is an acronym for PR Smith’s 6 fundamental parts of marketing:

S: Situation, O: Objectives S: Strategy T: Tactics A: Action C: Control

Situation: Situation analysis means ‘where are we now?’ Planning activities involved at this stage include performing an Internet-specific SWOT analysis and reviewing the various aspects of the micro-environment including customers, competitors, and intermediaries. Situation analysis also involves review of the macro-environmental forces i.e., political, economic, social technological, legal, and environmental (PESTELE) forces.

The key to a strong SOSTAC is an in-depth situation analysis. This is the basic step taken to arrive at effective subsequent decisions that are made on objectives, strategy, tactics, action,

and control. For the digital marketer, the most important task is to conduct a thorough assessment of the forces that are shaping the online marketing environment and identify which forces have implications for their own marketing planning and strategic initiatives.

Situation analysis includes detailed understanding of current performance as well as prevailing market situation covering-

- a) Technologies available and deployed by others which may be disruptive in nature.
- b) Competition: Competition may come from same industry or other connected industries. Environment must be thoroughly scanned to identify the competitors and understand their activities as well as capabilities.
- c) Customers: Customers are knowledgeable and connected to each other (sharing opinions and reviews). They are looking for best available benefits and opportunities and aware of their empowerment.

Objectives – The ends towards which activities are aimed. These are the goals for the business, and they should be aligned with the overall business goals, not just the marketing goals.

For setting specific objectives, it is useful to think through the benefits of the Internet channel so that these benefits can be converted into objectives. It is useful to identify both tangible benefits, for which monetary savings or revenues can be identified, and intangible benefits, for which it is more difficult to calculate financial benefits and costs, but they are still important, e.g., customer service quality. Five broad benefits of e-marketing –

Sell – Grow sales through wider distribution to customers you can't service offline, or perhaps through a wider product range than in-store, or better prices.

Serve – Add value by giving customers extra benefits online, deliver customer service by 'web self-service' or social media and inform them of product development through online dialogue and feedback, for example in blogs or customer communities.

Speak – Get closer to customers, learn about their interests by monitoring them through web analytics and social media monitoring, asking them questions in surveys, and creating a dialogue in online customer communities or panels.

Save – Save costs of customer service, sales transactions, and administration, print, and post. Can you reduce transaction costs and therefore either make online sales more profitable or use cost savings to enable you to cut prices, which in turn could allow you to generate greater market share?

Sizzle – Extend the brand online. Reinforce brand values using interactive digital media and content. Develop an online value proposition which can help inform or entertain customers in ways which are not possible in traditional media.

Strategy – Determination of basic long-term objectives of an enterprise and the adoption of course of action and allocation of resources to achieve these goals.

TOPPP SITE: 9 components for developing marketing strategy -

Targeting: Whom to target?

Objectives: Ensure that strategy meets the objectives

Positioning: How you want to be seen.

Partnerships: Strategic partnerships

Processes: New processes e.g., marketing automation

Sequence: Develop credibility before raising visibility

Integration: All tactical tools plus database integration

Tactical Tools: Highlight key tactics.

Engagement: Customers expected to climb Ladder of Engagement.

Tactics - Tactics defines the usage of tactical digital communications tools. This includes details of the marketing mix, CRM, experience, and digital communication. For example: SEO, PPC, Online Ads, Online PR etc.

Action – Actions refers to action plans, change management and project management skills.

Control – Control looks at the use of management information including web analytics to assess whether strategic and tactical objectives are achieved and how improvements can be made to enhance results further. This involves monitoring and assessment of performance with reference to goal setting using key performance indicators.