

Brief Backgrounder

This questionnaire is intended as a check list for you when briefing your copywriter for the first time. The more I know from the outset, the quicker the work process. Of course, the list will grow shorter over time as longer cooperation will allow us to focus on its central points.

Your company

- When and how did your company start? (Based on which innovation? Is there a story behind the founding of the company?)
- Who were its founders?
- How has the company become what it is today?
- What are the future plans of your company?

Your product

- What is your product?
- What customer problems does it solve (separately for each business or customer group, if applicable)?
- What other products or technologies are competing against it?
- Product features and their benefits to the customer/user?
- Which of the product's benefits are the most important for your customer (may vary in different groups)?
- How does your product differ from competing products for the same purpose?
- How is your product positioned against competing products?
- How long does your product last/How durable is your product?
- How easy is your product to use? How easy to maintain/service?
- Has your product any reference customers? What do they say about your product?
- What kind of range are you offering? How is the product customised?
- How long are your delivery times?

Your competition

- Who are your most important competitors (name at least three of the most important ones)?
- What do we do better than they do? In other words, why would the customer rather buy from us than from them? How is our product/solution/reliability superior to theirs?
- Are there any aspects in competing products that would lead the customer to rather buy from them than from us?
- What is the attitude of the customers/potential customers towards us (willingness to meet with representatives, what they say about the product etc)?

Marketing and sales

- Sales target for the year/campaign? How many per cent more is it than usually?
- How long does it take from initial contact with the customer to closing the sale?
- What is the typical way a new customer contacts you?
- How many customer calls/other contacts does it take to make a sale?
- What percentage of your sales calls/product presentations lead to an inquiry?
- What percentage of the inquiries lead to an actual sale?
- How much money (on average) does a typical sale make you? In other words, how many units do you need to sell over a certain period to reach your sales target?
- Are there seasonal variations in your sales?
- How is your sales organised? (Your own organisation, consultants, resellers etc?)
- How many people does your sales force comprise?

Target groups

- To what businesses/industries can the product be sold?
- Who and where are the customer organisations?
- Do we have to influence other target groups besides the customers (authorities, consultants) to assist sales?
- To which people (job titles/descriptions) do we need to target our sales activities and our marketing communication?
- Who makes the final buying decision?
- What motives drive the different persons involved in the buying process? (What product features and benefits are important to them? Do they wish to get some sort of personal gain, such as strengthen their expert status?)

Goals of communication

- What do we want to achieve with our marketing communication (sales leads, awareness for the company/product, present a new solution to a specific problem, other — what)?

Thank you for your time!

If you wish you can send the answers to this questionnaire back to me via e-mail or post. Total confidentiality is assured.

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