

Why is it so difficult to set objectives?

 By [Chris Brewer](#)

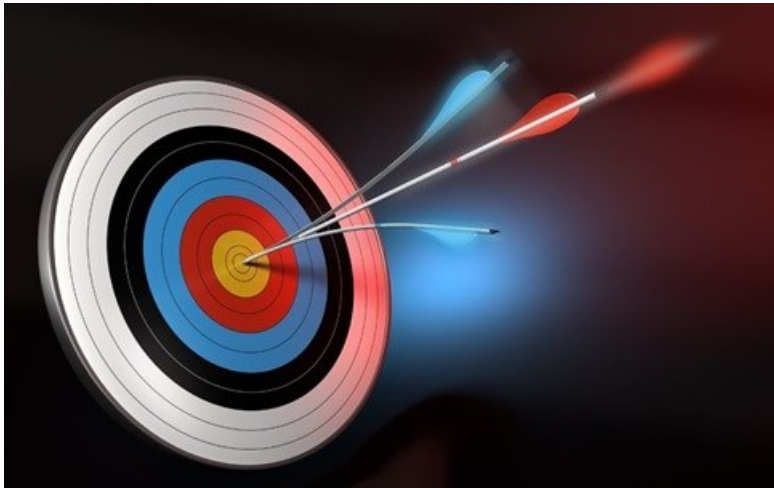
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I'm constantly amazed at how few businesses (agencies, clients and media) write meaningful sets of objectives. Often they don't exist at all and, perhaps of more concern, is how bad many of them are...

If your objectives are not written correctly then every plan that follows (business plans, media schedules and so forth) will be weak.

Writing objectives is no more difficult than writing a shopping list, really.

Within the marketing concept, the marketing strategy is the mobilisation of the company's marketing capacity and ability towards a customer-orientated goal. And the mobilisation of such resources includes advertising and promotion.



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However, strategy, in the form of an action plan, is only a framework because;

- It is the action plan that implements strategy.
- Strategy involves the utilisation of objectives. Without objectives there can be no planning.
- Without planning there can be no business.
- And without business there is no need for an action plan.

There are, essentially, two kinds of objectives we see on a daily basis in business:

Corporate objectives: These are the broad considerations of where the company wants to go and what it wants to achieve in the medium or long term.

Strategic objectives: These are shorter-term goals, being more detailed, specific and measurable.

Advertising plans are, almost always, strategic and tactical. They are immediately-actionable forces that can be implemented to deal with a specific (short-term) problem on the marketing battlefield.

Planning cannot start without an objective because we need to focus on the direction in which we want to go. We need to ask ourselves "what results do we want?" and these results must be reasonable and, to the largest degree possible, **measurable**.

In order to measure results, we need to set standards. When standards are met, the objective will have been achieved, which is why the best plans include key words like:

"To Do... So That"

For example: TO DO "To decrease my unit production costs and lower my selling price - and margin." SO THAT "Sales volumes will increase, thereby improving my bottom-line."

Objectives begin to be formalised roughly as follows.

1. **Tactical:** What do I want from this advertising? What am I doing it for?
2. **Turnover:** "I will increase turnover by (for example) X% for a period of Y weeks.
3. **Budget:** I will contain advertising expenditure to within Q% of forecasted sales.
4. **Summary:** What must be done? How must it be done? Who will do it? When will it be done by?

None of this is rocket science obviously and, over the next few weeks, I'm going to be covering more about objectives, forecasting and strategies - or you could give me a call and we could take a look at your Objectives together. (It's what I do, of course).

But it's an extremely good idea to stand well back from your business and take a good look at what your customers see - it's not as easy as it sounds and sometimes it's a good idea to get a third-person perspective.

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