



Marketing to the LGBT+ Community



Introduction

A good marketing plan should address your vision, growth goals, communication objectives and audiences, bringing them together in one place.

It should outline who you are trying to reach (your potential customers), what you want them to do (your goals) and how and what actions you'll take at each stage of the sales process to support them (your tactics). There are many different ways to develop a marketing plan, but ultimately it is about getting clearer on who you want to sell a product/service to and how you will go about selling it.

An LGBT+ marketing plan is no different. You need to identify specific personas or audiences within the LGBT+ community, determine the best methods for reaching them and ensure you create an experience that they will be happy to promote.

Why Develop a Strategy

Far too often, organizations get mired in the day-to-day, and marketing plans can end up reading like a laundry list of to-dos. Spending a little time each year to get clear on where you are headed, what you are doing and why you're investing in certain places is critical. It prevents you from spinning your tires or needlessly changing directions, it empowers your marketing team and gives them a clear list of what needs to get done so you can know if you are moving the needle.

It ties together the visioning side of your business with the operational and practical side of getting things done.

How to Use this Toolkit

This marketing planning toolkit is meant to help you put together a marketing plan to target LGBT+ audiences. It will provide you with a framework from which to build your plan, different prompts to help you think about unique approaches, audience personas to consider and summaries of some commonly used marketing tactics.

This toolkit is built on a Marketing Plan Framework. We encourage you to use this when you are doing your planning. We have also included basic tactic and budget templates that you and your team can use as you work through your strategy.

Five Things to Remember

The process of marketing planning can feel daunting, and it's easy to take on more than you can accomplish on your own. It can end up feeling like a lot of "before we can do this, we have to do that", or "once we build this, we can promote that". You can sometimes end up feeling stalled as you go through the process. Here are a few things to think about that will help you mitigate this snowball effect and keep the process from getting too overwhelming.

1. **Keep it simple:** Don't get too hung up on analytics, percentages, and complicated campaigns. Putting a plan together, no matter how simple it is, is a win. Don't bite off more than you can chew right out of the gate. Select two or three personas/audiences you think you can connect with and develop a few good tactics to help you reach them. Build on your plan over time and don't feel that you need to do everything right away.

2. **It's about consistency:** When you are starting out, focus on consistency before creativity. So much of marketing is about consistency, about getting on someone's radar and then staying there. You don't need to try and be totally unique in every marketing effort, you just need to be consistent. Focus on the frequency of your message and staying on top of your plan. Make an effort to do something every week, even if it's something small.
3. **Look to low-hanging fruit:** Avoid getting too excited about totally new product ideas and completely new audiences. While these opportunities are great and will help you stay innovative, you should make sure that your marketing plan is balanced. Look for low-hanging fruit or easy wins to use as the foundation of your plan. We always suggest that about 80% of your plan be built on things you know will bring value quickly, while 20% can be focused on new approaches, new audiences and un-tested tactics.
4. **Identify your advocates:** Keep your existing fans, advocates and customers in mind when building your plan. They can shine a light on what you are doing well and can give you a good place to build from. *What do they like about what you have to offer? Why do they keep coming back? How did they learn about you?* These are some of the questions you might want to consider when building your plan.
5. **Stay true to your brand:** Being authentic about your business and brand is important when marketing to the LGBT+ community, otherwise, you risk looking disingenuous or opportunistic. Rather than focusing on rolling out an entirely new product or service offering as part of your marketing plan, start by looking at what you can already offer your customers. If you are true to who you are and what you have to offer, customers will follow.



Marketing Plan Framework

A marketing plan should be built on a strategic framework. Essentially, it starts with your organization's vision and moves out through each audience, stage of the buyer's journey and into every single tactic you create to move each audience member along that journey.

Every detail of the plan should be a building block that helps strengthen the framework and support the other blocks around it. By using this framework, we ensure we are developing useful tactics that have a clear purpose, message and measurement.

We recommend spending time on each section of the Marketing Plan Framework, starting from the vision and working your way down through the tactics.

Over the pages that follow we will walk through each section, what to include, what to consider and tips to develop ideas for each.

Vision	Organizational Vision			
Personas/Audiences	Demographics, psychographics, buying patterns...			
Current State	% of portfolio, market share, mindset, strengths, weaknesses, threats			
1-Year SMART State	% of portfolio, market share, mindset...			
Buyer's Journey	Awareness (make sure they know you're there)	Consideration (communicate your offering and its fit)	Decision (in the moment, affect the choice)	Retention (keep them happy, advocate, NPS)
Key Messages	Head/heart appeal	Head/heart appeal	Head/heart appeal	Head/heart appeal
Tactics	A Tactics	C Tactics	D Tactics	R Tactics
	A Tactics	C Tactics	D Tactics	R Tactics
	A Tactics	C Tactics	D Tactics	R Tactics

Vision

Before you start your marketing planning, get clear on your organization's vision or strategic destination. Your LGBT+ marketing plan needs to be consistent and representative of where you are going as an organization. Each tactic carried out from your marketing plan should help work toward the vision (what you want your organization to be). Authenticity is key, and if your customers can't see themselves in your vision, then they won't come along for the ride.

Your vision should be a challenging, inspiring, believable statement of the future. It should be empowering, and people should feel connected to it. All of your audiences need to connect to it in their own specific way.

Tips for developing your strategic vision:

- **Quantify your vision:** What do you want your company to be worth in five years? How many customers do you want to serve? In how many cities/provinces/countries? The more specific you can be, the easier it will be to work toward your goals.
- **Be descriptive:** Your vision needs to be easy for your stakeholders to —you guessed it— visualize. What will you offer to people? How will they interact with your product/service? How will it differ from everything else out there?
- **Picture what you want your stakeholders to say about you five years from now:** Go into the future and be a fly on the wall — imagine a conversation between people that your organization wants to serve. What are they saying about you? Why do they love you? Why do they buy into what you're doing?

Sidebar: Sample Visions or Strategic Destination

Short-form sample:

We want to create experiences and services that support all of the communities we serve. We will do this by listening to our customers, adapting our offering based on their feedback and giving back to those same communities when we have the chance.

Long-form sample:

Our business is focused on the long-term health and prosperity of our people and the customers we serve. We will grow our business to 1 million dollars by creating memorable experiences that authentically connect the customers who purchase them. Our business will be inclusive and respectful of the diverse perspectives of all groups. We will:

- Incorporate imagery that is reflective of the customers we server
- We will speak inclusively to all of our customers but acknowledge their differences
- Commit to giving back to the communities that help us thrive
- Promote emotional wellness and a safe, friendly environment for all

Personas/Audiences

Your audiences should be at the heart of your strategy. In this part of the marketing plan, you want to outline the specific target audiences you are trying to reach. Some people call them target audiences, some call them personas and others call them stakeholders. To put it simply, they are different groups of people with similar characteristics to whom you want to market your product or services.

By outlining these audiences, you will be able to provide them with relevant and meaningful messaging, promotions and offers.

Each group is made up of different individuals with unique traits. Demographics, psychographics, buying patterns, job positions and family status are some of these factors. You should consider their common challenges, opportunities, strengths and objections.

Choosing Your Audiences

You may already have your audiences set, but if not, you can use these tips to help you land on your perfect fit. We suggest choosing a maximum of three audiences. This ensures you don't spread yourself too thin and are able to effectively communicate with each group.

It's important to note that openly marketing to the LGBT+ community may have an impact on other audiences you serve. Positively, many allies will actively look for inclusive businesses to support and want to associate themselves with brands that value diversity. When you market to LGBT+ audiences, you will also reach their ally networks which can extend your reach exponentially.

You may have some apprehensions about taking an active position with your brand or feeling like you might "turn off" some customers but it's important to remember that 66% of consumers think it is important for brands to take public stands on social and political issues*. In the end, if you believe in the importance of inclusivity, losing some homophobic customers may not be a concern.

- **Research:** Look at your website traffic, analytics, sales data, social media engagement, etc. and see what insights they can provide. It is a lot easier to attract customers who are similar to the ones you already have than attract a completely different audience. Use this research to inform your audience selection. You can look at industry or association reports to see audience trends in your industry and geography.
- **Brainstorm:** Bring together your leadership team or a crew from your organization and conduct an audience brainstorm. Spend time writing down any audiences who have purchased from you in the past, audiences you would love to work with and audiences you might have opportunities with. Once you have done this, try putting together a value proposition for each of them and see which audiences feel most viable. Then you can expand your selected audience profiles with more detail.
- **Speak to existing customers:** Talking to your existing customers is a great place to get insight. If you have good relationships with your customers, it might be worth conducting a brainstorm or focus group with them to look for additional opportunities. If you currently work with LGBT+ customers, we suggest reaching out to them and asking them for more insight into who you might be able to connect with and how to make the connection. Be sure to show your appreciation to those who are willing to offer their time to improve your product or service.

- **SWOT:** SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. If you have a sense of some of the audiences that might be a good fit for you, try doing a SWOT analysis on each. For each audience, write down as many things as you can for each of these four areas.
- **Choose from CGLCC's LGBT+ Traveller Niche Archetypes:** CGLCC has developed niche archetypes or profiles for common Canadian LGBT+ travellers and their preferences (encompassing activity preferences and some data regarding their demographics across LGBT+ communities). You may want to use these archetypes as a starting point for your own audience development. If you would like more information on these archetypes and how to develop products and tours for them, check out CGLCC's Developing LGBT+ Products and Tours resource.

Safety-Conscious Travellers

Safety is the most important factor for these individuals when choosing a travel destination. Of these:

- 45% are women, whereas 38% are men.
- This is an important factor in determining travel plans for all sexual identities, with over 60% of bisexual, gay and lesbian travellers identifying safety as a very important factor.
- Safety is an important factor regardless of age, with at least 53% of each age bracket from 18-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56-65 and 65+) viewing safety as very important.
- 59% of the population view safety as a very important factor when choosing a travel destination, and 89% value safety when choosing a destination.

Metropolitan Foodies

Food and dining-related activities are the most engaged with during leisure trips for this group. These individuals:

- Prefer to plan trips to major metropolitan cities, with 82% planning at least one trip to a city annually and 19% planning three or more a year.
- 33% of this group spends more than \$2,000 per leisure trip, 5% higher than the average LGBT+ traveller.
- 42% of those that view dining activities as very important are women, whereas 36% are men.
- 56% of travellers report engaging in food and dining-related activities during leisure trips.

Practical Lodging Travellers

Cost and minimizing expenditure is the most important factor for these individuals when planning leisure trip accommodations.

- This group is more likely to consist of budget travellers, with 37% of this group spending less than \$1,000 per trip.
- Women are more likely to view cost and minimizing expenditure as very important, with 46% of this group being women and 33% being men.
- 24% of this population will always stay at family or friend's homes during their leisure trips, and 20% always staying at hotel chains.
- 46% of individuals view cost and minimizing expenditure as a very important factor when choosing leisure travel accommodations.

Frequent Travellers

These individuals are likely to travel regularly within Canada.

- 33% of the population went on 3 or more trips in Canada over the last year.
- A third use their car for leisure trips.
- 42% of this population spends less than \$1,000 per trip, with 79% spending under \$2,000 per trip.
- This archetype is driven by the 34% of the individuals that take three or more short leisure trips per year.

Value Travellers

These individuals prefer booking leisure trips to destinations and choosing accommodations that offer good value for money rather than following recommendations from friends and family.

- 32% of millennial travellers (aged 26-35) value going on trips that do not require large budgets.
- 53% of the population maximizes long-term savings by staying at specific hotel chains for loyalty membership points rather than local accommodations or Airbnb.
- 33% spend less than \$1,000 per trip.
- 46% of travellers view cost-minimizing as a very important factor when choosing a leisure travel destination.

Cultural Explorers

These individuals prefer planning trips to explore different locations and cultures rather than to destress and relax. They have a strong preference for exploring destinations with LGBT+ history and culture.

- This archetype aligns with individuals that engage in arts & culture activities and attend festivals or LGBT+ events at their travel destinations.
- 34% of these individuals find LGBT+ history and culture important when choosing a leisure travel destination.

Influencer-Driven Travellers

These individuals refer to travel forums, blogs or Instagram influencers when planning a leisure trip.

- Prefer to plan a trip six months in advance rather than starting to plan a trip two weeks prior.
- 37% of the population view reviews and ratings as very important when booking leisure accommodations.
- 11% consider reviews on LGBT+ travel sites as very important when planning.
- 26% of these individuals take cues from LGBT+ specific influencers/resources when planning a trip.

1-Year SMART State

Once you have your LGBT+ audiences established, take some time to put together SMART states or goals for each one. We suggest evaluating how you are currently performing with your audiences and looking forward one year to map out where you would like to be with each of your segments.

What's a SMART GOAL

S	Specific	What exactly do we want to accomplish and what actions do we need to take to get there?
M	Measurable	How will we measure success? (sales, conversion, brand awareness goals, etc.)
A	Actionable/Achievable	Are our goals achievable? Do we have any evidence to back this up?
R	Relevant	Do our audience goals align with our overall vision and our audiences expectations?
T	Timely	What is the time frame to get things done?

Once you have a handle on what a SMART goal or state is, map out details for each of your audiences for their Current state and their one-year SMART state.

- 1. Current State:** Articulate how you are currently doing with each audience. Indicators like percent of the portfolio, market share, mindset, strengths, weaknesses, threats and connection to vision should be considered. You might find it difficult to get too many specific numbers for your audiences if you haven't already been tracking them. No need to worry, simply use the first year of a new marketing plan to establish some benchmarks and get a handle on what is achievable.
- 2. 1-Year SMART State:** What progress do you want to have made with this audience in a year? Articulate where you want to be with each audience. Include detailed goals for percent of the portfolio, market share, mindset, strengths, weaknesses, threats, connection to vision and any other relevant achievements.

Buyer's Journey

Don't forget about sales when developing your marketing plan. Avoid disproportionately focusing on costly awareness tactics like ad campaigns and cold outreach and miss tactics and ideas that are meant to close the deal with a customer.

Sales and marketing are directly linked and every single thing you do in marketing should support the sales journey. To ensure this happens, outline the buyer's journey for each of your audiences and develop messaging and tactics to support customers as they move along the journey.

For example, while a new ad campaign geared at an LGBT+ audience might be effective, you might find that turning your existing LGBT+ customers into advocates through a loyalty program or offering additional perks to improve their purchase experience is a more valuable solution.

For the marketing plan, you should take time to map out the buyer's journey for each of your audiences.

Buyer's Journey: Awareness

At the awareness stage, you need to focus on identifying common challenges that your audience is facing and provide them with valuable advice and ideas to help improve their lives.

To better understand what Awareness looks like, try going answering the following questions for each of your audiences:

- How does this audience describe their goals or challenges?
- How does this audience educate themselves on these goals or challenges?
- What are the consequences of inaction by this audience?
- Are there common misconceptions that this audience has about addressing their goal or challenge?
- How does this audience decide whether the goal or challenge should be prioritized?

(questions from Hubspot, reference)

Buyer's Journey: Consideration

At the consideration stage, our audience knows who we are and we can now start telling them about what we have to offer. We want to focus on communicating a fit with our products and services and articulating what it is that makes us different.

To better understand what Consideration looks like, try going through the following questions for each of your audiences:

- What categories of solutions does this audience investigate?
- How does this audience educate themselves on the various categories?
- How does this audience perceive the pros and cons of each category?
- How does this audience decide which category is right for them?

(questions from Hubspot, reference)

Buyer's Journey: Decision

At the decision stage, ensure your audience feels confident enough with your offering to proceed. Sales information should be presented to them in a way they understand, your track record should be known to them and you should make them feel comfortable that they are making the right choice.

Address what the decision looks like for each audience – what will make them decide now and what will make them choose you?

To better understand what Decision looks like, try going through the following questions for each of your audiences:

- What criteria does this audience use to evaluate the available offerings?
- When this audience investigates your company's offering, what do they like about it compared to alternatives? What concerns do they have with your offering?
- Who needs to be involved in the decision? For each person involved, how does their perspective on the decision differ?
- Does this audience have expectations around trying the offering before they purchase it?
- Outside of purchasing, does this audience need to make additional preparations, such as implementation plans or training strategies?

Sidebar: Pricing and Decision Making

Pricing is one of the most important aspects of the decision phase of the buyer's journey.

Although the LGBT+ travel market has, on average, a greater discretionary income, they still need to see value in what they are spending their money on. When pricing products or packages for your LGBT+ consumer segment, be sure they are priced competitively compared to your other offerings. Your pricing strategy needs to align with your brand positioning while considering significant differentiation for the market. Unless there is distinguishable added value to the product, LGBT+ consumers will not buy it at a premium just because you are speaking directly to them. The LGBT+ consumer is loyal and supportive of companies and destinations that support them, but they are also aware of those companies that are just after the "pink dollar."



Buyer's Journey: Retention

Too often, this stage gets missed in the buyer's journey – keeping your existing customers happy can often go a lot farther with less effort needed than trying to find new ones. One of the many positives of marketing to the LGBT+ community is that once you have developed a relationship, brand loyalty is high. When underrepresented communities authentically see themselves in your organization they will advocate on your behalf and will often commit to supporting you, even if that comes at a premium. 78% of LGBT+ adults and their friends, family and relatives would switch to brands that are known to be LGBT-friendly and 70% of LGBT adults say they would pay a premium for a product from a company that supports the LGBT community.*

Given this, retention becomes an increasingly important part of your marketing journey. At the Retention stage, ensure your customers feel taken care of and they understand that you offer new and different products and services that help them with other challenges. Focus on advocacy and ensuring your customers have a place to share your vision.

- What can you give this audience to help them advocate for your brand?
- How can you get this audience to leave reviews?
- What will keep them coming back?
- Can you do anything special to make their experience more memorable or more shareable?

Key Messages

Once you have gotten clear on what each stage of the buyer's journey looks like for all of your audiences, start putting together your key marketing messages. This will help you and your team when you are developing tactics.

There are different ways to develop key messages, but we suggest breaking messages down into two categories: Head messages and Heart messages.

Head Appeal Messages:

Focus on how to appeal to the logical part of your audience's mind. Think about the practical and tangible benefits of your offering and give them reasons to choose your product or service. For example:

- Our product costs 25% less than our competition
- We offer exceptional customer service

Heart Appeal Message:

Appeal to your audience on an emotional level. Build a connection with them and help them achieve something more than a purchase. For example:

- Use our product and save time for what matters
- Feel a sense of community with other LGBT+ customers

Here are some things to keep in mind when developing your Head and Heart messages.

Step into the Customer's Shoes

To be effective in your messaging, you need to empathize with your customers. As you think about your head and heart messages, it's helpful to picture one or two of your best customers specifically. What would you say to them in a conversation if you were trying to sell them on your product or service? While you can probably offer your products or services to a wide variety of people, it's a lot easier to build your messaging by focusing on one or two specific customers.

Don't Struggle to Be the Best, Instead Be Different

Every industry has a lot of competition, so if you simply try to say that your product or service is the best, you're going to get lost in the fray. How are you different from every other option out there? Focus your messaging around the answer to that question. Don't try to capture all of your great features in one fell swoop. It's easier to hook someone's interest by building your brand around one or two unique qualities.

Consistency is Key

People don't like surprises when it comes to their purchase decisions. Many people conduct online research, read reviews or talk to friends before making a decision to buy (especially if it's something expensive). Your brand and messaging plays a big role in setting that expectation, so if a customer decides to buy from you, the product or service needs to deliver.



Tactics

Now that you have your audiences identified, your goals mapped out and your key messages indicated, it's time to start brainstorming and developing your tactics. Tactics are the tangible actions and approaches you are going to take to reach your customers. A tactic could be an ad campaign, a targeted blog, an initiative in which you collect reviews from your customers. It doesn't matter the size or scale of the tactic, what matters is that you determine what they are and where in the buyer's journey you are going to use them. Remember, a tactic's purpose is to help move your audience toward the next stage of the journey.

For each tactic, outline what the tactic is, why you've selected it, who will own it, when it needs to be completed, how you will measure its success, its cost and how you will resource it.

Use this table for each tactic you develop.

Tactics	Define the tactic and what part of the buyer's journey it belongs to.
About	Describe the tactic and your plan to get it done.
Why	It is helpful to articulate why you have chosen a particular tactic. Especially as the year progresses, this serves as a good reminder and will help you explain why you've chosen an approach if anyone on your team asks.
Ownership	Specify who in your organization is going to own a tactic. This is important as it keeps you accountable.
Partner	If you need the support of an outside partner or agency to complete a project, indicate that as soon as possible.
Timing	When will you develop, launch or promote each tactic? It is helpful to articulate this and ideally map it out on a blocking or gantt chart.
Key Measurement	For every tactic you want to include a key measurement. Earlier in the SMART goals section you mapped out audience goals, but a key measurement for a tactic should also be defined. It can be something small like 'number of people to call' or something more complicated like 'number of conversions received on the campaign'.

Brainstorming Tactics

The best way to develop your tactics is to have a brainstorm. To do this, set aside time with your team, community members, friends or family. Brainstorm tactics for each of your audiences separately and spend time on each stage of the buyer's journey. You can start with an hour or two on each. Write down every idea you can think of because in the brainstorming stage, there are no bad ideas. Feel free to get unique or unusual or stick to more traditional marketing methods if that helps the ideas flow.

When you are done brainstorming, plot your tactics in the buyer's journey and see if there are any holes or if you have a well-balanced plan.

When you are brainstorming or developing your tactics, use this channel insight from CGLCC's 2020 Travel Market Guide.

Advertising

There are numerous advertising channels available when looking to reach the LGBT+ consumer. As when deciding on any advertising mix, it is important to know exactly where your chosen audience seeks their travel information.

From CGLCC's research, the following are the top seven sources for leisure travel information for Canadian LGBT+ travellers:

1. Friends
2. Family
3. Official tourism destination websites
4. Hotel/airline brand websites
5. Travel blogs
6. Travel forums
7. Other vacation rental websites

Of those who use LGBT+-specific resources when planning leisure travel trips, the top three sources are LGBT+ influencers, LGBT+ apps with LGBT+ travel forums and LGBT+ media (print, TV and radio) tied for third. Importantly, a majority (76%) would travel to a destination if they know that the destination has an LGBT+-friendly reputation. What are the most effective ways you can build that reputation for your destination? Friends and family recommendations are at the top; however you can also integrate messaging in your other communication and promotional platforms.

Social Media and Influencers

Social media and influencers play an important role in both the planning phase and during the LGBT+ travel experience. Using social media tools and channels to promote your product and services directly to an LGBT+ audience is a great way to stay "top of mind" and show your continued support of the market.

Not all content needs to be LGBT+-specific; they want to know about your mainstream events just as much as everyone else does. But by making your content relevant to LGBT+ travellers, you will ensure that you get their attention. Use channels that are specific to your target segment and, if possible, tailor your message.

For example, if there is a music festival taking place in your destination, try highlighting an artist who is well-known within the LGBT+ community. Although it may not be LGBT+-specific content, it is content that is relevant to LGBT+ travellers.

According to Destination Canada's 2019 research, Instagram was a top influencer for those under 45 years of age. Social media is a way in which friends and family influence each other, which, as you know, was the top-ranked method.

Website

Research indicates that approximately 77% of Canadian LGBT+ travellers consult destination websites when researching their travel plans. Is your website speaking to them? Is there content on your site that is specifically targeted to the LGBT+ traveller? By incorporating LGBT+ content and imagery into your site, you are demonstrating your commitment and inclusiveness. You are actively welcoming LGBT+ travellers to your destination by showcasing the product offerings that meet their needs.

Content can be as subtle as having a rainbow icon or a logo from an LGBT+ affiliation on your site in conjunction with photography that's include a truly diverse group of individuals and couples.

It could be a page that is dedicated to interesting and relevant information (such as listings of events or LGBT+-owned or allied businesses that are actively targeting the market). Or, it might go beyond a dedicated page with an integrated approach using content and imagery throughout to indicate your support of the LGBT+ market and community. Whatever the strategy, it is important to show your commitment to the LGBT+ community in some way, and to show that your destination or tourism business is truly welcoming.

Tradeshows*

LGBT+-targeted consumer shows are a great way to reach the LGBT+ travel market. There are several shows or events that provide this opportunity for you to get your brand in front of the consumer.

From LGBT+-travel specific expos, to LGBT+ lifestyle events (such as same-sex wedding shows), to larger festivals and events (such as local Pride events), LGBT+ consumer shows provide you with a unique opportunity to speak directly with your consumer and to create additional awareness.

When choosing what shows to attend, ensure that there is a fit between the target market of the show and your target audience (psychographically, geographically, etc.). For instance, if you are focusing on couples, then a same-sex wedding show might be a great place to participate.

*For more information, see CGLCC's Hosting Inclusive Events resource guide

Sponsorships & Partnerships*

There are numerous LGBT+-specific activities, events and causes available and looking for support. Find one that aligns with your brand and/or your LGBT+ strategy and see how you can get involved.

To find some of these opportunities, work with your local LGBT+ community leaders to see what is available or incorporate an LGBT+ component into your larger corporate program. For example, if your company supports programs for youth, then include support for LGBT+ youth.

Engage your employees. By seeking their input and participation, you are showing employees within the company how committed you are to the market. Including employees in these activities helps to ensure that your sponsorship and partnership activities are authentic experiences, while furthering employee engagement within the company.

Sponsorships and partnerships with LGBT+ groups and organizations not only provide a promotional opportunity for your destination or company but also show true support for the LGBT+ community and showcase your commitment to this market.

*For more information see CGLCC's Building Community Engagement resource guide

Media Relations

Media plays an integral role in the purchase decision and travel planning process. As previously indicated, LGBT+ travellers consult both mainstream and LGBT+ media for information on where to go and what to do at a destination. These media outlets and their writers are travel influencers, and, by actively engaging them, they will help you to attract more LGBT+ travellers to your business or destination. If you have a media relations team, ensure that they start including LGBT+ media and LGBT+ writers in their contact lists. Encourage your team to work with the local LGBT+ community to find stories of interest to the traveller, such as an upcoming LGBT+ event.

Incorporating LGBT+ content into all of your media kits will showcase how inclusive your destination or tourism business is, not to mention, it can garner extensive coverage. The key is to tell your LGBT+ story to not only the LGBT+ press and writers but to all media streams. It's not just the LGBT+-specific writer or media outlet that will find your upcoming Pride event article-worthy, so make sure your mainstream media contacts also receive the press release.

Familiarization tours are a great way to bring select LGBT+ media and writers to your destination or business and to provide them with an opportunity to experience what you have to offer the LGBT+ traveller. For these events to be successful, you need to engage the local LGBT+ community and make sure they are part of the experience and story.

For a comprehensive list of LGBT+ journalists, visit The Association of LGBT+ Journalists at nljja.org.

Map Your Tactics

Once you have your tactics selected and planned out, you'll want to map them out in a calendar and with a budget. Put everything into one table that allows your team to see what activities are happening each month and how much budget is going to be spent.

Here are a few tips to help you avoid pitfalls in tactic timing:

Avoid the first-quarter stack: Pace yourself and spread tactics over the course of the year. Too often, we stack all of our tactics in the first quarter of the year. We get antsy to get things going and set unrealistic expectations for ourselves.

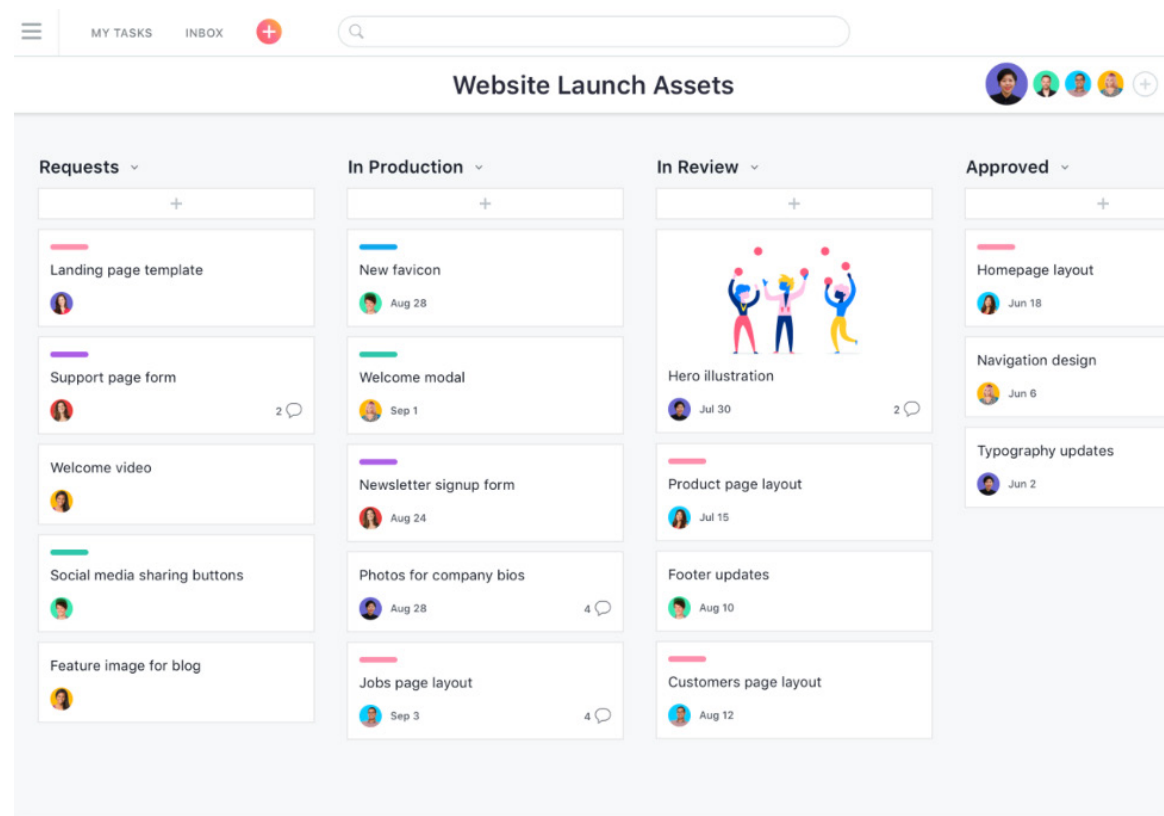
Check your plan quarterly: As important as annual planning is, quarterly check-ins are too. Make sure you are regularly checking the plan, making adjustments based on feedback from customers and any performance you've tracked.

Reserve some contingency: Unique marketing opportunities come up throughout the year, so reserve a portion of your budget to spend on these tactics. Typical contingency budgets range between 10% and 20%.

Marketing Strategy Management

The marketing strategy shouldn't sit in a document, it should be interactive and live through everything you do. It should be shared, reviewed and worked on by multiple people over the next few years. Once you have written your marketing strategy and have the initial plan finalized and tactics developed, you should add all of your approved tactics into either a schedule, an interactive to-do list (like Google Sheets) or an online project management software (like Monday, Asana, Airtable or Trello).

This will encourage your team to stay organized, keep things on track and provide a constant reminder of everything you're doing that's contributing to the vision/strategic destination you outlined in your plan. Each tactic should be entered on its own with a description of the tactic, its intended audience and the desired timelines. It's also helpful to decide who is owning which tactic, and it's important to stay updated on the status of that tactic - always outlining what the next step is. You would ideally use this to manage the progress of your plan on an ongoing basis.



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