



Spartan Marketing Group

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Executive Summary

This report was commissioned to explain Spartan Marketing Group's business purpose and strategy.

The research conducted for this business plan draws attention to the fact that 75% of all small businesses fail for reasons including: ignoring customers, no market need, wrong team, poor marketing, no cash, no business model, mistiming of the product/service, lack of passion, failure to pivot or poor product/service. There are over 1,356,000 small businesses spread throughout the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia. Overall, the small business market in these areas has grown at a 1.1% rate which is slower than the average national growth of 1.2% for the industry.

The problem that Spartan Marketing Group addresses is the failure rate of small businesses. We address this issue by creating unique business plans for these small businesses. We have identified the types of small business owners that exist and how to reach them. By using the right mediums, we are able to reach each business owner at their point of need and deliver a message that will compel them to choose us to help improve their business.

We will be successful because we have done the appropriate research and have developed strategic plans to reach our target market. Our business is scheduled to grow in three different phases. The first phase will focus on building our brand and clientele, the second phase will focus on growing our business to service small and medium-sized businesses, and our third phase will incorporate financing options for the businesses we serve.

Situational Analysis

Internal Analysis

Spartan Marketing Group (SMG) is a full-service business consulting company that specializes in creating business plans for small to medium-sized businesses. Our business plans include an analysis of the current state of the company, an analysis of the marketplace/industry that the business operates, identification and evaluation of the closest competitors, demographic and target market identification, marketing plan, pricing strategy and a timeline for success.

Every business should be a direct response to a problem. If your business does not solve a problem, then there is no market or customers for it to succeed. So, what problem is Spartan Marketing Group solving?

According to an article written by Inventors Digest in 2018, 3 out of 4 businesses fail because of multiple reasons including:

1. Ignoring customers
2. No market need
3. Wrong team
4. Poor marketing
5. No cash
6. No business model
7. Mistiming of the product/service
8. Lack of passion
9. Failure to pivot
10. Poor product/service

Spartan Marketing Group aims to solve these problems through our business plans and other services. The proper plan will combat all of these problems and create the foundation for a successful business.

Current Marketing Position

Spartan Marketing Group is currently marketing through the following avenues:

1. Website
2. Blog
3. Social Media - Facebook, Instagram
4. Meetup meetings
5. Word of Mouth / Referrals

We position ourselves as a small business with a market penetration strategy. This strategy is intended to present an affordable option to small business owners while taking market share from the more expensive competitors. We will provide the same quality of services for a lower price. Our margins are currently smaller than the competition, but this is necessary to establish brand recognition in the market. Once our brand is established, we are able to justify an increase in costs.

Sales & Financial Analysis

Spartan Marketing Group is still in the developmental stage of the business so we do not currently have sales. As stated earlier, we will adopt a market penetration strategy. Our full business plans are currently start at \$500 per plan and may increase due to the complexity of the business. All flyers and other printed marketing materials will be priced at \$30 per piece. Other consulting services will be evaluated on an individual basis with a base charge of \$25/hour. Initial consultations will be offered at gratis.

External Analysis

Industry Analysis

Spartan Marketing Group is focusing on a niche market within the Management Consulting industry. Over the next five years, the industry is expected to grow at the same rate of the general US economy. Over the past five years, the Management Consulting industry has been successful as rising corporate profitability and increasing business expenditure resulted in higher demand for advisory services. In recent years, demand for this industry has come from a variety of sectors. By specializing in this niche market, we will be able to create a submarket and service those people who are not currently being serviced.

Competitor Analysis

Spartan Marketing Group operates within the Maryland, DC, Virginia market. Our top competitors include Cayenne Consulting, Wise Business Plans and independent business plan writers.

Wise Business Plans

Wise Business Plans is an online business plan writing service. They are staffed with professional writers, researchers and financial experts. They offer a variety of services including graphic design, market research and management consulting. They target

medium to enterprise-sized businesses and focus on helping businesses position themselves for a potential investment.

Spartan Marketing Group positions themselves to target small to medium-sized businesses. Although we are able to service larger companies, our primary focus is on helping businesses grow organically and without a financial investment.

Cayenne Consulting

Cayenne Consulting offers business plan writing, financial forecasting, market research, market analysis, competitor analysis and advising services. Their plans are focused to position companies for an investment. They adopt a premium pricing strategy as their cost for services range from a few thousand to tens of thousands per plan, targeting medium to enterprise-sized businesses.

As you can see from two of our top competitors, Spartan Marketing Group services an underserved market, the small to medium-sized businesses. We provide the same services at a pricing strategy that is affordable to small and medium-sized business owners.

Marketplace Analysis

Spartan Marketing Group is located in Prince George's County, MD and currently services small businesses in the DC, MD and Virginia area. Even though these states are in close proximity, there is a different culture in each one of these states. We must evaluate the difference between each in order to develop successful business plans for the businesses in each of those areas.

In 2017, there were 71,146 small businesses in DC accounting for 98.2% of all businesses in the area. 29,958 of these businesses were minority-owned. In the second quarter of 2016, the District of Columbia grew at an annual rate of 1.7%, which was faster than the overall US growth rate of 1.2%, which suggests that this is a great area for aspiring business owners to begin their business. This also indicates that the competition in the area is increasing.

The graphic below shows the demographic breakdown of small businesses in the DC market.

BUSINESS OWNER DEMOGRAPHICS

Figure 2: District of Columbia Small Business Ownership, 2012

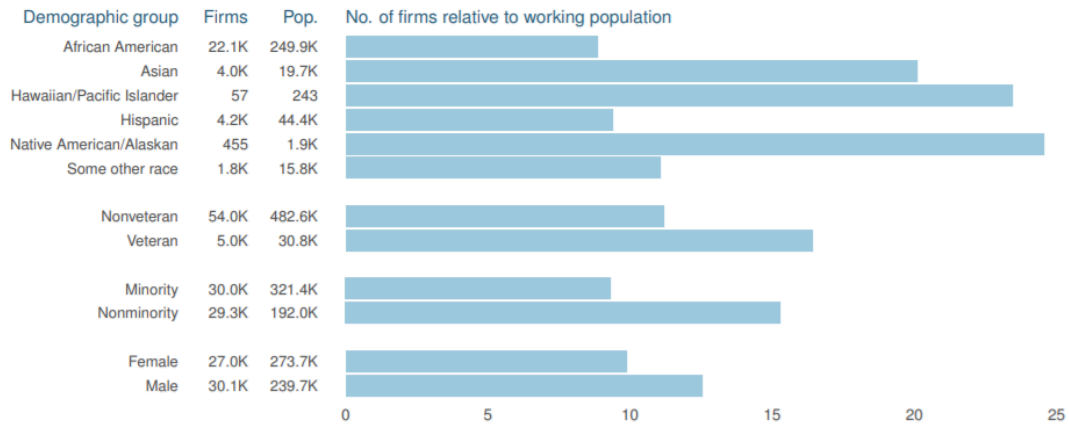
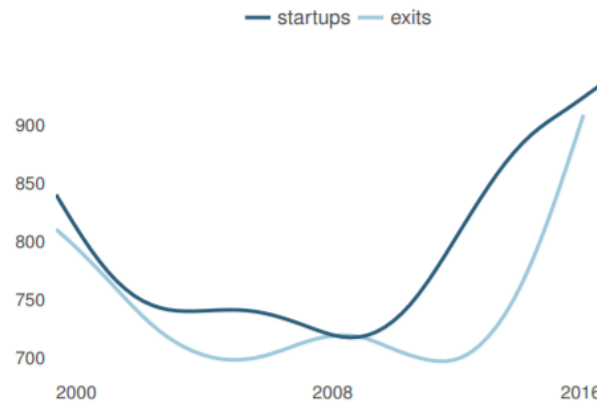


Figure 2 displays the number of small firms (SBO) per 100 people 16 years and over (ACS). For example, there are approximately 10 female-owned firms per 100 working age females or $27.0K \div 273.7K \times 100$. ACS and SBO differ in their classifications of individuals reporting more than one race. ACS provides a distinct category for two or more races while SBO tabulates these businesses into more than one group.

Although there was a steady increase in the number of small businesses being created, there was also a steady number of businesses that failed as seen in the graphic below.

BUSINESS TURNOVER

Figure 3: District of Columbia Quarterly Startups and Exits



The main types of businesses identified in DC can be shown in the following image.

SMALL BUSINESSES BY INDUSTRY

Table 2: District of Columbia Small Businesses by Industry and Firm Size, 2014

Industry	1-499 Employees	1-20 Employees	Nonemployer Firms	Total Small Firms
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	4,038	3,307	15,517	19,555
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	3,605	2,789	7,329	10,934
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,674	1,361	4,696	6,370
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	710	593	4,995	5,705
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	272	223	4,636	4,908
Administrative, Support, and Waste Management	642	440	3,425	4,067
Transportation and Warehousing	106	83	3,317	3,423
Educational Services	467	296	2,820	3,287
Retail Trade	1,234	1,105	1,866	3,100
Accommodation and Food Services	1,805	1,226	1,163	2,968
Construction	431	334	2,070	2,501
Information	378	271	1,531	1,909
Finance and Insurance	387	276	956	1,343
Wholesale Trade	247	199	297	544
Manufacturing	90	82	304	394
Utilities	5	5	55	60
Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing and Hunting	1	1	32	33
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	3	2	4	7
Total	16,133	12,680	55,013	71,146

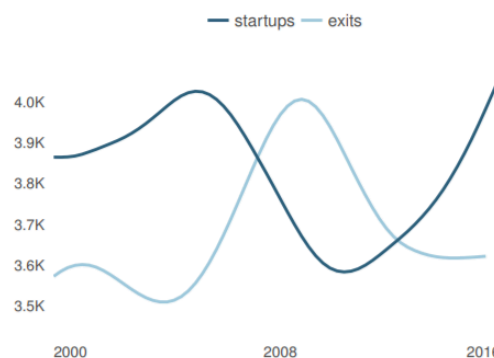
Data for counties shown in white in Figure 4 and values labeled "s" in Tables 1 and 2 were withheld by the Census Bureau because they do not meet publication standards or could disclose information regarding individual businesses. (Source: SUSB, NES)

As of 2017, Maryland had a recorded 579,173 registered small businesses accounting for 99.5% of businesses in the state. 35% of these businesses are minority-owned. In the second quarter of 2016, Maryland grew at an annual rate of 1.0%, which was slower than the overall US growth rate of 1.2%.

Maryland has seen a good number of small businesses become successful as indicated by the diagram below.

BUSINESS TURNOVER

Figure 3: Maryland Quarterly Startups and Exits



There is a level of diversity in the types of businesses in Maryland.

SMALL BUSINESSES BY INDUSTRY

Table 2: Maryland Small Businesses by Industry and Firm Size, 2014

Industry	1-499 Employees	1-20 Employees	Nonemployer Firms	Total Small Firms
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	17,637	15,817	75,836	93,473
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	12,601	11,496	65,654	78,255
Health Care and Social Assistance	12,074	10,414	53,286	65,360
Construction	13,659	12,195	47,302	60,961
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	4,280	3,884	47,783	52,063
Administrative, Support, and Waste Management	6,879	5,821	41,115	47,994
Retail Trade	10,893	9,822	32,998	43,891
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1,841	1,512	27,281	29,122
Transportation and Warehousing	2,796	2,395	24,758	27,554
Educational Services	1,864	1,442	17,005	18,869
Accommodation and Food Services	8,847	6,789	7,741	16,588
Finance and Insurance	3,835	3,422	11,694	15,529
Wholesale Trade	4,351	3,466	5,896	10,247
Information	1,215	977	6,790	8,005
Manufacturing	2,656	2,016	4,493	7,149
Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing and Hunting	187	178	3,228	3,415
Utilities	32	24	576	608
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	49	34	80	129
Total	105,657	91,989	473,516	579,173

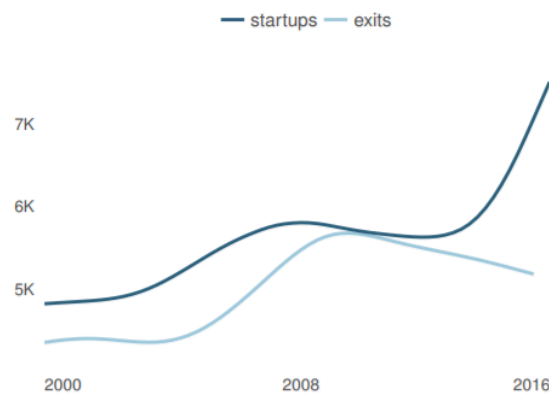
Data for counties shown in white in Figure 4 and values labeled "s" in Tables 1 and 2 were withheld by the Census Bureau because they do not meet publication standards or could disclose information regarding individual businesses. (Source: SUBS, NES)

99.5% of all businesses in Virginia are small businesses, accounting for 706,626 businesses. 184,956 of those businesses are minority-owned. Virginia grew at an annual rate of 0.6%, which was slower than the overall US growth rate of 1.2% in the 2nd quarter of 2016.

In the 2nd quarter of 2015, 79% of all businesses established exited the market.

BUSINESS TURNOVER

Figure 3: Virginia Quarterly Startups and Exits



Below is the diversity of businesses in the state.

SMALL BUSINESSES BY INDUSTRY

Table 2: Virginia Small Businesses by Industry and Firm Size, 2014

Industry	1-499 Employees	1-20 Employees	Nonemployer Firms	Total Small Firms
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	25,184	22,563	91,085	116,269
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	19,621	18,103	81,863	101,484
Construction	18,672	17,038	60,559	79,231
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	6,287	5,858	63,577	69,864
Retail Trade	15,032	13,543	43,214	58,246
Health Care and Social Assistance	14,124	11,980	42,254	56,378
Administrative, Support, and Waste Management	8,622	7,372	46,681	55,303
Transportation and Warehousing	3,825	3,281	30,574	34,399
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	2,589	2,166	31,269	33,858
Educational Services	2,637	2,123	20,133	22,770
Accommodation and Food Services	12,328	9,689	8,103	20,431
Finance and Insurance	5,200	4,729	14,614	19,814
Wholesale Trade	5,086	4,072	7,110	12,196
Manufacturing	4,187	3,112	5,912	10,099
Information	1,757	1,375	7,998	9,755
Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing and Hunting	647	616	4,991	5,638
Utilities	66	44	446	512
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	157	104	214	371
Total	146,029	128,222	560,597	706,626

Data for counties shown in white in Figure 4 and values labeled "s" in Tables 1 and 2 were withheld by the Census Bureau because they do not meet publication standards or could disclose information regarding individual businesses. (Source: SUSB, NES)

All three of these evaluations are based on a small sample size of data, but are a snapshot of the current situation of small businesses in each area.

Target Demographic

Spartan Marketing Group currently targets small businesses with 1-50 employees. In order to be successful, we must know who we are selling to and how we should sell to them.

The general profile of a small business can often times lie within the profile of the owner. The small business owner is the primary source for the strategic direction for the business and they have a substantial impact on the success or failure of the business. As it relates to Spartan Marketing Group, the business owner would decide whether or not to use our services.

The first step to success for any business owner is the strategic plan. Contained in this plan is the identity and competitive advantage of the business. If any issues occur, the owner should resort to the source of the business, the business plan, to either continue or redirect their business. It is the foundation for how and why decisions are made.

Many of these business owners operate their businesses on a limited budget. Because of this, they are frugal when it comes to spending money on new ventures or opportunities. They are expecting a return on every investment they make as they do not have room for multiple financial failures like a large corporation could tolerate.

Before we begin to identify the types of business owners, we must look at the demographics of the small business owner overall. Small business owners are more affluent than other Americans. The average income is over \$71,000 annually, higher than

21% of the U.S. population. They have an average age of 50 and have a standard deviation of 3-4 years.

Small business owners also have slightly different buying habits than the average American. 20% are more likely to buy from marketing materials they receive in the mail and 30% are more interested in technology than the remaining population. Below is a chart that shows how receptive small business owners are to email marketing.

E-mail receptivity

Percentage of small-business owners by industry who are more likely to be receptive to e-mail

Rank	Industry	Percent more likely
1	Services	73
2	Finance, insurance, real estate	69
3	Public administration	68
4	Wholesale trade	56
5	Manufacturing	53
6	Retail trade	53
7	Construction	41
8	Mining	33
9	Transportation	15
10	Agriculture, forestry, fishing	-24

Infusion Soft has identified four types of small business owners, the Passion Creator, Freedom Seeker, Legacy Builder and Struggling Survivor. We will analyze each and provide the best way to interact with each.

Passion Creators began their business because they simply love what they do. Their passion and expertise drives the business to success. 41% of these owners operate two or more businesses, 32% employ 5 or more people, 43% work in an office outside of their home and 14% reported revenues over \$1 million in 2013. Not only is this group perhaps the most successful, but they are often the most optimistic about the future success of the business.

Passion Creators are also the most marketing and tech savvy of the 4 types of small business owners. 48% of these owners spend \$500 or more per month on marketing activities. These activities may include but are not limited to email marketing, direct mailers, tradeshow, social media, and search engine optimization. It is noted that 65% use social media, 70% use email marketing tools, 48% use content marketing tools such as online blogs and 39% use search engine optimization methods.

The Freedom Seeker's main purpose for starting their business is the ability to control their work schedule, career path and work environment. They desire to live the life they always dreamed of and a successful business is the way they will achieve this lifestyle. 57% of freedom seekers find flexibility in their schedule to spend time with their families, 52% want to be in control of their environment, and 42% want flexibility in their schedule to

travel. Business owners that identify with this group have little to no desire to work “9-5 schedules”.

Freedom Seekers are also use technology to improve the efficiency of their business. 57% use automated bookkeeping technology, 61% use automated email marketing, 47% use automated payment processing, 46% use customer reference management software, 44% use email autoresponders and 38% use automated contact management systems.

Freedom seekers have no further desire to work for someone else as they are unable to control their schedules. These business owners use the knowledge they have acquired to begin their business. 29% provide business coaching or consulting services.

Legacy Builders are forward-thinking individuals who attempt to bring something new to the marketplace. They look to identify the products or services that have not yet been invented to solve a major problem. These business owners focus on creating a sustainable business that is capable of supporting their family in the future. They make investments in their business that will support the long-term goal.

80% of all legacy builders run one business so that they are able to invest all of their time and energy into it. Because the investments they make are for the future, they spend more time to research and consider all possibilities before making a final decision. They rely on their experience and expertise to run a successful business and are less dependent on technology for this reason. 45% do not have a functioning website and 21% do not use bookkeeping, email marketing or automated payment processing tools.

Many Legacy Builders do not use new marketing tactics to their advantage. Many do not use email marketing, content marketing such as blogs, search engine optimization, pay-per-click advertising or marketing automation to generate more business. Although they do not always use technology, they are interested in finding the right tools to use. 40% cited that identifying which software to use was a key area of difficulty.

The last type of business owner identified is the Struggling Survivor. The description of the name is exactly what most businesses fear, the struggle to survive. 53% of these business owners have considered closing their business. Some businesses, regardless of business model or expertise of the owner are not successful. They strongly consider returning to a corporate job to gain more financial security and stability.

These business owners are jacks of all trades, but masters of none. This can be detrimental to a small business owner because they are not able to focus their time and energy on developing one business to the stage where it is able to sustain itself before moving to the next. They also do not employ others to help distribute their work. 51% of struggling survivors run their business alone.

Marketing to Small Businesses

We know what the small business owner looks like, but how do we market to them? Time and money are the two most important things to a small business owner. They will only purchase your product or service if you can prove to them how you will either save them time and money or earn them more time and money.

One of the best ways to learn how to market to a certain demographic is to hear it from them. John Jantsch, owner of Duct Tape Marketing, wrote an article about how to market to small business owners. He identified a few ways to market to small business owners that I want to highlight. These are the ways Spartan Marketing Group will market to our customers.

The first objective is to understand that small business owners focus on solving current issues quickly. Small business owners would ideally want to have a long-term plan, but are focused on the short-term success. Once you are able to solve their short term problem, they would be willing to trust you with other projects.

The second objective is to sell the value of the product or service over the price. Once they understand the value of what they are getting, they will be willing to spend the money. The key is to educate, not to sell. Small business owners can identify a salesman easily and will be quick to distrust you if they feel you do not have their best interest at heart.

The third objective is to stay in contact with the owner. If you abandon them after the sell, you have ruined your chance of future sales. They need help to implement the plan. A great way to follow-up is to give them results. Spartan Marketing Group would be able to do this by showing the increase in sales after the implementation of the business plan.

The last objective that we have identified is to be loyal to the customer. If you solve the problem, they will stay loyal to you. They will become apart of your sales team and market for you with the most proven marketing method, word of mouth marketing.

We identified four types of small business owners earlier in our plan and should identify how to market to them. We do not want to rely on the methods of one business owner, so combining the two ideas should help us target our demographic more efficiently.

Since Passion Creators are the most successful of the types of small business owners that we identified. They currently use multiple marketing techniques successfully and pay for marketing on a monthly basis. We must take a consultative approach to these owners. They already have successful marketing and if we do not approach them with a unique idea, they will not purchase our services. We must personalize our approach so it is tough to generalize exactly how to market to them as each will be different. We must identify those areas in marketing that they could improve in and identify a step by step process for how to improve that type of marketing.

Freedom Seekers are technologically sound but do have room to improve their marketing. They are experts in their field so we must acknowledge this and yield to their expertise. The best way to market to these business owners is to explain the types of marketing avenues they should use thoroughly. They are smart enough to understand the marketing and will only purchase if they completely understand what they are buying. Appeal to how this investment will help create independence for themselves and their business. They do not want to go back to a corporate environment so will invest as much in their business as they can to ensure that it is successful.

Legacy Builders think solely about the future. They want their business to sustain not only themselves, but their family as well. The best way to sell to them is to help them understand that this purchase is an investment in to the future of their business. They must be convinced that new-age marketing is the best way to help sustain their business. They must be educated on the future benefits of this current investment. They may need someone to help assist them in running the marketing methods.

The Struggling Survivor is in desperate need of funds in the short term. They are not confident that their business will be sustainable much longer, so the initial marketing must yield results quickly. They do not have the cash to spend so if they do, they will need quick results. This is a contradiction in marketing so the best marketing methods must be of little to no cost to them.

Mission Statement / Vision Statement

Mission: To develop complete business plans that once implemented will help create a successful business.

Vision: To create successful small businesses.

Marketing Objectives

What do we want to achieve? Our goal is to assist small businesses become successful. The purpose of our business is to help these business owners and decrease the number of small businesses the fail. Our marketing action plans will address this issue.

Critical Issues

How could we possibly fail? There are three ways that we have identified where we could fail. The are if we are: unable to reach our target market, the businesses we reach either do not have the money or are unwilling to to spend the money on a business plan, or the plan

that we develop for them does not help the business to increase sales. Our marketing action plans will help us solve these problems.

Marketing Action Plans

Spartan Marketing Group's marketing plan will help us to become a successful business. To reiterate, Spartan Marketing Group develops business plans for small to medium-sized businesses. Our business plans include an analysis of the current state of the company, an analysis of the market, identification and evaluation of the closest competitors, demographic and target market identification, marketing plan, pricing strategy and a timeline for success.

What is our go to market strategy? We sell directly to the consumer. Because we sell directly to the consumer our marketing efforts have to reflect that. We have a broader range of customers we have to appeal to, so multiple forms of marketing are best to ensure that we create a successful business.

Our business plan is forward-thinking. We see our business experiencing three phases. Phase one focuses on creating brand awareness and building our customer base. Phase two focuses on expanding the business. Phase three focus on investing in the businesses that we develop business plans for.

We will employ the following types of marketing in Phase one:

- Free Initial Consultations complete with a survey that determines what type of business owner they are
- Website
- Content Marketing (blog)
- Social Media (specifically Facebook, Instagram, Youtube and LinkedIn)
- Meetup Meetings
- Exclusive Deals/Discounts
- Word of Mouth
- Small Tradeshows
- Freelancer Bids
- Email Marketing
- Printed Marketing Materials

Phase one will have the widest range of marketing styles. This is because we need to build our brand recognition. The best way is to create different avenues to have multiple touch points with our end customers.

Phase two's marketing initiatives will build on those established in phase one. These activities include:

- Cause Marketing (donating portions of profit to a good cause)
- Customer Rewards Program
- Search Engine Optimization
- Medium-sized Tradeshows
- Direct Mailers

Phase two is focused on scaling the business. By this time, we are expected to have an established and respected brand amongst our customer which we can build on.

Once we successfully implement both phase one and phase two of the business, we will branch into another market, venture capitalism. After our brand is established with our customers, we will begin to invest in those businesses as we see fit. Due to the successful implementation of our marketing plans, our new and existing customers will trust that we are industry experts and our push-style marketing will turn into pull-style marketing where customers begin to reach out to us.

To give a better picture of phase three, we will provide you with a hypothetical situation. Spartan Marketing Group receives a request from a local bakery. They are not growing as a company and the owner is actually incurring an annual loss from operating the business. They come to us to develop a new business plan for them to help increase sales. After conducting diligent research about the company and the surrounding environment, we believe that if our plan is implemented correctly the bakery will be successful. One of the notes in the business plan identifies that if the bakery where to buy new equipment, it would save the owner time and money. Not only would it save time and money, but because of the speed and efficiency of the equipment, the bakery is able to produce more in a shorter amount of time. The owner is unable to pay for the \$50,000 investment in the equipment. Spartan Marketing Group decides to offer to buy the equipment for 15% of the business. As the business grows, the overall worth of the business grows as well. Our initial investment of \$50,000 could grow to a profit of \$100,000 if the business grows to that level.

Identifying a business' marketing mix is a base to build a full marketing plan. The marketing mix identifies how you will price, product/service, promote and place your products. The phased approach in our marketing plan outlines the way we will promote our services. We will price our products based upon the market penetration strategy. We will strive to not be the highest priced bid while not degrading the value of our services. Every business plan will be priced based upon the level of difficulty. Since there is no standard price, our free consultation will include the price of that business' plan. The placement of our services will be through our website.

Controls and Timeline

The implementation of Phase 1 will estimate between 1-3 years. Phase 2 will take between 3-5 years and phase 3 will continue forever.

Phase 1 activities:

Activity	Estimated Launch Date
Initial Consultation	August 2018
Website	August 2018
Blog Creation	August 2018
Word of Mouth	August 2018
Freelancer Bids	August 2018
Social Media Pages	September 2018
Meetup Meetings	September 2018
Printed Marketing Material	September 2018
Email Marketing	November 2018
Exclusive Deals/Discounts	December 2018
Small Tradeshows	April 2019

Phase 2 Activities:

Activity	Estimated Launch Date
Customer Rewards Program	January 2021
Search Engine Optimization	January 2021
Cause Marketing	June 2021
Medium-size tradeshows	June 2022
Direct Mailers	June 2022

Phase 3 Activities:

Activity	Estimated Launch Date
Venture Capitalism	January 2024

Conclusion

Spartan Marketing Group has great potential to become a successful company for years to come. We believe that we have a large target market that is experiencing a common problem. Our solution will solve their problems.

Interested in services, email: spartanmarketing.info@gmail.com.

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