1. What are your Goals? Make a list of realistic goals. For example, do you want to increase market share, enter a new market, change your company's image, etc.

2. Who are your existing customers? Write out a detailed profile that includes geographic locations, industries, company size and titles or function of decision makers. Explain why they buy your product or service as opposed to that of your competitors. Specify what they dislike as well? Be sure to include all issues such as customer service, delivery, etc.

3. Who is your target customer? If different from your existing customers, write out a profile with the same type of criteria listed in question two.

4. Who are your competitors?

The list should include, but not be limited to: Features and benefits of their products. Marketing strategy (what marketing vehicles do they use, what is their message, how aggressive are they, what special offers do they make? Market share or penetration (total and breakdown such as percentage of U.S. market, Europe, etc.)

5. What role does your company play? Describe the features and benefits of your products or services. How does your product or service differ from the competition? How are you currently positioning your product or service? (The best, fastest, least expensive, etc.)

6. What strategy will you use to reach your goals? Write a list of steps or actions to be taken to accomplish your goals. For example, changing your distribution strategy to help increase market share.

7. For each strategy, what mix of direct response programs will be used? Specify who you will be targeting and the media you will use to reach them.

8. How much should you budget.