

Ten Practical Launch Planning Tips

by Mary Sullivan

- 1. Launch Action Plan** - Assign a target date and priority level, identify a resource, and estimate costs for each deliverable in your plan.
- 2. Branding and Positioning** – Be consistent with your branding strategy and complementary to the positioning of your other products.
- 3. Sales Involvement** – Recruit an experienced sales rep for your launch team. It's hard to get sales reps' time, but they know the market better than anyone. The Sales organization will welcome the results of the rep's high quality market feedback.
- 4. Analyst Involvement** – For technical products, industry analysts are key influencers, and early analyst involvement can help validate your positioning.
- 5. Public Relations** – Regardless of the scale of your launch, engage PR at the outset. You won't want to miss key Editorial Calendar dates that match with your introduction.
- 6. Launch Venue** – Choose it ASAP. Any venue – an event such as a trade or private show, a Webinar, or a "Press" launch – takes advance work.
- 7. Sales Launch** – Choose a Kickoff location, a Road Show, a Webinar, or eLearning, and work with Sales to make arrangements. See the March 2004 KickStart Accelerator article, *Launching to Sales with Impact*, for more tips on sales launches.
- 8. Customer Sales Tools** – All customer deliverables should focus on benefits, because they are at the root of customer decisions. With good positioning, this will come naturally.
- 9. Channel Launch** – The channel launch is part of your sales launch, however plan a Partner Launch for your Channel Partner Product Managers so they can plan their own pricing and product introduction.
- 10. Demand Creation** – Make sure you implement lead tracking to measure campaign effectiveness. Testing with pilots of two different campaigns may cost a bit more, but you can finish off with the campaign that delivers the most bang for your buck.

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