

# lingua business

## Playbook



By Paul Gibson

What's in your playbook? This week we take a look at what types of 'plays' can be found inside your company's playbook and see the ones that have made it to the final cut, and proved to be an effective tool to reach your objectives.

In American football or in virtually every team sport, there is a company 'bible' known as the 'playbook'. No, we are not talking about the 'employee handbook' – that is entirely different. The employee handbook contains those company rules and regulations that guide an employee's behaviour as an honoured member of the team. But the playbook is different. As you may have surmised, the word playbook contains two English words – play and book and yes, it is a book of 'plays'.

Plays are measures taken, actions accomplished, or strategic plans. Like many games or matches, companies must perform on a daily basis. At the end of each day, the market gives them a score or ranks their performance, on the basis of how much business they have accomplished following their 'playbook.'

Every company has three separate teams that work together in much the same way as an American football team: you have your defense (legal team, compliance), your offense (your sales, finance, billing, accounting, marketing and PR team) and of course, your own select group called 'special teams.' Depending on the situation you will need to 'call the plays' for the offense, the defense or send in the special teams.

Current market conditions are requiring a unique combination and coordination among these three key departments to make it to the 'end zone' or goal. Unlike this American sport, however, these three teams must all be on the (playing) field simultaneously.

Continuing with our football metaphor, the 'game' of business also has a protagonist – the ball or the final consumer. Companies are competing to get to the final consumer. Many times they will carry the consumer towards their business or lose them, in much the same way a player may 'fumble' or lose the football. Some times, an aggressive marketing campaign can 'intercept' or 'steal' the end consumer from your company. Other times, your key product or service may be 'sacked' by your competitor, resulting in a loss of marketshare (lost yardage in football), or lost opportunity (loss of a 'down').

So depending on who is on the field and their position, your company must act in consequence. Many times they go back to the 'playbook' to take a peak at the strategic actions they believe will help them score and put some points on the board.

\* Here is some practical advice for companies as they explore future possibilities:

## Play Defense

- **Refinance Your Debt** : renegotiate the terms of your debt or raise capital to pay it down.
- **Prioritize Your Debt** : pay off those debts which are absolutely necessary first.
- **Raise Cash Through "Factoring"** : sell your unpaid invoices to a factoring company for cash.
- **Sell Off Non-Critical Assets to Raise Cash**: sell off those parts of your business that are not contributing to your overall growth and performance.
- **Price Optimize for Your Best Customers**: separate your core customers from the deal seekers
- **Rebalance Compensation from Top to Bottom** : sacrifice executive pay for higher salaries at lower levels to send a message of unity.
- **Exploit Revolving Credit**: take out cash directly from a revolving credit account to react to short-term opportunities.
- **Take Advantage of Training Programs**: focus on training as a key element for your top producers, so your business will be ready to rebound after a recession.
- **Cherry Pick Top Talent Away from Rivals**: take advantage of an uncertain situation and steal talent from the competition.
- **Double Down on Strategic Advertising**: show how your product or service will aid consumers in a recession.
- **Capitalize on Affordable Luxuries**: offer services at an inconspicuous price that will suit the consumer, without making them feel guilty about spending.

## Play Offense

- **Land a Private Placement to Fund Critical Investments**: seek out a private investor that allows for more control.

\* Source: BNET – [www.bnet.com](http://www.bnet.com)

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