SAMPLE MARKETING PLAN CHECKLIST FOR AN AUTO REPAIR SHOP
Auto repair is a competitive industry where successful marketing can mean the difference between a successful shop and one that barely scrapes by.

The right marketing plan will cover who your target customers are, how you will reach them, and how to keep them coming back to your shop. A well-tailored plan may include different sections to suit specific needs or exclude others. No matter whether you’ve been in business for thirty-years or you’re opening a new auto shop, the basics, however, should always be in place.

A sample marketing plan for an auto repair shop can include a number of factors, ranging from high level concepts to detailed data collection procedures. Your plan is the framework by which you will increase your revenue and build a broader client base.

WHAT SHOULD YOU INCLUDE IN YOUR MARKETING PLAN?

Here’s your go-to checklist:

Target Markets
Identifying who you will target with your marketing to will affect the overall success of your campaign. When pinpointing your target market, include demographic features such as age, gender, and locality along with their interests. Consider what your target customer wants or needs from their auto shop, and ways that other shops have not met their expectations.

Competitive Analysis
Get a clear understanding of what your competitors are doing successfully (and, if possible, trying unsuccessfully.) Your competitive analysis should touch on everything from current marketing strategies to outstanding business practices. Remember to investigate their social media presence and check out online reviews of their services.

The acronym SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. A SWOT analysis is a high level study of your market positioning from an environmental standpoint.

Your analysis will include aspects of your present marketing and/or business model that are currently making the company stronger and opportunities for new growth and development. It will also include present shortcomings where improvement is needed and potential threats looming on the horizon.
Unique Selling Proposition (USP)
What makes your company stand out from the crowd? A smart USP can become a company’s hallmark. For example, Domino’s made their mark on in the ever-crowded pizza slinging world with their “delivered in 30 minutes or it’s free” pledge.

What does your shop do that no one else does (and how can you include that in your brand?) Your USP can be packaged into a killer tagline that will stand out.

Pricing and Positioning Strategy
Working through your pricing strategy requires a second look at your current financial model, as well as the current business climate in your area. Can you boost your prices without pushing away clients? Should you reduce your costs to drop prices below market?

Your pricing will determine your market position more than your branding or marketing — more than any other factor except service quality. When planning for a new marketing push, there’s no better time to review your current pricing procedures.

List of Incentives
List what you will be offering as incentives for new customers checking out your shop. Your offerings may change on who you’re targeting and how, factors like whether you’re looking to target new people in your neighborhood or explore new turf. Discounts, bonus gifts, and free consultations are common offerings.

Marketing Materials
How will you get your offerings out to the public? Marketing materials and activities are the end goal for all your research and analysis, so of course they should be included in your plan. If you are running a referral offering, for example, the postcards you’d send to existing clients about the program should be described and outlined in this section.

Promotions Strategies
Now that you have offerings and marketing materials planned out, it’s time for your promotions strategies. This covers the gritty details of your campaign, from run time and expiration dates to distribution cost and planning. It will also include whatever channels you plan to use — digital ads, radio, direct mail, or actual, literal television channels.

Online Marketing Strategy
Nowadays, chances are good you’ll want to include an online component to your marketing strategy. More than just having a website, online marketing means connecting directly with customers by offering them information and great deals where they look for them.
Your online strategy can include everything from offering a first-time discount on Yelp to sending regular emails to existing customers to paid Google ads. Don't be afraid to be informative in your online offerings and use a little creativity!

Conversion Strategy
Getting the word out is only part of the story. Your conversion strategy outlines how you will turn interested people into paying customers. For example, if you aim to improve your sales pitch to new customers or streamline your appointment booking process — document that here in this section.

Partnerships
What potential joint ventures and co-marketing opportunities do you have with community business partners? Consider what your customers buy before, during, or after the auto repair process and see if there are any companies who you can partner up with to help fulfill their needs easier or cheaper.

Partnering with other local businesses helps connect you with markets you may not have considered previously. Plus, regulars from other companies are likely to trust you more, thanks to your connection with a local company they already trust.

Referral strategy
Outline a referral strategy for your marketing plan. People have a tough time finding an auto shop they trust, even if most shops are doing good, fair work. A lot of people rely on their friends, family members, and work colleagues to steer them. An attractive referral policy can bring dozens of new customers through your door. Let your customers know they will be rewarded for their kind words!

Retention strategy
Don’t just focus on prospecting new clients all the time. Develop a strategy for getting your existing clients to keep up with maintenance more regularly. Sometimes, all that takes is a regular reminder for tune ups and other basic maintenance, or a discount on oil changes within a certain time frame from the previous one. Often, educating your customers on how to help keep their car running better for longer will motivate them to do work they otherwise would put off.

Developing a marketing plan will streamline your outreach strategy and connect you to new clients. Pulling together a strategy involves a lot of moving parts, which is why businesses rely on a marketing plan to set targets and track their success.