

ARK Market Leader Education Series: Marketing ABCs

Marketing Readiness Assessment

Considering a broad based marketing push? Evaluating internal vs. external marketing and sales solutions?

We'd encourage managers to complete the below checklist internally prior to embarking on any marketing effort, whether internally or externally run. In our experience, your likelihood of success will be much higher based on your preparedness/commitment to these factors. We would encourage you to rank your firm's readiness on a scale of 1-3 as follows, with the objective of having all factors at a 2 or above before engaging a solution. Additionally, we encourage you to ask the key constituents in your firm to individually answer the internal assessment questions provided to ensure the team is aware of the factors that will impact your marketing effort:

Readiness Ranking:

1. Fully prepared/committed/we can answer these questions with ease
2. Understand the expectations but we have some internal work to do before we are fully prepared/committed
3. Not currently committed/prepared to meet requirements for success

Marketing Factor	Internal Assessment Questions	Readiness Ranking	Firm Readiness Response
Brand	Is your brand professional and well supported through your overall marketing efforts? Is your messaging consistent and compelling? Do you look like a company that institutional investors will feel confident doing business with?		
Commitment	How long are you prepared to fund the marketing effort and at what price point per month presuming you see no/minimal new assets within the first 12 months? <i>(Suggested minimum: 24 months)</i>		
Differentiators	What are your key attributes outside of performance? Are they differentiators or simply expected? What are your weaknesses outside of performance? How will you address them?		
Competitors	Who is your competitive universe, both major brands and other lesser known firms? How do you stack up against a top 10 list? Is there a compelling reason why you should be hired over this list outside of performance?		
Content Infrastructure	Do you have a 'go to' marketing and sales liaison that works internally with your other business areas including investment management, compliance and operations? Are you populating or outsourcing the population of the major databases relevant to your product structure? Do you have an RFI/RFP database? Do you have a basic collateral system approved for use?		

THE ARK ADVANTAGE

From strategic positioning, through the tactical delivery of marketing, sales, and relationship management services, we partner with a limited number of boutique investment managers seeking access to institutional investors, and institutional investors seeking the competitive advantage of niche, researched investment managers.

To learn more about ARK and how we can help you call us at **800-676-2921** or visit us online at arkglobalonline.com.

Marketing Factor	Internal Assessment Questions	Readiness Ranking	Firm Readiness Response
Travel	What is your true commitment to travel in order to get in front of investors for consideration? For how long are you committed to this amount of travel? What amount of travel do you anticipate will be needed and over what period to be successful? Who will do the traveling/presenting on behalf of your firm?		
Responsiveness	What standards of responsiveness are you committed to? What specific window of time do you feel is appropriate for responding to a research inquiry? What existing exhibits/data sets do you have prepared for the inevitable questions regarding attribution and historical performance, team consistency and competitive analysis?		
Staffing	Have you made any recent staff changes? Do you anticipate making any within the next 24 months? What is the rationale? Is the risk of being moved to a 'watch' or 'on hold' list worth the staff change you want to make?		
Market	What is the current market environment like? How are competitors doing in this environment? Is the asset class and product structure at the beginning or end of its current and natural market cycle? Is education needed to engage the market on the asset class before buyers are likely? Are investors actively allocating or watching and waiting in general?		

Once completed, you will have a better sense not only of your preparedness and commitment to move ahead with a structured marketing and sales game plan, but also the specifics of what you need help with and/or who you need to hire. Often managers identify a 'good resource' to join the team without sufficient consideration of their specific skill set. The definition of 'effective' marketing and sales is always changing along with the competitive landscape. Determining the needs of the organization and finding the most experienced fit for those needs will increase your likelihood of early success. Hiring the incorrect solution may not only slow down your timing, but can also destroy opportunities by delivering inefficient, ineffective messaging to the market.