

FOOD FOR THOUGHT SPECIALTY FOOD & COFFEE BUSINESS NEWSLETTER FROM SOS ADVISORS

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Guessing Isn't Marketing: Why Direction Matters More in 2026

The Problem Isn't Effort

Most specialty food and coffee companies are not "under-marketing". They are "over-deciding". Marketing decisions are made continuously:

- What to promote
- Where to spend
- Which channel to prioritize
- What to try next

Individually, these decisions seem logical. Collectively, they often fail to build momentum. This is what guessing looks like in practice.

What Guessing Actually Costs

Guessing doesn't usually cause obvious failure. It causes inconsistency.

Common outcomes include:

- Results that vary month to month
- Repeated course corrections
- Initiatives that never fully scale
- Teams that execute well but lack confidence

Nothing breaks. Progress just stays limited.

Why This Gets Worse as Companies Grow

Founders and executives achieving growth are further from day-to-day marketing decisions, yet the cost of each decision is higher. Informal decision-making—once efficient—starts to create friction. This is the point where intuition stops scaling.

What a Professional Marketing Plan Changes

A professional marketing plan does not eliminate decisions. It governs them and provides:

- A shared direction for all marketing activity
- Clear priorities that survive staff changes
- Criteria for saying "yes," "no," or "not now"
- A way to evaluate results without second-guessing. This replaces guessing with direction.

Direction Is the Advantage

Companies with direction:

- Spend less time revisiting old decisions
- Reduce wasted motion
- Build momentum instead of restarting

Marketing becomes calmer, clearer, and more effective—not louder.

Resources For Professional Marketing Plan Guidance

- SBA/SCORE – Free general guidance, may not be industry specific
- Specialty Coffee Association – Resources for members only
- Specialty Food Association – Resources for members only
- SOS Advisors – Professional expertise for specialty food and coffee