

8.2

MARKETING AND PROMOTION

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ADVERTISING AND IMAGE MAKING

Your image is largely controlled by what you do (or don't do), where and when people encounter your organisation and who is receiving the information and in what way. So when thinking about advertising yourselves or trying to create a positive image, you need to think about the following things.

Creating An Image

When creating an image, you can make use of:

- **Logo**
- **Vehicles**
- **Stationery** : Letterheads, continuation sheets, business cards, invoices, statements, envelopes, franking, stamps, email, e-business cards
- **Signs** : Office signs, shop fascias, window signs, display cards, ticketing labels, stickers
- **Publicity** : Adverts, leaflets, price lists, sponsorship material
- **Presentation** : You, your equipment, your vehicle, your operations

Image is created not just by what you say but how you do things. For instance, answering phones promptly says one thing, being unable to help a caller say another. Getting to know your customers says one thing, creating distance and bureaucratic walls say another.

Planning Your Advertising

Having looked at a number of options for advertising and promotions, you need to decide which ones you might use. Keep things simple and consistent. Remember that you are an advert for your business. Make your choices according to what you can afford (budget), what fits with your business (image) and where you have the expertise i.e. what you can do yourself.

Choose five or six approaches and list them.

PRODUCING A MARKETING PLAN

A marketing plan is a key component of a business plan. The contents of the plan will vary depending on the particular business.

The plan should:

- Define customers needs/wants and the benefits they seek
- Clearly define product/services including after sales back up
- Establish the size of the market
- Set promotional strategies and budgets
- Identify how and when targets will be achieved
- Establish your position in the market place in relation to the competition
- Show pricing calculations and reasons for the pricing strategy proposed

You will need to build all of this information into your business plan.

Marketing The Product Or Service

Remember that marketing and selling are different activities. Your market is the individuals and organisations who buy the business's products or services. Identifying who they are is the function of marketing. Selling is the activity of persuading people to buy the goods or services.

With marketing there are two important questions that should be asked: What is your market? And; What is so special about you? You have to understand who are your customers and then decide what is the advantage that you have that will attract customers to buy from you. There are four key factors in considering this - often called the 4 Ps or 'marketing mix'.

Marketing Mix

Product/Service

What is it that you are selling? What is its quality? How will it be packaged or presented?

Price

This plays a critical role in a marketing strategy and there are three ways you can approach it:

- Cost pricing means that you work out what it costs you to do something and then add a bit for a profit
- You find out what you think the customer will pay
- You discover what the competition is doing and find out the 'going rate'

Promotion

Products or services need the support of well-devised schemes of promotion. It is a good idea to plan how you will promote what you are selling with leaflets, advertisements in newspapers, etc. Don't do it in a haphazard way but plan it over the year.

Place

This refers to where the product or service will be made available to the customer. For some businesses this is more critical than for others but it is an important consideration as it directly influences the market you will be targeting.

It is important that all the 4Ps complement each other. You must tailor what you plan to do, to the price you want to charge, and which you believe your chosen customers will pay. Also you should promote your product or service in areas where you can properly provide it to the people you believe will want it.

There has to be a continuous process of marketing planning which involves attracting more customers (market penetration); or making additional uses for your product to attract new customers (market development); or improving the product or service (product development); or moving into different products/services and different markets (diversification).

PROMOTING COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

Marketing and promotion are all about finding, getting and keeping customers. But who is the customer of a community-based organisation or social business? The customer is, crudely, whoever pays the wages, usually the funder but also can be stakeholders. Doing what you do well is sometimes less important to your funder or stakeholder than you think.

A community-based organisation often has to face two ways, towards the funder and the service-user. Organisations often fail because they are unable to resolve the competing demands of the funder and the user. The funder wants a low-cost service, the user (and you) want the best service! Providing something that is high-value and low-cost requires hard decision-making and good management. If members of the organisation resist changes needed to 'keep the customer satisfied', the organisation may eventually lose the funder's support. Additionally, community organisations often have only one or two customers. Marketing is easier but you are totally dependent on the funder's goodwill and continued support.

Organisations must also market to the user. Most rely on word of mouth or recommendations from existing users. How you promote your service to the user must meet the user's needs, be simple common-sense, make sensible use of resources, monitor results (particularly the cost-effectiveness of advertising) and work to increase awareness and understanding of your role.

Resources And Conditions Necessary For Successful Promotion

- Appropriate skills must be matched to the organisation's resources, people and time
- Appropriate information must be available
- A receptive audience is needed (they have to like/trust you)
- A SWOT analysis so you know what will stop you succeeding
- Your aims must match the user's needs
- Pre-implementation preparation and research

Promoting The Organisation

Typical Outreach Strategies

- Schools and educational projects
- Surgeries/advice centres
- Targeting particular groups of users
- Community liaison
- Media exposure : newspapers, radio, community service announcement, newsletters
- Mutual support by other agencies, and networking
- Using colleges, information points, libraries
- Using associated organisations
- Training, foundation and taster courses/seminars
- Social centres, careers offices, other outlets

Useful Strategies For Different Types Of Outreach

Educational Outreach

Use real life examples, offer free incentives, do familiarisation and awareness days, use mediated outreach, provide information, offer rewards, get feedback.

Employment Outreach

Offer clear benefits, use a hard sell approach, get your timing right, make sure you are hitting the right locations, target your audience.

Promoting Your Organisation

Build links, do networking, image-building, exhibitions, appropriate events, high profile shows and other events.

Targeting Key Players

Identify key decision-makers and their needs, use appropriate forms of outreach for these decision-makers, get your presentation right, do information and analysis.

Community Enterprise Marketing

If you are unable to sell, then your business will decline and fade away. You have to know your market and with community enterprises there is a 'market' in two directions. Firstly, there is the obvious market consisting of potential customers and those that will fork out the money to buy whatever it is you are selling. But there is also a second 'market' and that is the wider community in which you are located. As a community enterprise you have to pay attention to both.

Marketing The Community Enterprise

A community enterprise is different from other businesses as it must be accountable to the community where it is located. The story of the community enterprise needs to be told to members of the local community and we can call this local marketing. In the hurly-burly of running a business it is easy to forget that the local community and particularly the members are stakeholders in the community enterprise. You will want people to know about the community enterprise and get involved. This requires effective communication and you have to:

- Understand who you are wanting to communicate with and what they want from you
- Be aware that you are talking to the most appropriate people (targeting)

You will want to attract other people to your organisation in order that they get involved and there is a useful acronym that you can use to plan to get more community involvement.

It is AIDA, or

Awareness, Interest, Desire, Action

Local people should be aware of the community enterprise, be interested in what it does, show a desire to support it, and get actively involved.

Planning How To Market The Enterprise

In order to be involved with local marketing, it is an idea to write down the name of your community enterprise in the middle of a blank sheet of paper and then surround it with the names of all the groups of people who are affected by what you do. This might include council officials, other organisations, employees, etc. When you have decided who the stakeholders are, prioritise them and then develop ways in which you can communicate effectively with them. Some methods that have been used are: good contacts with the local press; circulation of main points from meetings; community enterprise newsletters; leaflets for customers and other stakeholders; open days; customer involvement and feedback questionnaires; membership drives by knocking on doors; sponsorship of a local club or football team; exhibitions; etc.

The strength of a community enterprise can partly be measured by its community involvement and having a wide membership is an advantage. A director should be identified to be responsible for increasing membership and communicating with the wider community. It may be possible to publish the list of stakeholders and keep a register of members and interested parties.

WHY ARE YOU PROMOTING YOURSELVES?

Do You Want To...

- Get orders or generate income? If so, how many and what kind?
- Generate enquiries for more information? Get buyers or purchasing managers to call? How many?
- Attract visitors to your exhibition/shop /special event? How many?
- Change the image or profile of your organisation in some way? If so, how and in what way?
- Celebrate some positive occurrence or achievement?

What Are The Aims Of Your Strategy?

- Will you achieve it with your first approach, or will you need to contact your target audience several times?
- How much extra business will you get?
- By when?
- Will you offer any incentives to order or purchase? If yes, what?
- Can you afford it?
- How will you measure the success of your advertising or promotion?

GENERATING PUBLICITY

Any attempt to generate publicity must be part of a coherent promotional strategy. This depends on answering why, what and who questions.

Why?

- To create a consistent image
- To identify and reach target groups
- To raise the profile of the organisation
- To change attitudes
- To widen the customer, funder and user base

What?

Are you trying to say or achieve (a better image, better understanding, awareness or appreciation).

Who?

Are you trying to reach (existing or potential customers, funders, users or supporters).

The information put out, in whatever form, must match the:

- Needs of the target groups
- Benefits they themselves are seeking
- Types and ways they get information

For instance, when preparing a campaign to **women returners** for instance you might emphasise that volunteering is an alternative way of working, an easy path back to work, offers learning opportunities and a reference from the 'employer'.

Any public relations strategy or advertising campaign will have certain objectives and make certain claims. When advertising a new service, for instance, you will need to be able to answer questions such as:

Is it relevant?

Will it be news?

Can you provide the benefit?

Can you deliver it?

Will it improve the organisation's reputation?

How To Get Free Publicity

- Many of the articles you read in newspapers and magazines and most news items are provided by public relations firms, advertising agencies, and marketing companies; the media are used to getting such items.
- Using the media carefully, courting journalists, finding out their interests and what they consider important can get you both local and national publicity.
- Local media like a local angle, use it.
- You have to have confidence, personal communication skills and persistence to get your message accepted.
- The media looks for items that will interest their readers/listeners and your message needs to bear that in mind.
- Create human interest stories, if one exists, and make sure the story gets to the media. Even if not about your organisation, it creates goodwill that can be used when you need it.
- Contact various publications to see if they would like articles of interest. Journalists like pre written articles that they can edit and attach their by-line to.
- Make sure you have a good action photo to go with your news item or other message and make sure it goes to the relevant editor.
- When you get coverage, reprint/record it and use it as a promotional device: a letter, poster, exhibition boards etc.

SELLING

In order to be a viable business a community enterprise has to sell whatever it does or makes to obtain an income. Without an income your business will cease to exist. Therefore, you have to get out there and get others to buy what you have to offer.

Not everyone enjoys selling - so find someone who has the skills. A common problem of many small businesses is an inability to sell. No matter how good your product is or how marvellous your service, you have to convince other people. Here are some points worth bearing in mind:

Presentation

It is important that the goods or service being offered are well presented. Packaging should be pleasing and smart. Services should be offered in a professional way which gives an immediate impression that you know exactly what you are doing.

Reliability

You must be able to do what you say you will do. Time schedules must be adhered to.

Promptness

Dealing with enquiries promptly and delivering promptly always gives a good impression. In many cases this will ensure repeat orders.

Punctuality

Nothing is more irritating than sales personnel continually arriving late for appointments. In the present economic climate small things like this may be crucial in selling.

Personal Appearance

From the customer's viewpoint, the initial impressions of the community enterprise may well be formed by the personal appearance of the individual doing the selling. It is therefore important for this person to look neat, tidy and smart. This is not to say that smart looking people can sell poor quality goods or services; simply that signs of scruffiness may inhibit potential customers from further investigation.

Telephone Manner

A telephone call is often the first contact between a business and its customers. A pleasant telephone manner, quickly and accurately answered enquiries all help to create the right image for the community enterprise.

PROMOTION AND SOCIAL MARKETING

Promotion is generating positive information about your product or service and generating a positive image. But social businesses don't just need to promote their products to customers; they must also promote themselves to funders, supporters, service-users and stakeholders. This is **social marketing**. The main forms of marketing and promotion are:

Advertising

Useful in introducing a new product or service, special offers or when customers are many or geographically scattered. Advertising often reaches a larger (and uninterested) audience than needed and (consequently) is expensive. Cost-effective marketing begins with thinking about how customers and users get and use information. Focused forms of advertising are community or user newsletters, direct mailings, in store advertising (e.g. posters).

Packaging (Image)

The way a product or service is presented greatly influences the decision to purchase or use it. You need to know what customers value. If low price is a priority then a 'cheap and cheerful' image might work. If a quality service is required then efficiency is a powerful image. Social businesses often provide services satisfying emotional needs such as for security, recognition, companionship, self fulfilment etc). The 'feel good' factor is powerful in persuading people to buy, use a service or go on providing funding.

Name (Identity)

This refers both to the name of your organisation and a product or service you offer. A name can carry a lot of information. New campaigns or services are often given catchy, informative names. This is known in marketing as 'branding'. 'Branding' creates an identity between the product, the organisation and certain (hopefully positive) values.

You

The most important form of promotion is communication between you and your customer. People need to feel wanted, welcome. They need appropriate information they can understand. They need to be 'introduced' to the product or service by trained staff. This creates a positive relationship between the buyer and seller, customer and supplier. In a world of (bad) instant responses, feeling someone is interested in our needs or issues helps create a bond which brings customers back time after time.

The most important thing in social marketing is to live up to promises. Customers buy in to the commitment, aspirations, integrity and honesty of a social business when they buy from it. Nothing dissolves the 'selling advantage' social businesses possess quicker or makes them seem like 'just another business' than letting people down.