

Marketing Your Organization

The Power of Image

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Introduction

Organizations that share their benefits and program impacts create interest, excitement and an understanding of how they contribute to the community. An effective marketing plan is the process organizations use to communicate these benefits and impacts. Communities embrace and support organizations that implement an effective marketing plan. An effective marketing plan helps organizations communicate their purpose and build an image through branding.

The Four P's of Marketing: Understanding the Marketing Strategy

An effective marketing strategy includes four components. These components include product, price, place and promotion. These four P's should be included when developing a marketing strategy for an organization.

Product is an item that satisfies what a client needs or wants. Volunteer organizations often market educational programs or activities designed to bring about change or provide a service rather than a tangible product. Products should answer the questions, *what do you want people to do and what steps must be taken in order for that to happen?*

Product or program development also includes branding, quality, appearance and packaging that create interest or desire. Every product has a life cycle. As time goes on, products and services should evolve in order to meet the client's changing needs.

Price is closely related to client values or the costs necessary to make the behavior change. When establishing price, consider staff time, resource development and life-cycle of the product related to intended outcomes. If input costs are greater than intended outcomes, *costs may not be worth the benefit*. Therefore, it is essential to determine the perceived value of the product or service provided when establishing the value or price of the product or service.

Place is the location at which the organization's programs or products or services are offered. Place should be convenient for the targeted clientele. When deciding on location(s), consider customer convenience, access, comfort level with surroundings, transportation needs, logistics and other considerations.

Promotion advertises products or services and the manner in which the marketing message is most effectively delivered and received by the audience. Promotion represents a variety of communication methods used in providing information about the product or service. Promotional messages can be delivered by website advertising, social networking, public relations, press releases, brochures, print and mass media. (Refer to *Putting Your Marketing Plan to Work* [CLD3-X]).


Building a Brand: Developing an Image for the Organization

Branding uses logos or slogans to stimulate recognition of product or service benefits. Logos or slogans visually communicate messages describing benefits.



A brand for a company is like a reputation for a person. You earn reputation by trying to do hard things well.

—Jeff Bezos



The image or words communicate clear and compelling messages that meet client's wants or needs. Marketing messages must be communicated and delivered consistently and repeatedly. Some popular brands include the American Red Cross cross, the Salvation Army's red shield, the 4-H clover, McDonald's golden arches and the distinctive Coca Cola script. These organizations developed a strong brand that clearly communicates compelling consumer benefits.

Strong brands include three essential components that are reflected in their logo and slogan. These components include:

- the organization's name
- the organization's marketing message describing benefits
- a visual representation of the organization's personality

The **name** of the organization should describe its mission. The name should stand on its own without a lot of advertising. Everyone in the organization should be coached to introduce themselves by stating their name and the organization they represent.

The **marketing message** should be clear, focused and appropriate, and should deliver the brand's promise of benefit. Make sure the message is truthful and accurately communicates the organizational promise. Slogans introduce promised benefits.

The organization's **personality** reinforces the messages delivered by logos or slogans and fosters the creation of an organizational atmosphere and culture. The organization's personality is reflected individually through a collection of members and their personality traits.

The brand creates a promise of benefit. Each of the three components of an effective brand work together to communicate a marketing message that will be reinforced through client experience.

Developing an Effective Marketing Plan

By building on the Four P's of Marketing, an effective marketing plan can be developed. A marketing plan ensures an interest in outlining strategies for promoting

programs, services, products and events. A marketing plan should:

- **Articulate marketing goals that outline action steps.** Marketing goals should include measureable objectives relating to the organization. Include both short- and long-term goals and an action plan that can be implemented immediately. When developing a marketing plan, evaluate progress by comparing it to marketing goals.
- **Define the target audience.** What is important to the audience? What are the interests and values of the target audience? Identify the places audiences go for products or services both offline and online.
- **Establish a consistent message.** Develop a concise, consistent and uniform marketing message related to organizational goals and audience type. The marketing message should capture the audience's attention. The marketing message should focus on one impression and reinforce the organization's brand messages, relaying product or service benefits.
- **Decide how the message will be delivered. Consider the interests, needs, values and culture of the audience.** Determine the factors that inspire clients to take action. Support and reinforce the message with graphics, images or visuals that communicate the value of the program and capture the attention of the target audience.
- **Prepare message spokespersons.** All clients should have a positive attitude about the organization and a clear understanding of the benefits of the marketing goals.
- **Construct a timeline and budget.** Determine when the marketing efforts will begin and end. This should coincide with the "roll out" of the product or service. The marketing budget could include paid advertisements, public service announcements, printing, electronic communications, websites, word of mouth, special events, public relations and so forth. Some promotions may have little cost; others may require significant dollars in constructing, delivering and evaluating.

Summary

Organizations that share their benefits and program impacts create interest, excitement and an understanding of how they contribute to the community. An effective marketing strategy is the foundation for building a powerful brand and an image that communicates benefits and impact. Effective marketing strategies include four key components: product, price, place and promotion. A brand identifies an organization to clients who recognize the marketing message. A brand helps clients recall positive experiences with the organization.

A marketing plan guarantees that a consistent message is communicated to target audiences. It articulates how to reach marketing goals, identifies the target audience, delivers a concise marketing message, uses the most effective means of delivering the message and identifies the organization's brand. Organizations that market their products and services greatly enhance the power of their image in the communities they serve.

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