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Kentucky Extension Leadership Development

Building Your Marketing Tool Kit

Telling the Story of your Organization throughout the Community

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Introduction

To most people, the words "marketing" and "promotion" are synonymous. Marketing is describing a product and convincing people to buy it. Marketing promotes services and convinces people to use them. Marketing takes many forms, including ads, brochures, press releases, and commercials. More recently, marketing includes Facebook pages and Twitter accounts. Marketing is promotion. Marketing builds an awareness of the services offered by an organization and their usefulness or importance to the clientele.

What Is a Marketing Tool Kit?

A marketing toolkit is a group of tools and resources needed to promote the organization and its programs, events, and activities throughout the community. An effective marketing tool kit helps community organizations promote their programs, activities, and services and should contain resources and information to assist in marketing and communications efforts. Useful marketing tools should:

- **Attract new clients** and improve relations with existing clients
- **Offer a public service** to those in need of assistance, information, or education
- **Educate the community** about programs, events, activities, and services
- **Increase visibility** by giving the organization a community presence to business, consumer, and community groups

The best products, services, and organizations in the world have little usefulness if people aren't aware of their existence or the benefits they offer. An effective marketing tool kit helps the organization build this awareness in the community.

What Should Be Included in a Marketing Tool Kit?

Most toolboxes contain a variety of tools. If one understands the problem to be fixed, and how, when, and why each tool is used, a tool kit can be incredibly helpful, saving time and money. But if you just want to fill a tool box full of shiny new tools because they might be necessary for some vague or unknown reason, they're a big waste of time and money.

Assembling a marketing tool kit is like building anything else. If you want to do a good job, you need good tools that are useful to you. Don't start with every tool; just start with the basics that make the most sense for your organization. To begin assembling your organization's marketing toolkit, ask the following question:

What are the most basic and useful tools that could be implemented to market our organization and its programs and activities?

Make Your Marketing Tool Kit Usable

All tools should be user-friendly and should help the organization accomplish its goals. Hanbury gives suggestions to make marketing tool kits usable. Tools should be:

- **Available online.** Encourage everyone to access tools online to ensure they are using the most up-to-date information. Keep all tools in one easy-to-access location.

Business has only two functions–marketing and innovation.

–Milan Kundera

- **Printable.** People will want to print tools for easy use and quick reference. Make the date of publication obvious, and remind users to check periodically for updated versions.
- **Clearly branded.** All marketing tools, as well as the tool kit, should be identified with the organization's logo. The writing, design, and format should all reflect the organization's brand and logo.

Teach People How to Utilize the Tool Kit

Never assume that people will understand how to use the tools or where to find them. Taking time to teach people how to use the tool kit will help you better understand their needs and obstacles and will also make them feel involved. People who know how to use the tool kit will be more likely to adopt and utilize it. Include a review of the marketing tool kit as part of the orientation process for all new staff and volunteers.

Create High-quality, Useful Tools

Remember that marketing tools should be representative of the quality for which the organization is striving. Don't lower quality standards just because the audience may be internal. Match each tool with one or more groups of clients, members, volunteers, or leaders. Lautenslager (2002) suggests a variety of tools that could be included in a marketing tool kit. These include:

- Letter of introduction and overview. Include the organization's contact information in this letter. Explain the role and importance of the organization and its programs to the community. Describe the target audience and its needs.
- Organizational information. Include the vision, mission and purpose of the organization, as well as a brief history, a synopsis of programs offered, target audiences and intended outcomes.
- An outline and brief description of each marketing tool.

- Information on programs, products and services, events and activities.
- Ways to get involved. Include information about membership, leadership and volunteer opportunities.
- Marketing message, logo, header and footer and template for brochures, fliers and newsletters.
- Press releases and news stories.
- Promotion and information fliers.
- Registration brochures.
- Link for the organization's website.
- Impact information. Share how the organization and its programs have made a difference in the lives of people and have benefitted the community.

To begin creating marketing tools for your organization, ask the following questions:

- *What tools or resources will help market our organization and its programs throughout the community?*
- *Are these tools currently available or do they need to be created?*
- *Where should the marketing tools be located in order to be accessible?*
- *What is the most effective means of teaching people how to utilize marketing tools?*

Basic Marketing Tools

Begin with the basics. For organizations that are assembling marketing tool kits from scratch, the three most important tools to begin with are press releases, promotional fliers, and registration brochures.

Effective press releases

For most community nonprofits, developing a press release for local media outlets will be the most important method of marketing the programs offered by the organization. A press release is the quickest and easiest way to get free publicity. If well written, a press release can result in multiple published articles about the organization and its programs, products and services. And that can mean new prospects for clients, members, volunteers, and leaders. What's more, press releases are cost

effective. James gives five suggestions to ensure that press releases will motivate prospects to contact the organization:

- **Use the press release as a marketing tool.** The idea is to communicate a message to clients and prospects.
- **Have a newsworthy story.** To get your message communicated through the publication, you need to convince the reporter/editor that the organization's message (or the story surrounding it) is newsworthy. The message must appeal to the readership.
- **Write it like a reporter would write it.** If the press release looks and feels like a real article, reporters will often just file it as a story with minimal editing. Therefore, make sure the press release looks and feels like a real article.
- **Provide some good quotes.** Say something memorable and personal.
- **Contact top outlets personally.** In addition to sending a press release, personally contact the reporter(s). Send them something personal.

A well-written press release will accomplish several purposes. It markets the organization and its programs throughout the community. It builds an awareness of what the organization is doing and trying to accomplish. It promotes opportunities. It highlights the contribution of the organization and its programs to the community and therefore, builds value. Best of all, a press release is free of charge! In order to assure that the organization makes the best use of press releases, ask the following questions:

- *For which programs and activities should press releases be written?*
- *What people are best suited to developing press releases for these programs and activities?*

Eye-catching promotion and information flyers

Promotional and informational flyers brochures are an inexpensive way for community organizations to promote their programs, events, and activities. Pender identifies seven elements of an effective promotional flyer.

- **Design the message to be communicated.** The idea is to get the message across in as few words as possible. Use buzz words that will get the attention of the target audience.
- **Draw the reader's attention** by creating white space around text. Using dark fonts and centering the text in the middle of the promotional flyer will encourage the reader to focus directly on the message.
- **Focus on the benefits** of the program or activity to the target audience. Use bullet points to make the message easy to understand. This technique improves readability and comprehension.
- **Design a simple, uncluttered flyer.** Regarding graphics, less is more. Keep it clean and to the point. If graphics are used, make them small and related to the message or product being promoted.
- **Use dark or shadow text fonts** to reduce cost. Color is attractive but isn't necessary. When the organization, program, or event is popular and making more money, splurge on color.
- **Include contact information.** The information should be centered and located at the bottom of the flyer. Include a phone number, email address, and website.

Print and distribute copies of the finished publication. Once it has been proofed and approved, it is time to go to print. Take a copy (both hard and electronic) to the print shop and make black-and-white copies. Use colored paper to make your flyers stand out from the white paper flyers. Save the original to use if you need to print more copies.

Registration Brochures

The third tool in a beginner's marketing toolkit is the registration brochure. When planning an event that requires registration, develop a registration brochure. An effective registration brochure will include promotional information about the event as well as a registration form. This two-in-one approach saves the organization time and money. Following are five methods that will help you create a registration brochure.

The aim of marketing is to know and understand the customer so well the product or service fits him and sells itself.

–Peter F. Drucker

- **Use a tri-fold layout with the registration form on the back panel.** Begin with a standard 8½ by 11-inch sheet of paper folded in thirds. Upon completion, the back panel will become the middle of the brochure. (A perforated fold will make removing it easier.) Use the inside part of this panel for the registration form. The back of this panel can be used for testimonials or other information about the program. Do not put important details about your event on this panel because it will be removed and sent with the registration form.
- **Design an eye-catching front cover.** If the brochure makes a good first impression, people will open the brochure and read the contents. Include key information about the event and a "teaser" question that will motivate the reader to look inside and find out more.
- **Leave the middle outside panel blank for addresses** if the brochure is meant to be mailed. The outside middle panel will be showing if the brochure is placed face down. As they will be seen first sometimes, make them attractive. Use a watermark of your logo so that address labels can be affixed without being too distracting.
- **Use the remaining space for the contents of the brochure.** Include the benefits of the program or event. Create a call to action that encourages people to attend. Near the end, make a list of the groups of people who should attend. This list should range from very specific to general. If people see themselves on the list, they are more likely to attend.
- **Include all of the vital information.** The date, time, location, and cost of the event is vital. Include the name of the event as well as the names of the speakers and sponsors. Any special offers should be clearly stated as well rates, deadlines, and payment information.

This two-in-one brochure is a valuable marketing tool and is a key to conducting a successful event. To determine how recognizable the marketing message of your organization is, ask program participants the following question:

What is the marketing message of our organization and its programs?

Conclusion

Utilize the organization's marketing message in all communication and promotional materials. The most successful marketing strategies are those that consistently reinforce the marketing message throughout the community. Unlike organizations that present a diverse array of seemingly unrelated programs on a variety of topics, your marketing message will have more credibility and prestige if you present a clear, identifiable focus.

The best products, services, and organizations in the world have little usefulness if people aren't aware of their existence or the benefits they offer. A successful marketing strategy builds awareness of an organization in the community and motivates people to join, serve, or lead. Marketing strategies brand programs, products, and services, build customer loyalty, and share the benefits and impacts with others throughout the community.

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