

Marketing and Promotion

Community groups have plenty of stories and news to tell people about. From reporting on the success of your last fundraising event, to campaigning for your cause – the highs and the lows - getting your message across is crucial.

Marketing and publicity are all about promoting your activities and services. From creating a logo, to advertising events in on-line social networks such as Facebook, marketing and promotion is all about informing people, making sure that as many as possible know what you do. This not only ensures that you are involving people, but it also encourages their support.

Good marketing and promotion does not need to be expensive, the main aim is to 'get the word out' about your group or project. Having a marketing and promotion plan will help you to:-

- raise awareness of what you do
- build your reputation
- publicise the good work you are doing and services you offer
- attract new members and supporters

Planning your Marketing

Like any plan, a marketing and promotion plan, can be either short term (for a specific project/event) or longer term for the promotion of your group. No matter what you are marketing or promoting the underlying principles are the same.

Setting up a Marketing and Promotion plan

When setting up a marketing and promotion plan you need to consider:

- What it is that you want to promote - being clear about what you are providing will help to focus your marketing and promotion plans as well as make sure everyone in your group sends out the same message.
- What are the benefits of what you are providing? Why should people support what you are doing and how will it help them?
- Who are you trying to reach and why? You may have many different types of people/groups you need to market to, for example you may work with youth groups and so they would be your main audience however you may also work with other service providers who would be your secondary audience.
- What is your budget? Good marketing and promotion does not need to be expensive, set a budget and concentrate your resources to make the most of it.
- What resources will you use? Marketing and promotion uses many different types of methods from brochures to radio advertisements. The most effective marketing and promotion is where a combination of these is used, as this will ensure all the different audiences you are marketing to will 'get the message'. For example when marketing a family event you may use

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online services such as social networks, press releases, posters and radio advertisements.

Timescale

Setting a timescale for your marketing and promotion will enable you to plan resources and develop the marketing materials you need.

For a one-off event, it is advisable to commence planning the marketing and promotion about five months in advance - giving you the first two months to develop and produce marketing materials, and three months to promote the event with a more intense campaign in the final month

For the general marketing and promotion of your group it is advisable to plan for a 12-month period, including things such as newsletters, annual reports, website development/updating and social media.

Reviewing your Marketing and Promotion plans

Reviewing your marketing and promotion plan will help you identify what resources/methods were successful and what you can change to improve your next plan.

Ask your target audience if the marketing materials and press activities worked - did they know about the event or understand the objectives of your group?

Collect statistics from on-line campaigns such as

- how many people opened/responded to emails?
- how many people visited the website page?
- how many people used social media?

Creating an Identity for your group

Having a clear and recognisable group identity will make it easier to promote and market your services

Your group's identity should include a Mission Statement (based on the aims and objectives in your constitution) reinforced by your group's branding.

Mission Statement

A mission statement is a short paragraph that defines:-

- who you are
- what you do
- what difference do you make?

When writing your mission statement keep it short. Ensure it uses the same language as your audience (no jargon) and that it conveys what you are all about.

A well-defined mission statement will:-

- help to focus your group and clarifies its purpose
- motivate your board, staff, volunteers, and members
- help attract people and resources

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Branding

A group's brand is what identifies and differentiates it from other groups. It should convey the beliefs that your group members share, clearly identifying your aims. Having a 'brand' will help your group to connect with like-minded people and help to persuade others to support your cause.

Your logo, group colours, design styles and the words you use to describe yourselves, all contribute to your brand.

Logo

A logo is a visual representation of your group, it helps people to instantly recognise your group, be it used on a t-shirt or in an advertisement.

Strap-line

A strap line is a single sentence that is often used in conjunction with your logo. It tells people what you do in a concise and clear way, for example the Community Toolkit strap line is 'essential guidelines for community groups'.

Group colours

Using a set of standard colours will help people recognise your group and reinforce its brand identity. People will associate your group with those particular colours. You could choose to use the colours of your logo for example and extend these to posters, newsletters and website. Remember that people associate colours with emotions and messages. Reds are often associated with excitement or danger, browns can be warm and rustic, blues and greens more calming.

Images and font styles

Sticking to certain images and using particular font styles can also help to reinforce your brand. For example, using bright and funky images and fonts may appeal more to young people.

Simple Marketing Plan Content

GOALS

What is your organisation's main goal (1-2 goals)? What are your communications goals (1-3 goals) and what are the communications goals that will contribute to achieving the overall goal?

OBJECTIVES

What are 3-5 concrete, specific, measurable (when possible) steps to take to achieve your communications goals? Avoid vague objectives.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Who are the 1-3 top audience groups you need to engage to meet your communications objectives and what do you need them to do? Most importantly, what are the wants, habits and preferences of each group?

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BEST STRATEGIES

Given your target audience groups and the actions you want them to take, what are the best ways to motivate them to do so?

TACTICS

How to deliver the messaging to your audience via these strategies?

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Who does what? Existing staff? New staff? Outsource? How many hours (per week or month) is it expected to take? What training (if any) is necessary to build necessary skills?

STEP-BY-STEP WORK PLAN

How to roll out the program?

BUDGET

How much is it going to cost?

EVALUATION

Measure outputs and outcomes. What is working best, so your org can do more of it? What targets are engaged and which segments do you need to engage differently? What content is most compelling to your base? What messaging generates action, and what fails to stir the pot?

Marketing plans can take a range of forms including the “four or seven Ps” PEST, SWOT Analysis, USP, USB, detail on Market analysis and positioning and growth sustainability. This information can be used to develop your initial plan; however, the elements above will help your organisation focus on the best direction to take when promoting and raising awareness. Investing in Marketing can be costly if not in cash in time therefore the clearer your plan the more able you are to make an informed response to marketing opportunities that come your way.