

☑ Marketing

What is Marketing?

Marketing is a process for creating and communicating a vision for the effective delivery of products and/or services that have value for clients, partners and the community at large.

Marketing is happening whether the members of a group or organisation are aware of it or not. This information sheet will help to explain marketing and how it can work *for* your group, not against it. Many people think of marketing as just advertising, promotional campaigns or sales efforts; however, it is significantly more than this. These are part of an overall marketing strategy but not the full definition of marketing. For information about the related topic of promotion and advertising, please refer to the information sheet entitled 'Promoting your group or organisation'.

Marketing is the process for consistently and strategically improving how people *feel* about the group or the organisation and about ensuring the continued delivery of products and services in the community. This includes managing how the people *within* the group feel and how the wider community perceives the group's overall image and activities.

A good way to describe the marketing process is to imagine getting ready to go to a job interview. Most people like to make sure they look as good as possible so they make a good impression. The process starts from the development of the resume, through to the actual interview itself. The same kind of principle applies for any group or organisation, from the smallest to the largest. It is important to create impressions that are positive, genuine and lasting which will generate opportunities to develop new relationships in the future.

Marketing a group or organisation can include but is not limited to:

- Creating a clear purpose and collective vision
- Creating a sense of belonging amongst members
- Attention to the way things are managed and processed
- Managing the delivery of information, goods and/or services
- Advertising and promotional activities (see *tip-sheet*)

What are the benefits?

The benefits may include any of the following:

Reaching and attracting new people

A group or organisation can attract new people in a number of capacities - volunteers, members, donors, fundraisers, service users or activity participants.

Reaching diverse target audiences

Marketing will help to promote your aims and objectives to different groups of people. This will open up the potential pool of available volunteers as well promote awareness of services across the wider community (see the information sheet on Diversity for more details).

Building legitimacy and confidence

A group or organisation will build trust and confidence in the community when they consistently deliver on their promises. This will, in turn, help your group or organisation to source monies from fundraising, donations, philanthropic and government submissions. Prospective volunteers will also be attracted to groups that demonstrate a commitment to achieving their aims and overall vision in an open and ethical way.

Staying in touch with existing and former contacts

Well-directed and visible marketing will keep your group or organisation within the

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consciousness of former members, volunteers or clients. This may convince them to come back and be involved again.

Sharing collective knowledge

By marketing your group or organisation as being willing to engage in community partnerships, you can ensure that important messages are being promoted and that the community is made aware of them.

Encouraging participation

There is evidence to suggest that the social connections formed from belonging to a community group are good for one's health (VicHealth 2005). By attracting and drawing people to your group or organisation through effective marketing strategies, your group or organisation will benefit the community through the involvement of its healthy individuals.

How do we start marketing our group and organisation?

Have a strong sense of communal vision

The key to beginning an effective marketing strategy is to ensure everyone in the group or organisation knows what the main objective is. This vision needs to be readily available for anyone who wants to know. A strong identity is integral to effective marketing because it is clear what the group or organisation is aiming to achieve. All other policies and procedures spring from this collective vision.

Build the appropriate infrastructure

It is very important that fundamentals such as a constitution, policies, procedures and other management infrastructure is clear and easily understood; and that consultation with all stakeholders has taken place in the development of these documents. Efficient and readily adopted processes will help create action to achieve the vision.

Know who your audience is

Marketing is about researching the needs of your target audience so that the right information and services can reach the people who need to know about it.

Establishing clear procedures and protocols

This will create uniformity, trust and confidence which will in turn, increase staff and volunteer morale; which again in turn, will create a positive image for your group or organisation out in the community.

In conclusion

This is only the beginning! Marketing is a process and it is ongoing throughout the lifespan of the group or the organisation. It is as critical to the success of a group or organisation as any other process. Effective marketing is like a magnet - it will attract people, which will ensure the longevity and legitimacy of a group or organisation. This will be particularly critical if services are provided for the welfare of the wider community.

The information contained in this information sheet is generic. Please contact your volunteer resource centre if you require further assistance.

REFERENCE

VicHealth 2005, 'Social Inclusion as a determinant of mental health and wellbeing: Research Summary 2', accessed September 2009, <<http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au>>.