

What is Promotion?

Promotion is a collective term for all of the methods your group or organisation uses to spread your message and build awareness in the community about your purpose, products and needs.

Promotion is just one branch of a Marketing strategy (see information sheet). The difference is that marketing is more of a whole of organisation approach, whereas promotion is more specific and is generally targeted towards a more focused outcome.

Promotion is not just about “advertising” either, even though the two terms are very closely related. Promotion is ‘selling’ your message to the wider community in a much broader way. Advertising is a strategy you use within a promotional campaign and is often used to promote a specific product, service or need. Generally speaking, but not always, advertising requires a payment for getting your message out to the community, usually through media such as newspapers, radio, internet, signage and magazines.

There are many ways of promoting your group or organisations services and activities that do not require a large dollar budget. This information sheet will provide your group or organisation with some thought-starters for different ways to promote what you do, provide or need.

Why is promotion essential?

Without promotion, your group is likely to stagnate and decline. With properly planned and targeted promotions, your group or organisation is better placed to enhance and expand its ability to:

- Recruit new volunteers and members.
- Let people know about what you offer.
- Build your profile in the community.
- Give your group or organisation more opportunities to access funding.

Planning a promotional strategy prevents duplication and ad hoc attempts by individuals which could potentially “miss the mark” and not achieve your group or organisations objectives. The strategy does not need to be complicated or expensive – just structured and organised so that everyone knows what, where and how essential messages will get out to the community.

Begin with a Profile.

Effective Promotion of your group or organisation starts with having a good profile (see *information sheet*). When your members and volunteers clearly understand **why** they do what they do in your group or organisation, it will be much easier for them to tell others. Word of mouth promotion is the most effective kind of promotion there is – and it’s free.

Find your niche.

Even the smallest group needs to conduct some simple research if they want to promote themselves positively. This research is about finding out what kinds of people your group or organisation would, most likely, be attracted to your type of services, products or activities. Targeting your promotional strategies to these people can potentially, give your group or organisation a much more successful result, but you do need to identify who “They” might be. This can be as simple as asking people in the wider community what they know about your group or organisation, what they believe about you and what they would like from you.

Use the right tools.

Promotion is a strategy, which may or may not include paid advertisements. Whatever means you use to promote your group or organisation, you need to ensure you have the resources and skills to achieve your goals and that the methods you use do not contravene any of your policies or procedures, particularly if you receive any kind of funding from government or philanthropic trust.

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Promotion

The list over the page gives you some ideas on different methods you can use for promoting your group or organisation and/or its goods, services or needs. It is not exhaustive, because creative outside-the-box thinking will find many more ways for promoting your group or organisation's activities in the community.

Remember: *that there are often cheap and, sometimes, free ways of achieving all these ideas.*

You do not need to use all of the following ideas at the same time. You might like to think of the following list as a kind of "tool box" with each idea representing a "tool" that will do a specific job. Select ideas that will work for your group context and purpose. The types of tools you use need to communicate clearly to your target audience and deliver your message in ways that positively enhance your group or organisations profile.

- Flyers
- Pamphlets and brochures
- Posters and Billboards
- Nametags
- Show bags
- Bookmarks and postcards including business cards
- Display boards
- Community Notice Boards
- Community newsletters
- E-newsletters and printed newsletters
- Website, Email or Social Media (eg. Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Blogger)
- Community Events Calendars (hard copy or online versions)
- Community Directories
- Newspapers and magazines
- Radio and Television community announcements
- Paid media advertisements including Google Ads
- Media and Press Releases
- Letters to the Editor
- Word of Mouth
- Conferences, Expos, Field Days and Agricultural shows,

- Networking groups (e.g. BOOST Wimmera Network via your local Council)
- Sandwich Boards
- Window displays
- Letterheads
- Logo
- Group or organisational Profile (see information sheet).
- Photo boards
- Doorknocking
- Letter box drops

Conclusion:

Promoting your group or organisation is an essential component of your overall marketing strategy. There are many ways to promote your services, activities and needs to the wider community and by carefully researching and planning your approach your group or organisation can achieve a positive outcome.