



Simple Marketing for Community Organisations

Part of the Waltham Cross Cohesion Project

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INTRODUCTION

As a voluntary and community organisation you will already be very aware of the difficulties of finding much needed funds. Effective marketing of your organisations services is closely linked to accessing grants and contracts and of paramount importance when it comes to demonstrating your organisations abilities to potential funders.

This Guide is intended for voluntary and community organisations that don't have much money to spare for a marketing budget. Or maybe your organisation doesn't have a marketing budget at all!



To use this Guide successfully, you must be very clear about what your marketing aims are. **Why** do you want to market your organisation? It could be that you need to attract more funders, more clients, more service users or that you want to raise your profile. Whatever your reason, remember that it is the driving force behind your marketing and all your efforts should be directed to achieving that aim. If you lose focus you will ruin your marketing message.

The best time to market your organisation is when everything is going swimmingly: you have cash available, you have happy clients, maybe you've just won a funding bid. Unfortunately, this is exactly the moment when most organisations think "Phew! We're safe for the next 12 months! Let's get stuck in and do the work." Wrong, wrong, wrong! It is WHEN things are great and WHEN your future is secure, even temporarily, that you must sell yourselves even harder. Difficult times will come as they always do, but if you have kept your profile high your efforts should see you through the bad times. Unfortunately, this is usually when many organisations think "Oh no – our work is drying up, we have no funding bids in the pipeline and the local authority is making noises about reducing our grant. Let's get out there and market ourselves!" Bad timing. So, this guide has been written based on the assumption that your organisation, like most other organisations and businesses, is trying to market itself when things aren't looking good and there's very little cash to spare.

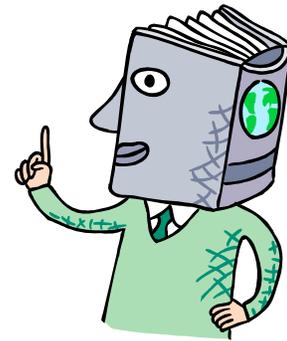
This is also an opportunity to put a stop to bad marketing habits. Each time you win a bid, or make a sale, or win new clients, put a small percentage of the money aside for a marketing budget. That way, when all your hard work has proved fruitful and everything's going well again, you will have some funds available to market yourselves at the optimum time.

And if you're one of those organisations that has a good marketing strategy – this guide is also for you. It will help to keep you one step ahead and give you some fresh ideas about how to make the very best use of your money.

Finally, a word of warning. Throughout this guide you will find words and phrases which are considered “businesslike” such as SELLING, BRANDING, PRODUCTS and so on. Some organisations don’t like these terms as they feel them to be inappropriate to the voluntary sector. But as long as you understand the point being made and you can benefit from what you learn, the vocabulary used shouldn’t offend.

SOME GROUND RULES

1. DO NOT waste your efforts!
2. DO NOT waste your words!
3. DO NOT waste your time!



The main resources required for a successful marketing strategy are MONEY, TIME and IMAGINATION. If you are reading this Guide, then you probably have two out of three. Not bad. But if MONEY is the missing ingredient, that means a lot more pressure is going to be placed on your TIME. And as we all know, time is one resource that most of us don’t have enough of these days, and certainly none to spare. To get your marketing strategy off the ground, it is likely that you will have to sacrifice some of your free time, so it is vital that you use this time productively. Don’t waste a precious second of it, ever, in whatever you do.

4. Decide on who you are trying to attract?
 - a. New clients?
 - b. New funders?
 - c. A wider audience?
 - d. Partners?
 - e. All of the above?

You need to work out what you want to achieve from this campaign before you get started. FOCUS is your new watchword.

5. Work on your “Brand”.
 - a. Know what you’re selling
 - b. Know to whom you’re selling
 - c. Have a clear marketing message
 - d. Have a consistent brand

6. Involve everyone in your organisation.
 - a. All staff, volunteers and Trustees must spread the same message
 - b. Remember: Mixed Messages Crucify Sales

YOUR MESSAGE

Before you start marketing in earnest, you must have an agreed marketing message. And “agreed” means everyone in your organisation must like and understand it. Ideally, they should have contributed to it as well.



Coming up with a succinct tagline can be very difficult - it might be easier to start with a Mission Statement or a Vision. Whatever you finally decide upon, it must accurately reflect your organisation and its ethos. A good tagline is memorable and can be trotted out as required by any member of staff or volunteer. The Mission Statement and/or Vision should be an expansion of the tagline and can be used at meetings, networking events, seminars and so on. The important point to remember is that the same message is conveyed by all three: tagline, Mission Statement and Vision.

Once the marketing message is clear use it to underpin all other aspects of your marketing.

Vorsprung durch technik

Simply the best! **Vorsprung durch technik**

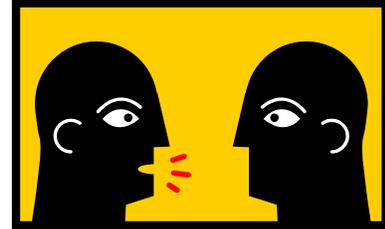
We try harder

We'll take good care of you

(Almost) COMPLETELY FREE MARKETING

1. WORD OF MOUTH

Word of mouth is the very best way of marketing your organisation, but you have to make it happen, encourage it along. When one of your clients or stakeholders talks enthusiastically about your organisation – that's word of mouth advertising. You need a way of ensuring this happens more often.



You can get word of mouth recommendations from two sources: current clients and influential people and you should have a system for both. It is sometimes difficult to identify exactly who the clients are – are they your funder or your beneficiaries? Or both?

Current clients:

- Receiving referrals from clients starts with providing excellent service, so you must take every opportunity you get to create a loyal client. David Frey teaches businesses to look for the “seven moments of truth” that provide chances to go that extra mile for clients:
 1. **the moment a client complains**
 - apologise, ask what you can do to put things right; then put things right
 - this is valuable information: a justifiable complaint tells you how to improve your service
 2. **the moment a new client comes back a second time**
 - say thank you
 - ask why they have returned
 - offer them a discount/something for free/a reward of some kind
 3. **the moment a client has thanked you**
 - say “All part of the service!”
 - ask “Do you know anyone else who could use/fund our service?”
 4. **the moment one of your clients has been through a hard time because of a mix-up on your (or his) part**
 - if it's your fault, apologise and put it right
 - if it's his/her fault, commiserate and put it right
 - in both cases, keep in regular touch for a short period
 5. **the moment a client needs a favour from you**
 - say “Of course!”
 - follow it up – was everything OK?
 - Say “Is there anything else we can do?”
 6. **the moment you see your client in public**
 - greet them warmly and chat for a while
 - don't just talk about work
 7. **the moment your client brings in a recommendation**
 - say thank you
 - ...and that's all

Influential People

These are individuals who know you and your organisation and who mix with many other influential people. They can multiply your marketing efforts many times over and you need to make sure that you are at the forefront of their mind when they are speaking to others who could use your services or fund your operations.

- i. **Identify your “Influencers”. They could include:**
 - a. Current funders
 - b. Other agencies
 - c. Patrons
- ii. **Educate them**
 - a. Supply them with information and statistics about your organisation
 - b. Give them an FAQ sheet
 - c. ...and a list of endorsements, compliments, case studies



Word of mouth marketing is very effective and definitely free, but you must make sure that what is said about you is complimentary – negative comments can also be passed by word of mouth and unfortunately, bad news stays in people’s minds much longer than good news and is more likely to be repeated.

2. CARDS IN SHOP WINDOWS

Very cheap and widely read. Make sure your card stands out – coloured card, unusual typeface, memorable slogan.

3. CHURCH NEWSLETTERS

Ask local churches to include a paragraph about your organisation in their newsletters. Most denominations are happy to carry information about voluntary and community groups.

4. SCHOOL EVENTS

Ask to have a stall at the Spring Fair or Summer Barbecue. Your audience will be parents, grandparents and friends of the pupils – all with different needs, interests, backgrounds and jobs.

5. www.gumtree.com

Community classifieds - post an advertisement about your organisation.

6. ONLINE DIRECTORIES

There are numerous free online directories – make sure you’re in all of them. Google “free online directories” and see what happens...

7. YOUR VOICEMAIL

Many organisations cannot afford to have their telephones manned all day, every day and rely on a telephone answering service. Some organisations are even apologetic about this, believing that it shows them to be unprofessional. Some lateral thinking is required here. If you run such a service, use it to your advantage. Make your answering service part of your marketing strategy and record a fresh message every day. So, instead of “Hello, this is Anytown Voluntary Service, please leave your name and number after the tone and we will get back to you as soon as possible”, try “Hello, this is Anytown Voluntary Service. Before you leave your message, make a note of our website www.anytown.org.uk because for the rest of this week you can download our ten top tips to attract new Trustees! “Ask each member of your organisation to come up with a message and then to record it.

8. LOST CLIENTS

If clients or funders or any other stakeholder stops coming to you, write and ask why! Be truthful: “you haven’t been in touch for a while and we wonder if our organisations did something wrong? If we did, it certainly wasn’t intentional and we’d like to put it right.”

9. E-MAILS

E-mails cost nothing to send and as a consequence, they are very over-used. People will delete them without reading them, particularly if you are known as a sender of boring, inconsequential messages.



The trick is to make each one count. What’s in it for the recipient? What do they want from you? How can you help them to achieve what they want? If your e-mail answers these questions, you’re on to a winner.

Develop an e-mail newsletter

Anyone who has ever seen Martin’s Money Tips will see how to put together an eagerly-anticipated newsletter (www.moneysavingexpert.com). It’s informative, has lots of links to USEFUL websites, follows the same format each week and always finishes with a bit of fun – usually a link to a free game.

I used to regularly delete a dozen or so newsletters every week without opening them because I knew they’d be boring and waste my time. However, there was one which arrived every Friday afternoon from a misanthropic Scotsman which really made me laugh. It was also full of very useful information that helped me to do my job better. Now, Friday afternoon would seem to be the very worst time to send out an e-mail newsletter: people are switching their brains off for

the weekend, or are not in the mood for work of any sort, but my miserable Scot used this to his advantage by making his newsletter a kind of sign-off for the week: read this, have a laugh and go home. Oh, and you'll also find some information that will help you to hit the ground running on Monday morning. Genius!

If you think your organisation could benefit from having a newsletter, ask yourselves what you want it to do. If it's just to raise your profile and keep you in people's minds, a weekly publication is probably overkill – try monthly or quarterly. On the other hand, if you regularly have important information to give out, or run regular events, you are probably justified in having a weekly newsletter. Good newsletters in the voluntary sector create a sense of community – it makes the recipients feel that they are a part of something, that they are valued.

A couple of points to remember. You have to give recipients the option to unsubscribe. And you are likely to receive some negative feedback and complaints from some people. This always happens – don't let it get to you. Ask your subscribers for suggestions on how to improve the newsletter or if there are any subjects they would particularly like you to cover.

There are a number of websites which will help you:

www.phplist.com

- an open source newsletter manager which is free to download. Go to the site and watch a demo.

www.alouwebdesign.ca

- busy site, but there are useful free downloads in there.

www.mailchimp.com

- free e-mail marketing download

10.

THE TELEPHONE

An "almost" free marketing tool as you only have to pay for the cost of the call. But cold-calling is not for everyone, mainly because no-one likes to be rejected. And no-one likes to receive cold calls. So try "warm-calling" instead.



If you have sent an e-mail or a piece of direct mail to a prospective client, follow it up with a telephone call. Write yourself a script to help overcome any nerves you might have – try not to sound as though you're reading it line by line. And as ever, before you call, decide on what result you want. If you want to set up an appointment, then your script should "channel" the conversation in that direction. Your last line should be "So when is it convenient to meet?"

TELEPHONE TIPS

-  **If you have a volunteer or member of staff with cheek and charm, ask them to make the calls.**
-  **Befriend the receptionist – when she's on your side, you're in!**
-  **Speak to a decision-maker**



The following paragraphs come from “Cold Calling for Chickens” by Bob Etherington and has been used successfully by a number of small organisations:

“Good morning <Mr X> my name is <your name>.

I am <Director> of <my organisation>. <My organisation> specialises in helping you to make efficient use of your telephone network based on our unique analytical tool.

I won't take up any of your time today. What I'd like to do is set up a brief appointment to come back and talk to you about our service and show you how it will work for you. You never know, if not today, then some time in the future we may be able to help you.

When would be a good time for you? The middle of the week? Morning or afternoon? What will be best for you?”

You should say all those words without breaks or pauses. Also notice that you must say that you are not going to take up *any* of the person's time – not “much of your time” or “a lot of your time”. You must say “any”.

I am sure you get the idea. When a prospective customer realises that you are not trying to sell anything immediately you will find he or she relaxes quite a bit.

Also, be ready for the person to say: “Tell me about it now...”. So have some questions ready to ask them about typical problem areas where you know you can help. Once they have answered a couple of chatty questions, once again ask them for a face to face meeting using the same words as before.

Nothing beats persistence

Is this infallible? Of course not, you will still get rejected, it's all part of the game for an entrepreneur. But well-executed telephone cold calling works better than anything else I know. If you make 20 calls each day following this little script you'll find yourself in front of more

potential customers than you ever thought possible. Oh, and if you won't call your prospective customers then I will. And if you're in my market, I *will* take them away from you.'

If you are interested in finding out more about doing your own cold-calling, you will find information about Bob at <http://www.brainguide.co.uk/bob-etherington> . He has also written a great book called “Presentation Skills for Quivering Wrecks”.

If you really can't face cold or warm calling, you can always employ a telesales organisation, but they cost between £250 and £500 per day. However, for that, you should get at least five appointments in front of a decision-maker.



11. PIGGYBACKING

The posh name for this is "Affiliate Marketing". It means using other people's customers to get new business or to acquire more funding.



You will need to think of other organisations that market to more or less the same clients and funders as you do. Your only limitation is your imagination.

For example, an organisation offering assertiveness training to women's refugees decided to start a social enterprise to generate some unrestricted income (i.e. revenue without any strings attached). They spent a morning thinking of other groups or businesses whose clients could be helped by receiving this training. One of the suggestions was Weightwatchers: they thought it likely that the people trying to lose weight might suffer from lack of self-esteem and that learning to be more assertive would fit in very well with the encouraging results they should be getting from Weightwatchers. Even better, Weightwatchers would also benefit from this as they would be seen by their clients as offering an additional service of great interest.

The bit you must get absolutely right is the approach to the prospective partner. You **MUST** convince them that you are not competing with them in any way – your product or service is complementary to theirs and will be seen by the client as gesture of goodwill (although they will have to pay of course).

Next, tell them that:

- you won't damage their good name by poor customer service
- they will not have to do anything – you will write the letter/contact the clients/give a presentation and absorb all the costs
- all request for your service can be directed through them if necessary
- you will refund them any costs incurred and guarantee all work

Try to forestall any objections they might have by being prepared to allay all their fears. Think of what their likely questions will be and work out your answers.

Getting started

1. List complementary or related products or services
2. List organisations that sell those products or services
3. Put the organisations in order of priority, starting with those you think are most likely to be interested.
4. Prepare your approach to the top three.
5. Always do what you promised you would!

USEFUL SOURCES OF HELP

The Media Trust

www.mediatrust.org.uk

Bringing media and charities together.

Click on “online guides” for a list of free factsheets about various aspects of marketing.

Flying Kite

www.flyingkite.co.uk

An amazing website offering free tutorials in marketing and fundraising. Don't tell your friends!

Bootstrapme

www.bootstrapme.com

An American website which has some interesting tips on creative marketing for those of us with no money.

Free PR!

www.doyourownpr.co.uk

Free newsletter and low-cost PR services. Well worth a look.

Reliable source of information

www.ncvo-vol.org

A huge website, but there is a lot of very useful information therein. Set aside at least an hour.



Other Useful Addresses you may wish to visit:

http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/recipe_futurefunding_new.pdf
http://www.fit4funding.org.uk/help_and_advice/funding/banks
http://www.fit4funding.org.uk/help_and_advice/funding/companies
http://www.fit4funding.org.uk/help_and_advice/funding/stores
http://www.fit4funding.org.uk/help_and_advice/funding/local_business
<http://www.aandb.org.uk/render.aspx?siteID=1&navIDs=1,2>
<http://www.funderfinder.org.uk/pack/companies.pdf>
<http://www.companygiving.org.uk/Default.aspx>
http://www.financehub.org.uk/support_from_the_corporate_sector/default.aspx
<http://www.hertscvs.org.uk/userimages/How%20to%20get%20support%20from%20business%20es.ppt>

RAISING YOUR PROFILE

Or "Stories Sell!"

As Henry Ford said, "You can't build a reputation on what you're going to do."



Nothing sells like a good story, and bad news sells more than good. Every organisation has a story to tell and if you build in a human interest element, you're on to a winner.

If you're after free promotion for your organisation, getting your stories into the media is a sure-fire way to do so.

For most organisations, the first stop is the local press. The Media Trust (see previous pages) has a factsheet "Establishing Contact with a Journalist" which will help you to get started. Check out the website of your chosen publication and find out what their deadlines are. Is there a specialist reporter that covers your organisation's activities? Can you offer yourself as an "expert" from whom a journalist can get reliable quotes and information.

Local newspapers are "wannabe nationals". They want to be taken as seriously as the national daily press, so see what's making headlines in the nationals and decide if you can offer a local angle on it. Local newspapers sell more copies when their headlines reflect a national story – can you help them increase their circulation?

Other examples of stories include:

- Offering something new to the area
- Offering something truly unique
- You or an employee has won a prize/competition
- You or an employee has done something out of the ordinary

- You have a connection with someone famous
- Results from your latest survey

Real gold dust is when a story in a local paper is picked up by the national press and television so aim high!

A word about photographs. A picture really does paint a thousand words. Beg, borrow or steal (or buy, of course) a digital camera and photograph everything to do with your organisation: staff, volunteers, clients, events, visits, open days etc etc. Storage of and instant access to all your photos is easy and eventually you will capture a fantastic shot. DO NOT send it in to a local paper or anyone else. Let them know you've got it and ask if they'd be interested in using it.

PRESS RELEASE RULES

- "Press information" or "News Release" at the top
- Date and name at the top of the first page
- Attention-grabbing headline
- At least 1.5 line spacing
- No underlining, bolding or "quotation marks" (unless for speech)
- Length – between 100 and 5000 words
- Type "End" at the end
- Include editor's notes (giving information about your organisation, explaining any acronyms etc)
- Content must be factual – don't use padding
- Always check spelling, grammar, telephone numbers, website addresses etc
- Always, always tell the truth!
- 1st paragraph – contains the whole story: who, what, why, where, when and how
- 2nd paragraph - need to know
- 3rd paragraph – nice to know
- 4th paragraph - final round up with contact details



Send press releases about new products and services, events, competitions, awards and speeches you have made.

A good tip is to write a press release that can legitimately use the word "free" in the headline as it attracts readers' eyes to the story.

Match your writing style to the style of the newspaper

DON'TS

DON'T provide incorrect information

DON'T write too much



DON'T miss deadlines (next week's event should have been in last week's issue)
DON'T write a press release with no news value
DON'T be too commercial
DON'T pester journalists or editors – no stalking!

Get your story out there!!

LOCAL AND NATIONAL RADIO

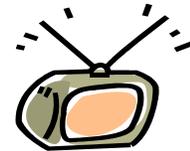
Local radio can be a bit hit or miss. It's no use giving an interview if the target audience don't listen to the particular show you're on. Radio stations often have outside broadcast units at country fairs, fetes, sporting events, county shows and so on. It's much easier to sell your organisation in a face to face meeting, but as ever you will need to prepare your approach.



All radio stations have websites which makes getting in touch with them straightforward. Once again, it's the story you have to tell that will get you noticed so if you've had success with a local press release, try it with a national radio station. Steve Wright used to have a "website of the day" slot which featured a charity that I had worked with. Their website hit rate shot up and they went on to great success, partially as a result of their appearance on the radio.

TELEVISION

With the explosion in the number of television channels, there is a hunger for new stories. Television is a greedy medium and there is sure to be a channel that is interested in your good story. The Community Channel is a good starting point for the voluntary sector. Look at their website www.communitychannel.org for more information.



CELEBRITY SUPPORT

The ever-useful Media Trust has a factsheet called "Attracting and Keeping Celebrity Support" which is a good starting point. But, a word of warning: celebrities can and do attract some very negative headlines so choose yours carefully. They can cause you a lot of damage.



SPONSORSHIP

Sponsorship is harder to come by than it used to be but it's still out there. As with celebrity support, choose your sponsor carefully. The following sites are useful:

www.sponsorshiponline.com

www.uksponsorship.com

www.sponsorship.co.uk

ANNUAL REPORT

Make this into a marketing tool – don't allow it to become a boring document that does nothing more than fulfil a legal requirement. It should be fun, interesting, inspiring and threaded through with your new marketing message.

YOUR MARKETING STRATEGY

Some, or maybe even all, of the ideas put forward in this Guide will work for you – it really depends upon what you want your marketing strategy to achieve for your organisation. It is likely that you will need more than one outcome: more funding, more beneficiaries, some commercial income, a higher profile and so on. But none of these aims can be reached if you don't put together a proper marketing strategy and accompanying action plan.

A good marketing strategy is a route of how to get to the end goal. It therefore follows that your first step should be to identify your end goal or goals. If possible, make your goals measurable: "We want to have earned £20,000 through trading activities" or "We will have 5 press releases accepted in the next 12 months".

Apply the following steps to each of your goals:

1. Understand your market and the competition

It is vital to understand your market. A market consists of people whose needs are not being met. This could be funding bodies, service users, public sector bodies, clients etc.

- Are there segments of your market that are being underserved?
- Are the segments of the market for your service big enough for you to make money/benefit in some way?
- How much of a share of that market do you need to capture just to break even?
- Is there too much competition in your market to be competitive?
- What are the weaknesses in my competition's offering that I can capitalise on?
- Does the market want or value my unique competitive offering?

2. Understand your customer

You cannot prepare a marketing plan until you know:

- Who your clients are – **beneficiaries or funders?**
- What they want, and
- What motivates them to buy

People will buy what they **want** rather than what they **need** (go out for bread and come back with chocolate, wine, flowers etc). So ask yourself:

- How does our potential client buy similar services/fund organisations e.g. in a shop, from the internet, through a CVS etc
- Who is the primary buyer and the primary influencer
- What kind of habits does my client have? For instance, where do they get their information (TV, newspapers, internet)?
- What are my target client's primary motivations for buying?

3. Pick a niche or a new sector

If you say your target client is "everybody" then nobody will be your client! You'll have more success as a big fish in a little pond. You could be a disability advisor in Hatfield or a mobile library that specialises in care homes. Pick a niche that you can communicate with.

4. Develop your marketing message

Two types of messages – your elevator speech: once in a lifetime chance to be in the lift at the same time as your target who asks "So, what do **you** do?"

The second marketing message should be:

- Explanation of your target's problem
- Proof that the problem is so important that it should be solved now without delay
- Clear about why you are the only organisation that can solve the problem
- An explanation of the benefits people will receive from using your solution
- Examples and testimonials
- Your guarantee

5. Decide on your medium (or media)

Remember what you've read in this Guide. You must pick media that give you the best return: the most niche prospects at the lowest possible cost.

Match your message to your market using the right medium. It would do you no good to market your retirement care home in Devon using a fast-paced, loud ad on Radio 1. Remember: **market, message, medium!!!**

6. Set sales and marketing goals

You must use the SMARTER method. Make your goals:

Specific
Measurable
Agreed
Relevant
Timetabled
Ethical
Recorded

7. Develop your marketing budget

If you've been running your organisation for a year and tracked your marketing-related expenditures, you could easily calculate your cost to acquire one customer or cost to sell one product by dividing your annual sales and marketing costs by the number of units sold/customers acquired.

Every time you win a bid, sell a product or service, acquire some donations, put some money aside for future marketing needs. It could be used to produce some brochures, develop a website, pay for some advertising.

ACTION PLANNING

Assign the goals to specific people within your organisation and talk to them about the resources they will need to achieve these goals. And don't forget to set a realistic deadline.

Set aside uninterrupted time to develop the strategy and as far as possible involve everyone in your organisation – you will be amazed at the creative thoughts people can come up with when given the freedom to suggest ideas without fear of being laughed at. Some of the best marketing ideas arise from brainstorming sessions where people are encouraged to speak freely.

And finally.....

Make sure you have the capacity to deal with the success of your new strategy!



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