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Building a Marketing Toolkit: Telling the Story of Your Organization Throughout the Community

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Building a Marketing Toolkit

Telling the Story of your Organization throughout the Community

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What Is a Marketing Toolkit?

The words "marketing" and "promotion" are synonymous to most people. Marketing promotes services and convinces people to use them. Marketing utilizes a variety of promotional delivery tools. These tools come in many forms, including ads, brochures, press releases, commercials, 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 client.

A marketing toolkit contains the tools and resources needed to promote the organization and its programs and services throughout the community. Useful marketing tools should:

- Attract new clients and improve relationships with existing clients
- Offer a public service to those in need of assistance, information, or education
- Educate the community and public 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 value if people aren't aware of their existence, usefulness, or benefits. A marketing toolkit helps the organization build this awareness in the community.

How Can a Marketing Toolkit Be Created and Used?

Most toolboxes contain a variety of tools. If one understands the problem to be addressed as well as how, when, and why each tool is used, tools can be incredibly helpful. Tools save time and money. But if you just want to fill a toolbox 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 toolkit 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, its programs and activities?

Create high-quality, useful tools

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. A variety of tools should be included in a marketing toolkit. These include:

Letter of introduction and overview. Include the organization's contact information in the letter. Explain the role and importance of the organization and its programs to the community.

Business has only two functions— marketing and innovation.

~ Milan Kundera

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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 the 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?

Make the marketing toolkit usable

All tools should be user-friendly and help the organization accomplish its goals. To make toolkits usable:

- **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.
- **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 toolkit, should be identified with the organization's logo. The writing and format should all reflect the organization's brand and logo.

Teach people how to utilize the toolkit

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 toolkit will help you better understand their needs and obstacles and will also make them feel involved and included. Getting people to feel invested in the tools will result in better adoption and tool utilization. Include a review of the marketing toolkit as part of the orientation process for all new staff and volunteers.

Three Basic Marketing Tools for Your Organization

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

Developing an effective press release

For most community nonprofits, developing a press release for local media outlets will be the single most important method of marketing the programs offered by the organization. A press release is the quickest and easiest way to get free publicity. A well-written press release results in multiple published articles about the organization and its programs, products, and services. And wide distribution can mean new prospects for clients, members, volunteers, and leaders. What's more, press releases are cost effective. Consider the following ways 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 the marketing message communicated through the publication, you need to convince the reporter/editor that the

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organization's message (or the story surrounding it) is newsworthy. The message must be timely, relevant, and appealing 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 providing the who, what, when, where, and why of the program or event.
- **Provide some strong 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.
- **Include a web link for additional information.** The press release should direct people to the organization's website for additional information about the event, organization, and volunteer opportunities.

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?

Creating Promotion and Information Flyers

Promotional and informational flyers and brochures are an inexpensive way for community organizations to promote their programs, events, and activities. Pender identifies seven steps to create a 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.** When using 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.** This 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 color paper to make flyers stand out from the white paper flyers. Save the original to use if you need to print more copies.
- **Post the brochure on the organization's website.** Include a web link for additional information.

Creating Registration Brochures

When planning an event that requires registration, develop a registration brochure. An effective registration brochure includes promotional information about the event as well as a registration form. This two-in-one technique saves the organization time and money. Following are five steps for creating a registration brochure.

- **Use a tri-fold layout with the registration form on the back panel.** Begin with a standard 8 ½" x 11" sheet of paper folded in thirds. Upon completion, the back panel will be folded and 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 the event on this panel as it will be removed and sent with the registration form.
- **Design an eye catching front cover.** In all brochure printing projects, the front cover provides the only opportunity for a first impression. 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 which will motivate the reader to look inside and find out more.
- **When designing a mailed brochure, leave the middle outside panel blank for addresses.** 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 the brand or logo so that address labels can be affixed without being too distracting.
- **Decide what to say in the body of the brochure.** The remaining space will hold 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 vital information.** The date, time, location, and cost (if any) of the event is vital. Include the event name as well as names of speakers and sponsors. Any special offers should be clearly stated as well. For example, if a group rate is offered, include that information as well as all rates, deadlines, and payment information.

With the right amount of time and effort, this two-in-one brochure is a valuable marketing tool and is a key to conducting a successful event.

Summary

A marketing toolkit utilizes a variety of promotional delivery tools. These tools come in many forms, including ads, brochures, press releases, commercials, Facebook pages, and Twitter accounts. A marketing toolkit contains the tools and resources needed to promote the organi-

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