

WHY MARKETING MATTERS



Marketing has a key role to play in achieving growth and stability in your organisation. By harnessing the techniques of marketing, your organisation is better equipped to become the one that people choose to interact with. Unsure how? Then read on...

What is marketing?

“Marketing is the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer needs profitably.”

Chartered Institute of Marketing (2000)

Put simply, this means that marketing:

- Keeps your ‘customers’ (the people you serve) at the heart of everything you do;
- Involves more than just promotion and branding;
- Helps you achieve your organisation’s objectives.



Understanding your customers

Marketing starts with the customer. The first step is to identify who it is your organisation serves, then what it is they need from you and then to arrange your organisation and its activities in a way that meets those needs at every turn.

It is helpful to think about customers in the broadest sense – as stakeholders; anyone who has an effect on or is affected by what your organisations does.

So your customers could be:

- volunteers
- donors
- service users
- members
- employees
- commissioners
- funders
- partners

Your organisation has a mutual relationship with all of its customers – they receive something from you and in doing so, they contribute to your organisation’s success.

Therefore, it is essential that you have a good understanding of what your customers need from you, so that you can make sure you deliver it to them.

The best way to do this is research – use the internet, gather some intelligence, conduct a survey – to get to grips with what it is your customers are asking for.

Customer focus

Once you have identified who your customers are and what it is they need, your organisation can employ marketing tools to ensure you fulfil them in every activity you undertake.

Tools such as the 7Ps provide a structure for thinking about the needs of your customers and incorporating them into the different elements of your organisation. For instance: the type of services you provide (product), the location you offer them from (place), the different ways you advertise (promotion).

This is where marketing is about more than promotion. Designing leaflets or getting your logo right is only one component of marketing. Marketing is much broader; encompassing the whole process of understanding your customers and then tailoring your organisation to match.

Achieving your objectives

It probably sounds like a logical step, but once you are meeting the needs of your customers, your organisation is far more likely to be the one that people choose to interact with. Your organisation becomes the one your customers choose to:

- volunteer for
- turn to in time of need
- become a member of
- commission services from
- donate to
- award funds to

And by becoming the organisation of choice, your organisation is in a strong and healthy position to meet its objectives and enjoy success and sustainability.

But to continue being successful, it is crucial that your organisation maintains an understanding of its customers' needs. Carry out regular satisfaction surveys or focus groups to make sure you are still giving the customer what they want.

Tips for getting started

Adopting marketing in your organisation is actually relatively simple as a lot of its practices revolve around common sense and a sound knowledge of your organisation. Here are some tips for getting the most from your marketing:

- 1. Build up a picture of your customers** – who they are, what they are like, what makes them tick
- 2. Know why you're unique** – understand what it is that makes you stand out and then shout about it
- 3. Make a plan** – forward thinking is key to successful marketing so make sure you have planned your activities in advance
- 4. Evaluate** – recognise where you have been successful and the times where you have not, and understand why
- 5. Take things on board** – encourage feedback from your customers and build on and learn from both positive and negative comments

Marketing support

SUSTAiN provides free advice, information and guidance on all aspects of marketing. If you would like support with implementing marketing practices in your organisation contact Jayne Scarman, PR & Marketing Manager on **0121 711 3148** or promotion@solihull-sustain.org.uk

