



myplace
support team

Marketing Plan

Introduction

You may think you have the shiniest new **myplace** centre in the country offering the best range of positive and fun activities available anywhere in the region. But, unless young people know what's on offer and want it they're not going to beat a path to your door. Marketing is the process of identifying your offer to your target audience, and gaining their enthusiastic involvement. This briefing provides a few pointers on how to go about it.

How to develop a marketing plan

The best promotional resource you will ever have is a large group of young people already committed to your centre. Evidence shows that this age group is far more likely to adopt a brand - in this case your **myplace** centre - if their peers recommend it. But why would they? What's in it for them? Think about why they would choose to come to your **myplace** centre rather than just hanging out, watching TV or going to another centre. There's lots vying for their time and attention out there.

To convince them to choose you over the 101 other things they could be doing you need to be giving them what they want. And to give them what they want you first need to ask them what it is they want. So, your marketing plan really starts right at the outset of your project, not when you're ready to open the doors to the first group of young people.

In straightforward terms the stages in developing and delivering this might be:

- › Establishing rapport: whether you are working with a group of young people who already know each other or not, start with an icebreaker that gives everyone the chance to get to know each other.
- › Exploring what marketing means: different groups of young people have different levels of understanding about what marketing is and what it does. Spend a bit of time exploring what the group already knows and identifying the gaps.
- › Identifying where you are starting from: before you can plan your journey you need to know where you're starting from. Work with the young people to review the current position of the project and make decisions about how to take it forward.
- › Deciding where you want to get to: if you don't know where you're going how will you know if you've got there? Setting clear goals will help you to focus your efforts and your budgets. Marketing should be an investment not an expense, but without clearly defined objectives it's impossible to judge if you're spending your budget in the most effective way.
- › Profiling your target audience: the single most important aspect of any marketing campaign is targeting. You must identify your perfect customer and focus your efforts towards them. Profile your target audience and discuss what you know about them.
- › Focusing on the benefits: successful marketing is focused on the benefits to the customer. It is essential that you answer the question, 'what's in it for me?' Stop focusing on features and start selling the benefits instead.
- › Identifying what makes you unique: modern marketing is focused on differentiation. Your job is to identify what makes you better than the competition and focus your efforts on communicating that benefit. Identify your USP - your unique selling proposition (or point) and communicate it quickly and clearly.

- › Designing your brand: a brand is simply a collection of messages designed to tell your audience why you are different.
- › Crafting the perfect message: what you say is second only to who you say it to. Successful marketing is about giving the right message to the right person at exactly the right time.
- › Taking stock of your resources: knowing your budget and understanding what support you have available to you is essential when choosing your marketing methods.
- › Choosing the ideal media mix: choosing what tools to use is very important. Consider all the different tools available and pick the ones that are most likely to reach the target audience and have the maximum impact.
- › Testing and measuring for predictable success: this involves monitoring the success of your efforts and constantly comparing your results to your goals. Anything that is successfully achieving your aims is retained; anything that is failing is dropped.
- › Planning the work and working the plan: now that you know what your goals are and how you're going to achieve them, you need a plan of action. A project timeline gives you a path to run on, it makes it easier to work and review your progress.
- › Reviewing and evaluating: to help you review the young people's enjoyment and make improvements in the future.

Actively involving a motivated group of young people at the outset in making all of the marketing decisions, from the initial planning stages right through to when you're up and running, will create a bigger impact and improve the results you get from any marketing activity. It will bring in more young people as the message spreads round peer groups of why what's on offer is too good an opportunity to miss, without leaving anything to chance because the whole process remains under your control. It will also help to create a positive image for the work you are doing within the wider community.

So, first things first, is to identify and develop a group of young people to work with and set up some training workshops with them. This will help to give them the knowledge and confidence to play a full part in the process. Then work your way through the stages above.

It may sound daunting but it's a tried and tested formula. And marketing communications don't have to cost a lot to be effective. What matters most is figuring out a clear strategy in the first place. Think about your messages and the audiences you want them to reach. Then concentrate on finding innovative ways of getting your message out.

You can put together a professional and engaging online and e-marketing campaign. Blogging and services like MySpace have made creating web presence accessible and easy to do. You can create flyers and posters and email them out as pdfs, saving on print and distribution costs. Or go viral - set up an e-bulletin or e-campaign and encourage everyone to send it on to their friends, contacts and networks. Don't advertise in your local newspaper if your target audience of young people aren't reading it. If you have an IT suite as part of your **myplace** centre young people, with support, could create much of the material you'll use.

It's important that your messages excite, inspire and connect with the target audience. But don't over reach or over sell. Be honest with them.

Action planning

Young People

Young people are not a homogeneous group and what appeals to one 16-year-old may not appeal to another, let alone a 19-year-old of the opposite gender. So, try to get a range of young people on your 'marketing steering group' and be prepared to listen to a range of views. Don't expect the one campaign to appeal to everyone across the spectrum.

Making a Difference

Being part of the marketing group for the **myplace** centre represents an excellent opportunity for those young people who are interested in a future career in marketing and will stand them in good stead if they choose to pursue it at a later date.

Vision and Values

There are people and organisations in your local community who can help in delivering the marketing messages about your project. Marketing activity is a good opportunity to work in partnership with these organisations, one of the central aims of **myplace**, and can help sustain and develop your project. Most organisations, such as businesses, charities, voluntary groups, local authorities and schools have newsletters and communication channels that might be useful as part of the marketing mix.

Practicality

Don't spend all your energy on the production of a lovely leaflet without thinking how it will be distributed, when and by whom. Otherwise there's a danger it will end up collecting dust in the **myplace** basement and everyone's efforts will have been wasted.



Links and Further Guidance

The **myplace** support team has produced an excellent marketing resource – **myplace marketing toolkit Practical tools for engaging children and young people in marketing planning**. Working through this resource is the best way to build marketing in to your wider **myplace** activities, and puts young people at the heart of the activity from the outset.

Check for the latest guidance on marketing for **myplace** centres on the Big Lottery Fund website:
www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_myplace

businesslink.gov.uk, the official government website for businesses of all sizes has some helpful advice on developing marketing. See
www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotq/action/layer?topicId=1073869186

Businessballs provides tips, examples, techniques, tools and a process for writing a marketing strategy, business and sales plans, to produce effective results. Free online guide including free templates and examples, such as the Ansoff and Boston matrix tools. New pages are being added soon on advertising, PR (public relations) and press releases, advertising copy-writing, internet and website marketing.
www.businessballs.com/freebusinessplansandmarketingtemplates.htm

Marketing for the Voluntary Sector: a Practical Guide for Charities and Non-government Organizations Paula Keaveney, Michael Kaufmann;
Kogan Page

Marketing Management for Nonprofit Organizations Adrian Sargeant; Oxford University Press, 1999. Provides an overview of the theory behind nonprofit marketing and looks at key sectors such as the arts, education, healthcare and social ideas.

The New DIY Guide to Marketing: For Charities and Voluntary Organizations Moi Ali; ICSA Publishing. ISBN 1860721354