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Self help module 12: Marketing and promotion

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About this module

This module will provide you with a practical approach to marketing and how it relates to the Main Street/Small Towns Program (MS/STP). Some coordinators and committees will be very experienced at marketing and some may be facing marketing challenges for the first time.

This module is designed to show newcomers a simple step by step process for developing a marketing plan. It will also offer experienced coordinators the latest ideas and innovations in marketing along with some tricks of the trade to save you time and money.

There are two sections to this module:

- The Marketing Process which shows you how to use marketing to generate revenue for your events and activities,
- Your Marketing Toolkit which looks at marketing and promotional ideas and concepts.

Wherever possible anecdotes, practical information and "live" examples from coordinators have been included to demonstrate how these marketing techniques can be applied in practice.



What is marketing?

Ask most people for a definition of marketing and you'll be greeted with ummms and errrs. Ask what is the first thing that comes into their mind when you mention marketing and most will say "advertising". Other people think of marketing in terms of promotion, customer service, selling, publicity, branding or image. That's the big problem with marketing, it's a generic term which means different things to different people!

Marketing is a process. It is the process of matching. All you do when you market is match you, your organisation and your product or service to your clients needs and wants.

Advertising, promotion, customer service, selling, publicity, branding and image making are just some of the things you have in your toolkit to make the matching process happen. Like any good process, marketing has a beginning, a middle and an end. Unfortunately there are no guaranteed formulas or answers when it comes to marketing. We cannot say that a "buy local" campaign will work in every community. We know advertising works in some areas not others and a business directory can be a raging success or an abject failure. Working through the marketing process is the only way you can be sure of developing marketing strategies that work for your community whether it be regional or metropolitan, large or small, rural or urban.

Don't get mad ... get marketing

When well known businessman from Sydney – Gerry Harvey, Chairman of Harvey Norman – made some disparaging remarks about Lismore their Main Street organisation didn't get mad they got marketing and turned a potential disaster into a triumph. The remarks and a comment which said that "Ballina was better than Lismore" sparked a furore and debate raged. Some people cancelled their orders at his store. Others said they would never shop there again. He was called to task on radio and the Mayor, president and manager of Lismore Unlimited were all interviewed. Mr Harvey to his credit then pledged on radio to give Lismore \$50,000 for whatever project Lismore could come up with to "improve" Lismore. From that they established the "Spirit of Lismore Foundation" and matched it with funds from their Special Business Rate Variation Levy.

They felt they had to act quickly. Their Events/Promotions Coordinator came up with the "Love this City" promotion for the month of March. It was always intended as a morale boosting exercise. And it worked. There were cash and goods prizes for shoppers who spent their money with any of the 150 participating businesses who came from the CBD, North, South, Industrial Estate and some shopping malls.

Good visibility and branding came from yellow T-shirts emblazoned with a big red heart and "I Love Lismore" red and yellow balloons, posters and stickers. Businesses were encouraged to "go to town" on decorating their shops – and they did! They loved it. In addition to TV ads featuring the Whitlams hit song "Ya Gotta Love This City" and ads in the local paper, there were new newspaper photos and stories throughout the month of some of the best decorated outlets.

The response was astounding. They were up to their ears in entries – around 250,000 in all. They could have sold a lot more T-shirts. Tourists and university students from overseas wanted to buy T-shirts to send home. The overwhelming majority of business participants were very happy with the promotion.

Handy Hint:

Cost in items like balloons, stickers, posters, streamers and T-shirts. These have a wonderful team building effect and make it easy for businesses to participate.



Who are my clients?

It is unlikely that one becomes a Main Street Coordinator or Economic Development Officer because they have an overwhelming desire to go out selling or marketing. But it is a fact of life that marketing and selling your ideas is critical to your personal success and the financial success of your events and activities. So who are your clients? For the purpose of your marketing plan your clients are not the end users (ie the members of your local community who attend events) but the people who fund those services, events and activities.

Typical clients would include:

- Sponsors – businesses and organisations.
- Supporters and subscribers to events and promotions – businesses in town.
- Funding Bodies – Chamber of Commerce, local council, Department of State and Regional Development.
- Organisations representing local interests.

Typical end users would include:

- The community who attend events and support promotions.
- Tourists.

When you think about it, clients and end users have very different needs and wants. Although it is important that we promote our events and activities to the end users, marketing is about generating revenue, so the marketing process must focus on clients not end users.



The marketing audit

Step one – analyse your people resources

Your marketing will be limited by your people resources. There are only so many hours in a day so it is important that marketing strategies are tailored to suit the skills and strengths of the people who will be responsible for making them happen. If you are a one person band who only works two days a week it is crazy to embark on a marketing program that needs three days a week to plan and implement. Marketing should always be achievable so don't set yourself up to fail! It is also important to develop marketing strategies that capitalise on you and your team's strengths. For instance, if you are a whiz with words but hate telemarketing don't put together a program that relies on you making 500 phone calls.

This simple personal audit can be used to identify the strengths and skills you can call on for your marketing. Find a quiet place and take twenty minutes to complete the audit. Then try it on your committee and volunteers.

Skills audit

Identify your skills, strengths, weaknesses, loves, hates, dreams.

Skills – learned through employment, courses, hobbies, eg time management, welding, etc

Strengths – innate characteristics, eg calm in a crisis, persistence

Weaknesses – eg language, dislikes people, procrastinates

Loves – a key to business satisfaction, need to be nurtured/developed

Hates – things you don't do/won't do

Dreams/Goals – marketing drives the dollars which will fund your goals



Ask yourself

- What are key issues that will help or hinder business development? (knowledge, language, communication, negative/positive attitude). Mark these and make sure you consider these when developing your marketing strategies.
- Are existing marketing activities likely to generate the revenue/profit needed to achieve goals?
- Do you have the right staff in the right positions?
- Do you need to recruit volunteers in particular areas?
- What skills and strengths is it important to nurture?
- Are you suited to the tasks you perform for the organisation?

Step two – analyse your organisation and community

A SWOT analysis is vital for marketing planning. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. A SWOT provides a snapshot of your organisation at a particular time. It also identifies the key internal strengths and weaknesses of the organisation and alerts you to the opportunities and threats you may face in the future. Conducting a SWOT analysis has been covered in *Self Help Module 3 – Collaboration and strategic planning* but it is worthwhile revisiting the SWOT from a marketing perspective. To make sure you get a wide range of opinions and perspectives, try to involve a cross section of people in the SWOT meeting. These could include committee members, volunteers, a local business owner, council representative or representative of a regular sponsor. The sample marketing SWOT will give you an idea of the categories you need to look at and includes some issues which may act as thought starters for your own SWOT analysis.





Sample SWOT

This sample SWOT (not from an actual community) is a compilation of issues you might see in a MS/STP SWOT.

General performance

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good team coordinator and volunteers • Regular events • Established events, eg Winter Festival ☆ \$\$\$\$ generated over summer holidays • Strong committee skills and support ☆ Lots of support from the retailers ☆ Potential to promote tourism businesses • Street beautification program ☆ Potential to set up a training program for local businesses ☆ Interest from service businesses, eg accountants, solicitors • Motivated Mayor ☆ Press coverage of growth in the area ☆ Interesting shops in main strip • New age influx 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ Road works in main street ☆ Inadequate parking ☆ Escape spending • No tourism traffic or trade • Time to market and promote ☆ Town looks run down • Local XYZ manufacturer closed down • Lack of support from council, committee or chamber • Number of unemployed hanging around town centre ☆ Fixed income market

☆ Key Issues



Pricing/funding

STRENGTHS

- Special rate levy
- Major sponsorship from XYZ business
- DSRD funding
- Automatic annual membership
- Credit card facilities
- ☆ Small business "package" of events

WEAKNESSES

- ☆ Small retail businesses not happy about costs
- Pricing event entry so it is affordable for local market – fixed income
- ☆ Collecting membership fees
- Cash handling at major events – security risks

☆ Key Issues

Place

STRENGTHS

- Close to a tourism market
- On the route to somewhere
- Beach or tourist attractions
- ☆ New shopping development
- Old fashioned shop fronts
- Passing traffic
- ☆ Office right in the centre of town
- Bright modern office
- Good signage
- ☆ Growth area – young families
- Regular holiday makers
- Holiday houses
- ☆ Reputation of area

WEAKNESSES

- ☆ Escape spending
- Low spending local population, eg unemployed or retirees
- ☆ City centre looks run down
- Old fashioned shop front
- Office is hidden away
- Poor facilities
- ☆ No parking
- No toilets
- Public facilities
- ☆ Reputation of area
- Crime
- Gangs
- Drugs

☆ Key Issues



Resources

STRENGTHS

- ☆ Coordinator's marketing experience
- ☆ Volunteers with events experience
 - Committee supportive
- ☆ Major sponsor
- ☆ Major businesses in the area
- ☆ Data base of businesses
- ☆ Council support
- ☆ Good event venues
- ☆ Track record in events

WEAKNESSES

- ☆ Lack of funding
 - Unmotivated committees
- ☆ Retail apathy
 - Part time coordinator or support
- ☆ Lack of council support
 - Lack of volunteers
- ☆ Poor event venues

☆ Key Issues

Promotion

STRENGTHS

- Blessing of the Fleet event – 60,000 attendees
- ☆ Sponsorship of business directory
- ☆ Good data base
 - Coordinator known about town
 - Support of local council
- ☆ Extensive experience with funding applications
 - Local printer gives discount rates
 - Banners
 - Hire of Christmas decorations and Santa outfit
- ☆ Support from local paper – free ads
 - Community service spots on radio

WEAKNESSES

- ☆ Buy local campaign – lack of retail support
 - Telemarketing was unsuccessful last time
- ☆ Lack of experience targeting a specific group, eg Primary producers
 - Local chamber not supportive
- ☆ Small retail businesses not willing to pay to participate
- ☆ Lack of time to visit businesses
 - Time spent stuffing envelopes

☆ Key Issues



Economic

OPPORTUNITIES

- ☆ Buoyant rural community
- ☆ Fall in Australian dollar – increased tourism

THREATS

- GST
- Fall in Australian dollar

☆ Key Issues

Political

OPPORTUNITIES

- Government legislation affecting support for regional or metropolitan communities
- ☆ Risk of political flare ups with building or development projects
- Support from local members
- Support from local council
- New funding programs

THREATS

- ☆ Change in focus of funding programs
- Political orientation of electorate
- Local politics

☆ Key Issues

Social

OPPORTUNITIES

- ☆ Growing number of local primary producers
- Large Asian community – eg Cabramatta
- ☆ Interest in different and unusual retail outlets, eg Newtown or a country town with boutiques
- ☆ Adventure tourism
- Promotions that are experiential
- Growing tourism businesses

THREATS

- ☆ Loss of tourism market
- Not seen as trendy area
- Poor local image
- Major town or region stealing thunder

☆ Key Issues



Technology

OPPORTUNITIES

- ☆ Use of Internet in marketing
- Use of Internet in regional areas
- Email communication with local businesses

THREATS

- Cost of keeping up with technology – rate of change
- ☆ No ISP in your area – lack of access

☆ Key Issues

Perception

Perception is an optional category but often helps identify the negative perceptions that the community hold. Marketing material can be used to effectively address some of the perceptions.

OPPORTUNITIES

THREATS

- ☆ Main Street coordinators are glorified secretaries
- That events don't help local businesses
- Crowds stop people getting to shops
- ☆ How do I know that a promotion or event will work?
- Why should we advertise, everyone knows we're here
- ☆ No need to participate, I'll piggy back on everyone else

☆ Key Issues



Key issues

Urgent

- Plan a meeting with key stakeholders in the community to clarify support
- Recruiting campaign to source volunteers with event and database experience
- Research available funding for food and wine festival

Important

- Develop an annual training program to improve retailer skills and merchandising in particular
- Develop an event or program that will target the tourism operators
- Develop an annual publicity program in conjunction with the local press and radio
- Develop an event or program to encourage local spending
- Investigate opportunities for developing automatic credit card payment of membership fees
- Update data base of local businesses, include email details
- Explore opportunities to set up community web site
- Lobby council for upgrade of event venues
- Develop a package of events for small retailers – use flyers to promote

Ongoing

- Monitor existing programs with research and exit surveys
- Aim for four major events a year and two other activities

Future planning

- Monitor local trends in retail development and escape spending
- Investigate opportunities for delivering retail training via the Internet
- Increase profile of Main Street program – enter NSW tourism achievement awards. Encourage local businesses to enter NSW tourism awards
- Establish contacts with key people in surrounding areas with a view to developing a regional food and wine event

Research your local community

MS/STPs do not operate in a vacuum so you will also need to take a look at some of the other factors which may have an impact on your marketing. These factors can be explored through:

- Demographic profiles of your area
- Retail or business studies that may have been commissioned by local councils
- Economic studies of your area

Sources of this information include:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) – for site profiles, specific postcodes or groups of postcodes based on the last census information. The Social Atlas publication – for metropolitan programs only.
- Local councils – reports are usually held in the local library
- Business Retention & Expansion (BRE) Survey reports available from DSRD
- The 80/20 program – a commercial program which matches ABS information and business profiling to compile detailed statistical profiles. Often available at little or no charge from Business Enterprise Centres.

Don't forget the human element in your research, often there are community leaders or "centres of influence" in your community who can provide interesting background and historical information. These people may be an ex Mayor, local business person, Minister or prominent member of a local organisation.



Identify the features of your product or service

The next step is to look at all the features of your services and events. Every product or service has features that can be identified. For example, if you were buying a refrigerator some of the features could include:

- Number six energy rating
- Frost free
- Adjustable shelves
- Butter conditioners
- Brand name
- Capacity – 1200 litres

Open any yellow pages directory or local newspaper and you can see advertising that promotes the features of a product or service.

Turn features into benefits

The bad news is that clients don't buy features, they are much more interested in "Benefits" or "WIIFM's" (What's In It For Me?).

The good news is that it is easy to turn a feature into a benefit with just two words "**SO YOU**". For example:

- Number six energy rating so you will save around \$60 a year on electricity bills
- Frost free so you never have to stand around with a plastic spatula and hot bowls of water again. So you will save time and effort
- Adjustable shelves – so you can fit gigantic bottles of soft drink or casks of water in the fridge
- Butter conditioners – so you always have spreadable butter
- Brand name so you can be sure of the reliability and reputation
- Capacity – 1,200 litres so you can fit two cartons of beer, two cases of wine and ten trays of smoked salmon in the fridge.

Sit down with a piece of paper and brainstorm features and benefits for your MS/STP. The more the better. The trick with features and benefits is to be specific not general. Don't write things like "quality service" because they don't easily translate into benefits. Ask yourself what makes up that quality service, for example the phone answered in three rings, trained staff, tea and coffee for clients kept waiting etc. Once you start to use features and benefits your marketing material and sales pitches will sound much more interesting because the points will relate specifically to the client. Here are a few thought starters for a MS/STP:

- An office in the main street **so you** have easy access to the MS/STP Coordinator.
- A Coordinator who has extensive experience in retail management **so you** will be dealing with someone who understands your worries and concerns.
- A data base of all local businesses **so you** have access to other businesses in the area.
- A buy local campaign **so you** have an opportunity to capitalise on local spending trends.
- An annual street fair **so you** can reach an extra 5000 people over a two day period.
- A retail committee **so you** can have a say in the events that are planned.
- Christmas Santa suits for hire **so you** can save time and money by hiring locally.

Of course, these aren't the only benefits and some features may have more than one benefit. Each of your MS/STP activities and projects will also have specific features and benefits which should be used in all your marketing.





Search for your competitive advantage

The last thing to look at is any competitive advantage or Unique Selling Proposition (USP) you, your program or your community may have. A USP is something that is unique, unusual or outstanding. Generally speaking the USP should be specific rather than general. Quality service, or friendliest town in the west would not be regarded as USPs whereas a town featuring 15 gourmet food specialists or a tourist attraction such as the Kiama Blowhole could be developed into a strong USP. You don't have to have a USP to market successfully but if you do have one it should be featured in all your marketing.

Last but not least you need to look at product development. How does your product or service need to change to meet the needs of your target clients? This information often comes out of the SWOT analysis.

Step four – pinpoint your competitors

Your community may be competing with other regions, shopping centres and events for a share of the disposable income in your area. It is important in your marketing strategies to look at the competitive advantages and benefits you have and promote those wherever possible. For instance, if a new retail centre is under construction it may be an ideal time to promote easy parking – hassle free shopping at your neighbourhood shopping centre. Generally speaking it is dangerous to spend too much time worrying about competitors. You are better to plan strategically for your area and capitalise on your strengths wherever possible.

Even though a MS/STP is a not-for-profit program you will often face competition from other organisations who are chasing the same pool of funds. It is important to understand who you may be up against in the marketplace when you are tendering or quoting on a project. Potential competitors you may face include:

- Councils
- Economic development organisations and other MS/ST programs
- Community groups
- Local press and promotions companies
- Business training programs
- Sporting events looking for sponsorship dollars

Win Win in Kingscliff

Television can be a real winner when it is used to promote an image or special event.

When Kingscliff was by-passed by the highway the MS/STP decided to promote their town by reinforcing their lifestyle image of "Everything from Fine Food to Fun in the Sun". They turned to television using inexpensive stock footage and still shots to create a 30 second "generic" commercial and then used the top and tail for a combined campaign with three retailers slotted in the middle of the commercial. The local businesses were winners because the month long promotion worked and they had the chance to try television at a reduced rate. The television station was a winner because it could demonstrate the effectiveness of television to potential clients. The MS/STP was a winner because it branded Kingscliff effectively and made it easy for local businesses to participate!

Winning tips:

- Pay the extra for a professional voice over (preferably someone not usually heard on your local station) so your advertisement will stand out from the rest.
- Don't forget that music is an important part of setting the scene, don't settle for boring or bland.
- For maximum impact don't rely on ROS (run of station spots) pay the extra to buy some commercials in prime time programs that will reach your target market!



Step five – review your existing and potential clients

This is the critical part of the marketing review. If you can successfully identify your target clients you can save yourself a lot of time, money and headache.

Find your market boundary

The first thing you need to do is identify your market boundary. This is the area where you are going to spend your marketing resources. Time, money and energy! The obvious boundary for Main Street/Small Towns programs is geographic. Most coordinators have a charter to service a specific area and that is where they should concentrate their marketing activities. However there are other ways of creating a marketing boundary. These include:

- Demographic or age – if you were selling retirement villages you would be targeting people aged 55 and above.
- Industry or business type – if you make metal widgets you would be targeting the manufacturing industry so you wouldn't waste time approaching fashion retailers. Your boundary could be professional practitioners such as accountants or solicitors. You could also combine this boundary with a geographic boundary so you could target all manufacturers in New South Wales.
- Ethnic groups – if you are growing taro you could be targeting the Islander population.
- Religious groups – if you are preparing kosher food you could have a marketing boundary of people of the Jewish faith.
- Sex – there are four sex boundaries: male, female, gay and lesbian. They are distinguished by particular buying characteristics such as high disposable income and high levels of referral.
- Education and income – it is not recommended that you have a market boundary based on education or income as people do not walk around with labels on their foreheads saying "I went to university" or "I earn \$60k a year". These boundaries are better related back to geographic areas or professional groups.
- Attitudinal – boundaries can also be based on a target market's attitudes, for example, New Age or environmentally aware.

A market boundary is necessary to conserve your resources (time, money, energy). A market boundary also tells you what not to do. For example if you are targeting retirees you would not advertise on a rock radio station, sponsor a rock carnival or have pink fluro business cards!

Find your target market segments

Within your market boundary there will be lots and lots of potential clients who are willing to sponsor an event, buy into a promotional program or supply in-kind support. The only problem is finding them. Most small business owners spend most of their business lives wandering around hoping to bump into a potential client. The trick is to create groups of potential clients. These groups are called market segments. A market segment is a group of individuals with similar attitudes and attributes, worries and concerns. For instance, we could say that "all mothers" were a market segment, but closer analysis shows that regardless of age, income or location they don't have similar attitudes and attributes or worries and concerns. But if we were to call "mothers of two year olds" a market segment that makes much more sense because regardless of age, income or location they have similar worries and concerns. The aim is to brainstorm as many market segments as you can. Some of the typical market segments you might see in a MS/STP are listed in the box "Potential market segments" on page 17.

Branding at its best

Developing a consistent image for your town or region is tough when you are dealing with lots of businesses and interested parties. Toronto took on the challenge and won with a brilliant concept. They produced a brochure that promotes six different sections of the community each denoted by an icon. The six colour coded categories – Events, Services, Restaurants, Accommodation/Lifestyle and Family – all promote local businesses and events. The brochure has been designed so it can be updated or changed very cost effectively. So each time the brochure is reprinted it can promote up coming events and always stays fresh and interesting. The icons and colours for each category are then used in event signage, street identity, banners and any promotion of an event. Great community branding on a budget!

Trick of the trade:

Don't even attempt this without a quality graphic artist. You'll pay more but it is well worth it!



Marketing segmentation in action – build on success

Over the years, Newtown has been seen as a shining example of a metropolitan Main Street program and the area is now well known for its eclectic and exciting mix of King Street shops. This popular area draws shoppers from all over Sydney to the northern end of King Street. However the success of this one area has highlighted missed opportunities in two other adjacent shopping precincts. Research and feedback from retailers identified that there were opportunities to build on the existing success of the program.

After careful consideration and consultation with all the interested parties it was decided to segment the Newtown shopping area and create two new distinctive precincts. South King Street is a homewares precinct featuring different and unusual outlets while Enmore Road has become a haven for locals with a good retail mix tailored to suit the people who live in the area. To facilitate this plan, the program created sub committees with their own budget to drive the planning and implementation of their precinct marketing programs. An important facet of this program has seen the committees working with local real estate agents to promote their project to potential businesses. They also promote the homewares precinct at Home Shows and other relevant showcasing events.

Potential market segments

- Mum and dad retailers
- Retail businesses with managers
- Top ten – independent business
- Major companies – eg BHP, Pacific Electricity
- Chains – eg K Mart
- Franchise businesses – eg service stations, fast food outlets
- Rural industries
- Tourism and accommodation businesses
- Professional services
- Accountants/solicitors
- Health professionals – eg doctors, pathology laboratories, physiotherapists etc
- Clubs – sporting and recreation
- Property owners*
- Funding sources – Federal, State and Local Government
- Councils
- DSRD

**In communities where a business levy is not in place, owners can be a valuable target market segment and should be considered during the planning process.*

Identify the decision makers in each market

Once you have identified the main groups of potential clients you need to test whether they are a market segment and identify the decision maker in each market segment. It is important to know who the decision maker is so you don't waste time marketing to the wrong person. In some markets there are influencers as well as decision makers. You may need separate marketing approaches to reach both influencers and decision makers. Be careful not to leave influencers out of the loop because they can influence a decision against you!

Handy hint:

If you have more than one type of decision maker you probably have more than one market segment.



Who are the decision makers in each market segment?

<p>Mum and dad retailers <i>Decision maker – owner</i></p>	<p>Professional services Accountants/solicitors <i>Decision maker – practice owner or practice manager</i></p>
<p>Retail businesses with managers <i>Decision maker – owner</i> <i>Influencer – manager</i></p>	<p>Health professionals – doctors, pathology laboratories, physiotherapists <i>Decision maker – practice owner</i></p>
<p>Top ten – independent business <i>Decision maker – owner</i> <i>Influencers – senior managers</i></p>	<p>Clubs – sporting and recreation <i>Decision maker – management committee</i> <i>Influencer – general manager/secretary/manager</i></p>
<p>Major companies – eg BHP, Pacific Electricity <i>Decision maker – marketing manager, regional manager</i></p>	<p>Property owners <i>Decision maker – property owners</i></p>
<p>Chains – eg K Mart <i>Decision maker – regional manager</i> <i>Influencer – head office</i></p>	<p>Councils <i>Decision maker – elected councillors</i> <i>Influencer – general manager, individual councillors, Mayor</i></p>
<p>Franchise business <i>Decision maker – regional manager</i> <i>Influencer – head office</i></p>	<p>DSRD <i>Decision maker – eg senior manager, executive director</i> <i>Influencer – head office program manager, regional business development or community economic development manager</i></p>
<p>Rural industries <i>Decision maker – owner</i></p>	
<p>Tourism businesses <i>Decision maker – owner</i></p>	



Potential for revenue in order of attractiveness

- \$\$\$\$\$\$ Mum and dad retailers
- \$\$\$\$\$\$ Rural industries
- \$\$\$\$\$ Retail businesses with managers
- \$\$\$\$ DSRD
- \$\$\$\$ Councils
- \$\$\$\$ Top ten – independent business
- \$\$\$\$ Franchise businesses
- \$\$\$\$ Clubs – sporting and recreation
- \$\$\$ Major companies – eg BHP, Pacific Electricity
- \$\$\$ Tourism and accommodation businesses
- \$\$ Accountants/solicitors
- \$\$\$ Property owners
- \$\$ Doctors, pathology laboratories, physiotherapists
- \$ Chains – eg K Mart

Based just on \$s you may be tempted to chase mum and dad retailers or concentrate on the top ten businesses. But look how the picture changes when you look at the difficulty factor of each market segment on the next page. A high number of ticks means it is very easy.





Ease of marketing	
<i>Top ten independent businesses</i>	
\$\$\$\$\$✓✓✓✓✓	easy to deal with, keen to support programs
<i>Rural industries</i>	
\$\$\$\$\$\$✓✓✓✓✓	have lots of funds, desperate to take part in activities, easy to chat to
<i>Clubs – sporting and recreation</i>	
\$\$\$\$\$✓✓✓✓✓	keen to support, feel they want to be involved in everything, very easy to deal with
<i>Franchise business</i>	
\$\$\$\$\$ ✓✓✓	easy to reach, active in the community want to be a part of action
<i>Mum and dad retailers</i>	
\$\$\$\$\$\$\$ ✓✓	easy to find but resent spending money
<i>Retail businesses with managers</i>	
\$\$\$\$\$ ✓✓	???
<i>Councils</i>	
\$\$\$\$\$ ✓✓✓	easy to reach but decisions take a long time and funding can be affected by political issues
<i>Major companies – BHP, Pacific Electricity</i>	
\$\$\$ ✓✓	harder to locate, have other responsibilities, do not necessarily have a local focus
<i>DSRD</i>	
\$\$\$\$\$ ✓✓	easy to find but funding is a competitive process and set requirements differ for each departmental program and generally include the need for matching funding
<i>Tourism businesses</i>	
\$\$\$✓✓✓	???
<i>Professional services</i>	
<i>Accountants/solicitors</i>	
\$\$✓✓	can never reach them, in meetings all day, not business focused
<i>Health professionals – eg doctors, pathology laboratories, physiotherapists</i>	
\$\$ ✓	can never reach them, in meetings all day, not business focused
<i>Property owners</i>	
\$\$\$ ✓✓✓	easy to find, some are supportive but others see levy as not beneficial or relevant
<i>Chains – eg K Mart</i>	
\$ ✓	have limited budgets, hard to contact, unwilling to support local activities



Once again the picture changes and segments that looked to be profitable may take a long time to build relationships with. Finally desirability gives us a picture of where the key people want to concentrate their energy, after all no one is keen to spend time on activities or market segments they don't like or relate to.

What is the desirability of each market segment?	
<i>Top ten independent businesses – 9/10</i>	
\$\$\$\$ ✓✓✓✓✓	easy to deal with, keen to support programs
<hr/>	
<i>Clubs – sporting and recreation – 8/10</i>	
\$\$\$\$ ✓✓✓✓✓	keen to support, feel they want to be involved in everything, very easy to deal with
<hr/>	
<i>Councils – 9/10</i>	
\$\$\$ ✓✓✓	easy to reach but decisions take a long time and funding can be affected by political issues
<hr/>	
<i>Rural industries – 6/10</i>	
\$\$\$\$\$ ✓✓✓✓✓	have lots of funds, desperate to take part in activities, easy to chat to
<hr/>	
<i>Franchise business – 4/10</i>	
\$\$\$\$ ✓✓✓	easy to reach, active in the community want to be a part of action
<hr/>	
<i>Retail businesses with managers – 6/10</i>	
\$\$\$\$\$ ✓✓	??
<hr/>	
<i>Mum and dad retailers – 2/10</i>	
\$\$\$\$\$ ✓✓	easy to find but resent spending money
<hr/>	
<i>Major companies – BHP, Pacific Electricity – 6/10</i>	
\$\$\$ ✓✓	harder to locate, have other responsibilities, do not necessarily have a local focus
<hr/>	
<i>DSRD – 8/10</i>	
\$\$\$\$ ✓✓	easy to find but funding is a competitive process and can take time to source
<hr/>	
<i>Property owners – 5/10</i>	
\$\$\$ ✓✓✓	easy to find, some are supportive but others are not supportive of a levy
<hr/>	
<i>Tourism businesses – 4/10</i>	
\$\$\$ ✓✓✓	??
<hr/>	
<i>Professional services – 2/10</i>	
<i>Accountants/solicitors</i>	
\$\$ ✓	can never reach them, in meetings all day, not business focused
<hr/>	
<i>Health professionals – eg doctors, pathology laboratories, physiotherapists – 3/10</i>	
\$\$ ✓	can never reach them, in meetings all day, not business focused
<hr/>	
<i>Chains – eg K Mart – 1/10</i>	
\$ ✓	have limited budgets, hard to contact, unwilling to support local activities



Select your target market segments

At this stage you should be able to pick a selection of market segments that you want to target.

Final market segments (in order of market attractiveness)			
<i>Industry</i>	<i>Ease of marketing</i>	<i>Desirability</i>	<i>Dollar value</i>
Top ten independent businesses Decision maker – owner Influencer – senior managers	✓✓✓✓✓	8/10	\$\$\$\$\$
Sporting and recreation clubs Decision makers – management committee Influencer – general manager/secretary manager	✓✓✓✓	8/10	\$\$\$\$\$
DSRD Decision makers – senior manager/executive director Influencer – head office program manager/regional business development or community economic development manager	✓✓	8/10	\$\$\$\$\$\$
Rural industries Decision maker – business owner	✓✓✓✓	6/10	\$\$\$\$\$\$\$
Councils Decision makers – elected councillors Influencers – general manager/individual councillors/Mayor	✓✓✓	9/10	\$\$\$\$
Retail businesses with managers Decision maker – owner Influencer – manager	✓✓	6/10	\$\$\$\$\$
Franchise businesses Decision maker – regional manager Influencer – head office	✓✓✓	4/10	\$\$\$\$\$
Mum and dad retailers Decision maker – business owners	✓✓	2/10	\$\$\$\$\$\$
Major companies Decision maker – marketing manager/regional manager Influencer – head office	✓✓	6/10	\$\$\$
Property owners	✓✓✓	5/10	\$\$\$



Note that the order of attractiveness has changed again now that we've included the desirability factor. Some market segments have disappeared all together but those with low desirability but high dollars stay on the list. Developing objectives and strategies to target those segments will be a challenge.

In this example you may want to target three or four main markets such as:

- Top ten businesses
- Retail businesses with managers
- DSRD funding
- Sporting and recreation clubs

Long term targets might include:

- Rural industries
- Local councils

Keep in mind the time you have available for marketing. If you only have two days a week for marketing activities then you would spend a day and a half on the main targets and half a day working on the slower target markets with long term potential.

The aim of marketing is to put yourself in a position where you are likely to be successful. So don't be afraid of dropping some of the traditional markets where you have had limited success. This doesn't mean you won't sell to them but you may use different techniques such as flyers rather than personal visits. A good example of this is the Mum and Dad retail businesses.



Step six – develop customer profiles

The final step in the review process is developing a customer profile of the decision makers in your target markets. To make the matching process happen we have to target people not buildings so we need a thorough understanding of the needs and wants, worries and concerns of our potential clients. Once you have developed a client profile you can test your marketing strategies to see if it will reach the client, appeal to the client, be of benefit to the client. The aim is to understand the client as a person not just a potential customer. Here is a check list to help you develop the profiles. Ask yourself what attitudes and attributes these groups have in common?

Customer profile check list

- Experience
- Skills
- Pressures/stresses
- Responsibilities
- Family
- Age/sex/education
- Possessions
- Where they meet
- What they need
- Who do they report to
- People they see
- Hopes/desires
- Who are they
- Where are they
- What are the personal worries and concerns
- What are the business worries and concerns

If necessary, develop profiles for influencers as well as decision makers.



Understanding what makes your potential clients tick will help you plan your marketing. You can promote benefits that are specific to their needs and desires, you can discuss their worries and concerns so they realise that you understand their situation. You can approach them at times when they are most receptive. You can advertise in publications that you know they read. You can design an event to help them achieve their business goals or overcome a threat they are facing.

Sample client profiles

Manager of a sport and recreation club

- Predominantly male
- 35–55 years old
- Lots of industry experience
- Needs a management certificate
- Starts in a smaller club and work their way up
- Needs to move clubs to get a promotion
- Spends a lot of time in the club
- Can be difficult having a family life due to long hours etc
- Manages staff
- Tends to be a good communicator
- People oriented
- Aware of the community
- Interested in the community
- Donates funds to community projects
- Reports to a Board of Management that doesn't necessarily have management experience
- Doesn't necessarily get a lot of support from their board
- Has responsibility for day to day running of the business
- Needs to run major decisions past the board
- Concerned about public image re alcohol and gambling
- Concerned about keeping and retaining members
- Concerned about health and safety issues
- Can be blamed for anything that goes wrong
- Needs to keep revenue steady
- Reads club publications, trade magazines and some business publications
- Needs to meet budgets
- Some are coping with a falling per capita spending
- A part of an industry that is coping with change
- Often have total responsibility for financial performance and management

Owner of a larger retail business

- Can be family run, often husband and/or wife
- 35–60 years old
- Work long hours – seven days a week
- Have 5–6 staff, mainly part timers
- Well known in the area
- Often belong to Rotary, Lions or Chamber of Commerce
- Don't have much time for anything other than business
- Often well established businesses
- Good business skills
- Belong to a buying group that offers business support
- Tend to network with other similar sized businesses
- Proactive about promotions and marketing
- Belong to industry associations
- Have total responsibility for financial management
- Can suffer greatly with any small change in an area, eg weather, road works
- Concerned about
 - Losing market in a retail strip
 - Competition from other centres
 - Unfair dismissal legislation



Analysing data from the marketing review and developing objectives

The toughest part of the marketing process is analysing the information you've gathered during the review. You need to put yourself outside the business and look at all the issues objectively. The analysis process should take half to a full day.

Gather together all the outcomes from your review:

- The list of key issues from your personal review and staff or volunteer reviews if relevant. This list will give you the clues for establishing the types of marketing activities best suited for you and your team. You can also identify the best staffing structure to achieve your goals.
- The key issues from the SWOT analysis. This is often an action list of things to be addressed before you can start your marketing. The strengths and weaknesses will give you an idea of products or services you should be promoting, systems that are likely to fail if there is a sudden increase in business and successful marketing strategies that should be continued.
- The list of opportunities and threats from the SWOT analysis together with the market review of your area and industry will have identified any new opportunities from developing new services, targeting new geographic or industry markets and ways that technology can be used to promote your program or deliver your service to the client.
- The list of features and benefits from your product review will give you the copy or wording you need for any promotion or advertising. You simply match the benefits to a particular market segment and customer profile.
- Your USP if you have one will be something that is promoted on all marketing material.
- Your market boundary will help you understand where to concentrate your marketing activities.
- Your target market segments and the client profiles for each target market will help you allocate time to the potential clients that are most likely to support your program.

Start by focusing on the client side of the equation, your target markets. Good marketing will come from matching your products and services to your clients' needs and wants.

Ask yourself:

- What are the key opportunities in my marketplace?
- What are the threats I will have to overcome?
- What are the market segments I want to target?
- What are the key products or services I want to sell to each market segment? Keep in mind you want to concentrate on products or services with the highest chances of generating revenue.
- What are the key benefits I have to offer my customers and potential customers in each market segment?
- What revenue is it realistic to expect from each of my target markets over a twelve month period?
- You might like to work out potential by calculating the number of target companies within your market boundary. In target markets where you already have a track record it will be easier to forecast business increase. You may want to target additional clients, increase a market segment by a specific percentage or simply aim to increase the average spend by each customer.
- Add up the expected revenue from each target market to give you a total revenue increase for the next twelve months. Does it look feasible? If you are totally run off your feet and constantly stressed with your existing level of activity is it realistic to aim for a 25% increase in revenue? Check that this revenue increase will be profitable, there is no point in working harder and not seeing the financial rewards in terms of profit. Check the key issues from your systems review to make sure that you will be able to deliver the products when sales increase.





Write your financial goals on a big piece of butcher's paper. Goals should follow the SMART principle. They should be:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Time bound

Ask yourself what other marketing goals and objectives would you like to achieve. These could include "hard" and "soft" goals. Hard goals tend to be financial or easily measurable goals, soft goals are harder to measure and are often more philosophical.

These additional goals could include:

- To increase awareness and visibility of the program and the coordinator or committee (soft)
- Increase revenue from existing clients (hard)
- Increase in the number of memberships (hard)
- Outcomes from a particular event or promotion (hard or soft depending on the measurement)
- To improve the branding and image of the program (soft)
- To improve customer service levels (soft)
- To increase the average spend of all clients (hard)

Finally, conduct a Gap Analysis. A gap analysis compares the gap between where you are now and how things will look in the future. The gap analysis identifies all the areas that will need to change to achieve your goals.

- What will the program look like physically in the future?
- Will it be in the same premises?
- Will you need to change your image to access new markets?
- Will you need to develop new products or services?
- Can you use our existing name and logo?
- Do you need to update your image?
- What skills will you need to develop or buy in to achieve your goals?
- What will be your role as the coordinator?
- What systems will be needed to achieve these goals?
- What political or economic issues do you have to work around to achieve these goals?
- Will you need strategic alliances to achieve your goals?
- What revenue can we spend to achieve these goals?
- What time do you have available to achieve these goals?
- What product developments will you need to make to achieve your objectives?

This picture becomes your vision for the future.



The matching process and creating strategies

Most businesses and organisations have only one marketing message which they promote while hoping that potential clients in the marketplace work out what is in it for them. Rather than take this reactive approach it is much more effective to have specific marketing strategies, methods and messages for each target market segment. Look at each decision maker client profile and ask what marketing tools you have in your toolkit to make the matching process happen. This will give you what is called a marketing mix. For each market segment you can look at nine key areas:

Product development – do you need to create a new service or event to reach your target market? For example, if the rural sector is keen to be involved can you add a “Field Day” to an existing festival or event? Will a tourism expo or publication help you attract support from top ten businesses and tourism operators?

Packaging – look for opportunities to package a range of events or services to suit a particular market. For example, membership, retail training, a “Buy Local” event and a Christmas promotion could be packaged together for the mum and dad retail market. This type of packaging has the added advantage that you only have to “sell” once and you are not constantly “doing the rounds” looking for dollars.

Selling – identify the best way of reaching and selling to each market segment. Tenders and proposals will be appropriate for some segments where others will need personal selling. Obviously the larger amount of money you are looking for the more likely you will need a face to face meeting. However, some markets can be ideal for telemarketing, a mail campaign or even a breakfast launch where you can sell the concept. Don't forget that some markets will need time for relationship building at networking events. As time is a valuable resource, you need to focus your energy on the segments where you have the greatest chance of success. Many businesses rate their clients as *As*, *Bs* or *Cs*. *As* are the largest and most frequent spenders. *Bs* have potential to spend more or more often whilst the *Cs* are mainly one off sales or clients who are difficult to approach and resent spending money. In those businesses *As* and *Bs* will receive most of the face to face sales time and *Cs* will be approached mainly by third party methods such as mail, advertising or telemarketing.

Pricing – don't make the mistake of pricing to suit the lowest common denominator or loudest complainer in your market. Consider developing a range of pricing that gives you maximum revenue from each market segment. Packaging is an excellent way of increasing prices overall. Apart from being easier to sell, it enables you to put a market price on some services which would be difficult to sell on their own. Look at each segment separately and ask yourself:

- What is the value of the event, promotion or campaign to them, can they achieve similar results on their own or in partnership with anyone else?
- What are they used to paying, what is their ability to pay?

Promotion – look at each existing promotion and ask what are the benefits for each market segment. Consider developing promotions that will appeal to specific target markets.

Customer service – review the customer profiles to see what kind of customer service will suit each decision maker. Decision makers in the council may prefer written reports which they can circulate to casual follow up phone calls. Owners of the top ten businesses who are sponsoring major events may be happy with phone calls or email updates. Major retailers may appreciate being taken out for coffee. Try and include one or two customer service initiatives for each target market segment. These don't all have to involve face to face time with the coordinator. For instance, a member of your committee can make a welcome aboard phone call to a new member, a volunteer can send off a “thank you for your participation” email to businesses who attended a seminar.

Advertising – your customer profile will give you “clues” regarding the best way to reach your target market. In regional and metropolitan communities it is unlikely you will need to use mass media such as television or radio to reach your target markets. (Reaching your end users is a different story!) Target mail, flyers, telemarketing or personal visits would be the key methods of reaching the decision makers in your market. Another key element of matching is identifying the specific benefits of a program or event for each market segment. This may mean that a general information flyer is prepared but each target market segment may receive a different covering letter promoting the benefits for their decision makers.



A sample marketing calendar

The following is a marketing calendar for a MS/STP located in regional NSW with a strong tourism focus.

January	26th Australia Day Beachside Celebrations – free Aussie community event with entertainment and Fireworks Display.
February	Charity Cricket Match – fundraiser for local cancer care appeal. Head shaving promotion – fundraiser for local cancer care appeal.
March	
April	Annual Bed Race sponsored by business in the community – fundraiser for local cancer care appeal. Easter promotion – Easter Egg Hunt, entertainment for kids, colouring in competition, photos with Easter Bunny.
May	
June	Launch of Business Awards.
July	Business Awards Nominations.
August	Business Awards Presentation event.
September	Annual Scottish Festival. Sydney press advertising campaign to encourage retail businesses from Sydney metropolitan area interested in relocating. Local television advertising campaign – “Best of both worlds”.
October	Music in the park at Norah Head – free community event. Annual Teddy Bears Picnic sponsored by local pharmacy.
November	Television advertising campaign – “Best of both worlds” targeting local residents and tourists. Lighting of town Christmas Tree. Santa takes up residence until Christmas Eve. Christmas Retail Promotion – radio and press.
December	Carols By Candlelight. Christmas Promotion drawn 20th December.
Other	Television, radio or press with each major campaign, live music every second Thursday on Village Green, Sunday Live Music on Village Green predominantly in summer, sponsorship of community events, eg Surf Classic and Golf Days.





Publicity – is simply the best advertising that money can't buy! It is amazing to think that the publicity you **don't** pay for has much more credibility than the advertising that costs you money.

Publicity should be an integral part of any MS/STP.

- Aim for 3–4 publicity pushes per year.
- Don't be afraid to target different media for different events.
- Become a spokesperson for your community and you will soon find local press, radio and television approaching you for quotes.
- Get to know the local journalists in your area.

Here are a few tricks of the trade:

- Keep in mind that the story should be of genuine interest to the listeners or readers and not seen as an advertisement or gratuitous promotion.
- Don't compromise advertising sales staff by asking them for editorial space, their main aim is to generate revenue and often don't have a say in editorial space.
- Write the story for them, you'll be surprised how often a busy journalist will grab a story and print it verbatim if it is interesting and well written.
- Follow up press releases with a friendly phone call.
- Don't send boring photos, try and come up with something other than the standard "cheque presentation" photo or smiling group with drinks in their hands.
- If you are inviting the media to an event, give them plenty of notice and send them a one page who, what, where, how and why summary.
- Write and say thank you after the story appears.

Visibility – is a key element in any marketing program. The greater the visibility, the greater the perception that "something positive is happening".

There are lots of ways of increasing visibility:

- Street banners add instant impact to any community, but make sure they will stand out in your particular streetscape.
- Decals or stickers – these can be given to residents or retailers to promote the program or a specific campaign. If you are running a car sticker campaign the most effective way of getting good coverage is to make sure you also apply the stickers. This can be done by "courtesy staff" at local shopping centres or service stations. In a retail situation decals have more impact if they are distributed in multiples so retailers can create a "strip" across the base of their window or behind their counter. As an added customer service you can give retailers a few suggestions of how they can use the stickers effectively.
- Corflute boards can be effective signage during a special event or promotion. They are light, durable and waterproof although they are flammable.
- Empty window displays – windows of empty shops can be a great way to promote a Main Street event or program. A bright sign or painting can attract instant attention. There are also some benefits for the real estate agent or owner as the signage can improve the look of the outlet.





Merchandising – can be a profitable addition to any event or activity. The secret of merchandising is to find an item that is “desirable” to the target audience or reflects their feelings about an issue. T-shirts are the most common form of merchandising and can provide the biggest failures. Sizes are critical, if big and baggy is all the rage no one will buy tight T-shirts and visa versa! Most importantly if the message is seen as boring or doesn’t agree with their views then you can be stuck with hundreds of leftovers. Look for items that are a current craze or useful. For instance, umbrellas for an outdoor event, water bottles for a sporting activity or collectible wrist bands for the young teen market. Don’t be afraid of a high price item if it will appeal to your audience. Logo watches, wind cheaters and commemorative medallions will all sell well at the right event.

Telemarketing – is growing in popularity as it is a relatively inexpensive way of reaching target market segments. However it is very time intensive and its effectiveness relies heavily on the skills of the phone operator and the sales “script” that is used. If you have credit card facilities you can use telemarketing to sign up participants for an event or collect membership fees. Telemarketing is best used when you are looking for a definite response such as an appointment or an agreement to participate in an event. If you are considering telemarketing it is worthwhile looking at training the phone operator to maximise the effectiveness of the campaign.

Web marketing – through a web site can be a valuable marketing and communication tool for your community and your program. It can be used as a “gateway” to your area and provide links to all the businesses in your region. Your business directory can be attached to your web site to give local businesses increased visibility. A web site can also help you promote events and communicate with local businesses, sponsors and supporters. If you don’t have one already build yourself an email database. Once you have the database established you can send promotional flyers, sponsorship proposals or membership applications at the press of a button. Best of all email marketing enables you to reach people in minutes and it’s free.

Relationship building – is often overlooked as a part of a marketing toolkit but it can be a very effective way of generating new clients through referral. It isn’t always easy to find time in the daily rush for networking events and meetings but relationships formed at those events can be invaluable when it comes to achieving your goals.

Some of the key people you should be building relationships with are:

- Volunteers
- Staff
- Your committee
- Board members
- Long time supporters and clients
- Strategic alliances with other organisations who target the same markets, eg Business Enterprise Centres, Tourism Associations, Arts Councils.

Sponsorship and funding submissions – are critical to the success of a MS/STP. From a marketing perspective it’s important to remember that sponsorship or funding submissions should focus on the benefits to the funding body or sponsor. These days it is expected that a commercial value can be put on a sponsorship. It can be difficult for a marketing manager to justify a \$5,000 event sponsorship purely on the basis of being a supporter of the community. But if that \$5,000 could return dividends with on stage signage, naming rights, corporate logo on T-shirts, involvement on the planning committee and a chance to speak at the award ceremony it would be much easier to justify the sponsorship to the decision makers within the company.

When looking for funding remember that there are three levels of funding sources:

- Local – eg local councils, arts boards, tourism development funds, chambers of commerce.
- State – eg DSRD, Tourism New South Wales, Ministry for the Arts.
- Federal – eg Federal Tourism, Festivals Australia.

Nuts and bolts

Every toolkit has a whole heap of nuts and bolts lying around at the bottom.

Here are a few nuts and bolts ideas for your toolkit:

- Casual leasing in local shopping centres to promote an event or activity.
- Distribution of a promotional sample or gimmick to support an event.
- Magnets to promote a business event.



Promotions in focus

Promotions are often the public face of a MS/STP. They are the end result of a lot of planning and hard work and can make or break the reputation of a Main Street coordinator or committee. A promotion can be an event, a retail promotion, a publication, a competition, business service or any way that you choose to promote your area.

There are usually two target markets for promotions:

- the participants
- the clients or businesses and organisations that financially support the promotion.

Both need to be considered in the planning and marketing of a promotion.

Key marketing elements

Timing – generally speaking, you should aim to run retail promotions at times when business is traditionally good. That is because down times often can't be influenced or improved by a sale or event. For instance, if everyone is out of town in January there is no point in running a promotion as sales will not increase. Business promotions should avoid traditionally busy months such as June (end of financial year), November, December when many businesses are too busy to participate or January when many businesses close for the month. Festivals and community events also have to be scheduled to attract a maximum number of people. The number of attendees will be one of the measures of the event's success.

Frequency – promotions are a great way of improving visibility and awareness. Ideally four main promotions, events or activities a year will provide a steady stream of interest. This of course will depend on the available support team, the time you have available and the size of your community. In some smaller areas you may have one traditional major event a year but this could be supplemented with other programs such as retailer training, a business directory, post card campaigns or a business expo.

In metropolitan areas the focus may be on business to business activities rather than street fairs or community events. It is still a good idea to aim for four activities a year if possible.

Objectives – each promotion should have clear objectives for both the participants and the supporting businesses and organisations. Participant objectives could include numbers of people attending an event, number of entries in a competition, awareness of a community project or capture of escape spending dollars. Objectives for the supporting businesses could include increased visibility, increased traffic, increased revenue,

opportunities to network, opportunities to be seen as supporters of the community, opportunities to introduce their products and services to a new market.

Developing a promotion – make sure that a promotion is designed to fit your particular community. The matching or marketing process will help you evaluate whether your promotional ideas are on track. But don't be afraid of adapting promotional ideas from other main street programs to suit your area.

Resources – once you have developed your promotion you need to identify the resources you will need to make it happen. Keep in mind that you won't have time to do it all yourself so you will need to delegate or recruit volunteers with specific skills. You will need to consider

- A detailed budget
- A list of resources
- Equipment
- Office supplies
- Marketing information, eg data base or mail list
- Estimates of people needed and hours required

Information on developing a resource plan can be found in *Self Help Module 4 – Project management*.

Think outside the square

Some of the best promotions come from a little lateral thinking. In the same way that an impromptu party can be great fun an impromptu promotion can be a terrific way of boosting business morale and revenue. Look for opportunities to create interesting or fun events from topics of public interest or take an unusual approach to an old favourite.

Wear your heart on your sleeve

The Main Street Coordinator at Queanbeyan wore his heart on his sleeve in this cheap and cheerful promotion which demonstrated to the local businesses that he was willing to get involved with the local business community. On Valentines Day he turned a plain white shirt into a costume with iron on red hearts. He then sourced 600 red toffee hearts on sticks which he personally handed out to ladies in the local shopping centre. This simple promotion won him lots of smiles, goodwill and plenty of coverage in the local paper.

Handy Hint:

Don't be afraid to get out there and "be" the promotion.



Marketing challenges

In your role as Main Street coordinator or Economic Development Officer you may be called upon to act as a “Marketing Manager” for the retail businesses in your community.

Your instinct will probably tell you who are the poor performers in your community but here are a few diagnostic tips:

- Look for low stock levels especially on the higher shelves. Stock that is spaced out on shelves or looks like it has been “spun” to the perimeters of the shop is often an indication of cash flow problems.
- See if the stock has a clear target market. Does it appeal to the young, the old, farmers, trendies. A jumbled mix of stock is often the sign of a retailer that doesn’t understand their market.
- Look for stock that is displayed for the business owners convenience rather than the customers. For example, toys out of reach of children.
- Stock crammed to the rafters that never seems to move can be the sign of a shopaholic who loves buying stock but doesn’t know how to sell.
- Stock that does not move can also be a result of not understanding the market.
- Window displays that do not change or have a permanent collection of blowflies usually won’t attract customers.
- Steps and cluttered entrances will keep away the elderly and mothers with young children.
- Window displays that hide the contents of the shop will not attract customers inside unless they have a very good window display.
- A counter across the front of the shop will repel customers (unless it’s a chain store or supermarket).
- Low average spend is usually a sign of poor customer service.
- Windows that are so cluttered with “Circus” and event posters that you can’t see inside the shop.
- A surly or bad tempered owner usually results in low average spend and a gradually dwindling business.
- Lights turned off can indicate a penny pinching attitude.

Quick fix ideas for struggling retailers

- Make sure the counter is located left or right so it does not block traffic. Depending on whether the counter is left or right shoppers usually head in the opposite direction. This is where high profit, high profile stock should be kept.
- Clear doorways for easy access.
- Rotate stock fortnightly, weekly if in fashion. Gift shops should have feature areas or tables that change regularly.
- Don’t scare customers off by giving customer service as soon as they walk in the door. Use eye contact and a smile until customers are comfortable. Never approach a client from behind to greet them (they often just speed up and leave the shop).
- Arrange stock so it appeals to specific target market segments, eg teenagers, young mums and grandmas. Display clothing in outfit groups so it is easy to mix and match rather than grouping all skirts or shirts together regardless of target market.
- Display clothing as an outfit complete with accessories to drastically improve an average spend.
- Clean windows on a regular basis, put posters on a noticeboard or an unobtrusive side panel of the window. Whatever the free tickets are worth they could be costing you hundreds in lost sales.
- Use windows to profile stock inside the shop. Use props ladders, buckets, balloons to create an impact in the window. Use stock from other retailers as props in window display.
- Install the best lights you can afford in the window to highlight stock.
- Include prices on all window stock, people may assume you are too expensive unless you show prices.
- Display stock in multiples to it creates a better impact.
- Clear clutter away from windows.
- The back wall is an ideal place for promotion of high profile stock as it draws people through the shop.

