

## How to Plan Marketing Activities

### The seven Ps of marketing

Marketing begins when you start planning your arts event. Time spent planning a marketing strategy will be rewarded tenfold. Be sure to use members of your team and outside mentors to brainstorm your strategy. Marketing considers the seven Ps:

- Purpose
- Product
- Place
- Position
- Price
- Public
- Promotion

These are all interrelated and together they make up your marketing strategy.

One of the first things you need to do is identify the seven Ps and do a SWOT analysis. It's important that you have objectives and these objectives are SMART.

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Timescale

### Purpose

What's the purpose of your arts event? It's important to determine the purpose so you can measure your success against your goals. Perhaps you want to introduce your company's work to a new market. If that's the case, financial return may not be your top priority. Or perhaps the show is a development exercise for your company. If so, you may not want many people to attend – and certainly not reviewers.

### Product

It's important to know what you're selling. Defining your product involves describing it in

terms of what it is; who it's for; where it is; when it's on; how long it's on for; and what time it's on.

No event appeals to everyone. Even if you've got a broad target market, your event will appeal to some more than others. You should direct most of your resources and time to attracting those who are the most likely to attend. Make a list of all the reasons you think people will come to your event. Then work out which of the three target markets – primary, secondary, tertiary – they fit into.

- Primary target – people who are already favourably disposed to your work (including friends, family and flatmates)
- Secondary target – people who are interested in your type of work, the arts and issues in general
- Tertiary target – schools / colleges.

It's important to make sure your primary target is well informed, given easy access to your work and incentives to book in advance. Having identified your target market, you need to find out as much as you can about it. It's easier to sell your event if you know why they might want to come to it. As we know, this is described as developing a demographic (i.e. age, sex, location etc.) and psychographic (attitudinal) profile.

## Place

Your event should be staged at a time, date and place to suit your audience. Take, for instance, a show aimed at school children. You may choose to perform your show by touring to individual schools. Or you may decide to use an established theatre and attract school audiences to your venue if the show is large and not easy to tour.

Is your audience likely to come as part of a school group or are parents more likely to bring them? This will help you decide whether to run your season during the school term or the holidays. It will also influence your choice of venue. Ask questions e.g.:

- How familiar are your target markets with the venue?
- Are there any physical impediments? For example, an event targeted to senior citizens will need to be in a venue with easy access, including wheelchair access.
- What expectations does your venue engender about aspects such as show content, quality or innovation? E.g. attending a show at the Nottingham Playhouse creates different expectations to Derby Dance Centre.
- What facilities are there for your public? This includes seating, refreshments, toilets, heating, and front of house staff. A youthful audience may be happy sitting

on the floor of a draughty warehouse but an older audience isn't likely to be attracted to this venue.

- Have you informed your audience about the protocol particular to that venue? For example: no smoking/eating/drinking, mobile phones turned off, no photography or videos, use of smoking/strobe light/offensive content on stage, admittance of latecomers' policy, length of interval, reserved seating.
- Is the venue easy to find or will people need a map to find it? Are there buses nearby? Where is the closest parking? Where can people get a drink?
- Where do people book? Can they pay by credit cards or cheque?
- Have you got public liability insurance? What are the safety procedures of your venue? Will you be able to deal with any health emergency?
- Other legal compliances to be aware of include toilets, access for the disabled, and food to be served with alcohol.
- How many people does the venue seat and how does it impact on your budget?
- What facilities are there for your production's requirements? For example: lights, sound, size and height of stage, backstage facilities, what staff the venue provide.
- For outdoor, what are the wet-weather alternatives? How do you inform your public?
- Do the venue have requirements for sponsorship that may conflict with your own?

Make the most of the venue. They've seen hundreds of companies and have learned a thing or two. Use them as testing boards: show them your poster design, talk through your marketing and promotion, and find out if they have any friendly suppliers.

## Position

This refers to the position of your product in the market. The measure of this is how you want your public to perceive you particularly compared to your competitors. When other events are competing for the same target markets it's important that you identify your points of difference to ensure that your product stands out as unique. The needs, desires and perceptions of your target markets will determine how you position your event. Factors such as price and place have a big impact on the audience you attract and on your position in the market. The quality of paper you choose for your flyer reflects where you are positioning yourself in the market place.

## Promotion

Once you've identified the six other Ps you are ready to put together your promotional strategy. You have worked out what you have to market and who you wish to target. You've



worked out the behaviour of your target segments and how to reach them, and have lessened the obstacles of place and price. You now have all the tools to sell out!