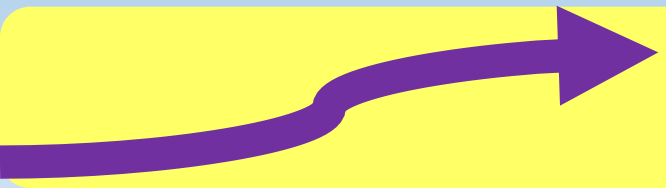




Pathways for Addressing Social Needs: Marketing and Public Relations

Developing the Roadmap to Connecting with Your
Clients and Promoting Your Services





Overview

- Marketing and public relations are important to allow the organization to connect with its target audience.
- Effective communication regarding the organization's programs and services is essential to raising awareness in the community.
- Part of successful marketing includes having a clear understanding of the program/service/product, offering it at an acceptable price, making it easy to access for your target clients, and communicating (advertising/promotion) in a manner that connects with your audience.
- To ensure your marketing efforts are successful, the organization needs to monitor and evaluate the results of these activities.



What is Marketing?

- At its core, marketing refers to the activities an organization or individual undertakes to promote products, services, or ideas, build brand awareness, and attract potential customers.¹
- Marketing involves clearly identifying who the customer/client is, assessing their needs, and developing products or services that meets those needs.
- Successful marketing includes developing programs/services that are needed or of interest to the customer, pricing them correctly, making them easily accessible to the clients, and making individuals aware that the programs/services exist.



Identifying Your Target Clients/Customers

- To be successful with your marketing efforts, the organization needs to be clear regarding what group(s) of individuals the programs/services are intended for.
- Organizations can use different methods to segment the general population into specific groups that the programs/services are intended to reach.
- Examples of key variables to divide the general population into smaller segments include:
 - Gender
 - Culture
 - Income
 - Age
 - Geographic Area of Residence
 - Primary Occupation
 - Ethnic Variables
 - Race
 - Religious Affiliation
 - Education
 - Primary Language Spoken
 - Psychographic Variables
 - Marital Status
 - Social Class



Marketing Research on Your Target Clients

- Market research helps an organization gather information on its clients/customers to better connect your programs/services with the needs and interests of this group.
- Market research blends consumer behavior and economic trends to confirm and improve your business idea.²
- One way to conduct market research is for an organization to review existing data collected on the community or population of interest which is known as secondary data.
 - Examples of secondary data include existing studies conducted by the government, private organizations, trade associations, foundations, etc.
- Another method for collecting market research is to conduct a study of the population or community directly known as primary research.
 - Primary data collection may include phone interviews, online surveys, focus groups, written surveys, and in-person interviews.
 - Although primary research is more costly and timely to conduct, it can gather specific information about the population to help the organization better organize its programs/services.

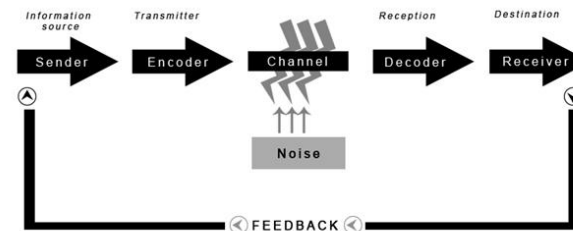


The 4 Ps of Marketing

- The marketing mix involves developing the right types of programs/services, offering them at the right price, promoting them effectively, and offering them in a place/format that is easy for the customer/client to access.
 - Products/Services/Programs: Are the programs or items that the organization is offering in alignment with what the customer/client actually needs or wants?
 - Pricing: If there is a fee for the product/service/program, is it affordable for the customer or set at a level that the person is willing to pay?
 - Place: Is the product/program offered in a format or location that is accessible to the customer/client? Another factor to consider is the days/hours when the organization is open for business.
 - Promotion: What method is the organization using to communicate that the products/programs/services are available to the customer/client? Is that method of communication a typical way for the target population to receive information?

Understanding the Process of Communication

- For an organization to be successful in reaching its target audience, it needs to understand the process of how information gets communicated.
- As the Shannon-Weaver model suggests, a message begins at a source, is then relayed through a transmitter where it is sent using a signal towards a receiver. This message travels from sender to receiver while encountering all kinds of noise (sources of interference). The last step is for the receiver of the message to let the source know if the message was understood.³



SHANNON-WEAVER'S MODEL OF COMMUNICATION



Successful Advertising

- Advertising is one method of connecting with your customers/clients to let them know about your products/programs/services.
- Advertising is a business practice where a company pays to place its messaging or branding in a particular location.⁴
- Since there is a cost to the organization to do advertising, it is important to select the option that will best connect the product/program/service with the client.
 - Based on the amount of funding the organization has to do advertising, some options to consider include:
 - Print media (i.e. magazines/newspapers)
 - Direct mail/email
 - Church newsletter/bulletins
 - Trade publications
 - Billboards
 - TV/Radio
 - Online advertisements
 - Paid sponsorships of events
- In selecting the best option for the organization to communicate about its programs/services, a good idea is to develop an advertising plan and to seek the advice of experts.



Sales: Connecting Directly with the Client

- While advertising offers one option for organizations to connect with clients, this approach is less personal compared to direct sales.
- With direct sales the organization communicates with the client/customer directly about its mix of products/services.
 - Similar to advertising, there is a cost to the organization to do direct sales.
- Having a sales team that is able to connect effectively with the clients is key to developing their interest in the products/programs/services.
 - Persons involved in sales need to understand the needs of the customer/client and be knowledgeable about the scope of programs/services the organization offers.
 - Developing a good sales strategy and having people familiar with doing direct sales will help ensure a successful connection between the organization and its clients/customers.



Public Relations

- Advertising is paid media, public relations is earned media which means you convince reporters or editors to write a positive story about your organization, brand, or issue.⁵
- Organizations serving the community offer many human-interest stories that media outlets are interested in publishing.
 - These types of stories highlight important programs and services being provided but also bring attention to the organization and its mission.
- Having a program/service covered by the local media may garner increased credibility from the public because the story is coming from a third party (versus advertising where the media coverage is paid for by the organization).
- Maintaining good relationships with the local media and regularly pitching stories to them is a key strategy for increasing public relation opportunities for organizations and their programs.



Using Social Media and the Internet

- With the development and growth of the internet, there are many opportunities for organizations to promote their programs/services online.
- Internet marketing can be an effective way to connect with your customers/clients and less costly versus traditional advertising approaches.
- A large majority of U.S. adults (86%) say they at least sometimes get news from a smartphone, computer, or tablet and 56% say they do so often.⁶
- There are multiple online options for organizations to consider in promoting their products/programs/services.

Online Marketing Options

Online Marketing Options	Description
Website	An online site to access content about the organization and its programs that may include images, text, and videos.
Email	Sending direct communications to individuals through digital messages.
Blog	A section of a website that offers posts containing information or opinions in a conversational or diary type format.
YouTube	A free online platform to share short videos about the organization and its programs.
TikTok	A newer social media platform that allows for the sharing of short video segments
Meta (formerly Facebook)	A social media platform that allows people to connect, network, find communities of persons with similar interest, and to do digital advertising.
X (formerly Twitter)	A free online platform offering opportunities for social networking and blogging.
LinkedIn	Is a professional networking platform including job postings, a forum to share industry news, and a site to develop professional relationships.



Monitoring and Evaluating Marketing

- When conducting marketing to promote an organization and its products/programs/services, it is important to measure the impact of these activities.
- Key methods to evaluate marketing activities include:
 - Number of new clients/customers received by the organization.
 - Increase awareness in the community about the organization and its programs.
 - Number of existing clients/customers retained by the company.
 - Level of activity on the company's website.
 - Satisfaction feedback on the organization's programs.
 - Tracking the response to advertising options selected by the company.
 - Number of positive stories about the organization and its programs in the press.
 - Success with fundraising and development activities spearheaded by the organization.



Ethical Considerations Regarding Marketing

- When an organization does marketing some key ethical issues to consider include:
 - Don't misrepresent the organization or its programs/services to the public.
 - Avoid deceptive practices with your clients/customers.
 - Avoid derogatory or misleading statements about competitors in the community.
 - Always be truthful with any of your marketing messages.
 - Protect the identity and confidentiality of your customers/clients.
 - Respect the wishes of your customers if they don't want to be in a public photo, video, or have their name mentioned in marketing materials.
 - Be transparent and truthful with the public, especially when issues arise to avoid being accused of withholding or misrepresenting the facts.



Conclusion

- Marketing is a useful tool in helping an organization connect with its client/customers.
- The key elements of the marketing mix include offering a product/service that the customer needs, providing it at an acceptable price, using effective means to promote it, and considering how easy it is for the client to access the program.
- While some forms of promoting a product/service require a financial investment by the organization, public relations offers free media coverage for stories of interest to news outlets.
- With the development of the internet there are now other options for an organization to connect with its customers/clients.



Online Resources

▪ Posture

- Offers information on free nonprofit marketing tools.

<https://getposture.com/free-nonprofit-marketing-tools-that-we-love-3/>

• Lynn University

- Offers a listing of digital marketing resources.

<https://online.lynn.edu/resources/business/marketing-resources>

• Kannect

- Offers free communication tools for nonprofits.

<https://kannect.co/blog/comparisons/free-communication-tools/>

Reference Notes

¹American Public University, “*Understanding Marketing – What It Means and Why It Matters*,” April 23, 2025, <https://www.apu.apus.edu/area-of-study/business-and-management/resources/what-is-marketing/> (accessed October 5, 2025).

²U.S. Small Business Administration, “*Market Research and Competitive Analysis*,” September 23, 2025, <https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/plan-your-business/market-research-competitive-analysis> (accessed October 6, 2025).

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⁴American Marketing Association, “*Marketing vs. Advertising*,” 2025, <https://www.ama.org/marketing-vs-advertising/> (accessed October 9, 2025).

⁵Robert Wynne, “*The Real Difference Between PR and Advertising*,” Forbes Online, December 10, 2021, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/robertwynne/2014/07/08/the-real-difference-between-pr-and-advertising-credibility/> (accessed October 10, 2025).

⁶Pew Research Center, “*News Platform Fact Sheet*,” September 25, 2025, <https://www.pewresearch.org/journalism/fact-sheet/news-platform-factsheet/#:~:text=patterns%20and%20trends,News%20consumption%20across%20all%20platforms,publications%E2%80%9D%20from%202020%20to%202024> (accessed October 10, 2025).