

# A New View of MARKETING

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## HERE ARE SIX KEY INGREDIENTS TO SPREADING YOUR MESSAGE

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BY JENNIFER ROWLEY

**I**t's time to put aside traditional marketing ideas and benefit from a new approach. You'll find that this new model—which focuses on building relationships and creating communities—will encourage a more strategic view of marketing throughout your organization.

You may want to keep your usual marketing methods, such as newsletters and press releases, or add such techniques as Web sites and relationship databases. But the important thing is to integrate these tactics into a wider view of marketing. That means viewing all communication—including appointing volunteers, negotiating with funders, and delivering services—as marketing. Marketing should be embedded in everything you do.

The six essential stages of marketing described here are based on a model of relationship building, not the life cycle of an organization. Thus, you'll have relationships in all stages and will need to manage them all at the same time.

### 1

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#### UNDERSTAND YOUR CORE PURPOSE

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Make sure everyone in your organization agrees on your core purpose. Without this shared understanding, you won't be able to communicate a consistent message to your organization's community.

The purpose may be formulated in a mission or vision statement, or, at a lower level, a set of organizational

objectives. But, more than that, it must be evident in all “marketing communication.”

This means much more than printing the mission statement in annual reports and other publicity. It means living the core purpose in every interaction with a customer or a stakeholder. That's why it's so important that all staff (paid or voluntary) share, understand, and commit to the purpose. The core purpose needs to inform all press releases, meeting communications, and, most of all, the nature and quality of the services your organization delivers.

### 2

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#### UNDERSTAND YOUR STAKEHOLDERS

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Next, develop your understanding of the customers and communities your organization serves. You need to build relationships with individual stakeholders and with key representatives of stakeholder groups.

Unpack your concept of the “customer.” Instead, emphasize the citizens and communities your organization touches. In some settings (such as charity shops), the customer concept is relevant, but even then you must also encourage a larger view. Expand your marketing vision to include the entire community of people represented by those customers.

Develop relationships with all stakeholders, including funding bodies, users of your services, the wider community in which you operate, political figures, auditors, and

others. Working with stakeholders and listening to their feedback is the best way to fulfill your core purpose and develop a set of core competencies. As environments and communities change, you will be able to deploy these competencies in different contexts without losing sight of your core purpose.

### 3

#### INTRODUCE YOUR ORGANIZATION TO YOUR STAKEHOLDERS

During this stage, you need to communicate your organization's strengths to your stakeholders. You may wish to use such methods as mailings, visiting days, special events, special offers, or a presence on the Internet to make the first contact. Then you'll need to persuade stakeholders to renew their contact with your organization.

### 4

#### DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Now it's time for you and your stakeholders to become better acquainted. Personal contacts, preferably at many levels and between a number of individuals, are important during this stage of the process. Understanding, knowledge, and trust need to develop. Be sure stakeholders are satisfied with the service quality, and encourage them to extend their range of involvement with the organization so that the relationship becomes more multi-dimensional.

### 5

#### CONTINUE THESE RELATIONSHIPS

During this stage, the two-way relationship is well established. The stakeholders and organization know what to expect of each other and understand their role in the relationship.

For this period to be extended, the relationship must adapt to changes in either party. Both the organization and stakeholders are subject to shifting environments, and what they require from the relationship may change. If the relationship was well established in the earlier stages, both parties will have mutual investment and loyalty and will strive to manage instabilities.

### 6

#### SAY GOOD-BY

Parting may be inevitable. Funding bodies change, and organizations fulfill the needs of individual customers. Both parties may be reluctant to terminate a good relationship, but parting on good terms is important to the future of both parties. So don't let it "just happen." Manage the parting as carefully as any other phase of marketing.

Offer opportunities for continued contact at a reduced level. Or develop a new relationship with different roles. Provide as many ways as possible to stay involved or get others involved. Happy memories inspire valuable word-of-mouth recommendations and leave the door open for other relationships in due course. ■

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These publications are available through the Society for Nonprofit Organizations' Resource Center, 608-274-9777, Ext. 221, [www.danenet.org/snpo](http://www.danenet.org/snpo).

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