

Module 2 Marketing Your Program

Objectives

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- ◆ List your marketing goals for your program.
- ◆ Identify cost-effective, creative ways to promote your program.
- ◆ Develop a marketing plan.
- ◆ Develop a recruitment process for your program.



Activity #1 Your Marketing Goals

There are many ways of getting the word out about your program that are free or low cost, provided you know who you are trying to reach and what message you are trying to give. You may have several promotion goals:

1. Recruiting potential program candidates.
2. Educating local community partners about the services you provide.
3. Building a reputation for excellence in entrepreneurship training with your funders and other stakeholders.

What is your current promotion goal? Be as specific as you can.

Example: My goal is to recruit 200 unemployed or underemployed men and women, who are currently earning less than \$ 30,000.00 annual household income and are not eligible for employment benefits, who want to start a full-time business, who need business training, and who will inquire about our training program within the next 4 weeks.



Who do you want to reach? Imagine that you have a room full of people on the first day of your training program. How would you describe them? Be as specific as you can. Outline their demographic profile (age, gender, income level, geographic area, education level, etc.) as well as their psychographics (values, life style choices, attitudes, emotional health, etc.) These are the people you want to reach in your program promotion activities.

Demographics: _____

Psychographics: _____



What are the key points about your program that, if they heard about it or saw it posted somewhere, would grab these people’s attention enough to get them to pick up the telephone and call your agency?

This is the message that you want to focus on in your promotional materials and activities. Keep it simple! The goal of promotion is to get the right people interested enough to contact you. You don’t need to provide all of the information at once – save the details for the information session.



Activity #2 Promoting Your Program

Now you need to consider the best places and methods to get your message out to your target market. Imagine that you are your own client. Where do you live, work and play? What do you like to do on the weekend? Where do you hang out in the local community? What community services do you use? What businesses do you frequent? What newspapers do you read? What radio stations do you listen to? What TV stations do you watch? Who do you talk to in your neighbourhood? What other services within your agency do you already use? Chances are, the answers to the above questions will give you the best ideas on how and where to promote your program.



Think about all of the internal and external resources you have access to at your organization. Who do you work with who can refer you appropriate candidates? Where can you do a presentation to potential candidates or people who talk to potential candidates? How do other community programs recruit their clients? Think about other services your agency offers, your web site, resource centre, partnerships, board members, and contacts. Ask your colleagues for suggestions.



Check out the sample flyer and 10 great promotional ideas in your toolbox!



Activity #3 Your Marketing Plan

Let's go through all of your promotional ideas so far. Choose the ones that you want to pursue. Start with the ones that you can do for free or for a nominal cost. Then, select any others that will cost you some money that you still think are worth doing. Find out specific costs and potential benefits before making your final decision. Don't be afraid to explore options on getting these cost items for free. You never know until you ask!



- ◆ Ask for a discount from the company that prints your posters. Invite them to come in and show their work to the entrepreneurs in the program who will undoubtedly be wanting to print business cards and brochures.
- ◆ Get some snazzy pens, fridge magnets and fun giveaways from a marketing products company. Tell them that they can put on a tagline that says "Compliments of..." in order to get some free publicity as a program sponsor.
- ◆ Ask every supplier for a deal or a donation because it is for a worthwhile cause. Tell them that they can give back to their community by contributing to a valuable project in their neighbourhood. If you are a non-profit organization, perhaps you can provide a charitable donation receipt, or include them as a partner or sponsor in your public events and marketing materials.

Write down all of your selected promotional activities on the action plan on the next page. When setting deadlines, remember that lead-time is crucial. It is wise to assume that getting people to call you will take longer than you think, and that they need to hear and see the same message over and over again before they will call you. If you are planning on doing any advertising, you will need to check into submission deadlines. Put together a budget for your marketing activities before you implement your action plan.



Action Plan

Marketing Plan

Marketing Activity	Goal or Desired Outcome	Cost	Deadline



Activity #4 Your Recruitment Strategy

Before your office begins receiving inquiries about your program, make sure you have a plan in place on how to handle the number and type of anticipated calls. Figure out who will take the calls, and how much information will be given up front.

Most organizations opt for an information session. These are usually 60 to 90 minutes in length, and provide clients with:

- ◆ Information about the content and format of the program.
- ◆ Eligibility requirements.
- ◆ The chance to get to know the training centre and meet the delivery team.
- ◆ The opportunity to ask questions.

You can offer regular, on-going information sessions, organize several sessions just before each intake, or do a combination of the two.

There are many benefits to delivering an information session:

- ◆ They are time and cost effective.
- ◆ The organization has the opportunity to get a sense of the type of candidates inquiring about the program.
- ◆ Clients have the opportunity to self-select into or out of the intake process.
- ◆ Asking people to make the effort to attend an information session can be an indication of their commitment to and readiness for the program.

At the end of the information session, invite interested candidates to register for the assessment program. Let them know that this next step is to help them decide whether or not they are ready to start their own business, and that they can self-select out of the process at any time. If, at the end of the assessment program they have decided to go forward with their business idea, they can then apply to the self employment training program by completing an application package. Eligible candidates will be invited for a one-on-one interview.



Check out the Sample Information Session in your toolbox!



How Did You Do?

Before we leave this module, let's make sure you understand everything we have discussed and that you know what you need to do next. Check your progress with this quiz:

1. Can you describe the marketing goals of your program?
Yes No
2. Do you have a marketing plan in place?
Yes No
3. Have you developed a recruitment process for your program?
Yes No

If you answered **yes** to all of the above questions, turn the page.



Congratulations!

You have successfully completed Module 2: Marketing Your Program. Take a moment to review the *Food For Thought* section with *Lessons Learned* and *Discussion Questions*. Then, when you are ready, move on to Module 3: Assessing and Selecting Clients.



Food For Thought



Lessons Learned

#1 Allow ample time for promotion and recruitment, ideally a minimum of 3 months.

#2 Start with a large pool of potential candidates in order to get a reasonable number of appropriate applications.

Example:

200 people inquire about the program



100 people register for information sessions



75 people show up for the information sessions



50 people register for the self-assessment program



40 people apply to program



35 people are interviewed

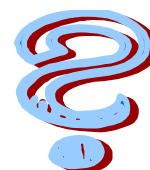


15 candidates are accepted into program

#3 Remember that once you begin promoting your program, you will continue to receive inquiries even after you have started training. Take advantage of this momentum by offering continuous information sessions, general business start-up workshops and self-directed research activities for potential candidates to participate in as they prepare for your next program intake. If you anticipate a fairly long time between intakes, such as longer than 3 or 4 months, consider referring clients to other community resources.



Discussion Questions



Individually and/or with your team members, discuss the following:

#1 You have just completed a series of information sessions and are about to start your self assessment program. There are 50 people registered for it. You walk into your office and there are twenty messages on your desk from people inquiring about the program. You don't have another intake for 4 months. What do you do?

#2 It is Thursday afternoon, you have just finished delivering the last of your information sessions, and there are 20 people registered for the three-day self assessment program that is scheduled to start on Monday. Recruitment was generally pretty good with lots of people calling to inquire about the program, but for some reason the information sessions were not very well attended. You have a gut feeling that a lot of the candidates are serious about starting their own business and will likely apply to the training program at the end of the assessment phase, but you won't really know much about their business and personal readiness until they have completed the assessment workshops, submitted an application package and had a one-on-one interview with you. You have told your funder that your goal is to end up with 15 businesses started. What do you do?

In Your Toolbox

- ✂ Sample Flyers
- ✂ 10 Great Ideas – How to Promote Your Program
- ✂ Sample Information Session

