



applied training & management solutions

A brief introduction to marketing services, strategy, planning and communications

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Marketing Services

'Marketing is not about providing products or services it is essentially about providing changing benefits to the changing needs and demands of the customer' (P.Taylor 7/00)

Customers include individuals as well as commissioners. The closer an organisation comes to meeting customers needs the greater its ability to gain a differential advantage over its competitors. In an increased competitive environment it is no longer good enough for an organisation to produce and sell aggressively what it is good at. Advantage is with the buyer.

A **marketing orientation** enables an organisation to look for new markets. It is both a philosophy and how it carries out its business. By adopting **customer orientation** an organisation seeks:

- Superior value over its competitors
- Increasing benefits to the buyer in terms of efficiency
or decreasing purchaser's costs by proving more benefits

Marketing seeks to focus attention on the **tangible evidence** of the service offer and accepts that every purchaser will make individualised decisions. Purchasers find it difficult to compare through bid documents the quality of each bidder. Quality is often a subjective opinion.

Customers buy for their reasons, not yours. - Orvel Ray Wilson

Bids should seek to demonstrate through evidence that the systems, processes and service you offer are better than your competitors. It is critical to understand what are the inhibiting and positive factors that will influence each purchaser and to ensure that critical success factors are analysed at the early stages of a bid.



When bidding for grant programmes especially those for innovation funders must consider what the added value is for the awarding body and the community as a whole.

Marketing Strategy

Planning should be focussed on

Where do we want to be?

Where are we now?

How do we get there? (choosing strategy)

How do we do it? (setting objectives)

Start with mission and answer the following basic questions

What is our business?

Who is the customer?

What is value to our customer?

What will our business be?

What should our business be?

To avoid a short sighted and product driven approach organisations should define their business in terms of the needs they fulfil rather than the product they produce.

Strategy should be based on **positioning which** is used by an organisation to differentiate its offerings from those of its competitors in order to give it a competitive advantage within a market. Positioning will also ensure that it identifies those **segments** of the market that will deliver growth.



Constraints on growth

Customer needs may drive the activities of an organisation but organisational factors constrain the extent to which an organisation is able to cater for identified customer needs. Developing existing or new services are often constrained by organisational issues such:

Strategy	Risk aversion
Articles and memorandum	Capacity
Profitability/cost	Internal politics
Geographical limits	Unwillingness to investment
Informal competition agreements	

Customer and Public Relations Management

Existing customers are your most valuable customers and are the people you have the potential to sell more or new products to. It is essential to understanding what customer wants are and ensure they are provided with it. Good relationships are based on identifying the variance between what the customer wants as compared with what they need.

Communication should focus on delivering key messages taking account of each purchaser's wants and their relationship with you. The same proposal sent out to a number of potential commissioners will be less effective than one which is personalised and relates to individual needs. Make sure that you check that your messages have been received and understood.

The greatest problem in communication is the illusion that it has been accomplished.

- George Bernard Shaw



Remember respect and honesty and your values are critical. How you communicate may be as important as what you communicate.

They may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel.

- Carl W. Buechner

Additional reading - Principles of Services Marketing, Adrian Palmer