

Marketing Connects Buyers with Products and Services

Marketing is essential to your museum's long-term survival and growth. Marketing is not simply advertising; it's about:

- understanding your audience
- tailoring your products and services
- meeting your customers' needs
- providing a visitor experience to suit them
- telling the audience about it

Successful marketers understand their product and know their audience. They know that consuming or experiencing the product will please and improve the lives of participants.

Marketing is About Communication

Successful marketing is about communicating what's unique and valuable about your museum and presenting it accessibly to those who want to hear.

Things you may want to communicate could include:

- what's going on at your museum
- a new exhibition or program
- opening hours
- cost of entry
- what to expect when visiting

Think About Your Audience

Most museums have a diverse audience including:

- people interested in local history
- tourists
- families
- culturalists
- schools and education groups
- researchers and historians

Each of these groups are tuned into different media outlets, meaning that you may need to use different methods to capture and attract each group.

The **language** you use in your marketing materials needs to be understood by each audience. For example, researchers and historians are more likely to respond to hearing about your 'local history research room', whereas family audiences would prefer an invitation to 'new children's activities hosted every Wednesday' and so on.

The Importance of a Marketing Plan

A marketing plan is the road map of where your museum is going. It should relate to both the Strategic Plan and the Business Plan.

A plan should contain detailed marketing approaches on all aspects of the museum including public programs, education programs, social events and general themes of the museum.

Include the methods you will use to reach your audience segments, such as:

- mailouts
- social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)
- flyers
- posters
- newspaper inserts
- billboards
- press releases
- websites
- paid adverts

Be realistic and don't oversell yourselves or say you are something you are not.

Think Brand Awareness

Creating brand awareness is key to developing audiences and is an effective strategy in marketing your museum.

Ways you can create brand awareness include:

- **Develop a logo and/or style guide** (it may be worth engaging a graphic designer to incorporate aspects of your museum into a visual brand). This should be used across all your public platforms such as printed material, museum signs, advertisements, and on your website.
- **Social media** is a highly effective way to generate brand awareness. Many museums have vibrant Facebook pages which are used to share facts about their collections, describe what's happening in the museum, announce public events, and provide community information.

A Press Release is Not Marketing

Press releases are primarily designed for the media; they package your news item or important information into a digestible format specifically for use by radio stations, newspapers or online publishers.

Press releases rely on the audience of the media outlet rather than your core audience. Relying on press releases is not a marketing strategy in itself and won't deliver long term audience growth.

While well-crafted press releases are an essential part of good marketing, they invariably provide a granular or detailed view of one thing that's happened or is soon to happen, and have a very short shelf-life.

Don't Underestimate the Value of Word-of-Mouth

Word-of-mouth is one of the most commonly cited ways people find out about a museum. Ensure your visitors have an enjoyable time by providing excellent customer service and information, if they require it. As they leave, don't be shy to ask them to spread the word and recommend the museum to a friend.