

# MARKETING ADVERTISING PUBLIC RELATIONS

INSTRUCTOR

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## COURSE OBJECTIVES

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At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

- Gain an appreciation of market research and its role in achieving overall marketing objectives.
- Understand the basic elements of a marketing plan.
- Identify how to communicate with a target audience using the appropriate message, media, and timing.
- Understand how broadcast media (e.g., television, radio), print media (e.g., magazines, newspapers), support media (e.g., outdoor

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advertising), direct marketing (e.g., postal mail), and interactive media (e.g., the Internet) are used in marketing and advertising.

- Learn how to apply public relations strategies and tools towards the development of a public relations campaign.

## ***Introduction***

There are various integrated marketing communications (IMC) tools one can utilize to effectively market a venue. Perhaps most notable of these are advertising and public relations. The bottom line for nearly all venues and show/event marketing objectives is putting spectators in the venue seats.

Whether it's Mumford & Sons, San Francisco Symphony or the Society of Radiology Technicians, creative and cost-effective marketing is crucial to the success of any event facility. IMC tools of advertising and public relations are crucial components of such marketing success. This section highlights the demand for marketing research before creating a successful marketing plan and highlights how different media advertising and public relations campaigns fit into the plan.

## ***Elements of a Marketing Plan***

The basic elements of a Marketing Plan can be stated in many ways. For the purposes of this topic section, the elements will be identified and defined as:

- **Executive Summary (What is the Gist?):**  
The executive summary is a high-level summary of the marketing plan. This section should highlight the main objectives, strategies, and recommendations developed by marketers. What are the goals to achieve? What are the desirable outcomes? Does the marketing plan focus on *indirect objectives*, such as increasing brand awareness or brand equity, or is it more designed for *direct objectives*, such as sales and revenue generation? The stated claims should be challenging, yet attainable.
- **Business Overview (What are the Media Offerings?):**  
The business overview provides a detailed description of the product, company, or event to be marketed, including relevant background information about the marketplace, consumers, and competitors. The venue manager should assume that the planning process will take place at the end of the fiscal year, then recap any areas of business for the past 12-18 months. Describe the business' internal philosophies and external factors that may affect operations.

- **Situation Analysis (Have you Screened the Market?):**  
 This situation analysis, also known as *environmental screening*, should include a description of the current market position of the property. The best way to go about it is to provide a detailed *SWOT* (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis. Consider all known information about the property (Business Overview); reflect on strengths and weaknesses of the operation, as well as opportunities and threats that may exist in the coming year.
- **Market Decisions (Who is your Target Audience?):**  
 How well do you know your target market? How well do you understand their needs? Can you articulate what your customers and potential customers need as opposed to what you offer? Are there groups to whom you should be selling who are not currently buying your services? Are there ways to segment your market so you can offer specialized products and services to various groups? Are there products that should be offered to a broad base of users? Is there a niche market that has been unexplored by your property? What is your positioning statement?
- **Marketing Mix Strategies (What is Your Pitch?):**  
 The marketing mix is the set of (controllable) strategic marketing tools—product, price, place, and promotion—the firm blends to produce the response it wants in the target market. Similar to a cake mix that might contain eggs, milk, flour, and sugar, you can alter the final cake by altering the amounts of mix elements contained in it. Changing the elements of marketing mix can alter your product offering to consumers. The marketing mix may also be compared to an artist’s palette. The marketer mixes prime colors (mix elements) in different quantities to deliver a specific final color. In this way, every cake or painted picture should be original in some way. Look at marketing mix elements with great detail!
- **Evaluation of Results (How do You Define Success?):**  
 As marketers, venue managers must defend the strategies behind decisions made. The best way to do this is to supply meaningful results. Some marketing plans demonstrate improved customer loyalty, increased attendance at the event, or enhanced awareness among consumers, all of which can increase revenue generation. However, it will be necessary for you to perform a thorough evaluation through research and data analysis to understand and appreciate the effects of your marketing plan strategies.

## ***Establishing Your Position***

In preparing the marketing plan for any venue, the venue manager must identify and understand the phase of the marketing cycle in which the

facility is currently operating. These phases are generally described as: *awareness* or *informative*, *trial* or *persuasive*, or *repeat* or *reminder-oriented*.

- **Awareness or Informative:**

If you are in the process of opening a new or recently improved/expanded venue, you will find yourself in the first category, the "*awareness stage*." Most potential clients and the general public will not be aware of the merits of utilizing the venue. The marketing plan the awareness phase most often utilizes public relations initiatives and advertising that is *informative*.

Public relations initiatives in this stage might include the use of press releases, trade press articles, general news columns, and blogs. Other initiatives such as networking through civic organizations, speakers' bureaus, and local groups (i.e., the Convention and Visitors Bureau or Chamber of Commerce) may also be advantageous. With regard to advertising, trade publications tend to be used in promoting new venues since the major requirement in such cases is to announce availability and identify the characteristics that will satisfy the needs of the client. In conjunction, advertising and public relations initiatives are often utilized in the new stage of a venue's life cycle.

- **Trial or Persuasive:**

In the "*trial*" or "*persuasive*" stage, there is more of an emphasis on the use of words or images to try and create an image for the venue and to influence attitudes about the brand. Both advertising and public relations can be effective in this phase.

Public relations initiatives might include testimonials from clients who have used the venue, venue-specific information published in trade publications, direct mail communication, or information located on the Internet and other social/news media platforms.

Image advertising is generally used more in the growth period and, to some extent, in the maturity period. As an example, once the venue has been opened, you can then market the specific attributes of the venue as opposed to talking about the awareness of the fact that it exists.

- **Proven or Reminder-Oriented**

In the "*proven*" or "*reminder-oriented*" phase, it then becomes important

to reinforce the positive image of the venue in the minds of

new and repeat clients by making sure the venue maintains a “*top-of-mind*” presence. This is especially true for those venues that have been around for some time, are proven, and are utilized frequently.

Public relations in this phase should reinforce the success of the venue and emphasize areas that are underutilized, and advertising should be reminder-oriented. One should never assume that success means to reduce your budget for advertising—it is in this cycle that many venues lose sight of their marketing plan’s objectives and strategies.

## ***Advertising Basics***

Though advertising is just one component of a good marketing plan— alongside and supporting public relations, direct selling, sales promotions, and sponsorship—it is not the solution to all sales problems. Traditionally, the objectives of advertising have been stated in terms of direct sales goals. However, a more concrete approach is for one to view advertising in terms of communication objectives that seek to inform, persuade, and remind potential tenants, clients, and customers of your venue.

Effectively, advertising has the unique capability to influence current and potential new tenants’ perceptions of and attitudes towards the promotional message and your venue. The chief objective is to increase the likelihood that tenants will utilize your venue over others. To this end, advertising can accentuate the reciprocal relationship between marketing communications and public relations strategy.

It is important to recognize that, though effective, advertising does not operate in a vacuum—it is a subset of marketing and other promotional activities. In terms of the implementation of activities, advertising works as a component of the IMC process. It is unreasonable and impractical to hold advertising activities solely responsible for a decline in sales, or to assume that it will be responsible for increasing sales over time. On the contrary, advertising is but one (albeit important) promotional element.

To utilize the various advertising vehicles described below in this session, one must accept the concept that venues are highly competitive and the use of advertising to assist in personal selling is a very important medium. To this end, this section later discuss the various advertising opportunities, such as newspaper, magazines, radio, television, direct mail, e-mail, social media, and the advantages and disadvantages of these various media. In addition, some venues may not use its own in-house advertising agency, for which cases this section will discuss the utilization of an outside agency and how to establish an

advertising budget.

## ***Target Advertising***

Whether the venue represented is a stadium, arena, performing arts center, or convention center, it is important to identify the specific *advertising target* prior to making a selection of the various media available. This is particularly important if the venue is a multipurpose venue of which the marketing plan is to heighten the awareness of the venue to a variety of clients. It is necessary to offer the venue to sport, entertainment, or trade and consumer show tenants, all of which read different periodicals and magazines that demand the use of various types of media in order to reach them.

For example, if advertising a convention/trade show venue in *Convene* or any other journal for consumer and trade shows, it would not be appropriate to use that same advertisement to attract concert events via an ad in *Pollstar*. In a magazine that appeals to concert promoters, the marketing message should focus on that specific market.

Advertising planning begins with effective research, and the results allow managers to make strategic decisions that are then translated into tactical execution, such as establishing a budget, advertising scheduling, and a creative brief.

## ***Knowing Your Customers***

With customer needs satisfaction as the central goal of marketing, having a well-defined view of who your customers are and what they want is key to business success.

Knowing your customers provides direction on where you should place your efforts, and what marketing objectives are realistic in the context of these markets.

There are a number of ways of defining and segmenting your customers, which can assist in narrowing down and profiling who you want to talk to and how. The types of ways you can classify your segments may be via:

- Geographic: local, regional, interstate, international
- Demographic: age, sex, income, family lifecycle stage
- Socioeconomic: education, occupation and income
- Psychographic: lifestyle, attitudes, personality

- Business type: retailer, wholesaler, distributor.

Segmenting the audience can be done via geodemographic profiling, which involves mapping a segment of your customer database using software that helps quantify and profile the composition of your audience into segments that might have similar expectations, perceptions and behavior towards consumption of your product or service. These findings provide powerful insights into strategic opportunities that may exist to exploit the unique characteristics of each segment. When comparing your customer segments with the potential 'geographic area' you can also identify gaps in the market where you have an opportunity to 'grow' your audience.

Once you have segmented your audience, you will be in a better position to understand which segments of that audience you should target and how to reach them. When selecting a target market keep in mind that it should be:

- Sizeable enough to pursue
- Easy to measure
- Reachable with your messages
- And, the audience must share common needs.

## ***Pulling It All Together***

### **Brand**

Positioning or branding concerns how your customers or potential customers regard your specific venue, event or offer, relative to others of a similar nature in the market.

This involves looking for a position in the minds of your target markets to distinguish your offer from that of your competitors, providing you with a strategic advantage in the marketplace in which you operate.

When a desired position has been determined, your business needs to 'deliver on that position' through the strategies you select to communicate to your target markets and multiple points of contact they might have with your business along the way.

Branding, in its narrowest definition, is essentially a name, sign, symbol, or a combination of these, which are intended to identify an event and differentiate it from its competitors. However, businesses need to think about how branding flows through every aspect of what they do and how it connects and impacts with every customer touchpoint.

Developing a strong brand is important so that your business is top-of-mind for customers; there is immediate recognition of what your business stands for; it differentiates you from competitors; and provides a strong identity for your whole organization to align with and flows through all its activities (including the way staff behave and engage with customers). Over time, a strong and successful brand builds recognition and generates loyalty from customers.

### **Marketing mix and customer touchpoints**

The key 'ingredients' in the marketing mix include product, price, place, promotion, people, process and physical environment. The customer might interact with you in some way at each of these points, or if not interact, be affected by decisions your business makes at each of these points. It is also important to keep the brand at the center of what you do.

'Product' refers to the physical product or service offered to the customer. In the case of a venue it might be exhibition space, function services and ancillary services like catering, parking, security, audio visual and theming.

When addressing 'Price' in the marketing mix, considerations around formulating a pricing strategy include: what to charge for, how much to charge and who; what are competitors charging and what will the market bear; what does the customer perceive as value and what are the other 'costs' for clients and their customers including parking, accommodation, ease of access and amenities surrounding the venue (The total cost).

'Place' is associated with the channels of distribution which enable the product to get to the customer. In terms of a venue, you can think of how you get the customer to your location. Is your venue well located, is it accessible, is it well serviced by public transport and parking?

'Promotion' involves creating awareness of the venue; differentiating the venue from competitors; informing clients of the product and services on offer; and creating a positive and persuasive case for using the venue. Promotional tools include advertising and direct marketing; public relations and media familiarization tours; sales promotions and trade shows; personal selling; websites and e-communications; social media; and collateral and photography.

'People' are an essential ingredient in your business and a key consideration in your marketing plan. Recruitment and training of staff in the culture of the organization and in the appropriate delivery of your services can provide a competitive edge for the business from a marketing view. Retention of staff is also important, from a relationship point-of-view.

'Process' is around the systems and processes used in delivering the organization's products and services to the expectations of customers.

'Physical environment' refers to the element of the service mix which allows consumers to make judgments on the organization based on such elements for example: is the venue clean and well maintained; are the staff friendly and well presented; how current is your equipment and fit-out; are the grounds well kept?

When you look at all these aspects of the marketing mix you can see why a marketing orientation needs to flow through the entire business and inputs at all levels of the business.

## ***The 7 'P's'***



## ***Making It Happen***

When pulling together a marketing plan, it is important that the plan is linked to an overall strategic plan for the business. This will ensure the marketing activities drive the business objectives. These objectives may be around expected market share,

leads generated or revenue targets. Depending on the type of business the objectives may also be broken down further by specific market segments, industry sectors or geographic location.

When developing objectives make sure they are attainable, specific and measurable.

Marketing departments are being called upon to justify their activities and their spend. So, it is important that the plan also identifies objectives around specific marketing activities and how these link back to business objectives. Some of the more specific marketing measurements might be around brand awareness, specific campaign or sales promotions results, customer satisfaction, retention or acquisition of customers, level of engagement with digital channels and social media channels. With the adoption of digital marketing channels into businesses, measurement of specific marketing activities has become easier to achieve, as these tools are trackable.

### **Plans, costings and timings**

The key to creating promotional campaigns is linking back to your marketing objectives and knowing your target markets. Being clear on this will enable you to create cost-effective campaigns that will deliver expected results with the target audience. When designing your promotional plan, some of the areas of consideration are: who do I need to communicate with; what sort of budget is required; are there specific objectives associated with the target audiences; and what promotional channels are available to reach them?

Depending on your venue, your competitors and the familiarity a target audience(s) already has with the venue, you may choose one or a combination of the communication objectives including: creating awareness; differentiating the venue; informing clients about benefits; persuading, enthusing, motivating; or driving a 'call to act' i.e. conversion to sale.

Again, depending on your objectives, your target audience(s) and your budget, you will need to plan the most cost-efficient and effective way to get your message(s) out to achieve your goals. Some promotional tools are more targeted / direct and cost effective than others, so there is less potential to waste your budget.

It is important to consider the different roles that different media play, including:

- Reach - penetration into target market
- Cut through – ability to stand out from the clutter, creatively and in a media sense
- Awareness – ability to convey not just what's on but an understanding of the experience being offered
- Conversion – following an understanding of the product, facilitate the desire to act

When determining a promotional budget, it could be around setting aside a percentage of the total revenue budget; or tied to a percentage of sales for a particular activity; or perhaps by identifying what you believe should be done in order to achieve the venues objectives, costing these activities and, if necessary, prioritizing them in order to bring costs in line with what could be considered realistic.

Once you have a rough idea of how you intend to go about things, you can create a specific schedule outlining: what will you do exactly; how much will it cost; what promotional objectives will be met; and what business objectives will be achieved.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

As marketing plans are implemented, changes may need to be made. Changes in the marketplace may lead to re-prioritizing target markets – and therefore communication budgets. To be able to respond to these changes, monitoring and controls need to be built into the process, including establishing benchmarks (sales expected over a given period) and processes to keep a tab on activities (i.e. meetings; reports; budget reviews).

At the end of the campaign, you need to evaluate what worked and what didn't to determine the how successful or otherwise your efforts have been in achieving set marketing objectives. Techniques that can be used for this include sales analysis, identifying sources of queries, research surveys and focus groups, retention and loyalty rates.

### ***Media Selection***

One of the most important decisions in preparing a marketing plan involves media selection. A mistake at this point can cost thousands to millions of dollars in ineffectual advertising. While media strategy must achieve the communication goals necessary to reach the targeted audience, the market selection research mentioned earlier should help identify the appropriate mix of available media that is best suited for the previously identified target

audience. The key objective is to achieve adequate media coverage without advertising beyond the limits of the potential market.

While there is value in using multiple types of media, it is more important to pick the proper mix. Below is a list of some of the more common types of advertising media:

### **Social Media**

The Internet provides a tremendous number of opportunities to communicate with consumers. Maintaining a presence on social networking sites such as

Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, SnapChat, TikTok and Pinterest provide opportunities for one-on-one interaction that is not available anywhere else. This changing medium needs constant attention as avenues open and close.

It is imperative to have a well-thought strategy and to realize existing limitations as an individual and/or department in creating, implementing, and maintaining relationships in the social space. The temptation to keep up with all the latest trends and any new sites that emerge can be rather overwhelming. The venue manager will need to determine what the venue wants to achieve, who is the target audience, and the social media sites that are appropriate for the organizational goals. Focus on one or two sites and work to cross-promote content.

### **E-Mail Marketing**

Email marketing is directly marketing a message to a group of people using email. The e-mail usually involves a call to action, information sharing, or information gathering. Email marketing can be utilized for either *cold lists* (non-customers) or to current customer databases. It is also effective to work with corporate and media partners to cross-promote using their email lists to increase market reach. E-mail database development is essential for any modern venue.

By building a large database of interested individuals, a venue can communicate directly with its target audience. There are some companies that provide this kind of service, such as HubSpot, Constant Contact and MailChimp, but oftentimes the venue ticket services provider will have an application available.

### **Newspapers**

Although considered “old-school” by modern standards, there are still many advantages to advertising through newspapers— flexibility, community prestige, local coverage, and control of exposure to the advertising message. The drawbacks are a short life span, declining readership, and poor

reproduction quality in many cases. To combat some of these issues, most newspapers now include an online presence with advertising opportunities.

Generally, newspaper advertising as it relates to the venue will be conducted by the presenter to promote a specific activity. The dramatic decline of circulation over the last ten years has made newspaper advertising a questionable practice. As such, marketers and presenters must look closely at the event to determine if the target audience for the event is one that still reads newspapers. To this end, the advent of the Internet has made questionable the decision to advertise in newspapers for younger demographics.

## **Magazines**

Magazines can be divided into trade publications, directories, consumer magazines, and various others that are often available in print form or online. The key advantage of using magazines for advertising is that marketers can be much more focused on reaching the target audience. In addition, the quality of production in magazines as opposed to newspapers is much better. Magazines also have a longer shelf life, especially a periodical or a directory, and the prestige associated with some magazines offer added benefits unrealized through newspaper.

The primary disadvantage of using magazines is the notable lack of the flexibility and impact of radio and television. Further, magazines are usually time-sensitive in that their shelf span is oftentimes only monthly or weekly. Be aware a magazine tends to be very quickly absorbed by an individual and thrown away.

In the entertainment industry, some good examples of prevalent magazines include *Venues Today*, *Billboard*, and *Pollstar*. In the convention industry, some examples of common magazines are *Convene*, *Meeting News*, *Facilities*, and *Successful Meetings*. While many magazines offer annual or semi-annual directories, the advent of the Web has made advertising in these directories of questionable value.

## **Television/Radio**

Again, television and radio, like newspapers, will tend to be used by venues more for promoting a specific activity like the opening of a venue or its availability to local community groups. Generally, when a venue utilizes this kind of media, they are either co-sponsoring an event with a promoter and are advertising that event, or trying to heighten local awareness of the availability of the venue to the community at large.

With the proliferation of satellite television and radio, tablets, mobile apps, Netflix, online streaming, broadcast television and radio are witnessing a steady decline in network and cable viewers. Nonetheless, these mediums still have a high impact and far reach of most advertising mediums, and they are typically the most flexible. Advertising through this medium is very temporary and extremely expensive. Developing a good relationship with your account executive is fundamental to ensuring success of using this medium. A good account executive can help place your spots in key positions, assist in securing third-party sponsorships, and find additional spots.

## **Direct Mail**

Direct mail is still an effective tool for certain segments of the population. Most family shows still consider this form of advertising to be a vital marketing tool.

For group sales efforts, direct mail continues to be an important part of the IMC process. However, if the direct mail piece is not creative and informative, it may end up being cast aside in the household almost immediately and will probably never be read. A “call to action” must be prominent along with the “offer.”

Depending on the venue, the venue manager may wish to utilize this medium. Convention centers may find this medium useful as it tends to be much more targeted and allows for focused promotion to a very specific target audience. Direct mail should be used in the early stages of the marketing cycle in the aforesaid awareness stage.

There are many advantages to direct mail, including a selective target, intensive coverage, speed, complete information, and the personalization of each mailing piece. Finding the most effective mailing lists is crucial to the success of a direct mail campaign along with making sure the message is directed appropriately to the target audience. One should be aware of the cost of a direct mail campaign and recognize in the early stages of an awareness campaign, your advertising expense is likely to be significant.

Sending your potential tenants promotional items, such as golf balls, clocks, and other items are quite effective. Whatever the promotional item you decide to utilize, make sure that it is an item that has some *legacy* to it. Any item that will not be thrown aside can be useful. Promotional items that will stay on the client’s desk serve as a reminder of the value of the venue.

A direct-mail campaign can be done in one step, or it can take a variety of steps to continue to reinforce the awareness level of the venue over a period of time. An example would be to send a “teaser” piece initially and then to follow up with other mailers thereafter that will be more specific in describing your venue. In either case it is absolutely crucial to remember that in any direct-mail campaign, there must be a response piece allowing clients to either request more information, request a familiarization trip to your venue, or to be put on a mailing-list. This allows for follow up with the client, which is the key in selling the venue.

### **OTT (over-the-top)**

OTT (over-the-top) refers to advertising delivered directly to viewers over the internet through streaming video services including devices, such as smart or connected TVs (CTV). The term “over-the-top” comes from the ability to bypass traditional TV providers that control media distribution, giving advertisers the ability to reach their audiences directly.

According to ADJUST, the type of OTT service most users probably interact with most regularly is video OTT – services like Netflix, Hulu, Disney+. Another

major OTT market is audio, with services such as Spotify. Users can access a massive library of recording artists and podcasts.

OTT is a relatively new trend with a great amount of growth potential as more people cut the cord and move towards online-only services.

Going over the top allows media companies (and advertisers) freedom of movement without pre-planned broadcast schedules or geographic limitations.

### ***Use of an Advertising Agency***

An advertising agency is a specialist firm that assists in the planning, preparation, and placement of advertisements. There are many reasons venues use an agency during at least a portion of their advertising process. These agencies are typically staffed with highly qualified specialists who are able to provide degrees of creativity and objectivity that are difficult to maintain within your own venue. They often also provide creative services.

In some cases, the employment of an agency can reduce costs of advertising since they do not require many of the fixed expenses associated with an internal advertising department. Yet, making good use of an advertising agency requires having a very close relationship between the organization and the agency—one must always remember to direct the agency, and not let it direct you.

It is also important to note that the effective utilization of an ad agency will be quite time consuming. Don't expect miracles! Ad agencies are not in the venue business—they oftentimes require specific direction to produce the desired results.

Rather than outsourcing its advertising to an agency, advertising and public relations campaigns are mainly handled internally by venue staff. Certain areas of advertising may still be directed to outside agencies, typically on a per-project basis, but only in the event that more creativity and objectivity is required.

### ***In-House Advertising Agency***

An in-house agency allows the venue to retain total creative control over the ways in which their shows/events/spaces are marketed and can prove cheaper than external agency services.

Venues that offer in-house advertising and marketing services can be key difference-makers as promoters and show producers are choosing locations.

Experienced and successful venue staff or departments can bring an informed awareness of marketplace conditions and target audiences to the table. Further, in-house advertising agencies should be able to work with promoters or managers in creating a plan inclusive of knowledge of the local market and new media outlets important to today's environment.

Regardless of whether the organization is using an advertising agency or conducting advertising business in-house, the venue manager will receive a variety of information on how an ad should look and what should be included. There are three key elements that should be included in a good ad for venues and they are listed in the following section:

## ***Content and Style of the Ad***

### **Creative and Catchy**

Whether advertising a convention center to association executives in *Meeting News* or introducing a venue to North American promoters through *Pollstar*, the venue will be faced with very stiff competition from peers in the industry. Look through any recent issue of *VenuesNow*, *Pollstar*, or *Billboard Magazine* and numerous advertisements can be identified featuring multiple venues trying to sell the same thing, all the while creating their own special niche in the same market. The competition is quite stiff and an effective ad must catch the eye of the reader in a very short period of time. Therefore, an ad must be catchy, unique, and creative, all the while stimulating demand and differentiating your venue from others.

### **Informative**

In recent focus groups conducted in the convention industry, association executives reported they want to be informed about the size of the venue, number of meeting rooms, venue access, transportation, number of hotel rooms, and other details. Most ads do not include this kind of information but tend to rely on beauty and aesthetics. In the case of arenas and stadiums this is equally true, whereby promoters want specific information and are typically attracted to a particular venue by the number of seats in the venue or the unique setup options. Thus, ads must sometimes be informative depending on the target audience.

### **Keep it Simple**

Oftentimes, many people try to accomplish too much within the given size of an ad. The ad must be as simple as possible, while still satisfying the abovementioned two ingredients of providing information and maintaining creativity. Although very difficult to achieve, the more simple the ad, the more impact it will have on the reader.

## ***Advertising Budget***

Irrespective of the level of awareness of your venue, one of your most difficult decisions will be determining your advertising plans for the fiscal year.

Monies spent on advertising will be argued right throughout the entire organization, and it is rather difficult to defend such large advertising budgets when we don't know quite yet the best method for measuring ad effectiveness.

There are many ways companies and venues have attempted to determine the budget to be set aside for venue advertising. As mentioned previously, a new or relatively unknown venue with scant awareness among a community has to budget more money than a venue that has been around for several years and is purely in the reinforcement stage of advertising.

Some companies or advertising agencies will allocate a certain percentage of sales or revenue advertising in a given fiscal year. However, this assumes that sales are a result of advertising—it should be reinforced that advertising is only one of the various promotional tactics used within the marketing plan to achieve desired results. Other forms of budgeting include competitive budgeting, which involves ad spending based on the amount of money our competitors are spending, and the objective and task method of budgeting, which challenges marketers to analyze and determine as accurate a budget statement as possible based on the objectives to be achieved and the tasks to be implemented. If the marketing plan has been developed with the right objectives in mind, the outside agency or internal resources can help make recommendations about the appropriate advertising budget that will be required for the organization. It then becomes a cat and mouse game to determine whether the budget is too high or low, but often the amount is dependent upon the kind of medium that has been selected to attempt to achieve the desired results.

## ***Advertising Plan***

An *advertising plan* is a planning document for the advertising objectives within the marketing plan, or various initiatives that you are trying to achieve in a period of time through advertising. The plan should include a summary of ad objectives, strategies, and should be subdivided into these creative and media sections:

### **Advertising Objectives**

These objectives define the role advertising will play in selling the venue and achieving the stated marketing objectives. A good statement should quantify success or failure by establishing the levels of awareness desired and relating

it purchase motivations. It should also describe the target market(s) you intend to reach.

### **Advertising Strategies**

These strategies provide a broad outline as to how the elements of advertising will be deployed to achieve your objectives. Once again, reference should be made back to your marketing plan. It often contains a positioning statement about your venue to be presented to consumers and a particular theme or positioning line that is necessary to achieve the results. The objectives and strategies provide the direction for the creative and media plans.

### **Creative and Media Plans**

The *creative plan* documents specific objectives and strategies, as well as the method of implementation for accomplishing the desired results. The *media plan* details specific objectives as to who the target market is, what the message is, timing, and what the primary markets are in which to advertise. These plans also outline the specific strategy about various mediums to be used

### ***What is Public Relations?***

Public relations is a difficult concept to understand. There is no universally accepted definition, perhaps because public relations is actually a composite of many different elements—research, media relations, venue and event publicity, promotions, public affairs—it is all these disciplines and more. What draws them together is a common focus. We will define public relations as *the use of information to influence public opinion*. In this way, public opinion belongs to perceptions of clients and the public.

### ***Race Formula***

As in the marketing cycle, it is important to scan the existing marketing environment—understand where the organization wants to go and what steps are needed to get there, find or apply the resources to make it go, and measure for success. The common acronym used in public relations teaching is RACE:

- R** - RESEARCH
- A** - ACTION
- C** - COMMUNICATION
- E** - EVALUATION

In this sense, research is to identify the problem and discover the facts, which are crucial to an effective campaign. Action is to set goals for the program

and plan strategies to meet organizational objectives. In communication, implement the identified strategies, keeping an eye out for any necessary changes in objectives, strategies, or implementation. Lastly, always have a plan to evaluate the results for the venue based on the objectives.

## ***Public Relations Tools***

*Public speaking* is one of the best ways to get the most positive public relations information out to “movers and shakers.” Venue managers should feel comfortable going out into the community to speak and should also consider bringing the public to the facility. Host a Chamber function in the venue, give the members a behind-the-scenes tour, and show off what makes the venue unique and worthwhile.

The *press release* is another key impression opportunity. Some events are worthy of a press release, in which case the release should answer the major questions of who, what, where, when and why, and list the contact person on your staff, whether it is the venue manager or someone else who can be called for further information.

Every venue, large or small, should have promotional materials at their expense to use for public relations purposes. This sizable expenditure, thought seemingly extravagant, could very well be the best bit of public relations. Items included in promotional materials might include brochures to inform patrons/users about parking, accessibility services, or ticketing information. In addition, each kit should include seating charts, layouts, and rate sheets, all the while using high quality images and standout coloring.

## ***Development of Relationships***

The responsibilities of a venue manager include developing relationships with the various individuals, organizations, and public groups with whom he/she/they will work with frequently. These relationships are the foundation of any public relations initiative, whether designed to create interest in an event, inform the public of changes in the venue, or announce modifications to long-standing policies. Venue managers must interact positively with individuals in the community including elected officials, city/county/university staff, board members, venue clients, the event promoters, venue staff, and other community leaders. All staff members should be aware of their role in public relations.

Interaction between special interest groups and organizations serving the elderly, disadvantaged, disabled, and minorities can be crucial to a successful public relations initiative. The media, whether it is local, regional, national, or

international, can be a significant public relations asset. The press should be included in the venue's efforts and provided timely information with any public relations effort.

A media policy should become part of a venue manager's *standard operating policies* (SOP) in order to maintain the continuity and professionalism of the message. This media policy covers the basics, including who speaks to the media, when media is allowed on site, or how the message is used.

### ***Manager's Role***

The manager's role, in addition to overseeing the daily operation of his or her venues, is to get the message to entities mentioned above. There are various ways a manager can achieve this goal. One can become actively involved in various city and/or county organizations, such as Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Hotel/Motel Association. In addition, a manager might obtain memberships in local, regional, state and national industry associations such as International Association of Venue Managers (IAVM), American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) or Meeting Planners International (MPI).

Successful managers become involved with special events in his or her city, to lend expertise and experience, join public relations or marketing associations, or conduct an outreach campaign by speaking to as many groups and organizations as possible. This manager also allows staff members to become involved in the community as well, working with other service and professional organizations and serving the role of ambassador.

### ***Summary***

Marketing and public relations are essential functions for venue managers responsible for attracting events, audiences, and community engagement. Effective marketing begins with research and a clear understanding of the marketplace, the competitive environment, and the audiences a venue seeks to serve. From this foundation, venue managers can develop a strategic marketing plan that defines objectives, target audiences, messaging, and the mix of communication tools necessary to achieve desired outcomes.

Advertising and promotional efforts should be viewed as part of an integrated marketing communications strategy rather than isolated tactics. Advertising helps inform, persuade, and remind potential clients and audiences of the venue's value, while public relations supports the broader objective of shaping positive perceptions and maintaining strong

relationships with community stakeholders, media, and industry partners. Together, these tools help move potential clients and patrons through the stages of awareness, interest, and ultimately utilization of the venue.

In today's marketing environment, venues must combine traditional marketing practices with emerging digital strategies. Social media platforms, short-form video, digital advertising, email marketing, and data analytics now play a significant role in reaching audiences and measuring engagement. These tools allow venue managers to better understand audience behavior, refine messaging, and allocate marketing resources more effectively.

Equally important is the recognition that modern venues operate within what scholars describe as the experience economy, where audiences seek memorable and meaningful experiences rather than simply products or services. Successful venues therefore focus not only on promoting events, but also on cultivating environments, programming, and community connections that create lasting impressions for guests.

Public relations remains a critical component of this effort. By following the RACE framework—Research, Action, Communication, and Evaluation—venue managers can develop effective public relations initiatives that strengthen relationships with media, stakeholders, and the public. Strong communication practices ensure that the venue's message is consistent, credible, and aligned with the organization's broader strategic goals.

Ultimately, successful marketing and public relations programs help venues build awareness, strengthen reputation, increase attendance, and generate long-term loyalty among audiences and clients. Through thoughtful planning, strategic communication, and ongoing evaluation, venue managers can ensure their facilities remain competitive, relevant, and valuable assets to their communities.

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