Marketing Your Community for Tourism

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I. Marketing basics

1. Definitions

a. Marketing- defined as any activity involved in the sale or rental of a service or product
b. What is marketing? – marketing encompasses advertising, product development, sales, pricing, promotion, communications, publicity and product distribution
c. Promotion – any attempt by an organization to stimulate sales by directing persuasive or informational communications to current or potential customers.
d. Advertising – any paid form of non personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services by an identified sponsor using a mass media
e. Personal Selling – an oral presentation to one or more prospective customers on a face to face basis
f. Sales Promotions – Activities other than advertising and personal selling that stimulates purchasing and overall tourism effectiveness.
g. Public Relations – A non personal presentation of ideas, goods or services using mass media, it is not paid for and there is no identified sponsor.
h. What is public relations – Public relations is the business of generating goodwill toward an individual, cause, company or product
i. What is messaging – Messaging is the careful development of the precise and concise language that quickly conveys the key messages you want known about your product or organization
j. What is branding – Branding is the look you choose to visually represent your organization or product
k. Differential advantage – What makes your product unique from all others in an important way, so that it will have a competitive advantage over others in the marketplace
1. Competitive advantage – A competitive advantage exists when the community offers something to the tourist that the tourist wants and the offering is either superior or unique.

2. Marketing involves selling
   a. “Nothing happens until something is sold”
   b. “All successes involve selling outstanding products”
   c. This relies on:
      • Meeting community needs
      • Being true to your community
      • Being differentiated and unique
      • Being of the highest quality

3. The 4 P’s – the focus is on the buyer, not the seller
   a. Product
   b. Price
   c. Promotion
   d. Place

4. The promotional mix – Refers to the absolute and relative amounts of efforts and dollars put into each major promotional category. There is no magic formula. Each community must decide on a promotional mix that builds on a community’s strengths and resources

5. Demand driven tourism – effective tourism marketing focuses on the buyer and not the seller. The question is “what does the tourist want?” not “what does the community have to offer?”
   Reasons for this:
   a. Tourism is discretionary
   b. Preferences of tourists rule
   c. Competition for tourists is strong

6. Five basic questions to consider in tourism
   • Will tourism provide value to the tourist?
   • Will tourism provide value to the community?
   • Will it have a competitive advantage?
   • What is the size of the potential market?
   • How does tourism fit into the overall development of the community?

7. Is tourism a satisfying exchange relationship?
   a. Is it voluntary?
   b. Is it of value to both buyer and seller?
   c. Do the benefits out weight the costs for both?
   d. In the value exchange tourists offer money, time and opportunity to buy, the community offers experiences, goods, services and products.

8. Understanding the tourism industry distribution system
   a. There are several different levels or tiers of buyers and sellers
      • At the top are operators who sell inbound tours wholesale to tour operators
      • Tour operators who sell tours to travel agents
• Preformed groups
• Individual consumers

b. Direct marketing is selling your service direct to individual consumers or preformed groups
c. Indirect marketing is selling your service through a distributor

9. A functioning tourism system includes:
   a. Demand – people with the interest and ability to travel
   b. Supply
      • Information and promotion
      • Transportation to community
      • Attractions
      • Products and services

10. Message – brainstorm the message you want to use in marketing campaigns
    a. Who is your audience?
    b. What are their triggers?
    c. What are their barriers?
    d. How do you satisfy their demand?
    e. Is it within your capacities?
    f. Use strong positive words
    g. Be short and concise
    h. Be sensitive
    i. Test your message

11. Marketing Truths
    a. Marketing is an essential community development tool
    b. Effective marketing programs can improve the economies and quality of life in small communities
    c. Sharing marketing ideas and experiences with other communities can improve everyone’s marketing capabilities
    d. Developing written marketing plans improves marketing effectiveness
    e. Marketing is fun and rewarding

12. National Trust for Historic Preservation five principles
    a. Collaborate
    b. Find the fit
    c. Make sites and programs come alive
    d. Focus on quality and authenticity
    e. Preserve and protect

II. Research

1. Research involves getting answers to the following questions
   a. What features of your area are most attractive to visitors?
   b. What are the demographic characteristics of people who visit your area?
   c. What impacts (income, employment, taxes, social, and support structures) does tourism have on your community?
   d. What methods of promotion are most effective to attracting new visitors?
   e. Are tourists satisfied with experiences in your community?
f. What kinds of private and public support facilities exist in the community/
g. What is the community already doing for tourism development?
h. What do members of the community want to do in the future?

2. Identification of potential target markets
   a. Target market identification – Questions to ask
      • Where do your potential visitors live?
      • What do they presently do as tourists?
      • What do they want to do?
      • How easily can they travel to your area/
      • What attractions do you have to offer?
      • What is your marketing program?
      • What are your goals and objectives?
   b. Characteristics for identifying markets
      • Geography
         a. Place of residence
         b. Traffic patterns
         c. Cost of travelling
         d. Travel time
         e. Physical and psychological effects of travel
      • Psychographics
         a. Motivations
         b. Values
         c. Interests
         d. Activities
         e. Lifestyle
      • Demographics
         a. Age
         b. Marital status
         c. Number of children
         d. Age of children
         e. Stage in life cycle
         f. Education
         g. Family income
         h. Occupation
         i. Disabilities and health considerations

3. Evaluating market potential - variables
   a. Closeness to major population centers
   b. Availability and quality of roads and other transportation means
   c. Number of people travelling to your area
   d. Attractions you have or develop
   e. Facilities that support your attractions
   f. Type of visitor you seek
   g. Promotional methods you use
   h. Price and other costs the visitors must pay
   i. Your competition
j. Planning for further development

4. Matching your attractions with target markets
   a. Consideration of your attractions
   b. Analysis of the image of your area as a whole
   c. Evaluation of the target market
   d. Match attractions and target markets

5. Estimating demand and usage
   a. Can your facilities and attractions handle the demand and will it be profitable?

6. Measuring visitor expenditures and impact
   a. Surveys
   b. Multipliers
   c. Step by step process
      • Collect data on the volume and pattern of tourist spending
      • Estimate percentage of sales that stay in the area
      • Determine percentage of tourist expenditures that directly increase local income
      • Estimate the percentage of local income people spend in your community
      • Estimate percentage of local goods and services sold locally that are produced locally

7. Determining visitor attitudes
   a. Do they like your area or not?
   b. Do they prefer your area to another travel destination?
   c. How do they rate the different features of your area?
   d. What are their expectations?
   e. How do they rate their experiences?
   f. What do their friends think?
   g. How does media affect their perceptions?
   h. What do they think are the strengths and weaknesses of your area?
   i. What are their attitudes about your area as a whole

8. Describing your market
   a. Who are your prospects - Directories and manuals provided by national tourism associations – Travel industry Association, national tour association, American Bus Association, US Tour Operators Association, American Society of Travel Agents,
   b. Once identified, analyze and see who is the best “fit” for you
   c. Determine how best to reach them.

9. Rating your products and services – use the following factors to help you rate your attractions. Give each of them a rating or grade on whatever rating scale fits your needs.
   a. What is the product, service or attraction?
   b. Does it meet community needs in attracting visitors?
   c. Is it true to your community and maintain the integrity of who your community is?
d. Is it differentiated and unique?
  e. Is it of high quality?
  f. Will it attract the type of visitors you want?

10. Looking at potential target markets - look at your target markets, their segments, how many people are involved and any special characteristics they might have and ask the following questions about them. These will provide insights into the needs and motivations of the target markets and segments. You can use these to tailor marketing programs for each segment.
   a. What will they buy?
   b. Why will they buy these services or products?
   c. Who is the decision maker?
   d. How do they buy?

11. Support for your projects – Determine who will support and help fund your projects. The following questions can help determine who might help fund your projects.
   a. What type of projects will they support?
   b. Why will they support these projects?
   c. Who determines what projects they will support?
   d. How do they select projects to fund?

12. Determining the differential advantage
   a. Your competitive edge is a composite of many factors that make your town unique
   b. Each community is unique and what works for one might not work for another
   c. A marketing program must identify and capitalize on your community’s unique features
   d. You need to step back and see your community with “new eyes” and solicit input on your uniqueness from a variety of sources – residents, newcomers, visitors, nearby communities, etc.
   e. Test your assumptions about your uniqueness with visitors and customers.
   f. The uniqueness may be the result of many little things rather than one or two big things.
   g. Be specific and realistic in determining your differential advantage
   h. Brainstorm with community members and use visitor surveys to help determine what is unique about your community that will attract visitors.
   i. Develop your list of what makes your community unique, how it is different from other communities, and how this can be used to attract visitors and build your local economy.

13. A sample visitor questionnaire to determine community uniqueness might include the following questions
   a. Where are you from?
   b. What brought you to town?
   c. Is this the destination of your trip or a stop along the way?
   d. Are you here on business or pleasure?
14. Conducting basic market research
   a. Getting to know a market segment
      • Values and beliefs – impressions, feelings, beliefs and perceptions of your community by your target market
      • Arts participation and attendance at cultural events
      • Leisure activity preferences
      • Media habits – where they get their information
   b. Feedback on your programs, attractions and activities
      • Inclination to do it again
      • Suggested improvements on what you do and offer
      • Opinions about the prices you charge
      • Response to your promotion and marketing campaigns
      • Opinions about your place
      • Feedback on your ongoing activities
      • Why did you participate in our activities?
      • What did you get out of your participation?
      • What where your positive and negative experiences?

15. Look at the size of your target market
   a. How much do they travel?
   b. What are their average incomes?
   c. What are their tastes and preferences
   d. How many in your potential market?
   e. Is the size large enough to have a critical mass to attract?
   f. Will the target market provide enough return on investment?

III. Developing a marketing plan – A marketing plan is a key to success. Develop two plans—one for customers and one for the resources you need.
1. Steps in planning
   a. Develop the vision or dreams for your plan
   b. Set your marketing specific goals and objectives
   c. Conduct a situational analysis
      • Strength and weaknesses of your marketing organization
      • What resources are available
      • Potential customers and their wants and needs
      • Competitors for your customers
      • Overall community dreams, goals and needs
   d. Define and analyze potential target markets
      • Geographic
      • Demographic
      • Psychographic
• Business segments
  e. Develop your marketing mix for each of your segments
  f. Strategies to gain community support
  g. Action plan with dates and tasks
  h. Resource plan
  i. Evaluation and reporting mechanisms to keep all informed of results

2. Components of a promotional plan
   a. Forecast expected revenues to support your efforts
   b. Set and clearly define specific target markets to be cultivated
   c. Determine motivational factors that will attract your target market to your community
   d. Develop promotional goals
   e. Develop the overall campaign theme or creative strategy for your promotional campaign
   f. Develop a media strategy
   g. Compose and create specific advertising and promotional materials
   h. Test the effectiveness of your efforts
   i. Evaluate and revise

The marketing plan is your guide for your marketing efforts, campaigns and promotions. It should be developed from your research, use your resources wisely, and put forth the best components of your community. It should be based on your community’s differential advantage.

IV. Marketing Techniques

1. Advertising - paid ads in newspapers, radio, magazines, billboards, internet, etc.
   a. Sells the benefits to the buyer
   b. Identifies the buyers hot buttons
   c. Uses all mediums to their best advantage
   d. AIDA formula –
      • Attention – capture the attention of the buyer
      • Interest – Hold their interest
      • Desire – Inspire the buyer to want your product
      • Action – Action – produce buyers
   e. Print advertising
   f. Radio advertising
   g. Television advertising
   h. Media sponsorship
   i. Movie theater advertising
   j. Internet advertising
   k. Playbill advertising

2. Promotions – Revenue generating or publicity
   a. Promotional gimmicks
   b. Cooperative promotions – local, regional, statewide
   c. Giveaways
   d. Sweepstakes
   e. Events
f. Use a mix of promotions
g. Souvenirs

3. Media
   a. Newspapers
   b. Television
   c. Radio
   d. Magazines
   e. Billboards / Outdoor advertising
   f. Internet – U tube/ videos
   g. Public service announcements
   h. Website profile
   i. Calendar listings
   j. Interview show
   k. Press packets
   l. Press conference
   m. Regular columns
   n. Feature Articles
   o. Newsletters
   p. Media alerts
   q. Have a media strategy

4. Exhibits and Trade Shows
   a. Conventions
   b. Marketplaces

5. Tours
   a. FAM tours
   b. Packaged tours
   c. Group tours
   d. Tour packaging

6. Direct Contacts
   a. Direct mail
   b. Direct selling – phone solicitation, emails,
   c. Inquiries
   d. Word of Mouth
   e. Telemarketing
   f. Sales calls
   g. E marketing
   h. Cards
   i. Travel missions

7. Printed materials
   a. Brochures
   b. Rack cards
   c. Displays
   d. Flyers
   e. Banners
f. Handouts
g. Posters
h. Community brochure

8. Signage
   a. Design
   b. Placement
   c. Business signs
   d. Attraction signs
   e. Historical signs
   f. Street and directional signs

9. Public Relations
   a. Media coverage
   b. Contests – photography, design, school kids
   c. Focus groups

10. Top 10 Tricks of the Trade
   a. Subscribe to target market publications and read them
   b. Consider timing of your news and events
   c. Avoid sending releases on Mondays or Fridays
   d. Try to include effective images
   e. Take the media out for lunch
   f. Proof all your materials
   g. Build in local angles for holidays and other important days
   h. The media loves celebrities
   i. Save copies of everything you do
   j. Recycle your efforts

11. Ten tips for effective advertising and promotion
   a. Use prominent headlines
   b. Use a dominant element
   c. Let white space work for you
   d. Create a simple layout
   e. Make your ads easily recognizable
   f. Make your copy complete
   g. Be creative
   h. Urge readers to act now
   i. State price or price ranges
   j. Include related items

V. Evaluating tourism development and marketing
   1. Key questions overall development
      a. Does what you do provide value to the visitor?
      b. Is there more potential for your target group and the market?
      c. Does it provide positive return on investment to the community?
      d. Have you taken advantage of your competitive advantage?
   2. Evaluating your marketing efforts
      a. Collecting data on your efforts – key elements
- Number of visitors
- Where they are from
- Market segment information – demographics/psychographics
- Visitor motivations
- Expenditures
- Timing of visits
- Length of visits
- Image/impressions of your community

b. Marketing data
- How did they here about you? – what marketing technique
- Where did they hear about you?
- Track responses to marketing techniques
- Surveys – exit surveys; follow up to visits, etc.
  a. Transportation used to visit
  b. Attractions visited
  c. Events attended
  d. Most preferred activities or events
  e. Repeat visits
  f. Impersonal influences – market techniques
  g.
- Assess attendance at attractions
- Questionnaires at attractions
- Suggestion boxes
- Determine visitor attitudes

c. Develop an evaluation plan for your marketing and tourism efforts
- Who are your evaluation audiences?
- What do they need to know?
- How often do they need to know it?
- What formats do they need it in?
- How can evaluation help refine your tourism and marketing efforts?

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