

How to Create Your Marketing Plan

Set your goal(s): What will be different/better if you succeed? How will you know if you succeed?

- Your goal should be for a specific project or program, not your overall mission. For example:
 - Build partnerships between farms and schools
 - Increase school meal participation
 - Get buy-in for a project

Define your objective(s): How will you achieve your goals? Set objectives that are **Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-specific (SMART)**.

- Examples:
 - Assist 10 schools in buying directly from local farms between August and December, 2013
 - Increase school meal participation by 10% during the next school year
 - Get staff from every department to endorse the project in the next month

Select your target audience(s): Who can help you achieve your objectives? What does your goal mean to them? What do you want them to think, feel or do?

- What do the people in each target audience have in common? Do they live in a certain zip code or neighborhood? Do their children all attend the same school? Do they share the same job title? Do they all smoke? Do they shop at farmers markets?
- What are their beliefs and values?
- What are their motivations, needs, concerns?
- How would achieving your goal help or hinder each group in getting their needs met?
- Does everyone in your target audience have the same needs and values, or are there different segments within the group?

Create your messages: Craft 1-3 key messages that can persuade your target audience to think, feel or do something that will help you achieve your goals.

- A good message is simple, clear, and persuasive: "Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk." But unless your main goal is to build awareness, you probably don't need a catchy slogan.
- A message can be conveyed through communications (personal, written, digital) or by demonstration (actions, behavior).
- You may wish to stress different messages for different audiences, but all of your messages should be compatible.

Choose the right messenger(s): The person who delivers your message can have enormous influence on how it is received. Which individuals or types of people will be most credible to your audiences?

- You or your organization won't always be the best spokesperson to convey your messages to your target audiences.
- The best messenger may be someone in your target audience's peer group (e.g. another parent), a celebrity chef, a farmer, a sports figure, or a child.
- Decide who would have the most credibility, and enlist their help.

Choose your marketing tactics: What specific tools and activities will you use to achieve your goal? How can these tools and activities demonstrate or convey your key messages?

- Keep it simple. Choose tactics that build on and reinforce other tactics.
- Everything should help you build toward your end goal. Getting 300 Facebook Likes is great, but how will it help you achieve your goal?

Set your timeline, budget and responsibilities: Create a daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual calendar of activities. Allocate your time, money and resources to each activity. Who will

Calendar of activities

- What needs to happen first?
- What needs to happen daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually?

Budget

- How much time, money and resources will you allocate to each task?
- How will you keep track of the budget to make sure you are not overspending?

Tasks

- Who will be responsible for each task?
- What type of training or supervision will they need? Who will provide it?

- **Create measurement tools:** How will you track or record your activities and results (e.g. on paper, in a database, on video)?
 - Give everyone on your team the same tools and measurement criteria for tracking. Will you need a form or specific software?
 - How will you measure your impact? Through surveys or tests? Focus groups? Anecdotes? Specific behavior changes? Decide what you will do before you implement your plan.

Implement your plan: Carry out your planned activities. Record your activities and decisions as you go. Adjust your plan as needed.

Evaluate your results: Did you achieve your goals? What will you do next time? Reflect and celebrate!