

AbaF

Marketing your exhibition in Australia

What is marketing?

Dr Sharron Dickman's definition is an oldie but a goodie:

Marketing is: the analysis, planning, implementation, and control of programs designed to increase visitor awareness and use of the collections, facilities, and services in a way that will mutually benefit both the organisation and the visitor...

Probably the most salient aspect of marketing is its recognition of the importance of the consumer. It focuses on the development of sound research strategies to obtain information about the consumer's needs and wants, and enables organisations to identify market segments which are most likely to respond to their products and services...to identify the most effective way to reach these target markets.¹

So how do you market yourself as an artist to both the arts sector and general public?

An audience-centred outlook versus a product-centred viewpoint

Basically, marketing is about two-way relationships. It is a process of building bridges and engaging audiences with your artwork.

The goal of marketing is to attract new customers, by promising superior value and to keep current customers by delivering satisfaction.

As visual artists the first hurdle is to STOP thinking about the work itself as the only point of reference – its aesthetic merits, 'cutting edge qualities', craftsmanship, relative position in the art sphere etc, not to mention monetary value. And START to think of the work from the audience's viewpoint; that is, put yourself in the audience's shoes.

This shift of focus can sometimes be challenging and raise questions such as:

- Am I selling out?
 - Who are the customers?
 - How can I call my artwork a 'product'?
- but it is critical to the execution of a great marketing campaign.

TIP:

Focus on the BENEFITS of the artwork for the audience, NOT ITS FEATURES.

Good marketing takes a strategic approach – what's the vision?

A strategy is a long term plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal or vision. Differing from a 'tactic', it is planned or premeditated for the long term.

The keys to developing a strategic approach include:

- Knowing yourself

¹

Sharron Dickman, *Arts Marketing: the Pocket Guide*, page 3.

- Knowing your destination
- Knowing your clients/audience
- Building relationships with your clients/audience
- Reaching your audience

TIP:

Think long term and plan accordingly, don't sacrifice long-term gains for short-term outcomes.

1. The starting place – Knowing yourself

Before you go on a trip, reach a destination or do anything in life, you need to know where you are starting from. It's the same for a marketing campaign:

- Who am I?
- What am I marketing?
- What is/are my product/s?

A product is anything that can be offered to a market to satisfy a need or want. People satisfy their needs and wants with a product. A product can be also a service, it does not always have to be a tangible thing. Yours might be:

- The artwork
- Services such as an artist's talk
- Products such as prints, t-shirts or postcards
- Books or catalogues about the artwork

TIP:

Don't make the mistake of paying more attention to the artworks or product attributes than to the benefits produced by it. See that what you are providing is a solution to a need or want, rather than 'selling a product'.

2. Knowing your destination

Where are you aiming to arrive? What are the objectives of your marketing campaign?

You will need to find responses to the following questions:

- How can I maximise audience attendance?
- How much artwork do I want to sell?
- Do I want to get commissions?
- Do I want to build my profile?
- Do I want to raise awareness to seek sponsorship?
- A combination of all five? And more?

Your objectives will incorporate the major goals of your business plan.

3. Knowing your clients/audience - put yourself in the shoes of your clients/audience.

Just like you have shoes in your wardrobe for different seasons and purposes, and you choose to wear them appropriately, your clients and audience is made up of different groups or 'segments'.

Targeting your audience

Marketing determines the needs and wants of target markets, rather than the 'the hard sell'.

Markets are used to describe various groupings of customers, such as:

- Demographics - age, gender, income, occupation, education, country of origin, family size, and stage in family lifecycle

- Products - artwork, books, and art consultancy services
- Geographic - if people are based in the country, city or different states.

TIP:

Understanding that the market has different segments, you will employ different methods of marketing to them, which will increase your success rate.

You want to reach new customers and retain existing customers by satisfying their needs.

Who is your target audience?

- Galleries – commercial
- Galleries – public
- Collectors
- Art lovers
- General public
- The media
- Sponsors and supporters
- A combination of all these?

TIP:

Make sure you energetically market to your existing customers – it's a common understanding that it costs 7 times more to get a new customer than to retain an existing one!

4. Building relationships with your identified clients/audience

To retain your clients/audience by satisfying their needs, wants and demands and attract new clients/audience, it's vital to build and maintain relationships with them.

This has taken on a whole new level of meaning with the influx of a wide new range of technologies which assist you as an artist to connect with your clients.

TIP:

Know your market: research and understand your customer wants, needs and demands. This provides important input for designing market strategies.²

TIP:

Capturing data is VITAL. Make sure you have a top quality, accurate and up-to-date database with all contact information and a note which tracks the customers' relationships with you/your organisation. A simple, coded Excel spreadsheet that can be easily sorted and filtered is an excellent start.

5. Promotion - How are you going to reach your audience?

The 'marketing mix' is a set of marketing tools that work together in the marketplace. Sometimes called the 5P's, it is a blend of marketing variables that help to identify interdependent factors that contribute to the creation of marketing strategies. The 5P's are the Product, Price, Place, Promotion and People.

² Su Hodge and Janet Millar, *Getting Art There: An Artist's Marketing Manual*, National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA), NSW, 2002, pp 15-24

One key element of this mix is *Promotion* - you want to raise awareness about your product, shape attitudes, generate interest, stimulate desire, provide a call to action and 'close the sale'.

On a limited budget, key promotional strategies include:

- a. Invest in good images: essential
- b. Have a website
- c. Email newsletter/campaign
- d. Marketing collateral – invitations, fliers, posters etc
- e. Publicity campaign

a. Invest in good images: a picture tells a thousand words

Your whole campaign will need images – If you can only afford to do one thing invest in photography!

Chose images to represent your work with good strong colour contrast if possible.

- Size – have them in a range of sizes from small files with low resolution (72dpi) for emailing, to large files with high resolution (300dpi) for reproduction in magazines
- Ensure they are properly captioned
- Have up-to-date images of your work, images of you with your work, images of you working in the studio

TIP:

Curators utilise images differently to marketers and images for printed flyers are different from images used by media outlets. Do some research in the arts pages of newspapers and see how artists and their work are presented; make a note of the differences.

b. Websites

A website is a virtual presence enabling access to your art and presenting a public face. A high majority of all arts attendees are internet users.

Advantages of websites:

- Constant access – user can access from anywhere, anytime
- Easily to update with the latest information
- Enables an easy two-way communication point between the artist and the audience
- It can serve as an alternative 'non gallery' artspace
- Enables a direct sales facility to customers to buy your work.
- A promotional facility that can present further background information and image downloads for clients, curators and journalists.

A successful website:

- Gets the correct message/s across
- Easy to navigate
- Good usability and accessibility
- Quick to download (homepage needs to be quick)
- Quality UP TO DATE content
- CONTENT IS KING

c. E-marketing program

An e-marketing program is an effective link to the outside world, can be cost-effective and integrate well with the overall marketing promotional campaign. Not without its challenges, such as a high rate of people changing their email addresses each year, privacy requirements, permission to

communicate with the recipient, information overload and spam, an e-marketing campaign needs to be carefully researched and planned to ensure it hits the mark.

With benefits such as speed, cost-effectiveness and interactivity, an e-marketing plan needs to define the type of communications, their frequency, type of data required, the interrelationship with other marketing strategies and measurement of effectiveness.

Forms of e-communications include:

- E-newsletter
- E-flyer
- Reminder for exhibition opening or launch
- E-survey, competition etc.
- SMS

Defining the communications:

- How frequently will it be disseminated?
- What is the timing?
- Format? (HTML or plain text?)
- What is the editorial policy?³

d. Online and printed information is digested differently

How we communicate online and process information is different from print. Electronic copy for websites and e-marketing materials needs to be legible and efficient – people only read 15% of web screen content, they 'scan'.

CRABS – a great acronym for the production of online copy (web and email).

- Chunky – small, digestible paragraphs with the main information in the first sentence
- Relevant
- Accurate and up-to-date
- Brevity – concise
- Scannable⁴

Increasingly, user-driven content is being generated in the virtual realm and is the natural fit for an artist or arts organisation, such as blogs, My Space, YouTube and Facebook. The outlets are increasing rapidly.

Ready access to broadband facilities, particularly at faster speeds, and the ubiquitous user creation of copy, digital images and video material has resulted in an explosion of social networking tools. People love to express themselves like never before.

This is an ideal opportunity for you as an artist to engage with your audience.⁵

³ Vicki Allpress-Hill, *Effective E-Marketing*, New Zealand, May 2007, download from www.fuel4arts.com Effective e-marketing

⁴ http://www.fuel4arts.com/files/attach/NZ_eMarketing_VAllpress_May2007FINAL.T.pdf

⁵ <http://www.fuel4arts.com/sauce/>

So you think you need a website?

http://www.regionalartsnsw.com.au/docs/artreach/06_dec_think_you_need_a_website.pdf

e. Publicity campaign

Publicity is the securing of editorial coverage through a persuasive campaign to influence the uptake of story ideas which result in coverage – preview stories, reviews, what's on information. Publicity is a fundamental part of the promotional element of the marketing mix.

A loose (but very workable) distinction between marketing and publicity:

- Marketing – get the promotion that you **pay for**, you control the message
- Editorial coverage – editorial promotion that you get for **free**

Good publicity, like all effective marketing practices has a customer orientated philosophy. In this instance, your 'customers' are the media – know what, when, how they want it.

TIP:

Working with the media is a combination of creative stories, brilliant strategy, context and timing – get this mix right!

Devise story types and angles:

- Do your research – read and listen to the media, identify where you would like to be featured.
- Have creative ideas for stories that communicate the right message and long-term vision of organisation.
- Competing outlets want different angles.
- Then match your story angles to the most appropriate media outlets

A good story is:

- Relevant
- Topical
- Gets the right message across
- Has a good picture opportunity

Examples of story types:

- A profile of an artist and their work (most popular story type)
- A critical exposition of trends in Australian contemporary visual arts practice
- An opinion piece or commentary by the curator involved
- The business of visual arts production promotion – value of works etc
- Photo-essays
- 24 Hours in the Life of...
- A diary that records the creation of a project
- An artist that's a good cook, gardener etc
- 'At home with...'
- What's new?

Plus:

- Reviews and What's On listings.

The Media Release is an important part of the publicity campaign and has a particular format:

- On letterhead with MEDIA RELEASE in large, bold letters.
- At the top it has the date and with immediate release or under embargo (with date and time).
- Catchy headline captures the reader's attention.
- 4 W's – what, when, where, who – in the first paragraph.
- Quote from a spokesperson (eg Gallerist) and/or the artist.
- Ensure all information of the event is included: price, availability, address, website etc.
- Use direct, non-jargonistic language.
- Make sure there is contact information for media at the bottom of the page.

- Clear layout and formatting – short (one page), large margins, can include backgrounders in subsequent pages – artists bio, supplementary information
- Get it triple-proofed.
- State what the picture opportunities are.

Sending out the media kit (media release with backgrounders):

- Most journalists prefer to receive media releases by email – but don't send huge file attachments (it's very annoying and some media outlets have firewalls). It's efficient to post a PDF of the media kit onto a website with the hyperlink in the body of an email. Also paste the media release into the body of the same email.
- Include all news wire services - AAP, Reuters etc – in your email list.
- Selectively follow-up with an email and/or phone call – not to badger, but politely check the journalist has received the material.

Timing

- Glossy magazines: four - six months prior for an article
- Weekly magazines: four - six weeks prior for an article
- Newspapers: national and metro dailies, Sunday papers: at least three weeks prior
- Local newspapers: find out which day is deadline date and contact two weeks before your event
- Radio: more immediate – two weeks to the day before, depending on the 'newsworthiness' of the story

Collating media clippings is essential, as they become testimonials for further marketing, development and grant acquittals. They are used for:

- Information packs to agents, galleries, presenters and other potential buyers of your work.
- Sponsorship proposals
- Quotes to use in brochures

Advertising

Advertising tends to be expensive, with a varying success rate of 'cut through' but no Marketing Fact Sheet would be complete without mentioning it!

Three types of advertising:

- Display – all types of print advertising, newspapers, journals, leaflets, posters, tourist publications
- Broadcast – radio, television, film, video and movie advertising.
- SMS and Online – website, email

Display advertising

- Advantage is that it can be long lasting – publications have a shelf life
- Reach very specific markets – eg Asian/ Australian art exhibition use Asian media outlets in addition to mainstream
- Very extensive range of publications – niche and mainstream

Broadcast media

- Very popular
- Has a big impact
- Can create a high level of interest and excitement
- Disadvantage is that it is impermanent – if the radio or TV not turned on the ad is missed.

Considerations for an advertising campaign include:

- What's the message?
- Budget for both production and placement costs

- Measurability

There are many other marketing strategies employed to reach arts audiences and these include:

- Merchandising
- Sponsorship and fundraising
- Creating events
- Joint ventures and Relationship marketing
- Create new product features
- International touring
- Tourism based activities
- Competitions
- Identifying new market segments
- Special membership groups – friends etc
- Educational activities
- Art in other locations
- Onsite promotions

Resources and further reading

- Julie Aldridge, *AMA Benchmarking: A report on the effectiveness of arts organisations' e marketing activity*, Arts Marketing Association, United Kingdom, October, 2003. This can be downloaded from:
 - <http://www.a-m-a.org.uk/images/downloads/Benchmarkingreport.pdf>
- Arts Marketing Association - *Message in a Bottle: The art and science of communication*, AMA Conference Report, 16-18 July 2003. Poole's Centre for the Arts and Lighthouse, UK - www.a-m-a.org.uk/message_home.asp
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- Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point*, Abacus, Great Britain, 2001
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- Su Hodge and Janet Millar, *Getting Art There: An Artist's Marketing Manual*, National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA), NSW, 2002
- Peter Hughes and Peter Steidl, *Marketing Strategies for Arts Organisation, 2nd edition*, Australia Council, Sydney, 1999.
- Philip Kotler, *Principles of Marketing*, Prentice Hall, NSW, 2003.
- Neil and Philip Kotler, *Museum Strategy and Marketing*, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, 1998.
- Woolcott Research Pty Ltd, Positive Solutions and Judith James Consultancy, *The Great Indoors: Developing audiences for contemporary art and craft in Australia*, 2003



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