

What is a marketing strategy?

A marketing strategy is a long-term plan of action where you'll lay out exactly how you'll be promoting your cause in the weeks, months and years ahead.

Here's what you should be thinking about:

RESEARCH

Before you do anything else, you should have a look at your environment and the things that could affect your marketing goals. In terms of the big picture, what political/world events could impact your cause? Smaller picture, think about what your competitors are doing, as well as the state of your own organisation. A really good way to summarise all of this stuff is to do a SWOT analysis:

Why should my cause have one?

Having a marketing strategy is really important, as it will give your marketing material purpose, consistency and direction. It will also let you know ahead of time where you should be allocating your resources.

S

Strengths: What can your cause offer that no one else can? What are its strong points in terms of marketing?

W

Weaknesses: What could your cause be doing better? This will let you know what you can improve on.

O

Opportunities: Maybe there's a new grant that you could be positioning your cause towards? Perhaps there are some digital innovations which might work for your organisation?

T

Threats: Is there anything on the horizon which could negatively affect your cause? Once you know this, you can prepare your strategy accordingly.

OBJECTIVES

Now that you've done your research, you can think about what you want to achieve! Recruiting a certain number of volunteers? Raising X amount of funds? Running a couple more events? Whatever your goals, always make sure that they are:

Clear – Your aims should be straightforward, so that you know exactly how to achieve them. For example, if you want to recruit a certain number of volunteers, set an exact figure so that you have a number to work towards.

Measurable – You need to see what is/isn't working. Social media is really good for this; it can give you data insights on how well your content has been performing.

Realistic – There's no point in setting unrealistic goals, so make sure that your aims are achievable!

MESSAGING

This is where you decide what you want to say with your marketing material. You need to think about who you're actually talking to and what they want to hear. For example, if you're looking to recruit parents into your PTA, would you go for:

Option A
Join the PTA!

Option B
Join our PTA to make a real and valuable difference to your child's school life!

You'd go for option B of course! That's because it's more personal and speaks to the target demographic directly.

BUDGET

CHANNEL

Be sure to plan within your means and make sure that you're allocating the right funds to the right areas. You can't go wrong with a big spreadsheet, but not everyone has access to Microsoft Office. Google Docs is a good solution to this! It's totally free of charge and you can share your spreadsheets with others in your group.

Where's the best place for you to put your marketing content? Whether it's physical or digital, each outlet has its own pros and cons. At the end of the day, you'll need to think about what works best for your cause.

PHYSICAL

Pros:

Trusted

Familiar

Local

Cons:

Not measurable

Expensive

Not instantly conversational

DIGITAL

Pros:

Measurable

Cost effective

Popular

Cons:

Lots of competition

Trolls

Public feedback

After your marketing strategy has run its course, you can assess your results! Think about what you did well and what you could do better next time around. Then it's on to the next one!