MODULE 15: MARKETING AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Step One: Creating Your Inclusiveness Committee

Step Two: Training and Consultants

Step Three: Definitions and Case Statement

Step Four: Gathering and Analyzing Information

Step Five: Creating Your Inclusiveness Blueprint

Step Six: Implementation

Overview of Content

In this module, you will:

- Learn about what it means to have an inclusive community relations and marketing strategy.

- Articulate the benefits of creating a more inclusive community relations and marketing strategy.

- Analyze the data from the information-gathering process that pertain to community relations and marketing.

- Review a series of concrete suggestions for developing a more inclusive community relations and marketing strategy.

- Establish goals and objectives for developing more inclusive marketing and community relations strategies that will be integrated into the inclusiveness blueprint.

This module should be completed by any organization that has decided to work to improve its **marketing and community relations** strategies in relation to inclusiveness. If you haven't prioritized this area as a part of your inclusiveness initiative, then skip to *Module 16: Fundraising and Membership.*

Who to Involve

The work in this module will be completed by the Inclusiveness Committee as a whole or a subset of the committee that would include members who have particular expertise about or responsibility for marketing and community relations. It involves reading text, attending meetings, and completing exercises.

Exercises to Complete

- *Exercise 15-A: Benefits of Inclusive Community Relations and Marketing Efforts*
- *Exercise 15-B: Analyzing Information*
- *Exercise 15-C: Understanding Your Audiences*
- *Exercise 15-D: Developing an Action Plan for Marketing and Community Relations*
- *End-of-Module Checklist*

Step Five: Creating Your Inclusiveness Blueprint

MODULE 15: MARKETING AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Why Marketing to Diverse Communities Matters

Marketing and *Community Relations* are the processes that an organization uses to connect with its various constituents such as clients, volunteers, donors, community partners, and peers.

- The American Marketing Association defines marketing as "creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers and managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders."[1]

- Community relations are your interactions with the community in which your organization operates. Community relations emphasize fostering trust through interactions.[2]

Marketing and community relations strategies, such as publications, web sites, events, and media relations, influence attitudes and encourage people to take certain actions.

For example, you may want to encourage prospective donors to give to your organization or encourage potential clients to access your services. Marketing efforts are most effective in motivating these actions when you develop them with the interests and needs of prospective audiences in mind.

Inclusive organizations understand that marketing and community relations efforts which build and foster connections with diverse communities result in greater success in achieving the organization's goals. As your organization becomes more inclusive, you will need to spend time creating intentional methods for communicating with new and expanded audiences and tailor your activities to match the needs of these audiences.

Corporations have long understood the power of marketing directly to communities of color. Fortune 500 companies such as Kodak, IBM, and Microsoft have divisions dedicated to such efforts.

In 1997, Continental Airlines launched a "Latinization Initiative" to increase the company's attention to language and culture in Latin markets. They conducted market research regarding how their customers in the U.S. and abroad respond to different styles of customer service, and learned that customers prefer to receive culturally appropriate services. Since Continental began the Initiative, its revenues have increased ten-fold.[3]

"We need every human gift and cannot afford to neglect any gift because of artificial barriers of sex or race or class or national origin."

- Margaret Mead

Many nonprofit organizations have also found that it is critical to develop marketing efforts that understand the needs of specific audiences.

The American Zoo Association (AZA), through its Diversity Special Committee, has developed numerous strategies for reaching out to increasingly diverse audiences. Strategies include training programs on communications and cultural differences, multilingual brochures and signage, and partnerships with multicultural media sources. The AZA believes that these efforts are critical to building relationships with the zoo visitors and supporters of the future.[4]

Complete *Exercise 15-A: Benefits of Inclusive Community Relations and Marketing Efforts.*

Note for Organizations Interested in Addressing Other Diverse Communities
The reasons you identify for expanding your marketing and community relations efforts to be more inclusive of people of color can easily apply to multiple identity groups. For example, developing strong relationships with representatives from other diverse populations can help you expand your sphere of influence. These strong relationships can then help you to accomplish your program and fundraising goals more effectively.

As in any marketing process, researching your audiences is the first step. Look for information that describes how you currently reach out to communities of color and identifies potential areas for improvement.

Complete *Exercise 15-B: Analyzing Information.*

Outreach to Diverse Communities

We indentified five steps to developing and expanding your outreach activities. These steps are similar to those involved in most marketing plans.

1. Establishing goals.
2. Identifying and understanding target audiences.
3. Developing specific strategies for achieving goals.
4. Defining objectives.
5. Evaluating success and soliciting feedback.

1. Establishing Goals

It is important that you decide what you want to accomplish through your outreach to diverse communities. If you have not had much interaction to date with the communities you wish to target, it will take

time to figure out the right balance of activities with which to foster trust and build relationships. It may take several years of consistent, frequent, and visible outreach to achieve the results you seek.[5]

Thus, it is important to set both long-term and short-term goals for your marketing and community relations activities.

For example, a long-term goal might be "creating a strong donor base in the Asian community." While this is a valid goal and may be achievable, your organization may become discouraged as it invests time and effort into activities that can only achieve results over a period of years. A related short-term goal might be, "establish relationships with key leaders in the Asian community who will support the organization and help with outreach." These relationships, which you may be able to develop in a shorter period of time, can then help you build toward a more comprehensive connection with the broader community in years to come.

Once you have identified your organization's goals, you will target specific audiences to help you achieve those goals.

2. Understanding your Audiences

The most important step in developing diverse marketing and community relations strategies is to understand your audiences. Audiences are those groups and/or individuals that you hope to reach and communicate with through your marketing and community relations efforts. Match your outreach activities as closely as possible with your audiences' interests and ability to hear your message.

Avoid taking shortcuts in the process of understanding your audiences. You may believe at the outset that a behavior is common to all members of a particular group, only to find that many members of the community don't embrace that behavior at all. While your research during the information-gathering phase of this workbook gave you some good information to start with, each racial/ethnic community has a complex character, as diverse as the individuals within it.

For example, the Latino community may share some broad traits and behaviors, but the difference between the culture of a person from Mexico and a person from the Dominican Republic can be significant. Likewise, each individual will have a different extent to which his/her culture influences their behavior.

Another dramatic set of differences within communities of color relates to how long an individual and his or her family has been in the United States. Even when two people are from the same country of origin, a new immigrant will likely have behaviors and traits very different from a third-generation resident of the United States.

Because of the diversity within communities, define your audience as specifically as possible.

> **For example,** "the African-American community in Denver" is tremendously diverse in terms of interests, class, and background. You may want to define your target audience as "members of the Denver African-American community who attend cultural events."

Spending the time to choose and define these targeted communities carefully can save you considerable effort in your outreach activities.

You also will decide how much time and effort you can invest in learning more about these specific audiences. Using your existing research, identify any key sub-groups that you may want to investigate and build this into your plan. You may also consider putting together a marketing and community relations committee, comprised in part of members of your target audiences, to help you gather information.

Important information to know for each audience when developing marketing strategies includes the following:

- What motivates this audience to take action?
- Whom do they trust as suppliers of information?
- Where do they get information? (church, media, community, etc.)
- How do they get information? (word of mouth, printed materials, etc.)
- What languages do audience members speak?
- What types of media do they use and trust? (newspaper, radio, etc.)
- Are there images, icons, or messages that either connect with or offend this audience?
- How does this audience currently connect with your mission?
- Are there key opinion leaders within this audience who would be willing to speak on your behalf?

Once you have answered these questions and developed a profile of your target audiences, you are ready to develop strategies to reach them.

Complete *Exercise 15-C: Understanding Your Audiences.*

3. Developing Strategies

Tailor marketing and community relations strategies to the needs of your audiences as you have come to understand them. As you gathered information about practices in your field (see *Module 5*) and worked

through the process of understanding your audiences (above), you may have identified strategies used by others that you can adapt for your organization. Note which of these strategies match with your goals and target audiences.

> **For example,** you may be targeting members of the Latino community who are involved with human rights issues, and you may have learned that many local members of this audience commonly share information through their churches. Your strategy could be to make a connection with church leaders and find out how to connect with their parishioners.

Some potential strategies for reaching out to various communities include the following:

- Target ethnic news and media outlets and journals for advertising, and tailor your advertising to the interests and cultural views of readers, viewers, or listeners.
- Include these outlets in media relations activities such as dissemination of news releases about your activities.
- Create leaflets and flyers specifically tailored to diverse communities.
- Use community outlets to distribute materials (churches, libraries, community centers).
- Produce materials in appropriate languages.
- Hire marketing or communications professionals who have specific expertise in reaching your target audiences.
- Create materials that tell stories about members of the target audience who have already connected with your organization.
- Hold outreach meetings in locations that are convenient and comfortable for your target audience.
- Develop public affairs content for radio, television, and newspapers that reach your target audiences.
- Recruit and train spokespeople who are members of the target audience to represent your organization. [6,7]

Now that you have identified your goals, target audiences, and the strategies you will use, you have the information you need to define specific objectives for your activities.

4. Defining Objectives

Your objectives help you define success. The best marketing objective is measurable and can be tracked back to the strategy that led to achieving the objective.

However, you will not be able to connect most objectives directly with one specific activity. An objective may be accomplished because of several strategies within your marketing plan, as well as to other outside factors you don't take into account.

> **For example,** with the following objective: "a 10 percent increase in the number of event attendees from the African-American community," your strategies may have been:
>
> - Advertising in community newspapers.
> - Public service announcements on the local radio station.
> - Development of event elements that appeal to African-American communities.

Any or all of these strategies could have resulted in reaching this objective. However, it is also possible that a popular member of the community was honored during the event, and without that element, your other strategies would have been unsuccessful. This is why evaluation and feedback are so important.

5. Evaluating Success and Soliciting Feedback

It is important that you build methods for evaluating the success of your strategies into any marketing and community relations plan, but it is especially important when you are reaching out to new audiences. There are a number of ways that you can accomplish such evaluation, but the important element is that you create *feedback loops* that give you honest information about how your audiences are responding to your activities.

Some examples of how to identify whether or not your strategies are achieving their goals include the following:

- Build a dedicated web page with its own URL for a specific outreach strategy and track visits to that web page.
- Use web-based surveys conducted via e-mail.
- Provide a postcard response device asking for feedback in printed materials.
- Conduct random phone surveys of audience members, tailored to their needs and to the concerns of your organization.
- Have board members make "thank you" calls to the members of a specific audience, using a script of questions that ask for feedback.
- Find two or three key contacts in the target audience whom you can trust to give you clear and accurate feedback.

- Conduct a focus group, either formal or informal, with representatives of your target audience. (See *Module 6* for a discussion of focus groups.) If you are concerned about receiving accurate information, ask a neutral outside facilitator to conduct the focus group.

- Develop a leadership council with members of one or more target audiences and ask them to serve as your "eyes and ears" in the community.

- Ask program staff who are working in these communities to solicit feedback as appropriate.

It is **essential** that you create a rich feedback process to evaluate your marketing and community relations activities, and that you do not rely on feedback from only one individual, or from people who are not members of the target audience. Such limited evaluation of your activities can lead you to make decisions that don't reflect the reality of your target audience's perceptions.

Complete *Exercise 15-D: Developing an Action Plan for Marketing and Community Relations.*

Track your progress in completing Module 15 on the *End-of-Module Checklist*, located after the exercises.

[1] American Marketing Association, www.marketingpower.com.
[2] American Marketing Association, www.marketingpower.com., retrieved 11/09/04
[3] "Continental Takes off with its Latinization Initiative," *Diversity in Business,* http://www.diversityinbusiness.com/dib2004/dib20410/Av_CA_PGarcia.htm; Website of Diversity in Business, retrieved 11/11/04.
[4] 2004 Diversity Trends Report, American Zoo Association, http://www.aza.org/AboutAZA/Diversity/Documents/DiversityTrendsReport.pdf.
[5] *Engaging Diverse Communities For and Through Philanthropy,* New Ventures in Philanthropy, 2003, pg. 17.
[6] Ibid, pg. 25.
[7] Wittstock, Laura Waterman and Theatrice Williams. *Changing Communities, Changing Foundations: The Story of Diversity Efforts of Twenty Community Foundations.* Minneapolis: Rainbow Research, Inc. 1998.

EXERCISE 15-A

Benefits of Inclusive Marketing and Community Relations Efforts

Instructions:

Write down all of the benefits that you can think of for having more inclusive community relations and marketing efforts.

- *Before you begin, revisit* Module 4: Making the Case for Inclusiveness, Exercise 4-B: Visualizing Greater Inclusiveness *for a reminder of some of your initial reflections on this matter.*
- *In addition to the points discussed in the module, think about benefits that might be specific to your particular organization.*

_____

_____

_____

_____

Date Exercise Completed _____

EXERCISE 15-B

Analyzing Information

Instructions:
Refer to Module 7: Information Gathering, Part 3: Compiling Results
- *Exercise 7-C: Available Facts: Compiling Other Information*
- *Exercise 7-G: Stakeholder Perspectives Compiling Likert Scale Responses*
- *Exercise 7-H: Stakeholder Perspectives Compiling Narrative Responses*

Select and review the information that pertains to mission and organizational values.

Answer the questions below.

Available Facts

Are there any ways in which your organization's community relations and marketing activities <u>already reach out to diverse communities</u>? How are those current efforts successful? How can they be improved?

_____

_____

_____

Are there any ways in which your organization's community relations and marketing activities are <u>more or less inclusive than those of other organizations in your field</u>?

_____

_____

_____

Are there any <u>best practices</u> from the field regarding community relations and marketing that you can put to work in your organization?

_____

_____

_____

Can you identify any <u>trends</u> in community relations and marketing that are relevant to your inclusiveness initiative?

_____

_____

_____

Did you notice <u>anything else</u> regarding your community relations and marketing activities in the results of the existing data scan?

_____

_____

_____

Stakeholder Perspectives

Are there any salient <u>themes</u> regarding your organization's community relations and marketing that were identified by a majority of your stakeholders?

Is your organization perceived by different stakeholder groups to be welcoming of people of color?

Do stakeholders believe that the organization currently has success in marketing to communities of color?

Are there any stories or <u>strongly held beliefs</u> regarding your organization and its community relations activities that were identified by stakeholders?

_____

_____

_____

Are there any significant <u>inconsistencies</u> in perspectives among groups of stakeholders regarding your organization's marketing activities?

_____

_____

_____

Can you identify any <u>trends</u> regarding your organization's community outreach based on the perspectives of your stakeholders?

_____

_____

_____

Did you notice <u>anything else</u> regarding stakeholder perspectives in relation to marketing and community relations?

_____

_____

_____

Is there any additional information related to marketing and community relations that currently isn't available that you would like to collect in the future?
_____ yes   _____ no

    If YES, what information would be helpful?

_____

_____

_____

Date Exercise Completed _____

EXERCISE 15-C

Understanding Your Audiences

Instructions:
Select an audience: _____
Answer the following questions related to that audience. You may find that you need to do some research to fully respond to these questions.

What motivates your audience to take action?

_____

_____

_____

Whom do they trust as suppliers of information?

_____

_____

_____

Where do they get information? (church, media, community, etc.)

_____

_____

_____

How do they get information? (word of mouth, printed materials, etc.)

What languages do audience members speak?

What types of media do they use and trust? (newspaper, radio, etc.)

Are there images, icons, or messages that either connect with or offend with this audience?

How does your audience currently connect with your mission?

_____

_____

_____

Are there key opinion leaders within your audience who would be willing to speak on your behalf?

_____

_____

_____

Date Exercise Completed _____

EXERCISE 15-D

Developing an Action Plan for Marketing and Community Relations

Instructions:

Complete the table based on your organization's goals.

Goals	Audiences	Strategies	Objectives	Feedback
Example: *Expand event attendance from members of the Latino community*	*Members of the Latino community who connect with the mission of our organization*	• *Advertise in community newspapers* • *Design bilingual invitations* • *Create a leadership group of members of the community*	*Ten percent increase in Latino attendance by end of next year*	• *Tracking of inquiries by ticket sales staff* • *Twenty random phone calls from members asking about reasons for event attendance and response to event*

Date Exercise Completed _____

Goals	Audiences	Strategies	Objectives	Feedback

END-OF-MODULE CHECKLIST

Module 15

Action Item	Date Completed	Notes
Review content on developing more inclusive community relations and marketing.		
Analyze the information gathered about community relations and marketing.		
Analyze your audiences.		
Develop an action plan to accomplish goals and objectives.		
Share the outcomes from your work with other key stakeholders.		
Recognize your progress to date and communicate it to appropriate stakeholders.		