



Developing marketing Strategies

Promoting your courses

Those unfamiliar with marketing often assume it is the same thing as advertising. Marketing encompasses many tasks and decisions, of which advertising may only be a small portion. Additionally, when you hear someone talk about "promotion" you may believe the person is talking about advertising. While advertising is the most visible and best understood method of promotion, it is only one of several approaches you can choose to promote your products and services. Many view promotional activities as the most glamorous part of marketing. This may have to do with the fact that promotion is often associated with creative activity, but while creativity is an important element, you must also have a deep understanding of how the marketing process works and how promotion helps your organisation achieve its objectives

WHAT IS PROMOTION?

Promotion is a form of communication that uses various methods to reach a targeted audience with a certain message in order to achieve specific objectives. To reach their markets, all organisations must engage in some form of promotion, and colleges and universities are no exception.

The most obvious objective for promotional activities is to convince your customers (students and potential students) to make a decision that benefits your organisation - enrol for a course or use your services.

TYPES OF PROMOTION

The possible objectives for marketing promotions include the following:

Build Awareness – Appropriate when advertising new courses. In this situation,

you must focus promotion to effectively reach potential students, and tell them what the new courses are.

Create Interest – Moving a potential student from awareness of your organisation to enrolling in a course can present a significant challenge. Students must first recognise they would benefit before they actively start to consider a enrolling.

Provide Information – Some promotion is designed to assist students during their search. In some cases, such as when a new course is developed, the information is simply intended to explain what the course is.

Stimulate Demand – Promotion can encourage students to enrol in a course by providing a reason to do so.

Reinforce the "Brand" – Once the student has enrolled in a course, you can use promotion to build a strong relationship that can lead to the student progressing on to further courses.

KEY TO EFFECTIVE PROMOTION

The key to effective promotion is to understand how communication works.

- You should make sure the message you send is crafted in a way that will be interpreted by message receivers as intended. This means having a good understanding of your audience.
- Allow Feedback - Encouraging the potential students to provide feedback can greatly improve communication and help determine if your message was decoded and interpreted properly.
- Choose Right Audience – Targeting the right groups will go a long way to improving your ability to promote your



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organisation and courses available. Messages are much more likely to be received and appropriately decoded by those who have an interest in the content of the message.

CHARACTERISTICS OF DIFFERENT PROMOTIONS

Before discussing the different types of promotion options available, it is useful to gain an understanding of the features that set different options apart.

Intended Audience

Promotions can be categorised based on the coverage of a single promotional message. For example, a television advertisement could be seen by millions of viewers at the same time.

Unfortunately, while mass promotions are delivered to a large number of people, the actual number that fall within the target market may be small. Instead, you can turn to newer techniques designed to focus promotional delivery to only those with a high probability of being in your target market.

Interaction Type

Promotions can be personal or non-personal. One advantage personal promotions have is the ability for the sender to adjust the message as they gain feedback from receivers (i.e., two-way communication). So if a student does not understand something in the initial message (e.g., doesn't fully understand the benefits of a course) you can adjust the message to address questions or concerns.

In contrast, non-personal forms of promotion, such as a radio advertisement, are inflexible and cannot be easily adjusted to address questions that arise by the audience experiencing the ad.

Message Flow

Promotions can be classified based on whether the message source enables the message receiver to respond with immediate feedback. Most efforts at mass promotion, such as television advertising, offer only a one-way information flow that does not allow for easy response by the message receiver. However, many targeted promotions, allow message recipients to respond immediately to information from the message sender.

Cost Effectiveness

Promotional cost is measured in several different ways including how many people are exposed to a promotion in relation to the cost of the promotion, and what percentage were in the target group. Also number of phone inquiries, website traffic, clicks on advertisements can be used to measure cost effectiveness

TYPES OF PROMOTION

You have at your disposal four major methods of promotion.

Advertising – Involves non-personal, often using mass media to deliver your message. While historically advertising has involved one-way communication with little feedback opportunity, the advent of computer technology and the Internet has increased the options that allow students to provide quick feedback.

Promotion – Involves the use of special short-term techniques, often in the form of incentives, to encourage students to respond or undertake some activity.

Public Relations – Also referred to as publicity, this type of promotion uses third-party sources, and particularly the news media, to offer a favourable mention of your organisation without direct payment to the publisher of the information.

Personal "Selling" – This form of promotion involves personal contact between your



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organisation representatives and potential students.

FACTORS AFFECTING PROMOTIONS CHOICE

With four promotional methods to choose from how can you determine which ones to use? The selection can be complicated by company and marketing decision issues.

Institution Issues

- *Promotional Objective* – There are several different objectives you may pursue with your promotional strategy. Each type of promotion offers different advantages in terms of helping you reach your objectives.
- *Availability of Resources* – The amount of money and other resources that can be directed to promotion affects your choice of promotional methods.

- *Company Philosophy* – Your organisation may follow a philosophy that dictates where most promotional spending occurs.

Marketing Decision Issues

- *Target Market* – Students characteristics dictate how promotion is determined. Characteristics such as size, location and type of target markets affect how you communicate with students.
- *“Product”* – Different types of courses require different promotional approaches.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- [Learn Direct](#)
- [Marketing and advertising techniques](#)
- [Principles of Marketing](#)