Market Your Project

Marketing is important to any project because it tells your community what you are doing, why it is important for them, and its overall impact. Successful marketing can open doors to funding, working with larger groups, and expanding the project. However, it can be difficult to maintain a consistent image, message, and target while doing your work, which is why it is important to consider marketing at the beginning of your project.

This guide will tell you about messaging, framing, branding, communication channels, and specific branding guidelines you might want to follow if you are marketing a University of Arizona project or program.

The Five “Ws”

As discussed in the Mission Statement Guide, the first things you should think about when starting a project are the “who, what, where, when, and why.” Depending on what you are doing, the importance of the “W’s” change, but for the most part, marketing focuses on the “who,” “what,” and “why.”

Audience

Your audience is the group of people you are trying to reach through different media. It could be anyone from college students to the President of the United States. You may have more than one target audience. Whoever it is, you need to clearly identify them, as their interests will determine your marketing plan. Think about age, location, type of people, etc. This will allow you to better tailor your argument to the “who.”
Example: A student at the University of Arizona began a waste reduction program called “Greening the Game.” This program takes place at all UA football games, focusing on educating the general public during tailgating to reduce waste. It also cleans up recyclable trash after football games with the help of other clubs and organizations. When working the tailgating event, Greening the Game volunteers have to come up with appropriate ways to educate and interest different groups.

Since tailgating is not exclusive to students, it is important to appeal not just to the University community, but to the entire Tucson community. The group will also have to market to clubs and the public to recruit volunteers. The different audiences determine how the volunteers market their program. For the general public, they organize games to teach about recycling. For clubs, they offer philanthropy and leadership opportunities. These are just some of the great marketing tools that could be used to get people involved with the project.

**Messaging**

Understanding your project, your objectives, and how you can communicate it in a quick and effective manner is incredibly important if you want to gain the attention of your audience. It is especially important to consider the audience’s perspective—why will they care about what you’re doing; how will they benefit?

**Framing**

Framing is highlighting certain parts of an issue and making connections to those aspects in order to promote a particular interpretation or solution. People respond better to positive frames as opposed to negative frames. Always keep messages regarding your project and the university in a positive light. You will be more likely to get support if you have positive framing.
Compare these two examples regarding recycling:

1. **BAD Framing:** The University of Arizona has terrible recycling facilities. I surveyed the University to find out what makes students recycle, but I found that most do not care about recycling.

2. **GOOD Framing:** The University of Arizona has been proactive, thus far, on initiating an effective recycling program. Currently, cardboard bins for recycling are present in most buildings on campus. After surveying students, I found that most would recycle more if there were clear indicators of recycling bins and clearer signage of what is and is not recyclable. Though there is still work to be done on the University’s recycling program, recycling efforts thus far have notably increased.

Which would you respond to more favorably? The first way of framing is very negative—it doesn’t paint a good picture and is not persuasive. The second statement is persuasive and positive. It acknowledges the problem, acknowledges the work that the University has already done, and it encourages the University to continue to improve its recycling systems. Think about this when you frame your project so you can get as many people as possible to support you from the beginning.

**Narrative**

Explain why you are getting involved and how your activity affects the community around you.

- **Story of Self:** I used to sell water bottles at the UA football games. In one night I would sell over 200 bottles. When the stadium cleared I saw all of those water bottles, along with soda cans and paper programs, scattered throughout the stadium doomed to be thrown away.
- **Story of Us:** The UA community has the opportunity to work together to reduce our landfill waste and save money by recycling waste from football games and other sporting events.
- **Story of Now:** Now is the time to act in order to limit the environmental impact of our sporting events by engaging our fans to “Green the Game”.

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[Images of recycling materials and a website banner for DistrictOn5th.com]
Think about these three components when you are talking to people about your project. The story of self shows why you got involved, the story of us connects you to the greater community, and the story of now inspires people to act on the issue. This is a way you can talk about your project that gives a complete picture of your purpose.

**Elevator Speech**

Prepare a 30-second speech about what your project is and why people should care. Have your team practice it so when asked what your project is about there will be a quick, professional and persuasive response.

- Example: Greening the Game works to reduce waste and educate fans about being sustainable at UA sporting events. We do this through recycling and composting initiatives and by encouraging fans to buy in bulk and to carpool to events.

**Slogan**

Create a summation of your project in a short, memorable phrase that motivates people to get involved.

Examples:
- “Break the Habit and Grab It” -- Tucson’s Bring Your Own Bag Campaign
- “Turning Red and Blue, Green” -- ASUA Students for Sustainability

**Simplicity is Key!**

You have a short amount of time and/or space to try to influence behaviors and get an audience to recognize your project. Use it wisely.

- Limit your use of facts and figures. Statistics and facts should be used judiciously; a few key numbers can be persuasive. However, you don’t want to bog down your audience with a jumble of data.
- Use images and messages that invoke emotion.
- Make it fun by using humor, games or inciting a competition.
- Use as few words as possible to get your message across.
Branding

As you develop your marketing strategy, be sure to establish a consist look or brand in order to develop name recognition with your potential supporters. A brand allows people to recognize you and what you are promoting as well as make inferences about your product. Think of a really successful brand. What makes them successful? People readily recognize their look and know they can expect certain qualities about any products associated with that brand.

**A note about on campus branding:** If you are working on campus with UA entities, you may need to follow UA branding guidelines especially if you want to use the UA logo. See detailed information at [https://brand.arizona.edu/](https://brand.arizona.edu/). If you have more questions, go to ASUA’s club services or marketing department to get help.

**Logo:** A key aspect of branding is your logo. Design a logo that represents your organization. It should go on all projects and marketing materials so people start recognizing what you do.

**Look:** Design the look and feel of everything you do with a similar style. Use the same color scheme, fonts, and design elements for everything associated you’re your project, such as websites, brochures, business cards, tee shirts, etc.

**Imaging:** Each graphic design artist has his or her own artistic style, therefore if you use different designers for different aspects of your marketing, make sure key elements are consistent across all the work.

As an example, see UA’s Residence Life branding guide:

Media Outlets and Platforms

Social media: Social media are virtual places to exchange and share information and ideas. Popular platforms include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Reddit, etc. Social media can be a powerful way to market your project, but beware—although using social media is free, to be most successful, it must be kept current with frequent postings, which is time consuming! It is extremely important to keep your project/program social media accounts separate from the accounts you use with your friends and family. If you’re trying to attract funders, for example, they will not be impressed by your posts about last weekend’s party.

- Facebook: Create a Facebook page about your program that users can “Like”. This page can help you quickly get information into user’s newsfeeds about your project. To create a Facebook page click here and follow the instructions.
- Twitter: Twitter is a social media outlet that is based around short anecdotes and fast information. “Tweets” are limited to 140 characters. Though not the best media outlet for detailed messages, it is still useful to have a Twitter presence since it reaches large amount of people and is good for general marketing, events, and messaging. Go to www.twitter.com to create a Twitter account.
- Instagram: Instagram is a social networking site based on images and photography where you can follow and like other people’s pictures. When posting on Instagram, aim for visually pleasing pictures that people can relate to and will want to like. For example, if you are posting to a UA Recycling Instagram, it is better to show Wilbur recycling a plastic bottle than you doing it. Keep in mind that Instagram is mostly smartphone-based; make sure your images and photography will be easily viewable on a small screen. Go to www.instagram.com to create an account.
- Reddit: Reddit is a social media site where the public can “upvote” or “downvote” your posts. Reddit is good for posting photos, memes, and videos that inform and entertain public audiences. Go to http://www.reddit.com/
- LinkedIn: LinkedIn is a professional social media site. Its main use is for posting professional resumes for individuals and job listings for organizations. It a great place to recruit and look for employees or volunteers, depending on the status of your project. Check it out at: https://www.linkedin.com/.
- YouTube: YouTube allows you to share videos about your project. If you give speeches about your project, create advertisements, or record project activities, be sure to post these videos onto a YouTube account. You can also link YouTube to your Facebook and Twitter accounts to allow for increased access to the YouTube information. To create an account, go to http://www.youtube.com.
Blogging: Blogging is a great way for you to tell people about your ideas, progress, and plans as well as receive feedback. Popular blogs rely on personal experience mixed with some research and formal writing to be successful. There are plenty of blogging websites where you can set up a blog for free. Try https://wordpress.com/ or https://www.blogger.com/.

Television: T.V. is a great way to reach large amounts of people. Though the number of people watching traditional T.V. has declined in recent years, it is still important to market to the people who do. If you have a project with enough funds to utilize T.V. ads, do so. Public Service Announcements (PSA) are also an option. These are announcements made by news networks for the betterment of the community and are often available for free or at discounted prices. Talk to local news stations for information on television advertisements and PSAs.

Newspapers: Newspapers are a great way to get information and ideas out. Although the news industry is shifting from paper publications to online formats, older populations (who, it should be noted, vote at higher rates than younger people) typically still buy traditional newspapers.

Op-Eds: Op-Eds are articles written by a member of the community rather than by a paid journalist. Typically they are persuasive essays published in the opinion or editorial section of a newspaper. Often political and community leaders write op-eds on an issue that the community is facing, but well-written opinions by informed citizens also can be published. Contact your local newspaper’s editorial department for more information about publishing an op-ed piece.

Letters to the editor: Letters to the editor are short letters that comment on articles in previous editions. These are good ways to make a public statement about an issue presented earlier. All newspapers have easy ways to submit letters to the editors. Check with your local newspaper for more information on how to submit a letter to your editor—and remember that your letter is more likely to be published if you adhere
to their guidelines, particularly concerning length

- Face-to-Face: Although more time consuming, face-to-face interaction is a very effective way to market. People are more likely to remember and support your cause if they’ve actually spoken with you. Additionally, social studies have shown that humans find it much harder to turn down a request during a face-to-face conversation.
  - Canvassing: Canvassing involves gathering addresses of supporters (or potential supporters) and going door to door to try to mobilize them into action. Canvassing can be effective for such things as obtaining signatures to get an initiative on a ballot or fundraising for an issue.
  - Tabling: Manning an information table on college campuses and at community events is a useful way to increase awareness of your program and interact with the community. If you sign up for a table, be sure someone will be there to staff it—nothing looks worse than a bare table with your name on it and no information or person to talk to! Find local events and call the organizers to request a table; be sure to ask about costs, as they often are not free.
  - Clipboarding: Clipboarding refers to going to events and meeting people without having a table, which is a good option where tables are too expensive. This is another way to provide information about your project. Clipboarding outside of community events such as the County Fair can be extremely beneficial for gaining support for your cause.

- Phone Banking: Phone banking—calling potential supporters to talk to them about your project—is relatively easy, but can be very draining if you’re delivering the same message over and over. Phone banking has become a less effective with the proliferation of cellular devices and caller ID.

- Radio: Local radio stations can be great sources for advertising an event or talking about your cause. Advertising an event usually will have a charge, but you may be able to interest a station in doing a short interview with you if it deems your activities newsworthy. Tailor what radio station you approach to the audience you want to reach. For example, National Public Radio (NPR) may not reach as many students as radio stations that feature current hit music.
Business Professionalism

Business cards are important to have as a way to promote yourself and your project and connect with other people. A business card should look professional and have the same branding as other materials associated with your project.

Business card attributes:
- Name
- Title
- Email
- Phone Number
- Logo and name of your organization
- Slogan of your organization (if you have one)

Domain Names on Your Email and Websites

Creating a website, blog, and email are all essential to getting out information to large amounts of people, but it is important to keep addresses professional. Set up emails that reflect the project or the position; ASUA’s Students for Sustainability could use some of the following emails: ASUAsfs@cox.net, gogreen@asuasfs.com, or SFSdirector@gmail.com. You may also link your personal email with your project as long as it is professional. Realize that you might be receiving lots of emails per day about your project and it can be easier to stay organized if you have a separate project email.

Try setting up a domain name through www.godaddy.com or www.hostgator.com. A domain name is what your website URL will be, such as www.uasfs.com for University of Arizona Students for Sustainability. It will allow you to make your online information look more professional. There are free website development sites you can use, such as Wordpress or Wix, to get started as well.

Literature

Literature is a common phrase referring to a printed brochure or pamphlet on an issue. Writing literature gives you the ability to express the “who, what, where, when, and why” of the project in a short and succinct way.

- Uses of literature
  - Mailings: Mailing out literature gives you access to people at home. However, printing and mailing is expensive and people generally throw away unsolicited mail without looking at it, so this approach is only effective for certain audiences and projects, such as if you are trying to mobilize already-identified supporters of your project to act on an issue. Organizing a mailing requires funding for printing and postage and time to acquire addresses of the people you want to mail to (these can sometimes be purchased as well).
● Events and Tabling: Again, tabling at events is imperative to most projects. It allows people to learn about your event in a face-to-face setting through conversations or by picking up literature. Make sure your contact information is on the literature so that people can reach you later.

Standard Organizational Materials

● Banner and/or posters for tabling
● Flyers or other literature
● Business cards
● Website
● Sign Up sheet for email listservs
● Fun engagement activity for people to do related to your project
● Tee shirts
● Social media platforms