

Using Marketing to Support Group Relations: A Call to Action

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AKRI Dialogues 2024



Objectives

1. Participants will be able to identify the key elements of a marketing strategy.
2. Participants will review examples of messaging for different market segments.
3. Participants will learn about the use of market research in developing a marketing strategy.
4. Participants will learn about the recruitment efforts of recent CSGSS events.

The Problem

- ❑ It is difficult to fill conferences and increase center membership and engagement
 - ❑ Many center members have been involved for years
 - ❑ Many conference members are repeat attendees
 - ❑ We believe many would benefit from attending a GRC but are not being reached or the outreach is not resulting in engagement
 - ❑ Much of the marketing and recruitment for GRCs falls on the Directors and conference staff
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Our Vision

- ❑ Actionable feedback about how to apply creative and innovative approaches to group relations conference marketing.
 - ❑ Commitment from AKRI & other affiliates to work together on implementing these approaches.
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Marketing of Recent CSGSS Conferences: Successes & Challenges

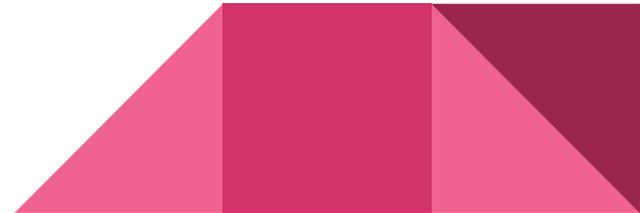
Weekend Conference 2023: Successful Strategies

- ❑ Asking past CSGSS Directors to invite their memberships
- ❑ Offering deals to specific groups
- ❑ Inviting members of Director's past conferences
- ❑ Using contacts at Harvard & BGSP
- ❑ Posting on personal LinkedIn accounts



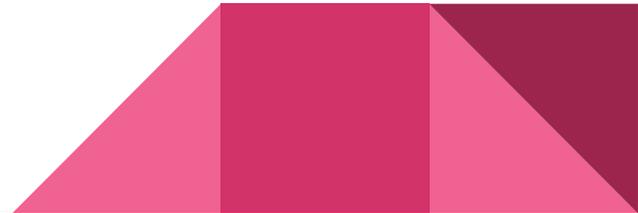
Weekend Conference 2023: Takeaways

- ❑ Importance of maintaining a database
- ❑ Unclear how much effort came from outside the Director/conference staff
- ❑ Despite full recruitment, conference barely broke even due to the number of discounts



Residential Conference 2024: Takeaways

- ❑ Marketing consultant not involved directly with residential conference
- ❑ Different market than the weekend conference
- ❑ Higher cost of entry may have contributed to significantly smaller membership
- ❑ Institutional relationships are key to sustaining in person residential conference work; difficulty of maintaining these over time (i.e., contact people change, institutional support waivers, only able to commit to biannual attendance)





Engaging External Help to Develop a Marketing Strategy

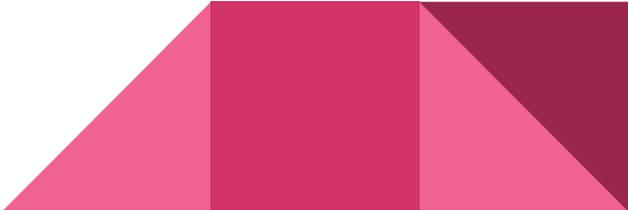
Working with Taproot Foundation

- ❑ Taproot Foundation helps “mission-driven organizations amplify their impact by mobilizing skilled volunteers to advance resource equity.”
 - ❑ Submitted project
 - ❑ Interviewed two candidates and selected one
 - ❑ Board point person interacted with Gail and arranged board contact and project steps
 - ❑ Determined scope of project
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Scope of Taproot Project

1. Identification of target markets and marketing channels
 2. Review of current marketing materials and nonprofit literature
 3. Interviews of board members and event leaders
 4. Surveyed membership (online) and weekend conference attendees (paper)
 5. Brainstormed basic messaging for each market segment to develop a one page marketing strategy document
 6. Marketing calendar framework
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Target Markets

- Existing participants in GR
 - Psychology graduate students
 - MBA students or students in other programs
 - Corporate or other organizational leaders
 - HR/OD professionals
 - Therapists
 - Members of DEI groups
 - Therapists/social workers
 - Organizational consultants
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Channel

Measures

The Marketing Toolbox And Measures



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MARKETING STRATEGY QUESTIONNAIRE

Background

- What business are we in?
- What products or services do we provide?
- What are our objectives over the next 2 years?
- What compelled us to start this organization?

Market

- What is the market size? Is geography a factor?
- How can the market be segmented into logical groupings?
- How does the economic climate affect our organization?

Target Audience

- What market segments can we identify to target? What are their characteristics? (age, education, profession, etc.)
- What is our customer's primary reason for buying or wanting to use our product/service?
- Are there any concerns target audience would have?

Competition

- Who are our competitors?
- How can we differentiate ourselves?

Offering

- What need does our product/service fill?
- What features and benefits does our offering provide?
- How do we deliver those benefits?
- Are there improvements we can make to better meet customer needs?

Messaging

- What does each of our target audiences know about us today?
- What is the single most important message that we MUST communicate to ALL of our target audiences?
- What evidence can we use to support the claim that we make in our single most important message?
- What happy clients do we have today that we can reference in our communications?
- What kind of personality do we want to portray in our communications? What did they buy from us and why are they happy?
- What kind of personality do we want to portray in our communications? Tone? Passion?
- What is the net impression about our organization or offering that we want clients and

Sales and Buying Process

- What is the process for selling our services/products? (direct personal sale? Direct online sale? Indirect sale, etc. ?)
- Who is involved (both from our organization and from any partner organizations) in each step of the sales process?
- How does our target audience buy our type of offering? Is this an impulse or planned purchase? Who usually pays for it (self vs. other individual, etc.)
- What buying criteria does our target audience usually use when selecting a product/service like ours?

Pricing

- How important is price in the decision process?
- What is our current pricing structure including discounts, tiered pricing, etc.?
- Is there anyone who offers a similar offering and what is their pricing?
- What is the perceived value of our offering as compared to price?
- What is included in the price? What could we consider including in the future?

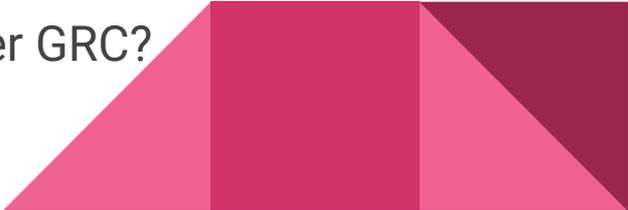
Communication and Promotion

- What written materials do you have, and is the language simple and easy to read?
- How are you communicating the true needs that are being addressed by your service?
- How frequently do your customers review their service provider?
- What events that are being held which could increase your organizations viability?
- What is the normal communication pattern with your customers? Can you add marketing activities to this communication?
- What information and materials do you already give to your customers/potential customers? How clear is this on your organizations brand? And what services you offer?
- What other materials or information do you think would be of benefit to your customers to help them make informed choices?
- How else would your customers like to hear about your organization and the services it provides?
- Which key channels of communication will be most useful and relevant for your customers?
- What would be the most effective channel to communicate with your customers and how?

Member Survey

1. Demographics (optional name, occupation, organization/company)
 2. How long have you been a member of CSGSS?
 3. How did you hear about CSGSS? (another organization, friend/colleague, other)
 4. Are you a member of any other group relations organizations? (Y/N?)
 5. How did you get introduced to group relations? (educational requirements, colleague recommendation, advertisement through another organization, internet keyword search)
 6. Have you attended any CSGSS events? If yes, how many? If no, why not?
 7. Would you be interested in a monthly newsletter? (Y/N) If yes, what topics/content would you be interested in?)
 8. How do you look for organizations that study and practice group relations like CSGSS that you would like to join? (internet search, ask friends/colleagues, other)
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Post-Conference Survey

1. How did you hear about the conference?
 2. Why did you attend the conference?
 3. Was your attendance related to work? If yes, please explain.
 4. Why are the interactions within and between groups of interest to you?
 5. What hurdles did you encounter in registering for or attending the conference?
 6. How could they have been better addressed?
 7. Aspects of the conference you liked/appreciated
 8. Aspects of the conference to change/improve
 9. What factors would you consider in attending another GRC?
 10. Are you a CSGSS member?
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What is a Marketing Strategy?

	Business Plan	Marketing Strategy	Marketing Plan
What is it?	Overview of the complete business.	Long-term marketing vision for the business.	The specific strategies and tactics used by the business to implement and accomplish the marketing strategy.
What is included?	Includes the business brand identity, complete details pertaining to the general operations of the business, budget, overall goals, target audience, competitors, unique characteristics, products, or services it offers.	Include objectives, marketing goals, target markets, competitive analysis, and value to the customers.	Marketing campaign goals, key performance indicators, buyer personas, competitive analysis, action plan, objectives, and all data points.
How to use it? 	The goals of the business serve as the basis for budgeting, fund-raising efforts, grants, or loans.	Represents and serves as the baseline for the overall marketing that each individual part of the marketing plan follows.	Stay focused and track results on individual marketing campaigns. This will allow you to be more likely and quick to identify any challenges found in other and future campaigns.

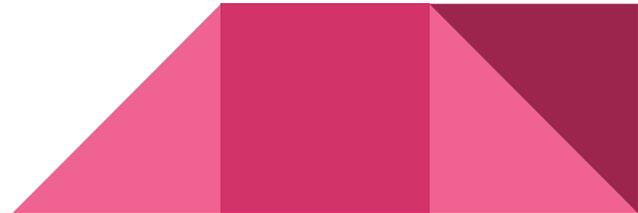
A business's overall game plan for reaching prospective consumers and turning them into customers of their products

One Page Marketing Strategy

OBJECTIVES Clear, realistic and measurable	SEGMENTS Profile target segments	POSITIONING Who you are and why you're different (value proposition for each segment)	PROGRAMS Marketing Mix (focus on channels, promotion and "basic" messaging for each segment)

Brainstorm

SEGMENT	PRIMARY BUYING MOTIVE	MESSAGING-INCLUDE	MESSAGING - CAUTIONS	CHANNELS (HOW TO REACH)	
Graduate (Psych) students	fulfill educational requirements	more than just fulfilling requirements - you will learn a lot about yourself	conferences can be very emotional	through their school program	*need to build ed partnerships?
	Professional affiliations relates to their research professional dev beyond ed requirements learning about what kind of projections you might receive in your role	emphasizing interactive nature of events experiential and experimental relationship to authority relative to their patients learning about unconscious biases	unlike anything you have done in class	Instagram	



Brainstorm (cont.)

SEGMENT	PRIMARY BUYING MOTIVE	MESSAGING-INCLUDE	MESSAGING - CAUTIONS	CHANNELS (HOW TO REACH)	
MBA students or other programs	They have to work in teams and it will provide insight into how groups work	how it relates to business	conferences can be very emotional	LinkedIn	with same schools as Psych students?
		NOT a seminar of lectures and presentations;		Instagram	
	learning about authority and power	learning about what kind of projections you might receive in your role	the conference is attended by people from many different disciplines - many outside the "business" world	through their university	
		unlike their coursework unique type of experience			



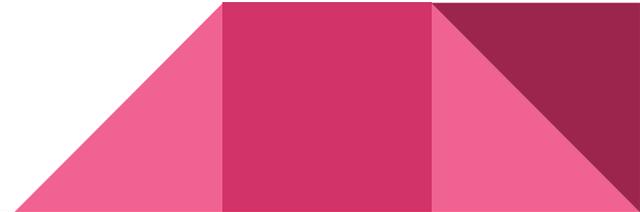
Gail's Recommendations

1. Develop "main messaging" for each segment to be used in channel communications (using draft messaging from group brainstorm)
2. Revise website:
 - Revise homepage to better communicate what the org is and does (use photos/videos if possible to humanize)
 - Create a page for each target audience
 - Use simple language on the homepage
 - Use photos and videos to make the site more engaging
 - Include some history and how the center is evolving
 - Get testimonials from members and attendees to use on website and in marketing materials



Gail's Recommendations (cont.)

3. Create social media accounts (LinkedIn and Instagram)
4. Develop a plan to partner with universities' graduate programs
5. Create a blog or newsletter to 1.) keep the website fresh 2.) engage the audiences on a regular basis (see topic suggestions from member survey)
6. Create a referral program for current members and event attendees



Barriers to Reaching Populations “New” to GR

- Uneven consultant training on identity issues
 - Group relations methodology rooted in white supremacy
 - Would be helpful to assess community needs rather than “selling” them on group relations
 - Not seeing community reflected in consulting team
 - Financial barriers
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Discussion Questions:

- How can we use marketing tools to reach new audiences for group relations work?
- How can AKRI affiliates and conference directors collaborate to address recruitment concerns?
- What barriers do you perceive to making conferences sustainable in the next 20 years?