

Personal Marketing: A Strategy for Marketing Programs to Diverse Audiences¹

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This paper is the first in a series of articles on planning programs to effectively reach diverse audiences. The Planning Culturally Relevant Programs series is available at http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_series_planning_culturally_relevant_programs. A Web-based staff development curriculum, Strengthening Programs to Reach Diverse Audiences, is also available at <http://fyics.ifas.ufl.edu/diversity/diversity%20website/home.htm>.

Overview

Marketing is vitally important when planning and delivering programs for diverse audiences. In contrast to some traditional audiences that may have a long history of engagement with Extension programs, many individuals who are new to Extension may lack the history and connection with Extension; they may not have a grandmother or mother who was an Extension homemaker, nor a father or grandfather who fondly recollects visits from an agricultural Extension agent. Many of these audiences do not have a legacy of 4-H membership. In other words,

many of these ethnically diverse audiences do not have a connection with Extension. Given this fact, they are much less likely to respond to indirect marketing techniques (brochures, flyers, radio spots, etc.).

A technique called personal marketing can help bridge this gap. Adapting marketing strategies from the business world, this fact sheet provides strategies for more successful marketing through direct, personal marketing techniques.

Personal Marketing

In the simplest terms, personal marketing can also be called direct marketing, and traditional/impersonal marketing can be referred to as indirect marketing. Personal marketing strategies are multidimensional and dynamic, requiring face-to-face contact. Personal marketing makes you and your program more visible because it involves personalized communication between you and your target audience (Rossman, 2000). Impersonal strategies don't require personal contact and are static

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(Lipe, n.d.). Unfortunately, many marketing strategies that we use in Extension fall into the category of impersonal or indirect marketing.

Table 1 shows a few examples of the differences between personal and impersonal marketing strategies.

Table 1.

| Impersonal Marketing Strategies | Personal Marketing Strategies |
|---|--|
| Mail a letter. | Run a booth at a community fair. |
| Have an announcement sent to a community meeting/event. | Visit a community meeting or event to market the program. Important: Be sure to stay until the end to meet people and answer questions. |
| Mail a brochure. | Make phone calls to key individuals in the community. |
| Post a flyer. | Have a cultural broker, opinion leaders, or gatekeepers provide information on your program. |
| Send an announcement to a radio station, newspaper, or television station that serves ethnically diverse audiences. | Have the program sponsored and direct-marketed by a grassroots community organization that is trusted by the target audience. |

Benefits of Adopting Personal Marketing Techniques

Marketing literature points to several benefits of personal marketing, which include:

- Personal marketing assists in successfully bridging the gap between you and your audiences.
- Personalizing your message will help you to strike the right chord with your audience.

- For ethnically diverse populations, a personal marketing strategy may be more useful than an impersonal one, since it customizes marketing with individual values and preferences.

Overall, personal marketing is extremely beneficial as it takes into account the unique value systems of different ethnic groups.

Personal Marketing in Extension Using *The Six P's*

The Six P's of marketing is a long-standing method used to address all essential aspects of marketing a program or product. *The Six P's* are widely taught in marketing and business programs as a means to increase the success of a marketing campaign by personalizing it to the targeted audience. *The Six P's* represent **people, partnership, product, place, promotion, and price.**

People

Marketing involves selling your programs to the people you want to reach; hence, you need to think about your audience. Ask yourself: "Who is this program for?" A different message will most likely be required for each audience, and the message should include the benefits that are most important to each audience based on the value system and culture of the audience. (See EDIS fact sheets FCS9217 and FCS9221, *Overview of Diversity and Planning Programs to Break Down Cultural Barriers.*)

Partnership

There may be other organizations whose programs are similar to yours. If you think that working with these organizations will benefit your Extension program, then partner with them. If the other organizations have a better rapport or a better relationship with the audience, then having them as co-sponsors on the marketing materials may help you "sell" your program better. Remember, don't focus only on formal organizations. Also seek out informal, community-based, grassroots organizations since they can be helpful allies. Oftentimes these organizations are viewed by diverse audiences as

really having their best interests at heart. Therefore, your connection with such organizations can give your programs authenticity and help break down barriers.

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Your program is the product that you want to present to people. Explain what your program will do for the audience. The *Ut gpi vj gplpi "Rtqi tco u"q" Tgcej "F kxgtug" Cwf kgpegu* curriculum (Guion et. al., 2003) provides tools for planning your program to meet the needs of ethnically diverse audiences. Briefly highlight culturally relevant components of your program in the marketing materials.

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Place involves the geographical area or location where you want to market your program. You have determined whom you want to target; now you must decide where to market your program. The best way to reach nontraditional audiences is to use nontraditional venues and locations. The key is to learn where the target group congregates. These locations will provide prime places to use your personal marketing techniques. (See *Ut gpi vj gplpi "Rtqi tco u"q" Tgcej "F kxgtug" Cwf kgpegu* for more information.)

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Promotion is the way to present your program. You need to be clear about the exact benefits of your program before presenting your program to the target audiences. The purpose of promotion is to motivate people to participate in your program, and one certain way to motivate people is by showing them the benefits of your program. The target audiences will need to recognize the benefits based on their beliefs and value systems. Ethnic marketing (using messages that have meaning and significance to the value system and beliefs of the audience) has been found to motivate people to participate. Ethnic marketing is discussed in the EDIS fact sheet FCS9223, *Gj ple" Octngvpi <C"Ut cvgi {"lqt "Octngvpi "Rtqi tco u"q" F kxgtug" Cwf kgpegu*.

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Price involves what people will have to do to participate in your programs. It could be both concrete and intangible. Price includes money (the fee or cost for your program), time (using their time to participate), and efforts (everything else people must do in order to participate in your program, such as arranging childcare, finding transportation, etc.). The benefit of the program must outweigh the cost (price), and this must be clear to your target audiences if you are to successfully reach diverse populations.

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In Extension, a program's success depends on the level of involvement from the target audiences and their participation in the program. To make your program a success, it is crucial for you to reach out to your target audiences effectively. Marketing is one of the key ways by which Extension educators engage and inform their target audiences of educational programs, events, and other opportunities for involvement. Therefore, it is important that the marketing strategies are effective. This paper introduced personal marketing as a method for improving marketing efforts in Extension.

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Guion, L. A., Goddard, H. W., Broadwater, G., Chattaraj, S., & Sullivan-Lytle, S. (2003).

Ut gpi vj gplpi "rtqi tco u"q" t gcej "f kxgtug" cwf kgpegs. Gainesville, FL: Florida Cooperative Extension, University of Florida.

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