After value: a marketing needs assessment for museums, libraries and archives in the South East 2005 - 2007
After value: a marketing needs assessment for museums, libraries and archives

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i. Summary

i.i This two-year project aims to strengthen links between SEMLAC and amh, in order to improve understanding of the marketing needs of museums, libraries and archives (mlas) in the South East and to devise sustainable means of meeting these needs.

i.ii It encourages mlas to make greater use of existing specialist marketing support and to increase the amount of mla marketing expertise based in the region in the short-term, with a view to improving the sector's skills longer-term.

ii. Overview of the Marketing Needs Assessment

ii.i The value of cultural institutions is explored through John Holden’s work in Capturing Cultural Value. The MLA Partnership Strategic Framework is used as a strategic context that unites the diversity of the organisations within the sector.

ii.ii The three regional domain strategies formed the basis of semi-structured interviews that have, in turn, informed the identification of explicit and implicit marketing needs. A marketing needs assessment is produced which complements explicit marketing needs of the sector with implicit marketing needs derived from marketing theory.

ii.iii A marketing planning framework is developed which has the following key steps:
1. Goal setting
2. Review
3. Strategy setting
4. Implementation
5. Evaluation

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1 amh is an audience development agency funded by Arts Council England and Hampshire County Council.

2 Capturing Cultural Value How culture has become a tool of government policy Demos 2004
iii Marketing Needs Assessment key findings

Explicit marketing needs of the sector

- **Customers** - the retention and recruitment of current and potential customers
- **‘Known culture’** - wider and deeper engagement with or reflection of cultural events, arts, mass media tie-ins, film, electronic games, sports, website services, and meeting increased consumer expectations derived from shopping and commercial services
- **Capacity** - the economies of scale represented by partnerships between mlas targeting similar audiences need to maximised
- **Market Intelligence** - responsiveness of service development to segmentation and target groups, and embedded evaluation through improved market intelligence.
- **Online** - development of online 'offer' to ensure optimum value is derived from this consistently changing and value-for-money medium for service delivery, customer communications and relationship building.
- **Marketing communications** - the need of the sector for distinctive, branded and effective marketing communications
- **Return on investment** - as mlas diversify their products to reach new and current audiences, this expansion requires more-from-less on an ongoing basis.
- **Advocacy** - for many mlas, increasing customers does not bring in direct revenue. Increased customer take-up needs to be communicated through advocacy to stakeholders to ensure sustainable funding.

Implicit marketing needs of the sector

- **Support for strategic marketing planning** - a marketing planning framework is required that will facilitate organisational change and repositioning.
- **Market Orientation Test (MOT)** - a simple, plain language, diagnostic questionnaire is required to assess organisations' current position
- **Funded support, advice and consultancy** - to deliver external marketing support for mlas, particularly those with limited capacity
- **Easier access to strategic context** - mlas require clearer presentation of key stakeholders' strategic documents, with the implications for marketing planning identified.

3 'Not for the Likes of You' How To Reach A Broader Audience produced by Morton Smyth Limited May 2004 p39
Next steps

The services to be delivered will:

* address **capacity** through funding supply of marketing consultancy
* structure the marketing planning process through a **marketing planning framework**
* serve **review** needs - enabling meaningful situation analysis
* serve **strategy setting** needs - enabling mlas to develop SMART marketing objectives
* serve **implementation** needs - creating capacity through campaigns, workforce development and partnerships
* serve **evaluation** needs - through embedding data capture and evaluation methodologies which address inputs, outputs and outcomes.
1. **An abstract**
1.1 Culture is a slippery word and cultural institutions operate within a competitive environment.

1.2 Marketing can help mlas think about and communicate cultural value.

1.3 Marketing can help frame the need of cultural institutions to invest to ensure that they are, and are understood to be, a real individual and collective benefit, for and by everyone.

2. **Project background**
2.1 SEMLAC, the South East Museum, Library and Archive Council have funded a two-year post to assess the marketing needs of museums, libraries and archives (mlas) in the South East.

2.2 The post is located within amh⁴, one of three arts marketing agencies in the South East.

2.3 A key intended outcome of this partnership is to inform mla sector marketing through established arts marketing practice, especially in terms of market intelligence.

2.4 This paper is a marketing needs assessment for the mlas in the South East Region.

2.5 This paper draws together desk research and semi-structured interviews with representatives of mla organisations across the South East.

2.6 The purpose of this paper is to highlight the value of marketing theory and practice for the regional sector in the context of explicit and implicit marketing needs.

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⁴ amh is an audience development agency funded by Arts Council England and Hampshire County Council
3 Terminology

3.1 The Chartered Institute of Marketing define marketing as ‘the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably.’

3.2 The term customer is used throughout to refer to readers, visitors, users or participants in MLA services.

3.3 The term re-positioning is used to refer to changing customer perceptions of an offer, in relation to alternative offers.

4 Value, purpose and a marketing planning framework

4.1 Evidence of value

4.1.1 Whilst exciting moves are being made in regard to evidencing the social impact of MLAs, the important point here is that value precedes evaluation.

4.1.2 Prior to evidencing the impact of the sector, there is a need to define the values which are to be evaluated.

4.1.3 John Holden’s clear and insightful work on cultural value identifies three distinct forms of cultural value.

4.1.4 These are
   • Intrinsic value – the value of culture ‘in and of itself’.
   • Instrumental value – the social value of cultural provision, it’s ‘knock-on’ affects in, for example, contributing to crime reduction.
   • Institutional value – the value created by cultural institutions which ‘flows from their working practices and attitudes, and is rooted in their moral values’.

4.1.5 It is this institutional value which marketing can inform and develop by improving participation rates and through delivering wider participation through embedding access and diversity as key business objectives.

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5 ‘Profitably’ can be problematic for some MLAs. Replacing ‘profitably’ with the phrase ‘to meet the organisation’s overall objectives’ helps clarify the pertinence of this definition for non-profit making organisations.

6 Inspiring Learning For All and the Public Library Impact Measures are strong examples development on evidencing instrumental cultural value of MLAs.

7 John Holden - Valuing Culture in the South East 2005

8 Jowell, Tessa - Government and the Value of Culture DCMS 2004
4.1.6 A developing sense of institutional value is what effective marketing depends upon.

4.2 The influence of Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA)

4.2.1 The MLA Partnership Strategic Framework outlines four strategic aims.

4.2.2 Strategic Aim 1: To increase and sustain participation
‘to build and sustain participation in museum, archive and library activity, developing user-focused and responsive services that people want and need throughout their lives. We want the sector to engage all sections of society, especially children and young people, and under-represented groups.’

4.2.3 Strategic Aim 2: To put museums, libraries and archives at the heart of national, regional and local life
‘show how museums, libraries and archives change and enrich lives, help define identity, inspire creativity, and support cohesive and sustainable communities.’

4.2.4 Strategic Aim 3: To establish a world class and sustainable sector
‘aim to create a competitive, sustainable and world class sector.’

4.2.5 Strategic Aim 4: To lead sector strategy and policy development
‘be the voice and champion for museums, libraries and archives, leading national and regional strategy and advocacy through working in partnership with national, regional and local stakeholders.’

4.3 Marketing and the centrality of customers

4.3.1 Marketing is a source of theory and practice which can assist mlas in making customers central to all that all mlas do.

4.3.2 Marketing creates a firm, continually developing bond between organisational purpose and current and potential customers.
4.4 When marketing works ....
4.4.1 Malcolm McDonald identifies\(^9\) cultural, cognitive, informational, resource and behavioural barriers to applying rationalistic, prescriptive models of marketing planning.

4.4.2 Brian Smith develops this line of argument\(^10\) and demonstrates that successful applications of marketing planning depend upon establishing a fit of marketing theory with external and internal factors.

4.5 A marketing planning framework
4.5.1 The organisational process which marketing implies for mlas will be outlined below through a marketing planning framework. This framework is a key implicit need of the sector.

4.5.2 This marketing planning framework is not presented as a prescriptive solution, it’s simply a conceptual structure deployed to enable a definition of terms and processes.

4.5.3 At this stage in the overall development of the marketing capacity of mlas, a framework of agreed theory and practice is a need second only to that of terminology.

4.5.4 In order to develop a marketing planning framework, two sources are drawn upon, McDonald\(^11\) and Cashman\(^12\).

4.5.5 There are strong fundamental similarities in these models.

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\(^12\) Thinking ... Big! A guide to strategic marketing planning for arts organisations, Stephen Cashman AMA, ACE 2003
Malcolm McDonald's model of marketing planning

Phase 1  
Goal Setting  
Mission  
Corporate Objectives

Phase 2  
Situation review  
Marketing audit  
Swot analysis  
Assumptions

Phase 3  
Strategy formulation  
Marketing objectives and strategies  
Estimate expected results  
Identify alternative plans and mixes

Phase 4  
Resource allocation and monitoring  
Budget  
First year detailed implementation programme  
Measurement and review of first year detailed implementation programme  
Feedback into phase 2  
marketing audit stage

4.5.6 This is one outline of the theoretical background against which McDonald found only 10-14% of marketing plans produced by organisations to be 'adequate when judged in the most lenient terms'.
4.5.7 It is this gap between theory and practice which led to research clarifying the barriers to organisations applying prescriptive marketing practice.

4.5.8 The development of hybrid approaches to marketing planning has been identified as a key element of successful firms\textsuperscript{15}.
### Stephen Cashman's model of marketing planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1</th>
<th>Goal Setting</th>
<th>Organisational Mission</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>Strategic analysis</td>
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<td></td>
<td>internal analysis</td>
<td>external analysis (trends, competition market)</td>
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<td>(marketing audit and review)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Strengths</td>
<td>Opportunities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Weakness</td>
<td>Threats</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>Making and Selecting Strategies</td>
<td>TOWS (TOWS clusters strengths and opportunities, strengths and threats, weaknesses and opportunities, weaknesses and threats to arrive at aggressive or defensive strategies)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Matrix based strategy assessment and selection of strategy sets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase 4</td>
<td>Strategic Action plan</td>
<td>Positioning and branding</td>
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<td>Evaluation</td>
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</table>

| 4.5.9 | Cashman is clear that arts organisations need to adapt, rather than apply marketing planning. |
|       |                                                                                           |
| 4.5.10 | Cashman’s model, through its rigorous application to the arts marketing context, crucially embellishes that of McDonald’s in its concentration on developing strategy sets through specific tools. |
| 4.5.11 | A marketing planning framework is fundamental to describing the combined explicit and implicit marketing needs of the sector. |
| 4.5.12 | In order to arrive at a marketing planning framework, the above models are conflated. |
| 4.5.13 | This conflation is presented so as to be of value to mla’s aiming to build capacity for improved marketing practice internally or through partnerships. |
| 4.5.14 | The written, documented marketing plan is a working document which serves to maintain a pre-defined agenda, guide fact-finding and which evolves through implementation. |

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16 Thinking ... Big! A guide to strategic marketing planning for arts organisations, Stephen Cashman AMA, ACE 2003
The marketing planning framework is a cyclical process.

The marketing planning framework consists of
- five steps which are worked through to deploy the marketing planning framework
- five sections to a written marketing plan
- sources of information which are evaluated to commence, and then re-evaluated to conclude, the marketing planning process

The five steps are
- Goal setting
- Review
- Strategy setting
- Implementation
- Evaluation

Goal setting
This step entails an outline of ‘big picture’ issues. It's about clarifying and agreeing a précis of the strategic context of an MLA or a partnership of MLAs.

This section of the written marketing plan would be short, clear and would articulate the current ethos which underpins institutional value and its key ambition for the future.

Sources to inform this step are overarching business plans, mission or vision statements of host organisations and key stakeholders.

Review
This step is about conducting a robust review of the current position of an MLA in terms of internal and external factors. Review of external factors grants a context of change, whilst a review of internal factors will begin to highlight service and knowledge gaps which the marketing planning process can address, over time.

This section of the marketing plan would define external context through use of the STEEPLE\textsuperscript{17} mnemonic and would outline the current offer provided by an MLA.

Sources for this section of the marketing plan would be wide ranging for external factors but would focus upon an MLA’s market and market share. Internal factors would focus upon product and services, premises and internally gathered customer data. The identification of required sources for customer data is a key aspect of this step.

\textsuperscript{17} STEEPLE is a mnemonic for Social, Technological, Ethical, Environmental, Political, Legal, and Economic factors.
4.5.24 To facilitate mlas in conducting this step of the marketing planning framework, a Marketing Orientation Test\(^{18}\) (MOT) has been developed.

4.5.25 This MOT consists of a short diagnostic questionnaire which covers key areas of activity:
- Customer lists and databases
- Generic, seasonal or corporate publicity/promotions
- Pricing and discounts
- Specific event target marketing
- Loyalty schemes and memberships
- Audience development programming, outreach and learning
- Staff and responsibility

4.5.26 **Strategy setting**
This step entails moving from the analytical and documentary steps of Goal setting and Review by finding creative and intellectual solutions which aim to close the gap between potential and actual market performance.

4.5.27 The outcome of this step, in the medium term, is for an mla to better understand and relate to its customers through delivering a developed offer and using that knowledge and flexibility to strengthen its market position.

4.5.28 This section of the marketing plan assimilates steps Goal setting and Review and expresses planned activity through SMART\(^{19}\) marketing objectives which frame Implementation and Evaluation stages of the process.

4.5.29 Sources for this section of the marketing plan would be a summary of Review, classically achieved through a SWOT\(^{20}\) analysis.

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\(^{18}\) The MOT will be published alongside the marketing planning framework on the SEMLAC website.

\(^{19}\) SMART, objectives ought to reflect each of following defining aspects: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timed

\(^{20}\) SWOT is a mnemonic for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats.
4.5.30 **Implementation**
This step is about delivering a developed set of services through changing key aspects of the overall offer. These aspects are usually expressed under categories of product and service range, premises, costs to customers, data gathering, customer facing processes, and communication with customers.

4.5.31 The marketing process assumes that evaluative practice is embedded in Implementation.

4.5.32 This section of the marketing plan would be a detailed project plan for each activity outlined through the SMART objectives which would include budgets and allocation of staff time to specific tasks.

4.5.33 Sources for this section of the marketing plan would be the project planning processes identified by the relevant working groups who are tasked with delivering the development of services articulated through the creation of sets of strategies.

4.5.34 **Evaluation**
This step ensures the organisational learning which enables the cyclical aspect of the process. It informs the re-evaluation implied by commencing the process afresh.

4.5.35 This section of the marketing plan would identify processes of data capture which develops evaluation from a descriptive narrative of activity, to an empirical analysis which informs future practice.

4.5.36 Sources for this section of the marketing plan are SMART objectives and the comparison of data within step 2, Review, to data from step 4, Implementation. This data comparison requires embellishment in the context of inputs, outputs and outcomes and might include any number of the following: staff and customer anecdote, customer exit surveys, customer telephone surveys, mystery shopping exercises and focus groups.
5 Marketing needs and delivering to those needs

5.1 Needs identification: explicit and implicit needs
5.1.1 The object of the marketing needs assessment has been to identify key marketing needs of the sector.

5.1.2 The marketing needs of the sector can be distinguished as being explicit needs and implicit needs.

5.1.3 This section of addresses the explicit needs of the sector and then addresses the implicit needs of the sector.

5.2 Needs identification: explicit needs
5.2.1 SEMLAC’s regional domain strategies have been reviewed as a source of stated marketing needs.

5.2.2 The three regional strategies are
   • Realising our Potential: a library and information development strategy for the South East 2002 – 2006
   • Future Archives South East: a strategy for archive development in the South East 2004-2007

5.2.2 Each of these strategies address marketing needs.

5.2.3 As extensive and robust research exercises in their own right, these strategies have formed the basis of semi-structured interviews. These interviews have informed the identification of explicit and implicit marketing needs.

5.3 Explicit marketing needs of the sector in outline
5.3.1 The following categories of marketing needs have been identified. They are presented in outline, and then expanded upon, in an order which reflects the marketing planning framework.

5.3.2 Customers
A primary and unifying marketing need of the sector is to address the retention and recruitment of current and potential customers. Increasing a customer base ensures direct and or indirect revenue, which enables growth rather than mere survival.
5.3.3 Known culture
In order for the sector to successfully retain and recruit customers, mlas need to develop the capacity to re-position. The product, services, processes, offer and communications of mlas require wider and deeper engagement with, and positive reflection of, consumer expectations derived from popular culture and commercial services.

5.3.4 Capacity
The economies of scale represented by partnerships need to be maximised. Partnerships build capacity of skills, knowledge, delivery and evaluation. Partnerships can extend the reach of mlas through addressing audience cross-over.

5.3.5 Market Intelligence
Market intelligence can be developed over time through improved data capture, embedded evaluation and acting upon that intelligence. Market intelligence develops the responsiveness of service development to segmentation and target groups.

5.3.6 Online
The increasing value of online services for cultural exchange provides an opportunity for development. Improving the online offer ensures optimum value is derived from this consistently changing and value-for-money medium for service delivery, customer communications and relationship building.

5.3.7 Marketing communications
The time-poor society and the budget limitations of the sector imply a need for distinctive and effective, branded marketing communications. This is reflected in the growth of targeted, personalised communications in the commercial sector.

5.3.8 Return on investment
As mlas diversify their products to reach current and potential audiences, this expansion requires more-from-less on an ongoing basis. Re-positioning activity therefore requires a return on investment in terms of skills, knowledge, delivery and evaluation.

5.3.9 Advocacy
For many mlas, increasing customers does not bring in direct revenue. Increased customer take-up needs to be communicated through advocacy to stakeholders to ensure sustainable funding.

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21 'Not for the Likes of You' How To Reach A Broader Audience produced by Morton Smyth Limited May 2004 p.39
5.4 **Explicit marketing needs of the sector expanded**

5.4.1 **Retaining current customers**
Marketing theory is clear that customer retention is both cost-effective and relatively straightforward to achieve. That current customers are committed to the intrinsic value of an MLA offer is well recognised in the sector.

5.4.2 Museum Friends groups, archive volunteers and public library reading groups are strong examples of activities which develop existing high levels of intrinsic value based customer engagement by adding a social dimension. This can bring about a new form of customer engagement with an MLA.

5.4.3 This new level of engagement can flow into institutional value through staff knowledge and understanding of the relationship between intrinsic and institutional values.

5.4.4 A concentration of marketing activity upon current customers is at the core of customer focused approaches to services. Customer focused activity is about understanding service delivery processes and ensuring they are developed in line with developing customer expectations. This is a relationship building process.

5.4.5 Awareness and responsiveness to developing alternative services provided by the wider market need to be addressed by MLAs as opportunities rather than threats. There is a need for competitor analysis, market share analysis and analysis of the character of the market.

5.4.6 There has been significant shift within the sector to the primacy of customer focused approaches to service delivery. The Charter Mark scheme emphasises and enables this approach and is arguably successful due to its fit with the strategic recognition within MLA institutions of the primacy of customer service.

5.4.7 The development of these approaches is especially relevant to lapsing customers. This group of customers need to be identified, understood and services need to be re-positioned and communicated accordingly.

5.4.8 There is a case to be made for making current and potential customers the primary internal performance measure from which all other indicators, measures, and impact assessments flow.
5.4.9 Recruitment of new customers
Whilst recognising the importance of retaining current customers, real growth requires recruiting new customers. This is a more challenging marketing aim. Potential customers present immediate barriers of communications and are likely to experience attitudinal and perceptual barriers to participation.

5.4.10 Potential customers require communications through media which reach them and which communicate strong and clear benefits of participation. Participation in MLA services may be an option which hasn't been chosen for some time, if at all.

5.4.11 Bourdieu argues\(^{22}\) that cultural participation appeals to socially privileged values lacked by socially underprivileged groups who mistake this lack as failure of their own. From this perspective, motives for participation are socially defined.

5.4.12 This is helpful to MLAs attempting to reach new audiences as it clarifies the need to equip potential customers with the confidence and skills they need to take up the MLA offer. This line of reasoning emphasises the need to tailor offers and the communication of those offers within ‘known culture’\(^{23}\).

5.4.13 **Wider engagement with known culture**
Known culture as represented by mass media, popular music, film, games, retail and leisure sectors are vehicles for connecting MLA offers with popular culture in its widest sense.

5.4.14 Connecting with known culture is about using popular culture to challenge its own excesses and ensuring that its immediacy and dynamism is tapped into and reflected by MLAs.

5.4.15 Failure to reflect popular culture polarises institutions and individuals:

“whether in Tottenham, St Paul's, Chapeltown, Handsworth, Peckham, Toxteth, or Moss Side, it was impossible to find my reality reflected in the images on television, in commercials, in books or in magazines”. David Lammy, Minister for Culture in the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, talking of growing up in the 1970s\(^{24}\).

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\(^{23}\) 'Not for the Likes of You: How To Reach A Broader Audience Produced by Morton Smyth Limited May 2004 p39

\(^{24}\) "Where now for black & minority ethnic heritage?" hosted by the Heritage Lottery Fund at the British Museum
5.4.16 **Capacity - workforce development**

Workforce development, in terms of marketing skills and the ability to relate marketing theory and practice to personal roles, is an oft-cited need. Increased marketing expertise within the workforce is a key driver for increasing customer take-up through the re-positioning of MLA offers.

5.4.17 MLAs require access to marketing training, support and advice as befits their given stage of organisational development.

5.4.18 This workforce need is one of institutional value. Marketing planning, skills and marketing informed activity, needs to be invested in by MLAs as a matter of urgency in order that marketing develops as an embedded capacity within the sector.

5.4.19 As part of a change management process, initial investment in marketing planning, skills and activity requires supplementary funding.

5.4.20 In the longer term, ensuring investment in marketing capacity is a leadership issue. Research\(^{25}\) is clear that in order to communicate externally the institutional values of understanding and responding to customers, those values need to be modeled internally by MLAs. This means recognizing investment in marketing as a strategic organisational necessity.

5.4.21 This investment has to be regarded as key to continued growth, from which greater revenue can be derived – the alternative is continual retreat.

5.4.22 Marketing capacity can either be developed through training, recruitment, consultancy, partnership or a combination of all four.

5.4.23 Improved marketing communications and the resulting raised profile of MLAs can positively impact upon recruitment and workforce motivation\(^{26}\). This has been one of the aims of MLA’s public libraries marketing campaign.\(^{27}\)

5.4.24 **Capacity - collaborative approaches to tactics**

Partnership and collaborative activity can be thought of as pooling unequal resources to meet a common goal.

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\(^{25}\) 'Not for the Likes of You' How To Reach A Broader Audience Produced by Morton Smyth Limited May 2004 p29


\(^{27}\) Marketing plan for public libraries in England April 2005 – March 2008, MLA
5.4.25 This approach is required from existing and new MLA networks towards funding, workforce, market intelligence, offer development, marketing communications, and evaluation.

5.4.26 Marketing plans enable the identification of common goals, resource needs and the communication of those needs to potential collaborators.

5.4.27 Open source protocols enable the sharing of research and understanding of customers. This informs partnership working and identifies sources of support for MLAs or networks of MLAs working together with a common segment or aspect of offer development.

5.4.28 SEMLAC’s Strategic Marketing Skills Bank is an open source approach to marketing skill sharing within the museum domain.

5.4.29 **Improved market intelligence**
Market intelligence is information on customers which requires active gathering and subsequent interpretation and analysis to be developed into organisational knowledge. The sharing of this intelligence creates sector knowledge, which builds over time. Improved market intelligence is a form of ongoing customer consultation which can be used to systematically inform service development and marketing communications.

5.4.30 Libraries, archives and some museums routinely collect customer data for transactional purposes. This data needs to be managed as a relational asset, through its analysis and deployment as a means of optimising marketing communications.

5.4.31 Developing market intelligence into organisational and sector knowledge enables segmentation, improved responsiveness to target markets and a stronger linkage of service development opportunity costs to organisational and sector objectives.

5.4.32 An open source approach to captured data, the interpretation and analysis of customer data through market research, marketing planning processes and evaluation is required to further effective use of market intelligence across the sector.

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28 Open source approaches assume the good faith of the end-user rather than requiring prior permission for use from a producer.
5.4.33 Development of online 'offer'

The online offer of each domain is increasingly important and allows for a meeting of the needs of current customers through direct service provision, building customer relationships and developing customers communications.

5.4.34 The relative ease of tracking customer engagement with services through this medium are well documented.

5.4.35 As broadband becomes more prevalent and consumers become increasingly time-poor, physical visits to MLAs will continue to be offset and complemented by virtual visits.

5.4.36 The development of the online offer to MLA customers is therefore crucial and is entirely consistent with product-driven development within the sector to date.

5.4.37 Marketing communications

The time-poor society, the competitive environment of the wider leisure market and the budget limitations of the sector imply a need for distinctive and effective, branded marketing communications.

5.4.38 Branding needs to reflect institutional values of service quality and organisational development in terms of customer orientation as well as providing a distinct graphic, visual message.

5.4.39 This need is reflected in the growth of targeted, personalised communications, and the relative slow-down in use of mass-media advertising, in the commercial sector.

5.4.40 There is a need for improved integration of marketing communications with service and offer development and market intelligence through online, direct marketing and 'outdoor' communication tools.

5.4.41 Some organisations find that their specific marketing communications needs conflict with a host organisation's communications guidelines, or that corporate branding is diluted within marketing communications produced in partnership.

5.4.42 The development of regional brands that have strong quality protocols offsets this problem and enables the internal communications between distinct corporate functions required to recognise common interests.

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29 Outdoor marketing communications refers to posters, billboards, which are a relatively common device for MLAs.
5.4.43 **Greater return on investment from specialised activity and collections**
Limited human and financial resources mean that the highest possible customer impact, staff development and improvement of market intelligence is required from specific campaigns. This requires strong marketing planning, accurate segmentation, partnerships and sharing the results.

5.4.44 This approach requires the identification of common goals, such as key target communities shared by geographically disparate mlas within the region.

5.4.45 A model of partnered organisational effort which allows a combination of ‘lead and follow’ roles creates relative economies of scale. Partnership enables lead organisations to further develop their understanding of best practice and primes following organisations with the tools they need to emulate leading organisations.

5.4.46 **Advocacy**
Mlas often have host organisations, such as local authorities, which operate within tight cultural spending parameters. The case for the sustainable funding of mlas has therefore to be made. Advocacy which evidences individual and social benefits from mla services, can ensure funding within a competitive micro-environment.

5.4.47 Marketing plans help cohere mla activity within a wider corporate agenda and plan the delivery of key advocacy and marketing communications messages.

5.4.48 Improving advocacy is about evidencing strong relationship between mla activity and corporate objectives, the aims of funding agencies, and wider political, social and economic value.

5.4.49 Despite the widely held belief within the sector that mlas do deliver instrumental value, there is limited evidence to raise these beliefs to the status of knowledge.

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30 ‘lead and follow’ is used here to describe a formalised partnership arrangement whereby one organisation pilots one project with the express intention of partner organisations following on from the learned outcomes of that pilot.

5.4.50 This agenda is about evidencing the instrumental value of mlas. From the knowledge economy, to community cohesion, to arts participation, to the DCMS' priority groups, to the common 'Quality of Life' aim of local authorities, it is the evidencing of the instrumental value of mlas that is required.

5.4.51 This agenda requires grown-up responses to data capture, professional standards of data management and tracking, and creative interpretation and communication of that data in a noisy public relations environment. The public relations environment for stakeholders is very different from that of consumers and different messages need to be devised accordingly.

5.4.52 The SE Hub/SEMLAC funded project to establish a database of museum engagement with schools is a significant project for education advocacy and service development in the museums domain.

5.4.53 SEMLAC’s Department for Education and Skills funded Strategic Commissioning project is a landmark project which develops cultural enrichment to cultural entitlement by deploying a range of museum services to schools across the region.

5.4.54 Developing marketing communications is facilitated by media-ready presentation of evidence of mla impact and has the potential to improve the sector’s capacity to engage mass-media.

5.4.55 Media plans, the planning of key messages and integrating mla communications to stakeholders, media and customers are prerequisites for improved advocacy and marketing communications.

5.5 Researched needs of organisations undergoing re-positioning

5.5.1 Whilst carrying out the evaluation of the New Audiences programme, amh identified key elements in re-positioning projects that were successful and had lasting effects for organisations.

5.5.2 The above treatment of marketing needs of the sector can be usefully complemented with the researched needs of individual organisations undergoing re-positioning.

5.5.3 These elements can be broken down into eight key areas.

5.5.4 Planning for change
Marketing planning needs to be integrated within business plans. Marketing planning enables evaluation and change based upon improved information and organisational knowledge, and addresses time, money and skill resources.
5.5.5 **Capacity change**
If organisations are to embed marketing, all levels of staff need marketing training supplementary to the existing staff development activity.

5.5.6 **Developing know how**
Organisational learning outcomes need to be derived from both successful and unsuccessful projects. These lessons must inform generic "instructions" for those who wish to repeat the activity.

5.5.7 **Specialist support**
When specialist support is provided, it is essential that the skills are transferred to the organisation and not lost when that support is gone. Support needs to be a value-for-money investment for organisations.

5.5.8 **Partnerships with purpose**
Partnerships need to be a means to a common customer centered end, rather than an end in itself or marriages of convenience driven by availability of funds.

5.5.9 **Region-wide support**
Investment in marketing capacity must inform the overall strategic development of mlas in the region and ensure best fit with the aims of political and funding stakeholders.

5.5.10 **Test techniques & support roll-out**
Organisations need the ability to pilot with impunity. Long term support for change is essential for any roll-out of success. One size does not fit all, there will be organisations where certain models are inappropriate.

5.5.11 **New mindsets**
Evaluation is too often a documentation of activity and its immediate impact. This must not continue. Evaluation needs to become integrated into the planning cycle of all projects, properly built into the budgets and timescales and acted upon at the beginning of any piece of work.
5.6 **Needs identification: implicit needs**

Though marketing practice is well developed within some mlas, the process which this project has worked through has highlighted implicit marketing needs of the sector.

5.6.1 Implicit needs of the sector are
- the need to invest in re-positioning
- a marketing planning framework to structure re-positioning
- marketing consultancy to develop approaches to re-positioning

5.6.2 Re-positioning enables mlas to adopt a systematic approach to identifying, anticipating and responding to customer needs and wants.

5.6.3 Marketing planning places marketing activity within wider business plans and identifies informational, workforce, and financial needs.

5.6.4 Marketing support, advice and consultancy structures organisational responses to those needs through planning, strategy setting, SMART objectives and evaluation.

5.7 **Delivering to explicit and implicit needs**

The marketing needs of the sector and individual organisations outlined above imply the need for delivery of services which meet those needs.

5.7.1 Through delivering a range of informational and interventional services structured by a marketing planning framework, the needs of the sector can be addressed.

5.7.2 This delivery is required to address needs derived from
1) policy, business climate and value needs
2) explicit needs of the sector
3) implicit needs of the sector

5.7.3 The resulting set of services are defined by their utility to the sector. Firstly, in terms of developing levels of marketing capacity and practice. Secondly, in terms of developing practice which is increasingly consistent with marketing theory.

5.7.4 Delivering these services will structure the remaining period of this project, March 2006 – April 2007.
### Appendix 1

**Consultation** - the following list of individuals and fora contributed to the consultation process.

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