

MODULE 11: Promoting Your Telecentre

UNIT 1: THE IMPORTANCE OF PROMOTING AND MARKETING YOUR TELECENTRE

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1.0 LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the importance of promoting your telecentre
- Explain the essential elements of marketing
- Define and differentiate the concepts of promotion, marketing and advertising

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Before we begin to discuss the importance of promoting your telecentre, let us ask: what exactly is promotion?

On a piece of paper, write down some words that come to your mind when you think of the word 'promotion'.

For the purposes of this curriculum we will define **promotion** as the 'advancement of a product, idea, or point of view through publicity and/or advertising'. And this product, idea or point of view would be your telecentre.

Often promotion is similar to marketing. And, how would we define marketing?

Marketing is a social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging products and values with others. It is an

integrated process through which companies create value for customers and build strong [customer relationships](#) in order to capture value from customers in return.

Once again, as in promotion, the product would be the telecentre.

Very often the words marketing and promotion are used interchangeably. Now that you know what the words promotion and marketing mean, let us move on to understand and explore the importance of promoting your telecentre.

1.2 UNDERSTANDING PROMOTION AND MARKETING

1.2.1 Promotion

Activity

Read this story:

“For the last five days I was at Kurigram, a remote district of Bangladesh, on a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) visit. A local NGI, PASS, has established a telecentre in this area with the technical assistance of D.Net.

During this visit, I met community people to learn about the quality of service delivery and to evaluate the information needs of the community. I do this by going door to door with infomediaries and mobile (cell phone) women. One of my responsibilities is to respond to infomediaries inquiries related to telecentre services. (*Editor’s note: An infomediary is a [personal agent](#) who works on behalf of [consumers](#), helping them to take control over information gathered about them for use by [marketers](#) and [advertisers](#).*)

During this visit I got two questions from the infomediaries: Why do community people not understand the importance of information? Why they are not interested to use the services from the telecentre? I said I would give my feedback at the end of my visit.

On the third day of my visit I was talking to a village woman about telecentres services. After hearing what I had to say, she told me that if she faces any problem she will visit our telecentre. Her mother-in-law was also there and listening to me. Suddenly the old lady said, “We have no problem then why would we visit your telecentre?” Her statement reminded me those two questions raised by the infomediaries.

I was curious why people are not visiting the telecentres. I spent a whole day with the community people and asked them about their problems. When I asked them about their daily information needs, they said they did not have any. But after spending time with them and getting to know them better, they talked about their problems.

I found **three reasons** for not sharing their problems with the infomediaries at the first meeting. These are:

1. Community people are not always **aware** about their livelihood problems. For example, a coconut tree is not giving coconuts. It could be a disease and there could be a solution. But, people are not ready to believe that. To them only human beings and animals have diseases not the trees.
2. Telecentre initiatives are new to community people. They are used to NGOs and their services but not telecentres. They **do not understand** the power of information. They are print disabled as well as IT illiterate. In fact, in many cases we are struggling to convince educated and techno users about the effectiveness of telecentres as they do not believe that access to information can change lives of the poor.
3. Community people are **shy** to share their livelihood problems with a stranger. Infomediaries have to first earn the trust of communities by getting to know them. Slowly, community people only will share their problems with the infomediaries and begin to use the telecentres.”

Source: (<http://community.eldis.org/.59c3a0b3>)

From this story we learn lessons which can and should be addressed by appropriate promotion and marketing techniques for your telecentre. Some of these issues are:

1. Credibility/trust of the telecentre operator
2. Telecentre operator not understanding/knowing the needs of the community where it is operating
3. Community does not know what the purpose of the telecentre and how they can use it
4. Community members are not aware of the roots of their problems or concerns
5. The importance of partnership and networking in telecentre operations.

Follow up to the story

The story you just read was based in Bangladesh. But, it could be anywhere in the world and in your community too. Do the following activity and find out the need to promote your telecentre.

Talk to about 20 people in your community. Ask them the following questions:

1. Have they heard about your telecentre? If the answer is a yes, then ask them:
2. Have they used the services of your telecentre? If the answer is yes, what services have they used?
3. Are they still using these services? If they are not, what are the reasons? If yes, what are the reasons?
4. Are they aware of other services of your telecentre but are not using them? What are these?
5. Are there those who know about your telecentre, but have not used it? Why not?

Note the number of people who have not heard of your telecentre; take note of their location in relation to your telecentre and other socio economic factors (age; income; education, gender; marital status, etc.)

The answers to these questions will already give you some insights on the following:

1. Whether you are successful in promoting your telecentre or
2. Whether you need to revise your strategies to promote your telecentre

Either way, this module will be important to you so you can plan the activities that are aimed at promoting your telecentre. Or you can evaluate your activities aimed at promoting your telecentre, devise mechanisms so you can further improve current practices, and identify success indicators which can guide you in promoting your telecentre.

1.2.2 Understanding Marketing

We often confuse the concepts marketing and promotion. Often, we use them interchangeably.

If you are not clear as to what these different concepts mean, then you cannot develop and implement a good and effective marketing plan or a plan to effectively and efficiently promote your telecentre. This lesson will help you understand these concepts and other terms related to telecentre marketing and promotion.

Promotion of a product is just a subset or one of the activities in marketing.

The relationship between marketing and promotion can further be seen when we look at the four P's of marketing.

The Four Ps of Marketing are:

1. **Product** - this is the focus of the marketing process and the transaction between the marketer and the buyer –*or you and the client of the telecentre*. It may refer to a tangible product or practice or service needed by the buyer.
2. **Price** - this usually refers to money or the cost of the product. In most cases, though, the price is far more than just the monetary cost. It may also include other factors like time the buyer needs to devote to buy the product; the opportunity costs or the other benefits that the buyer will miss when they buy the product. *In your case it refers to the charge for the service you provide the client.*
3. **Place** - this refers to the point where the actual purchase can be made or where the product is available. *In this case at your telecentre.*
4. **Promotion** - includes all activities being done to popularise the product or to inform your target market of the availability of your product. *In this case all the services offered by your telecentre.*

In promotion, keeping the product (or service as in the case of telecentres) in the minds of the customer and creating and stimulating a demand for it is key.

There are several activities associated with promotion. These are:

- Advertising
- Public relations and
- Sales

1.2.3 Advertising

You are aware of advertising or publicity activities as a way of promoting a product.

Whether it is toothpaste, a battery or cooking oil, manufacturers will have to advertise their products and services to sell them. Unless they advertise you or other buyers will not know about the product and therefore, will not buy them.

Promotion is always equated with advertising, as the most visible and common aspect of product promotion is advertising.

Now, let's take a look at the activities associated with promotion or the mechanisms which you can use to promote your telecentre.

So, what exactly is advertising?

Advertising is the paid, public, non-personal announcement of a persuasive message by an identified sponsor; the non-personal presentation or promotion by a firm of its products to its existing and potential customers.

Advertising is bringing a product (or service) to the attention of potential and current customers. It is typically done with signs, brochures, commercials, direct mailings or e-mail messages, personal contact, etc.

1.2.4 Public relations

Public relations (PR) are the practice of managing the communication between an [organisation](#) and the public. Public relations gain an organisation or individual [exposure](#) to their [audience](#).

Public relations pertain to activities which will ensure that the overall company (or your telecentre) has a strong public image and that the public understands your telecentre and its products and services.

Public relations are usually done through the print and broadcast media, for the purpose of creating and building a good image for your telecentre.

1.2.5 Sales

A sale is the top activity involved in [selling](#) products or services in return for money or other compensation. It is an act of completion of a commercial activity.

Sales involve most or many of the following activities:

- ❖ Cultivating prospective buyers (or leads) in a market segment;
- ❖ Conveying the features of the product or service, its advantages and benefits;
- ❖ Closing the sale (or coming to agreement on pricing and services)

Check Your Progress 1

Note:

- a) Please use the space given below each question for your answer
- b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit

1. Name 3 reasons why community people may not speak their minds

- i _____
- ii _____
- iii _____

2. Define the following in 25 words or less:

i Promotion

ii Marketing

iii Advertising

iv Public Relations

v Sales

3. List the 4 P's of Marketing

i _____

ii _____

iii _____

iv _____

1.3 SUMMING UP

In this Unit we learned about promotion and marketing telecentres. The main points are:

- Promotion and marketing are essential to the success and sustainability of your telecentre
- Community people may not know what their information needs are; they may not understand IT or be shy to approach the telecentre
- Advertising, public relations and sales are important aspects of marketing and promotion
- The 4 P's of Marketing are: Product; Price; Place and Promotion

1.4 Check Your Progress: Model Answers

1. People in the community may not speak their mind because:

i They are not aware

ii They do not understand

iii They are shy

2.

- i **Promotion** is the advancement of a [product](#), idea, or point of view through [publicity](#) and/or [advertising](#).

- ii **Marketing** is a social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging products and values with others. It is an integrated process through which companies create value for customers and build strong [customer relationships](#) in order to capture value from customers in return.
- iii **Advertising** is the paid, public, non-personal announcement of a persuasive message by an identified sponsor; the non-personal presentation or promotion by a firm of its products to its existing and potential customers.
- iv **Public relations** pertain to activities which will ensure that the overall company (or your telecentre) has a strong public image and that the public understands your telecentre and its products and services.
- v **Sales** are the top activity involved in [selling](#) products or services in return for money or other compensation. It is an act of completion of a commercial activity.

3. The 4 P's of Marketing are:

1. Product
2. Price
3. Place
4. Promotion

1.5 DEFINITIONS

1. Promotion

Promotion is the advancement of a [product](#), idea, or point of view through [publicity](#) and/or [advertising](#).

2. Marketing

Marketing is a social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging products and values with others. It is an integrated process through which companies/organisations create value for customers and build strong [customer relationships in order to capture value from customers in return](#).

3. Advertising

[Advertising is the paid, public, non-personal announcement of a persuasive message by an identified sponsor; the non-personal presentation or promotion by a firm of its products to its existing and potential customers.](#)

4. Sales

A sale is the top activity involved in [selling](#) products or services in return for money or other compensation. It is an act of completion of a commercial activity.

5. Public Relations

Public relations (PR) are the practice of managing the communication between an [organisation](#) and the public. Public relations gain an organisation or individual [exposure](#) to their [audience](#).

1.6 ASSIGNMENTS

1. Take one service that you are offering in your telecentre. Make a marketing plan for it by apply the 4 P's of marketing.

The presentation could be

1. A 5-7 minute cassette or CD audio recording
2. A video tape (5 minutes)
3. A written essay (1000 words)
4. A drawing
5. A poem
6. A photos essay (with about 10 photos and text)

1.7 GLOSSARY AND REFERENCES

<http://marketing.about.com/cs/advertising/a/marketvsad.htm>

http://www.managementhelp.org/ad_promot/defntion.htm

<http://marketing.about.com/od/strategytutorials/a/marketaservice.htm>

http://tutor2u.net/business/marketing/promotion_sales_promotion.asp

http://books.google.com/books?id=6T2R0_ESU5AC&pg=PP1&pg=PA7#v=onepage&q=&f=true. Retrieved 2009-10-23.