

## **MODULE 11: Promoting Your Telecentre**

### **UNIT 3: COMPONENTS OF PROMOTION**

#### ***Structure of the Unit***

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#### **3.0 LEARNING OUTCOMES**

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

- Use advertising, sales and public relations for promotion
- Use approaches to message design
- Design effective promotion strategies
- Develop a media strategy

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the previous Unit, you learned that promotion is one important aspect of marketing. You also learned that the activities of promotion are advertising, sales and public relations. We will, in this Unit, discuss promotion in the context of these three activities.

Promotion is all about communication. What is communication?

Communication is the process of passing on information from a sender to a receiver with the use of a medium. In this curriculum, communication means to get the word out about your telecentre and the services you offer.

#### **3.2 PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES**

One common form of promotion is advertising. Just like any communication activity, advertising includes several elements. Before investing money in advertising for your telecentre, consider the following:

##### **1. Objectives of the advertisement**

- How many people do you want to reach through this advertisement?
- What change do you expect to happen after the release of the advertisement?

- Do you just want to inform people about the existence of your telecentre?
- Do you want people to think about how modern communication technologies can improve their lives?
- Or, is it just coming to the telecentre and using the services?

## 2. Messages

These will be designed to get the attention of your targeted clients and convey the message that you want to convey regarding your telecentre.

## 3. Channels or media of communication

What appropriate media will you use to ensure that your message will reach your target client group?

4. Credible or trustworthy **spokesperson** who will endorse your telecentre.

Let's look at these in more detail.

## Objectives of the strategy

In Unit 1 of this Module we asked the question: why should you promote your telecentre? If the answer to this was to get clients to use your telecentre and “buy” your services, then how will you go about this?

In formulating the objectives of this promotional activity, there are guidelines which you can follow. This will also help your assessment of whether what you are doing is working or not in terms of achieving the over-all goal of telecentre promotion.

Two approaches to use in formulating the objectives of a promotional strategy are the ABCD and SMART. Let's look at them in detail.

## The ABCD Approach

**A for Audience** – In the previous Units of this Module you learned about segmentising or separating the audience. Your primary audience or market is the target of this promotional strategy. You may also develop other promotional strategies for other groups you wish to reach.

**B is for Behaviour** - This relates to your target client group which will come to your telecentre and use the services you offer.

**C is for Condition** - This describes the conditions under which you want the expected behaviour to occur. If the expected behaviour is ‘buying’ or using the services of your telecentre, then you now specify under what conditions your target client group do it. For example, when they want to use the internet, or need quick tutorials about a software application, or want to consult a medical professional, they will go to your telecentre.

**D is for Degree** – This is the extent of change you want in your target client group. For example, what percentage in your target client group will go to your telecentre after, perhaps,

six months of doing your promotional activity? Or how many clients are you targeting to visit your telecentre in one, two, six or 12 months after implementing your promotional activity?

### **The SMART Approach**

**S is for Specific** - You have to be specific about what is it that you want to achieve in your promotional activity. Definitely, your answer will be 'for my target client group to actually visit my telecentre and buy/use the services I offer'.

Your objectives will determine how you develop your message and what medium or channel of communication you will use in your promotional activities.

**M is for Measurable** - Again, you need to quantify or put a figure to this: how many do you want to have at the telecentre as a result of your promotional activities? This number can be used as one indicator in assessing the effectiveness of your promotional activity.

**A is for Attainable** – You may want to set a target of 100% achievement. Whatever your goal, it must be practical so that it can be met.

Example, if your target client group is high school students aged 12-16 in your community, and there are about 5,000 in your community, then you may want to set 30 or 50% of this group. In setting this goal, you will also have to assess the number of clients which your telecentre can serve.

**R is for Realistic** - Given the resources that you will allocate for your promotional activity, set a realistic target. If you will just be using an interpersonal approach, then the 'spread of the word' about your telecentre may not be that far and wide. This also relates to the 'attainable' aspect, above.

**T is for Time Bound** - Set a realistic time frame - say 4, 6 or 12 months or more time - when you would want to see achieve your targets. During this time you will also do an assessment or monitoring of your promotional activities.

## **3.3 DESIGNING MESSAGES**

A great deal is involved in designing messages for your promotional activities, paid or unpaid.

When you develop your message, you have to be clear about what you want your target client group to do. The challenge is to 'say your message' in a way that the end result is your goal. The characteristics of your client group will determine how you will design and develop your message.

Message development is central part of your marketing programme. Content is an important aspect of message design.

### **Content of the message**

There are three general types of messages:

1. Messages that **inform** (i.e., contains facts and data)
2. Messages that **persuade** (i.e., makes emotional and intellectual appeals)
3. Messages that **combine both**

If your objective is simply to increase awareness of your telecentre, then you will most likely use a message that informs.

If your objective is to convince community leaders to support and endorse your telecentre, then you will need a message that both informs and persuades. **Generally speaking, messages that both inform and persuade are the most effective.**

How you communicate the message (e.g. intellectual versus emotional appeal) will depend on the profile of the group you want to target. For those well educated, an intellectual appeal may be preferable as they tend to evaluate products and services based on the features. However, depending on the product you are selling, even among those highly educated, the emotional appeal may also prove to be effective.

Take selling insurance as an example. This combines both the intellectual and emotional appeals. Intellectual as you need to present actual facts and figures and concrete computations of benefits vis-à-vis the cost of the premium. However, people will buy insurance for emotional reasons - to protect their family.

### **Style of the message**

You will direct your advertisement to the primary target group, right? The profile of this group will greatly influence the style you will use in your message. For example, if government officials are your target audience, think of a formal communication style. If you are targeting farmers, use a spoken style. Ultimately, the style you choose will be one that most suits your target audience.

### **Your Unique Selling Point (USP)**

You may recall discussing the USP in previous Modules. Your USP should be the centre of your message and is the single, most compelling idea in your message. It is usually short, simple and easy to remember. Imagine if you have only 15 seconds of radio air time for your advertisement, what would you say that will make the listeners remember your telecentre?

Again, keep in mind your target client group. The most compelling idea to you may not be the most compelling idea to your target audience. Imagine for a moment that you are your target audience. What USP would have the greatest appeal to you? For this answer, it may be a good idea to check your Community Needs Assessment.

In many cases, the USP is the only thing that your target client group will remember after hearing your advertisement or after seeing your promotional materials, e.g. poster. This is the reason why USP is important.

### **Choosing your medium**

To reach your target client group with your carefully crafted message, you need a medium or a channel of communication. There are two basic types of media or channels: **mass media** and **interpersonal media**.

Mass media includes television, newspapers, magazines, radio and other information sources. It is highly effective for creating general awareness.

Interpersonal channels are groups of people sharing information, usually in a face-to-face setting. They are usually more effective for promoting attitude or behavioral change.

### ***Mass Media***

Each mass medium has its own attributes and what to use will largely depend on your objectives and your target client group.

Television and radio for instance may prove to be effective if they are present in the area where your target client group is. Newspapers and magazines can also be considered, however, if your target client group has access and reads them.

Below are the characteristics of the mass media which you may want to consider when choosing exactly what medium to use.

#### **Characteristics of TV, Radio and Newspapers**

##### **Television**

Immediacy

Excellent for demonstrating things

Highly engaging—combines visuals, sound, text, and motion

Broadcasts are tied to schedules

Fleeting (i.e., once the announcement is over, it is over)

##### **Radio**

Immediacy

Very wide reach

Programming is highly localised and relevant to the community

Broadcasts are tied to schedules

Fleeting

##### **Newspapers**

“Not same day news”

Contains more detailed information

Can be read anytime, anywhere

Relatively permanent

### ***Non-Mass Media***

You can consider non-mass media such as brochures, booklets, posters, and flyers. They are cheap and fast to produce. You can produce these promotional materials yourself with some basic equipment such as a computer and printer. Web pages may also be useful in your marketing efforts.

### **Interpersonal Channels**

This is often known as spreading information by ‘word of mouth’. It means you communicate and spread your message by getting people to talk about it to others. Sometimes this involves giving incentives to people to talk about your message, and sometimes it doesn’t. For instance, you can reach adults through their children. You can plan a telecentre activity with school children that will excite them enough to share it with their parents.

**Note:** ‘Word of mouth’ is most effective when you can get someone who is respected and trusted within the community network to spread your message. If the message comes from a respected and trusted source, your message has a higher chance of being accepted and spread further.

### **Credible or trustworthy endorser**

In commercial marketing, an endorser makes the product promotion effective. It is useful if the endorser believes in the power of IT as a tool for social change. They should have a good reputation, be credible, trustworthy and have knowledge on the subject area being endorsed. For instance, an individual cannot talk about the benefits of access if they are computer illiterate, and proud of it!

Promotional efforts cannot succeed if the product's benefits, price, and placement are not also in line with the people's wants and needs. So programme promotions will have to be in perfect synch with the other marketing activities or to be more precise about it, with the other P’s of marketing.

## **3.4 WORKING WITH THE MEDIA**

Public relations (which you learned about in the previous Units) refer to practices that aim to influence public opinion in favor of a product or in your case, the telecentre. It is usually referred to as PR and can take many forms such as media relations, events (e.g. inaugurating your telecentre) or sponsorship and charitable donations.

An effective mechanism to promote your telecentre, even with a very limited budget, is media. This means you will have to have a good relationship with the media. Compared to advertising, media relations is not a directly paid service. While the activity may incur some indirect cost, there is more room for flexibility as to what will cost how much.

Media relations usually result in media coverage. Since you will not have control as to how the press will report what was covered, the write-up can be more persuasive to your target audience than other forms of marketing, because it is perceived to come from a neutral and independent source.

### **Suggestions for successful media relations**

**1. Identify the media:** Locate newspaper, television, radio, and magazine editors and writers who are inclined to report about social, community, or technology-related subjects. Since these are their ‘beats’ or things they cover and write about, your telecentre event can be seen as newsworthy or deserving space in the paper, magazine, channel or radio station.

**2. Focus on the story:** The media are interested in *news* – information that is current, significant, and relevant to the community. They are also interested in personalities, ‘success’ stories as well as big or unusual events. Think of newsworthy events and ‘sell’ them to the media. Examples of story angles include:

- Local personality (politicians for instance) to be present at the launch of your telecentre or other activities you can think of for your telecentre (‘Personality’ and ‘Big Event’)
- Telecentre will link people to the rest of the world (News that is significant and relevant to the community)
- Telecentre finds a long lost member of a family in the community (Success Story)

**3. Needs of media:** Remember, media have different information needs and interests. For example, a business newspaper will be more interested in the economic impact of the telecentre in the community e.g. how many jobs it will generate, how will the telecentre promotes the growth of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), etc. A technical magazine may want to take a closer look at the ‘state of the art’ equipment and facilities that your telecentre has and how the presence of your telecentre can benefit the whole community.

**Note:** You need to fit the story angle to the information needs and interests of the media you have in mind.

### **Keep in Mind:**

- Reporters want **exclusive reports** or ‘scoops’ that beat other news media. Therefore, if you are thinking of inviting more than one reporter or media personality, be sure that they claim scoops in whatever story they will report.

- Reporters work on very **short deadlines**. Schedule the event such that the reporter will still have time to write and meet press deadline.
- Reporters need **information that is accurate, timely and complete**.
- Prepare a **press kit** which contains information the reporter may need when writing the story. This may include the background of your telecentre, the services it offers, the organisational set-up, and how it will benefit the community.
- Provide a **contact point** in case the reporter wants to verify information. Phone numbers are always helpful.
- Provide a **list of individuals** whom the reporter can interview if they want to present another angle of the story e.g. from a student's perspective, a homemakers perspective, etc.
- Provide a **sample news article** or news releases and feature articles about your telecentre. Your straight news article can be a simple write up providing information on the 'who, what, when, where and why' of your telecentre.

**4. Contact list:** Make a list of editors and reporters to whom you want to 'sell' your story. Their response will largely depend on how 'newsworthy' your event is. Editors and reporters have many other stories to write each day and they will definitely choose which among these competing stories will 'sell the most to their target audience.

**5. Partnership with media:** It is also important to treat the media as a **long-term partner** – an editor or reporter may not write a story about your telecentre today, but they may tomorrow or a week or two later. Always think of the power of the media and how they can shape public opinion. That is why it's called building a relationship with the media.

**6. Focus on the newsworthy:** This can be a launch of major activities which will also help promote your telecentre. Examples are 'Farmers Hour', 'Health Talk', 'Children's Time' etc where you can give priority to farmers, health, children etc in the services of your telecentre. It can be offering a computer tutorial class to kids or the senior citizens in the community where you are operating. Offer these stories to the media and invite them to cover the highlight of the events.

**7. Be available to the media:** If you want to maintain good media relations, you have to make yourself accessible to the media. Return calls, letters, etc. In short, keep the communication lines open. Don't hesitate to invited media people for a cup of tea or coffee to just chat, without an agenda. That is how relationships are built.

**8. Launching the Telecentre or other services:** As a part of promotional activities and media coverage, look at the example below. It is the inauguration of a telecentre with

suggestions about specific activities that you will launch as part of your promotional activities for your telecentre. You can have a telecentre opening event only once but you can think of other major activities to launch which will also give your telecentre good media coverage.

### **Planning an Telecentre Launch Event**

Announce the opening of your telecentre with an event.

- **Invite a high-profile person** from the community - such as the President or the Deputy President, a local MP, or the director of a funding agency to open the telecentre
- **Invite all community organisations** you know (they could be future partners), as well as to representative of local government and the business sector. Send the invitations in good time so people can plan and be free to come.
- **Invite all local media** to the opening event.
- **Arrange a programme** for part of the day. This might include an opening speech, a demonstration, refreshments, etc.
- Make sure that plenty of **photographs** are taken.
- A **Steering or Management Committee member** must welcome guests.
- Take the **names and contact details of all attending the event**. Get a guest book with space for comments which can be included in articles and in displays of the opening event.
- After the opening of the Telecentre, **mount a display**, including photographs in the local library, shopping centre or community centre. The topic is less important than how many people it will attract into the telecentre.
- **Develop an individual design/logo** for packaging or wrapping all material that leaves the telecentre, so it becomes identifiable and recognised by clients.
- **Run a logo/slogan competition** in the local community; encourage school students to become involved in developing a telecentre slogan.
- **Organise a series of awareness programs** and invite small groups or members of local organisations to attend a free-of-charge induction into telecentre services and facilities that would be particularly useful for that group.

- Organise a light lunch and **invite representatives from local businesses**, the chamber of commerce and government departments. As with an open day, include demonstrations of the telecentres computing and technology equipment and a presentation on the benefits of the telecentre to local business. This event will need to be tightly structured, due to the time constraints of the people attending.
- **Display brochures** at local points of interest, such as the library, tourist bureau, schools and other public places.
- Capitalise on **“word of mouth” marketing**. Have brochures, business cards or pamphlets available to all committee members and the coordinator at all times. This information can then be distributed by these people in the normal course of their day, when someone asks them about the telecentre.

### 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. List the ABCD approach

- i \_\_\_\_\_
- ii \_\_\_\_\_
- iii \_\_\_\_\_
- iv \_\_\_\_\_

2. List the SMART approach

- i \_\_\_\_\_
- ii \_\_\_\_\_
- iii \_\_\_\_\_
- iv \_\_\_\_\_
- v \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name 3 general types of messages

- i \_\_\_\_\_
- ii \_\_\_\_\_
- iii \_\_\_\_\_

4. Name the two types of media or channels of communication

- i. \_\_\_\_\_
- ii. \_\_\_\_\_

### **3.5 SUMMING UP**

In this Unit we have learned about the various components of promotion. The main points are:

- Promotion is a strategic exercise
- Advertising, sales and public relations are essential elements of telecentre promotion
- Messages for telecentre promotion have to be carefully designed
- Both mass and non mass media can be used to promote the telecentre and its services
- Developing and cultivating relationships with media is very important
- Using word of mouth or informal methods of promotion are equally important

### **3.6 Check Your progress: Model Answers**

1. The ABCD approach is:

1. A for Audience
2. B is for Behaviour
3. C is for Condition
4. D is for Degree

2. The SMART approach is:

1. S is for Specific
2. M is for Measurable
3. A is for Attainable
4. R is for Realistic
5. T is for Time Bound

3. There are three general types of messages:

1. Messages that inform
2. Messages that persuade
3. Messages that combine both

4. The two types of media or channels of communication are

- i mass media and
- ii interpersonal media

### **3.7 DEFINITIONS**

## 1. Communication

Communication is the process of passing on information from a sender to a receiver with the use of a medium.

### 3.8 ASSIGNMENTS

Make a presentation of your telecentre launch. If the telecentre is already in service, think of a new product or service that is being introduced. Describe how you would publicise the event, using all that you have learned in this Unit.

*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)

### 3.9 GLOSSARY AND REFERENCES

1. Jensen M and Esterhuysen A. *The Telecentre Cookbook for Africa*. UNESCO, France. 2001.

2. Western Australia Telecentre Network Tool Kit.

[www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)