Stage 3: Set Up and Start Up
Theme 6: Marketing

UNDERSTANDING YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE AND DEFINING YOUR VALUE PROPOSITION

Now that you’re ready to turn your idea into a reality and begin defining your business model, it’s time to think about how you will market your products or services. Marketing is a much broader topic than many people imagine. Most people would probably define marketing as advertising, PR and sales; but the true concept of marketing is much broader and a key part of any organisation.

What is marketing and why is it important?

At the most simplistic level, marketing is the activity, which connects your organisations ‘offering’ with the target audience(s). Marketing is therefore the key ‘enabler’ to growing your business and achieving success. The principles of marketing are commonly understood around the following core ‘components of marketing’:

- **The offering:** the products (e.g. ethically sourced clothing) or services (e.g. counselling) your organisation will offer.

- **The value proposition:** Articulating your offering to the target audience- ‘the solution to their needs’.

- **The marketing strategy:** Your strategy for connecting with the target audience (e.g. deciding to target a specific geographical audience).

- **The marketing plan:** The objectives, budgets and tools that will be used to deliver the marketing strategy.

- **The target audience:** The stakeholders who will be ‘sold’ your value proposition.
Underpinning all of these marketing pillars must be comprehensive understanding of the target audience (e.g. who they are, where they are, what are their needs and their typical characteristics). The relationship between these different components is illustrated in the diagram below:

In this section, we will discuss the value proposition and understanding your target audience. Marketing strategy and marketing plans are discussed in the next section of this theme of the toolkit; note that it’s also worth reading the corresponding section of the Business Model theme - in particular, the importance of defining your offer and the introduction to stakeholders.

**Defining your target audience**

The relationship between your organisation’s value proposition and the target audience can be slightly more complicated for social enterprises due to the range of external stakeholders often involved. External stakeholders are typically defined as the people or organisations either affect or are affected by your organisation.

Identifying your external stakeholders will allow you to define your target audience(s), thereby allowing you to define your value propositions to these audiences. When identifying external stakeholders, it may be helpful to use the following categories, which will often cover the typical stakeholders for a social enterprise. Your particular project will have emphases on different groups, depending on what it is you will be doing and how you will be doing it:
Let’s look at an example of how this works in practice; Social Enterprise ‘D’ is providing advice, information and support to refugees and migrants in city ‘y’. Due to the nature of its offering, the target audience consists of stakeholders identified from all the categories introduced above. The diagram on the following page provides an example of an ‘external stakeholder map’ for this organisation:

Taking this into consideration, although your offer may be constant, you may need to develop different value propositions to each respective stakeholder within the target audience. For example, the **target groups** for social enterprise ‘D’s offering (refugees and migrants) will be interested in how the services will benefit them personally; whereas the **target suppliers** (grant makers and local authority commissioners) may need to know how the activities and services will addresses their priority criteria and targeted outcomes for their funding/contracting requirements.

**Understanding your target audience**

As introduced earlier, understanding your target audience is a vital step in enabling your organisation to define its value proposition(s). Once you have defined your external stakeholders within your target audience, the
The next step is to examine the key features of each stakeholder group or audience.

Understanding target groups (e.g. beneficiaries or paying customers) will probably require the most in-depth analysis. For this target audience you will need to understand:

- The size of the target audience
- The structure of the target audience (this will often involve trying to segment the audience into a number of core groups)
- The trends associated with the target audience (e.g. growth)
- The needs and characteristics of the target audience (this is vital to allow you to develop a strong value position that addresses the needs and demands of the target audience)

For the target suppliers (e.g. grant makers, local authority commissioners etc) and operating environment (regulators, statutory services, local community etc) categories, you will need to focus on understanding the core needs, characteristics and trends of these stakeholders.

Using the example of social enterprise ‘D’ discussed previously, let’s explore some of the questions you might set out to answer when trying to understand the target audience for this organisation:
# Audience

- **Refugees**
- **Migrants**

**Questions**
- What are the core needs or refugee/migrants? (e.g., Education, Employment, etc.)
- What are the main problems that prevent refugees from addressing these problems?

# Stakeholder Group

- **Size**
- **Trends**

**Audience**

- **Target Groups**
  - Number of refugees/migrants in target region?
  - Number of refugees/migrants by origin?

**Structure**

- Where are the refugees/migrants from (origin)?
- Where do they live?

**Need/Characteristics**

- How is the refugee/migrant population changing (growth/decline)?
- Where are the refugees/migrants from (origin)?
- Where do they live?

**Trends**

- How many grant makers fund the refugee/migrant sector?
- How is the local authority budget for these services structured?

**Size**

- How many refugees/migrants are in the target region?
- How many refugees/migrants are in the target region by origin?

**Structure**

- How many refugees/migrants are in the target region?
- How many refugees/migrants are in the target region by origin?

**Need/Characteristics**

- How many refugees/migrants are in the target region?
- How many refugees/migrants are in the target region by origin?

**Trends**

- What are the key trends in this sector for the grant maker funding?
- What are the key trends in this sector for the LA spending?

**Size**

- How many refugees/migrants are in the target region?
- How many refugees/migrants are in the target region by origin?

**Structure**

- How many refugees/migrants are in the target region?
- How many refugees/migrants are in the target region by origin?

**Need/Characteristics**

- How many refugees/migrants are in the target region?
- How many refugees/migrants are in the target region by origin?

**Trends**

- What are the key trends in this sector for the grant maker funding?
- What are the key trends in this sector for the LA spending?

**Audience**

- **Target Groups**
  - Number of refugees/migrants in target region?
  - Number of refugees/migrants by origin?

**Structure**

- Where are the refugees/migrants from (origin)?
- Where do they live?

**Need/Characteristics**

- How is the refugee/migrant population changing (growth/decline)?
- Where are the refugees/migrants from (origin)?
- Where do they live?

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**Trends**

- What are the key trends in this sector for the grant maker funding?
- What are the key trends in this sector for the LA spending?
The term ‘market research’ is often used as a collective term for working through the analysis and questions outlined above. Market research consists of two core methodologies; primary research and secondary research. Primary research involves the collection of data or information that does not already exist. Secondary research involves the summary, collation and/or synthesis of existing research; government reports, local statistics or trade journals, for example.

Secondary research would usually be used to understand the size, structure and possibly the trends within the different target audiences; whereas primary research would be used to understand the more qualitative elements such as the needs and characteristics of the target audience. In reality, it is primary research, through the development of your networks and relationships, which will usually give you the best insight into how your stakeholders think their needs and their expectations. As you learn more about them, try to maintain a ‘map’ of what this is telling you about how best to communicate what you do to them.

The process of understanding of your target audience(s) will enable you to define a strong value proposition (or positions), whilst also helping you to identify the opportunity for your offering in the market landscape.

**Defining your value proposition**

The next step is to define your value proposition(s). As discussed previously, your value proposition is the way in which you articulate your offering to the target audience(s) - ‘the solution to their needs’.

In addition to addressing the target audience needs, your value proposition should be grounded in the strategy and objectives outlined in both the business model and the social model for your organisation.

There are typically three types of value proposition:

- **Efficiency**: delivering your product/service at a better price than the competition

- **Leadership/ Innovation**: delivering a unique or leading product/service to the target audience

- **Audience Intimacy**: creating an intimate relationship with your target audience, beyond that of the competition
An **efficiency** value proposition will usually be reliant on high volume, low value (cost) services or products. In contrast, a **leadership/innovation** and **audience intimacy** value proposition will usually focus on delivering high value products or services, but at a lower volume.

Due to the number of stakeholder / target audiences that you may need to be ‘selling’ your ideas to, the value proposition may need to be adapted from audience to audience. For example, the value proposition to the **target beneficiaries** of social enterprise ‘D’ (discussed previously) will probably be one of **audience intimacy**-building strong relationships and trust with the beneficiaries through a comprehensive and targeted service offering focused on their identified needs. Whereas the value proposition to a **local authority commissioner** is more likely to be focused on **efficiency** and / or **leadership/innovation**.

Your value proposition should aim to differentiate your offering from other organisations in the market landscape (often described as your **USP: unique selling point**); therefore it will be important to consider the value propositions of the key competitors/ potential partners defined in your analysis of the target audience. Think about what type of value proposition each of your competitors are offering, and how you are different – this will help identify the things you need to highlight through your value proposition and your marketing more generally. This is a key part of thinking about your marketing strategy, discussed in the next section of this theme of the toolkit.

Once you have defined your value proposition(s), you will use this as the foundation for your entire **marketing strategy** and your **marketing plan** – see the next section in this theme of the toolkit.
DEVELOPING YOUR MARKETING STRATEGY AND MARKETING PLAN

We have introduced the core components of marketing in the previous section of this theme: defining your target audience, understanding your target audience and defining your value proposition. This section will look at the final two core components of marketing; your marketing strategy and marketing plan.

**What is a marketing strategy?**

The marketing strategy of your organisation should define how you plan to communicate your value proposition to the target audience. It should therefore consider:

- **Your brand identity** - how you communicate your value proposition / offering to the market

- **Your position in the market landscape** - how does your value proposition compare to your competitors?

- **Your ‘routes to market’** - how will you reach the target audience with your value proposition?

Your marketing strategy should be seen as an integral component of the overall business strategy and will play a fundamental role in delivering your organisation’s mission and overall strategic aims. Once you have defined your marketing strategy, you will then be able to develop a marketing plan - i.e. the objectives, budgets and tools that will be used to deliver the marketing strategy.

**Marketing strategy - brand identity**

In some cases you may need to communicate your value proposition in different ways depending on the target audience or route to market. For example, an organisation providing information and advice services to the homeless is likely to communicate very differently with beneficiaries versus Local Authority commissioners.
Features are factual statements about your product or service, whereas the benefits should answer the target audiences question ‘how does this benefit me?’ The example below demonstrates the use of features and benefits within a value proposition for an organisation supplying its products in fully recyclable packaging:

**Fully recyclable packaging - reducing your impact on the environment**

The core features and benefits of your value proposition should be used as the basis for your brand identity. Brand identity is a visual representation of your features and benefits, built upon a set of values that represent your organisation. Brand identity is much more than just a logo; it is a way of bringing together a specific set of values to help differentiate your offering in the market place and achieve competitive advantage. Developing your brand identity will require you to define a set of brand values. These values should be closely aligned with values defined in your business model, and will form the foundation of your ‘message’ to the target audience. The diagram below illustrates the relationship between features, benefits and values in creating your organisation’s brand identity.

Your brand identity needs to work effectively with all segments your target audience, and through all routes to market. However, the specific features and benefits you decide to emphasise may vary depending on the audience segment/ route to market in which you are communicating your value proposition (see marketing plan- next section).
This section of the toolkit has only briefly summarised the key components of brand identity. The Design Council UK has produced a number of excellent guides on this topic, including some comprehensive case studies around developing brand identity and the process of brand design (see www.designcouncil.org.uk/resources-and-events/Business-and-public-sector/Guides).

**Marketing strategy – your positioning in the target market**

Once you have defined your value proposition, the next important step is to evaluate how you want to position yourself within the market. Your target market is generally defined as the area or sector in which you are planning to operate. For example, if your organisation’s value proposition is ‘high-end ethical fashion clothing for women’, your target markets might include the ‘ethical fashion market’ and the ‘high end fashion market’.

Understanding your market position will require you to compare your organisation’s value proposition to those of the competitors in your target market landscape(s). Understanding your market position will then enable you to define and communicate your ‘competitive advantage’ or ‘unique selling point’. This in turn will help you define the key features of your product or service that you should be communicating to the target audience.

This process usually involves assessing your core competitors across a number of common variables. For a social enterprise, typical variables might include:

- Scale of social or environmental outcomes
- Quality of social or environmental outcomes
- Price
- Innovation
- Potential for replication / scaling up
- Social / environmental responsibility and ethical values

The diagram below illustrates how you might assess yours and others’ market position around two key variables, in this case quality and social responsibility (in reality, you are likely to need to think about this across a larger number of dimensions):
The diagram suggests that social enterprise B’s (value proposition: high-end ethical fashion clothing for women) is positioned in a unique place within the target market, focusing on both quality and social responsibility. Assuming that this value proposition addresses the needs of the target audience, this organisation should have a competitive advantage within the target market (although in reality, other factors such as price are also likely to be important).

**Marketing strategy - your routes to market**

The final step required in developing your organisation’s marketing strategy is to define the ‘routes to market’. ‘Routes to market’ are the different routes or channels that your organisation will need to use in order to access the defined target audience with your value proposition. When assessing your ‘routes to market’, it might be useful to consider the methods you might be able to use to reach your target audience; direct, or indirect.

For example, the ethical fashion company may chose to communicate its value proposition directly to a consumer target audience through a
PR campaign, signposting people to their website. However, it may also consider the indirect routes in may need to use in order to reach more people and generate greater sales. The diagram below illustrates ‘social enterprise B’s’ routes to market:

Your marketing plan (discussed later) will require you to consider how you will prioritise the different routes to market. For example, different routes to market may generate different levels of profitability for your organisation, therefore you may decide to prioritise you organisations focus on these routes to market.

**Developing your marketing plan**

Your marketing strategy should define your strategy for connecting with the defined target audience. Consequently, your **marketing plan** should identify practical steps and tactics to deliver the marketing strategy. This section will look at the key elements of a marketing plan:
- **Objective:** Each objective of the marketing plan should be focused on enabling the organisation to deliver its mission and strategic aims. Marketing objectives are typically focused on achieving one or more of the following results:

  - Generate new customers/ beneficiaries from within your target audience.
  - Retaining your existing customers/ beneficiaries.
  - Existing customers/ target audience purchase more products or services from your organisation.
  - Creating systemic change to change the way in which your product or service is delivered / paid for.

- **Tools:**

  - **Price:** how much will you need to charge for your product or service?
  - **Place:** which audience segment & routes to market will you focus on for delivery of this objective?
  - **Promotion:** your communications plan- which features, benefits and values will be communicated to this specific audience segment and through this specific route to market?

- **Plan:**

  - **Goals:** what goals will you need to meet to make sure you deliver the objective?
  - **Time frame:** when will you need to achieve these goals?
  - **Resource/ budget:** what will you need to invest in to achieve these goals?

*Note: If your organisation has a number of different products / services, you may need to develop a number of marketing plans for each respective product / service.*
The following table illustrates how these key elements of the marketing plan can be brought together in one summary table. The example shown below summarises the marketing plan for ‘Social Enterprise D’- an organisation providing advice, information and support to migrants and refugees in city ‘y’:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJECTIVE</th>
<th>PRICE</th>
<th>PLACE</th>
<th>PROMOTION</th>
<th>GOALS</th>
<th>TIME FRAME</th>
<th>RESOURCE BUDGET/REQUIREMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Renew service contract with Local Authority Increase the number of migrants/refugees that access our advice and info services by 25% (5000+)** | • 12% reduction in price from existing contract  
• Full cost recovery of direct service costs  
• 25% cost recovery of central costs. | • Local Authority Commissioners  
• Direct contact with commissioners  
• PR & media campaign | “Social Enterprise D will improve the social inclusion of migrants in city ‘y’ and reduce demand on traditional statutory services through our comprehensive advice and information service” | • Establish commissioning goals for new service contract tender  
• Develop a high quality, evidence based bid. | • Bid finalised Jan  
• 20% of CEO time  
• £4k for business planning support |  
| Increase the number of migrants/refugees that access our advice and info services by 25% (5000+) | n/a | • Migrants  
• Refugees | • PR & media campaign  
• Website  
• Statutory services | “Social Enterprise D provides free advice, information and support to refugees and migrants, helping you adjust to life in city ‘y’ and providing you with a place to discuss any problems you may have” | • Launch new website  
• Launch new PR & media campaign.  
• Organise Statutory service workshop day. | • Website-March  
• PR & media Campaign-Feb  
• Workshop-July | • Website-£10k  
• New role: Comms Officer |  
| Campaign for refugee and migrant rights at the local level | n/a | • Local MPs  
• Local Councillors  
• Statutory bodies: Border agency, Passports and Immigration National Government  
• National Government | • Research paper & press release  
• PR & media campaign  
• Website  
• Other NGOs | “Social Enterprise D: campaigning for a ‘fair deal’ for migrants and refugees in city ‘y’.” | • Commission research paper.  
• Launch new PR & media campaign.  
• Attend local council integration steering group. | • Research Paper: Commission-May, Release-Aug  
• PR & media Campaign-Feb  
• Steering group-ongoingl | • Research-£7k  
• New role: Comms Officer  
• 1 day p/m |
Stage 6: Sustainability
Theme 6: Marketing

REFINING YOUR MARKETING PLAN

The Business Model theme introduces the relationship between long-term sustainability and maximising income generation. Although the exact form of sustainability can differ from one organisation to another, the ability to generate and maximise income plays a fundamental role in delivering it for most social enterprises. As introduced earlier in this theme, your marketing strategy and marketing plan are key enablers for maximising income generation and achieving sustainability. This section of the Marketing theme sets out the key things to consider when refining your marketing plan and marketing strategy to maximise income generation.

A brief word of warning here: successful marketing requires you to provide the target audience with a consistent message about your offer. Constant changes to your value proposition or the way you market your offering may confuse your target audience and do more damage than good. Try to make sure that any you communicate the rationale for any changes in what you offer – as a guiding principal, you will ideally want to highlight that your new and improved product or service delivers even more social / environmental impact than before.

Refining your marketing plan

Your marketing tools will provide the key ‘levers’ or variables for refining your marketing plan and helping to maximise income generation, namely:

The business model theme introduces the two key approaches to growing top line revenue - growing the volume of the services / products that you sell and increasing the unit price for each sale. Both of the approaches (or objectives) will require you to refine your marketing plan, and in some cases your marketing strategy.
**Price**: Increasing your price will enable you to generate greater income per unit of sales, but this can also have a significant effect on volume of sales. Generally, the higher your prices, the lower your volume sales; the exact nature of the relationship between price and volume varies from one market / product / service to another and is known as **price sensitivity**.

Let’s take the example of social enterprise B (a manufacturer of high-end ethical fashion clothing for women). Increasing the price of their fashion products may successfully generate increased revenue per unit within a certain price band. However, if the organisation increases the price above the customer or target audience **price threshold** (the price customers are willing to pay for this type of product), this may lead to a step down in volume that may ultimately result in a reduction in overall revenue. This demonstrates the importance of understanding the value of your products / services to the target audience and how price changes (increases) will impact customer demand. Generally speaking in the social enterprise world, you will need to provide evidence of enhanced outcomes and/or value to your target audiences in order to justify price increases.

The diagram below illustrates the relationship between price, revenue and volume:

- **Price**: how much you charge for your product or service
- **Place**: the audience segment & routes to market you decide to target
- **Promotion**: your communications plan- the features and benefits that you communicate to the specific audience segment/ route to market
**Place:** As your organisation becomes more established, it is likely that you will start to understand your target market in greater detail than during the initial start up/pilot stages. In some cases, this may mean that you identify a new target audience or route to market opportunity. Assuming that your value proposition addresses the needs of a new target audience this might provide a great opportunity for increasing your sales volumes. However, we should include a word of warning again: don’t underestimate the operational implications of serving a new market (audience or route to market). For example, new markets may require different skills, capabilities or expertise and therefore require significant operational and organisational changes to successfully deliver into the new market.

**Promotion:** An increased understanding of your target market will often help you identify opportunities for refining the way in which you communicate features and benefits of your product or services to your different target audiences. This may require different promotional techniques to effectively communicate the features and benefits of your value proposition to the respective target audience.

**Refining your marketing strategy**

The Business Model theme discusses the importance of reflecting on your organisation’s original offering using your experiences from the start up/pilot stages - *what you have learnt so far*. This process may require you to make changes to your original offering (product/service) to make it more attractive to your target audience.

Significant changes to your offering will require a review of your value proposition to ensure that you are communicating these changes, and using them to reinforce or reposition your place in the market - a core element of your marketing strategy. It may be helpful to refer back to earlier stages in this theme of the toolkit to provide you with a framework for refining your value proposition and marketing strategy based significant changes to your organisation’s offering.
Stage 7: Long-term Growth/Replication
Theme 6: Marketing

MARKETING DURING GROWTH/REPLICATION

In the social enterprise sector, long term growth is often referred to as replication. This is because it usually involves taking a tried and tested model and replicating it in a new market, either in a new geographic area or for a new set of stakeholders (beneficiaries/customers). This final part of the marketing theme introduces a framework for managing your organisation’s marketing during replication.

Note: This section of the tool kit assumes that your organisation has decided to adopt a replication strategy that retains some level of control over the replication process (i.e. wholly-owned of affiliate-based replication).

Marketing - a framework for replication

We have introduced earlier the concepts of your marketing strategy and your marketing plan for your original market, and discussed the major components of both. As you seek to replicate and adapt your marketing approach to be relevant to a new market, you will need to think about which elements of both your marketing strategy and plan should be fixed, and which should be adapted/re-worked for the new market.

As seen earlier in this theme of the toolkit, your marketing strategy comprises your brand identity, your positioning within the market and your routes to market. In the main, your organisation should have a single marketing strategy that addresses these elements for all of your markets; however, depending on the nature of your replication, some elements may need to be adapted/refined to make them relevant in a new market, as denoted in the diagram below:
Whilst your goal should be to have a single marketing strategy that is largely constant across existing and new markets, you are much more likely to need to generate separate marketing plans for each market. This is because items such as price, placement and promotional tactics (the major elements of your marketing plan) are likely to be very specific to the needs / circumstances and features of your target audiences in each market (beneficiaries and customers). Moreover, other elements of your marketing plan, such as goals / targets, budgets, marketing action timetable, etc., will also be unique to a specific market:

To illustrate the approach to replicating marketing strategy and plans, let’s consider a successful social enterprise that manufactures and designs ethical fashion that, until now, it has sold through fashion wholesaler and distributor channels. Now that it has built consumer loyalty, brand identity and a reputation for great clothing, the organisation has decided to seek longer-term growth by opening a retail outlet to sell direct to consumers. In terms of the organisation’s marketing strategy, the elements of its brand identity and positioning will most likely remain fixed; however, its route to market is clearly different - it will be offering its products through its own retail store now as well as through the existing value chain partners.
Moving to the marketing plan, this is much more likely to be tailored to the specific needs and characteristics of the organisation’s new ‘market’ – in fact the change in this example is a move towards a direct to consumer (i.e. retail) marketing plan versus the original approach which focused on marketing to wholesaler / distributor intermediaries. So, of course, the marketing plan for the retail outlet will have very different elements in relation to pricing (i.e. retail versus wholesale pricing), promotion (e.g. advertising rather than a promotional stand at trade events) and placement (i.e. the layout / decor / feel of the retail store should reflect / highlight the fashion products on sale).