

HEALTHCARE MARKETING  
DR. UMBACH & PARTNER  
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# **Your Internal Marketing Program**

(And Personal Internal Recognition Program)

## **Why should you mastermind an internal marketing program?**

Your internal marketing programme has the objective of overcoming invisible internal obstacles and removing barely perceptible barriers. You want to enlist broad support within the company. You want to ensure word-of-mouth marketing for your project. Adopt a pragmatic attitude: Your internal marketing programme is also your personal recognition and career advancement program. Just as you plan and direct an external marketing campaign aimed at your external customers, you plan and direct an internal marketing campaign aimed at your internal customers. Feel comfortable about selling your project internally.

## **Know the challenges within your company**

If you succeed, you will invariably change the status quo and thus might invade someone's turf. This implies that some people in the company (for example risk-averse middle managers from other departments) wish you only some degree of success, but not too much. This is a people's game and therefore also a power play. Be prepared to be confronted with inactive individuals' inertia as well as with control fanatics in your organization. A good internal marketing programme helps you to navigate skilfully around these obstacles.

## **Make your project a top project: Put it on the company map**

You make plans on how to transform your project into a high priority project that is at the top of the list of projects in your company. First you work with what you have got. After all, necessity is the mother of invention. After laying the ground work, you make preparations to obtain the appropriate resources. You will need them to successfully implement the project in the market place.

## **Ensure sufficient resources for your marketing activities**

Without allocation of sufficient resources, your plans are doomed from the start. Your attitude therefore: Think big! Your approach to assessing the required money and people is therefore 'Better asking for too much than for too little'. Think of yourself as an agency doing a pitch. Try to avoid the creation of a formal 'steering committee' or 'advisory board' that you cannot control and that can actually slow you down.

## **Highlight your project's commercial value**

What unlocks the door to the decision makers? What helps you surmount the tough hurdle of obtaining additional resources? The prospect of more sales and more profit, expressed in numbers. Therefore play the "numbers game". Enlist the help of a controller to ensure that you have covered all bases in the organization.

## **Capitalize on the foundation other departments have laid**

Remember that past trial costs are 'sunk costs' that have no influence on the actual investment decision. Run your mathematical commercial forecast model only on future costs! This will of course facilitate calculating an appropriate expected return on investment. You may wish to use a statement like 'It will be very cost-effective', followed by the explanation 'since we can build on the excellent ground work that our medical colleagues have laid' - consisting in the contacts they have established with investigators, patient advocacy groups, opinion leaders and scientific societies.

## **Spreading the good message**

Use every appropriate opportunity to promote your project. Deliver your short persuasive presentations at department meetings, workshops and other events. Emphasize the value for the company. Specific terms you may wish to use include: 'business opportunity, 'golden opportunity' or 'We are mining a gold mine'. Your project is adding value. Everyone can benefit: Physicians, pharmacists, patients and payers.

### **Seek good cover: Get endorsement from key persons**

Get support from senior management. As business analysts Michael Porter and Gary Hamel have said poignantly 'The bottleneck is at the top of the bottle'. Get help from top management through face-to-face meetings. Before asking for an official decision, get informal acceptance or consent from key players in your organization. This will increase the likelihood of a getting a positive decision at the time of the formal committee meeting. Ask them for a short individual conversation and ask them for their advice. Show your appreciation for their contributions. Incorporate their suggestions, so they are likely to defend them during the official meeting when questioned. Give them the feeling that this project is also 'their baby'. Keep selected 'higher-ups' in the loop.

### **Initiate interviews and record them**

Consider short video interviews with your president and key players in your organization as well as with external experts. Remember to ask your own boss first. Ask the right questions to get the answers you want. Desirable is a statement like "I would like to ask all of you to ensure that the appropriate marketing and sales force activities are employed to realize the full medical and commercial potential of this product". Record the interview with a digital camera. Edit it. Store the short video clip on your laptop computer. Show the video as an introduction before your internal presentations. This will help you enlist support and create commitment in the organization.

### **Arrange internal publications: Use the company newsletter**

Most organizations have an internal newspaper or newsletter that is regularly distributed to the employees - from the corporation or from the business unit. Ensure regular coverage of your project. The editors of these publications are usually always searching for articles and are grateful if you supply them with an interesting story in a ready-to-use electronic format. Maybe your secretary or an assistant in your team can coordinate this 'inside the company promotion'.

## **Develop your intranet site: Make it an attractive place to visit**

Make your intranet site a living document. Your goal: People regard it as a toolbox where they can find up-to-date information useful for their daily work.

Some tips:

- Do not employ a password, since people are likely to forget it
- Make navigation as easy as possible
- Put only brief documents on the site that are quick to download
- Update your site regularly and remove outdated documents
- Include a "search site" service function
- Include a site map where terms are linked to the respective pages

## **Benefit from the intranet and ease your work load**

You and your assistants probably spend time answering requests from company people such as 'Could you just send me the questions-and-answers catalogue?'. Instead of searching for it in the file directory of your computer and preparing an email with the attachment, just say 'Peter, just go to our intranet site. The documents are all there'. In the long run, this approach saves you a lot of time.

## **Increase traffic to your intranet site by sending a newsletter**

Send regular emails that contain statements linked to your internal site. An example could be: 'This study shows exciting results, since Examplex was able to improve the outcome of ... ' followed by a hyperlink that brings the reader directly to the pertinent page of your intranet site. Three things to remember when writing this email:

- 1) Keep it short
- 2) Point out a benefit to the reader
- 3) Include a call-to-action.

## **Build a comprehensive communication platform**

Develop a document that encompasses the elements your internal stakeholders might need when they work on the project. Content you might want to include: Product logo, branding guidelines, key diagrams, pictures, press releases, publications, presentation charts, questions & answers.

## **Train the sales force: Establish close links with sales reps**

You know that the sales force is the most effective and the most expensive way to promote your product. Effective cooperation with the sales representatives is one key factor in driving sales. Try to attend as many sales force meetings as your time schedule allows. Communicate continuously. Show up, be present, and explain the marketing strategy, the message, the folder, and your online-activities. Emphasize the importance of branding. Even if you feel like preaching to the choir, carry on.

These meetings offer you the additional advantage of obtaining unfiltered feedback from front-line people. Ask them point blank what they would need to make more sales. They will tell you point blank in no uncertain terms - from their point of view. Use their suggestions to fine-tune your marketing strategy. A word of caution: Resist the temptation to change the branding.

## **Ensure financial incentives for sales reps**

In some companies, marketers are not informed about the compensation schemes (bonus or commissions) for sales reps. If there is a lack of transparency in your company, inquire about the current compensation scheme. You should be absolutely clear about how product sales influence the sales representative's income.

If your product happens to be the one without a substantial financial reward, the reps will have little motivation for discussing the trial results with the prescribing physician

and for driving the sales of your product. Instead the rep will spend his time detailing the product that will increase his pay check the most - no matter how brilliant your marketing strategy. Discuss this issue with the business unit director. Failing to give financial incentives to the sales rep means that your aspirations for more prescriptions are doomed to failure. Therefore help to devise appropriate financial incentives to incentivize the sales rep.

### **Affiliate and headquarters: Ensure mutual support**

If you are working in an affiliate or operating company: Ask headquarters for support. If you are working in headquarters: Ask the affiliate what is needed to implement the marketing strategy that you are directing. Remember: 'Think global, act local'

### **Think seamless communication: Stay in touch**

Think borderless communication: Contact people across departmental and divisional boundaries. Large companies often have separate parallel channels of communication with no connections between them, also referred to as functional silo structures and organizational stovepipes. Overcome them and make your communication more effective. Stay in touch with people - personally or by telephone.

### **Networking: Weave your own personal web of supporters**

Think Networking. Become an instinctive networker: Connect intuitively to people. Include everyone into your net that could help you. Get in touch with people. Find the people who will support you. Build strong human relationships. Build rapport. After all, business is a relationship game.

## **Your phone: A powerful tool**

The telephone is a powerful communication tool. You do not leave any traces in writing. You can be informal. You can talk off-the record. You can circumvent the company bureaucracy.

Develop your list of important stakeholders. Check when it was the last time when you talked to the persons on your list. If long ago, give them a call! Keep up with the people on your list!

Making the right phone call can save you days of work on the project and help you overcome seemingly impossible obstacles.

## **Coordinate internal activities: Steer, harmonize, synchronize**

We have covered a variety of individual measures in the past chapters. Now who will coordinate all those activities? Who will integrate all components harmoniously into one greater picture? Here you have a great opportunity for you to assume organizational and intellectual leadership for the project.

These activities will turn you into a project team leader who delivers results and makes things happen.

## **Additional tips in the free audiobook**

You can listen to complimentary audio files

- Adapting to a Professional Role
- Becoming More Resourceful
- Marketing Internally

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