



## Legal and other requirements Factsheet 3

# MARKETING

Traditionally voluntary organisations have not been very good at marketing. This is usually because they are too busy running activities and offering their services. However, a little time and effort can work wonders in the long run. Marketing doesn't have to be expensive or glossy and can be tackled quite easily. It is simply the ways in which you get your message heard and your name known.

Think about the different ways that the public can find their way to your organisation:

- **your location/premises**
- **the telephone**
- **word of mouth**
- **networking**
- **letterheads etc.**
- **website**
- **media relations**

### ***Your Location/ Premises***

Not all organisations are lucky enough to have their own premises. If you do, you need to make sure people know where it is. This can be quite easily done by having a sign on the building. (Be aware of any planning permission for certain signage). It may be a good idea to walk around your area and see what signs catch your eye. If your organisation is a registered company you are required to have the company name visible from the outside of its registered office.

Ensure that your leaflets have your address, telephone and fax numbers, email and website addresses and if possible, a map of how to find your premises. Make it as easy as possible for people to find you.

What do people think when they get to your premises? Again, first impressions are important and there are some quite simple steps you can take to make your premises welcoming to visitors:

- If there is a waiting area, make sure it is clean and tidy.
- Put pictures or informative posters on the wall,
- Imagine you are walking in for the first time – is it a welcoming atmosphere?

## ***The Telephone***

### ***Answering the telephone***

This is often the first contact with your organisation and being efficient and polite will create a good first impression.

### ***Answer machine message***

An answer machine is a cheap and effective way of being available when you are not actually there.

- Your message should make it clear whose answer machine it is!
- Explain your opening hours and alternative numbers to ring.
- Ask for details from the caller like their name and telephone number.

**Remember** that you are inviting people to leave a message. You should make sure you return the call. If not, people will get the impression that you are inefficient or worse, incompetent.

### ***Word of Mouth***

You might not think about it in this way but every time you talk to someone at a meeting, you are publicising your organisation. Talking to other people who work in the voluntary sector is vital for raising awareness about your services and activities and raising your profile in the community.

**Note:** If someone has not been treated by the organisation in the way they had expected, this will be passed on by word of mouth.

### ***Letterheads etc.***

The official face of your organisation need not cost a fortune to produce and it does look professional. Remember if you are a registered charity you are required by law to include your registered numbers on your cheques, invoices, receipts and orders for money or goods. It is good practice to include these on your headed paper as these may get used for orders etc.

### ***Website***

A web site is another means of telling the world about what you do and how you do it. It is important that the site is interesting and kept up-to-date so that people come back to use it again. You must include the name of your organisation, your address, telephone numbers, email addresses, so that users of your website know that you have a presence in the real world.

**Media Relations**

If you have a major campaign coming up, then don't forget to use the local radio and newspapers. If you are doing something that is a bit different or has a good story behind it you can get yourself a lot of free publicity.