

## MARKETING AND PUBLICITY

### *Organizational Skills Domain*

Promoting the educational aspects of your 4-H group requires organization, forethought, and planning. Marketing and public promotion depend upon communicating “what 4-H is” and “what 4-H is not.” Some call this “interpreting” 4-H. To the person who is outside of the 4-H program, a promotional campaign focused on the effective interpretation of the 4-H program, or brand, just may be the best way to market the program.

#### **Develop A Message**

Get advice from your county office on developing a message. Develop a message with the “interpretation of 4-H” in mind:

1. Start your messaging with a critical issue of local, or national concern. Citing statistics that are related to the issue will help give substance to your message.
2. Link the issue with an opportunity that is offered by your 4-H group. Explain how 4-H is helping address the issue, giving specific examples of your 4-H program. In your example, include what happened, who did what, where, and when.
3. Give credit to those who helped make your program happen, whether they be donors, staff, volunteers, etc.
4. At this point, broaden your message and describe the overall 4-H mission, purpose, and values. This allows your audience to envision themselves as being a part of something BIG.
5. Finally, invite the audience to be a part of your specific 4-H group, and give specifics on how they can be involved in the next 4-H gathering.

#### **Make A Plan**

A good plan is like a journey. As with any successful trip, there are four critical components.

1. Starting point: What marketing is currently happening? Who are the internal audiences—are families satisfied enough with 4-H to help promote it? Who are the external audiences—do people in your area know about 4-H and is their perception accurate? External audiences may not be the only ones that need to have 4-H “interpreted” to them (this may also be the case for some internal audiences).
2. Destination: What are the short and long-term goals of the effort? Are the goals realistic? What resources are available? An example of a long-range goal is to double the membership of a club or project area over two or three years. Examples of short-term goals could include improving orientation for new volunteers revising a recognition program having 50% of your 4-H members participate in a county public speaking event or completing two service projects within the upcoming 4-H year.
3. Itinerary: What is the plan to reach the goals? The plan could include a checklist of steps to reach a goal, and regular meetings or other means of consistent communication. The plan should have some flexibility so that adjustments don’t feel like crises.
4. Map: Looking at the big picture, what are the signposts and benchmarks for measuring progress? If goals are not met,



# VOLUNTEER

Research Knowledge Competency

relook at the destination and itinerary and make sure they are realistic and focused.

better response from your target audience.

## Tools and Strategies

Consider brochures, flyers, digital communication, planned events, and mass media. Mass media tools may include newspapers, radio, and television. Also, do not discount the effectiveness of “word of mouth” marketing.

For all strategies:

- Consider the audience you are trying to reach. How do they want to receive information?
- Formulate your specific message. Target the message on key points and provide sources for additional information.
- Develop relationships with those in the media. A personal relationship with a reporter or newscaster can provide insights into your marketing efforts and better opportunities for having your message heard.
- Keep your tools professional. Follow the guidelines for the use of the 4-H name and emblem. Your state may have additional guidelines for marketing 4-H and the use of websites, social media, and logos. Practice, proofread, and get feedback. Whether your message is verbal or written, high-quality marketing messages will have a

## Posting on Social Media

Choose content that is relevant to your audience.

- Try to include photos.
- Keep text to a minimum. Try not to use more than two sentences.
- Include a hook within your post to generate interest. Here is a sample post (from National 4-H Council Facebook Best Practices):
  - Do you remember: Your first 4-H Camp? Your first 4-H ribbon? Your first 4-H project?
- Post a maximum of 3-4 times per week.
- Post during a time that maximizes your visibility to your audience.

## Other Helpful Hints

- Include your Club’s hashtag when posting 4-H-related activities, photos, or videos OR tag 4-H by putting the “@” symbol followed by “(Club) 4-H” and hitting “enter.”
- Identify your posts’ location, if appropriate
- Amplify your post (sponsored stories enable you to target specific demographics, behaviors, and interests)
- When sharing a photo from an external source, be sure to credit the original site or photography by including the source in your post.
- Find more social media hints and tips on the 4-H National Council website.

*The original resource 4-H Organizational Skills: Marketing and Publicity (VRKC: Volunteer Research, Knowledge, & Competency Taxonomy) was developed by Linda Strieter.*

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