

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO MARKETING EVALUATION



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INTRODUCTION

This is one of a series of Beginners' Guidance Notes produced for cultural services officers working in the London Boroughs.

It is part of a programme - run by Visit London with London Cultural Improvement Programme, and funded by Capital Ambition - to develop the marketing skills of non-marketers working in London's local authority cultural services.

For all the guides in this series, case studies and other local tourism resources [click here](#), or click on the coloured boxes opposite.



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CONTENTS

Understanding marketing evaluation	page 2	READ >
The essentials of a marketing evaluation	page 3	READ >
Putting it into practice	page 5	READ >
Top ten tips.....	page 7	READ >
Glossary	page 8	READ >

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO
**CUSTOMER
 RELATIONSHIP
 MANAGEMENT**

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO
SOCIAL MEDIA

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO
**PROACTIVE
 MEDIA WORK**

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO
WEBSITES

1 UNDERSTANDING MARKETING EVALUATION

Marketing evaluation is worth doing because you need to know if the marketing and promotion you are doing is working.

Often evaluation is an after thought put in place once the activity has happened. It makes much more sense to build it in from the beginning when you are setting targets and planning what marketing you will do. You can then put in place ways to collect the information you will need.



Evaluating your marketing will:

- Provide a measurement of results and an opportunity to adjust your marketing to do less of the things that don't work and more of the things that do
- Allow you to identify which communications channels work best and use your budget effectively
- Keep you focused on your objectives and your targets
- Help you be accountable to funders showing how their support is being used
- Provide you with useful information for shaping future marketing plans for all your activities.

What are the marketing activities that you need to measure?

You may be responsible for a whole marketing programme or for specific elements. You need to identify the marketing activity that you want to evaluate.



This could be any or all of the following:

- Advertising in the local press
- Looking after web pages or a website
- Producing promotional print for a venue, event or performance
- PR and press activities
- Using social media 'channels'
- E-mail shots
- Sending out e-newsletters or printed newsletters.



2 THE ESSENTIALS OF EVALUATING MARKETING ACTIVITY

How should you evaluate your activities?

Evaluation will cost you money and/or time. Any evaluation you do should be proportionate to the activity - if you are only spending a few hundred pounds doing something it makes no sense to spend as much again on the evaluation.

You need to look at what you want to achieve with your marketing and how you'll know if it has been successful.

So for example if you are trying to get people to attend an event, the measure of your success will be numbers attending, which is relatively easily collected. But if you want to know which of the marketing routes you used worked best, you will need to measure each of these separately.



Most marketing is judged by its cost effectiveness - what is called return on investment (ROI). This is measured by the amount of spend generated by your customers against the cost of the marketing. It might be that your service is provided free to customers, in which case visitor numbers or customer satisfaction might be more appropriate than a strict ROI figure.

The measures used in evaluating marketing include:

- Hits, time spent or downloads on/from your website
- New people added to your database of customers
- Responses to advertising or emails
- Attendances, bookings or ticket sales to an event, performance or venue
- Press coverage of key messages
- Number of Twitter followers or Facebook fans.

Below are six marketing 'channels' and suggested measurable evaluation options for each.

In each case you might want your customer to do something immediately - like attend your event; but you might also want to capture their details to promote to them in future. You need to think through what you want them to do in response to your marketing.

In all of your marketing activity you should include a 'call to action' i.e. what you want people to do as a result of looking at your communication to them. You need to make this easy for people and not ask too much of them.

The inclusion of incentives like special offers, vouchers and competitions are useful things to include in your marketing as they are easy to track especially if you are not selling anything or requiring a booking.



Advertising and Print

This is really two channels - but the ways to evaluate their impact are the same. Advertising is paid for space that you buy in newspapers and magazines on and off-line. Print is leaflets or brochures you produce to inform and /or promote your venue, event etc.

Evaluation options:

- Include special offer e.g. 2 for 1, 'kids go free' etc that people can cut out and use or directs visitors to your website to register their data and download the voucher. And then measure the number of vouchers redeemed
- Include a specific url on the advertising and measure number of hits
- If you are directing people to your website then consider setting up a database if you don't already have one. You can then gather names and interests and communicate regularly with this interested audience. Numbers on your database can be a good measure of the impact of your marketing.

Direct marketing

This includes emails, e-shots, e-newsletters or mailing of printed leaflets or newsletters.

Evaluation options:

- Measuring the number of responses via website visits or click throughs, downloading of offers, signing up for more information, entries to competitions etc
- Providing a code and measuring the number of bookings and/or purchases of tickets



Website

This provides information on your venue or service and the events you are running. It also provides you with a good mechanism to measure the impact of your other marketing activity if your call-to-action is to visit your web site.

Evaluation options:

- Monitoring web stats for month-on-month and year-on-year unique visitor hits and page views
- Monitoring web stats following a marketing activity or a competition that asks customers to 'register' or 'reply' online
- Online surveys
- Monitoring online bookings for things like ticket sales and event bookings
- Monitoring downloads
- Monitoring sign-up to newsletters, information emails etc (this will build your customer database).



Social Media

This involves promotion through sharing, communicating and publishing knowledge and information online.

Evaluation options:

- Monitoring the number of followers on your Twitter feed, and who they are
- Monitoring the number of Facebook fans, what conversations they respond to, and what they're saying
- Monitoring the number of views on videos you have uploaded onto YouTube
- Monitoring comments on your blog and measuring the effectiveness of your blog posts
- Monitoring the click-throughs to your website.

Proactive PR

Proactive PR is about 'making news' and finding channels to communicate this news to the media and so to your potential customers.

Evaluation options:

- Monitoring PR and press activities that generate editorial coverage that you can then give an Equivalent Advertising Value (EAV) for i.e. what it costs to buy that space in advertising
- Monitoring the key messages (which you need to identify beforehand) which are included in press coverage
- Monitoring links to your website following the launch of a press release
- Monitoring downloads from your web pages of press articles, images (if you offer them) and facts & figures
- Signing up to journalists' social media channels that relate to your work, and monitoring their comments following your own PR activities or activities within your Borough.

3 PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Surveys

Instead of, or in addition to, the above you can also find out what is working best for you by asking people. This can be done through a survey of your audience.

Such evaluation is more successful if it is incentivised e.g. completed questionnaires are entered into a prize draw.



Evaluation options:

- A questionnaire that they are given when they attend your venue or event asking them 'how did you hear about us / this event?' You can give a list of options of the marketing channels you've used. This can also be done by face-to-face interviews if you can afford it and / or you need to get more in-depth qualitative information
- Have your front-line staff ask people how they heard about you when they book or ask for information
- If you have been collecting names on a database, send them a survey asking if they attended your venue or event, and how they heard about it
- You can also use surveys to find out how people get their information - what websites they use, and what press they read, to help you decide which marketing channels to use.

Best practice examples

Using an analytics programme (such as Google Analytics) to monitor web activities.



- Daily visitor hits can be monitored following specific online marketing activity, e.g. in response to a competition or special offers
- Page views can be monitored for activity interaction with downloads
- Entrance paths can be monitored to show how visitors found the pages
- Absolute unique visitors can be monitored vis-à-vis returning visitors.

Evaluating a social media activity

<http://islingtonwildlife.typepad.com/islingtoncounts>

Islington Council set up an Elections blog using the host Typepad. As one of the authors says, it was a great way of 'raising awareness of voting to groups that don't always get the information they need or are not always heard', as well as creating an election 'buzz' locally in the build up to Election Day on May 6.

There is now a summary on this blog page thanking followers, announcing the election results, and some feedback on the evaluation of this first-time blog: 'this is the first time we've used social media for the elections and we had over 20,000 visits to our blog. We also had hundreds of people follow our Twitter feed!'





Evaluating an Event

The Kite & Bike Festival at Blackheath Common is organised each year by Lewisham Borough Council. Organiser Jo Middleton, Town Centres Development and Tourism Officer, relies on local businesses, stakeholders, clubs and societies to help make the event as self-funding as possible. Her evaluation activities help provide valuable feedback and statistics that she can present to these partners as evidence of the event's success, giving them reassurance to back future events.

A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis was carried out a few years ago to assess whether to bring the Festival back to Blackheath Common. It reinforced the strength of Blackheath Common as a wonderful expanse of flat green open space and its suitability for public outdoor events that would raise the destination's profile, bring spend into the local economy and attract a wider visitor audience

Visitor research, a snapshot evaluation form (see right), is carried out during the event when 1 in a 100 visitors are asked a few questions about the event including 'how did you hear about the Festival' and 'where have you come from'

Proactive PR starts three months before the event to cover press publications and websites with long lead-in editorial deadlines. Their focus is on local and regional press. Highlights of 2010 coverage included BBC London 94.9 live outside broadcast, BBC London TV news, a post-event double page spread in the South London press, and a feature in Time Out.

OFFICIAL EVALUATION FORM
 Kite & Bike 12 and 13 June 2010
 It is important that this form is filled in so that we can fund the event next year.
 Your details will not be passed on to any other department of the Local Authority

You come from? Town _____ Postcode _____

How did you hear about this event _____

Have you any suggestions about how to make the event better _____

Are you Female Male Age 18 - 28 28 -38 38-48 48-58 58 - 68 68 +

Do you have children - if so, their ages:
 0-5yrs? _____ 5-11yrs _____ 11-16yrs _____ Over 16yrs _____

How many times do you exercise per week? _____

Would you be interested in other events that involve sport run by the Local Authority Yes No

Would you like to be on our events database? email _____

Ethnicity/Disability
 The following information will be used for monitoring purposes only and will assist us to ensure that our events/consultations involve all sectors of the community. *Ethnicity please tick one box*

White
 British Turkish Irish Other white background

Black or black British
 Caribbean African Other black background

Asian or black British
 Indian Pakistani Bangladeshi Other Asian

Mixed
 White and black Caribbean White and black African
 White and Asian Any other mixed background

Chinese or other ethnic group
 Chinese Vietnamese Any other Chinese or ethnic group

Do you consider yourself disabled?
 Yes No

If yes, please state disability
 If you encountered any site-specific accessibility issues please let us know



4 TOP TEN TIPS

1. Ask yourself what you need your evaluation for. Do you need accurate figures and numbers, or a more rounded indication that an event or activity was successful?
2. Identify which marketing channels you use and how much you spend on each. And decide which ones you want to evaluate.



3. Decide which type of evaluation is right for that channel and for what you are promoting.



4. Think through how you are going to gather the data, who will collect it and who will analyse it.
5. Seek advice from those with expertise and experience of marketing evaluation to ensure the methods you are proposing are robust and that the data produced will be meaningful and useable.

6. Think about the timescale for evaluation - this will depend on whether it is general promotion of a venue, or service, or for a specific event. Make sure you give people enough time to respond but not so long they will have forgotten about it.
7. Use as much as possible the channels already available to you such as web pages (to assess visitor hits), social media (publicising, monitoring, sharing & listening), and e-communications (for building customer data).
8. Decide where the evaluation will be kept. Set up files for data and documentation that can easily be sourced by colleagues and others who may need access in the future. Make sure you include your methodology.



9. Familiarise yourself with Data Protection. Always include 'opt in' and 'opt out' options in e-communications and, for questionnaires and surveys, tell customers what their data will be used for.
10. Use your evaluation results to shape your future marketing activities.

5 GLOSSARY

Benchmark A measurement of performance against an established standard

Click throughs The process of clicking through from an online advertisement to the advertiser's website

CTR Click through rate - the proportion of users viewing an online ad who click through to find out more

Customer profiling Defining customers by their specific interests and characteristics

Data protection The Data Protection Act 1988 was introduced to protect individuals' data, no matter how it is collected, what is collected or who collects it



EAV Equivalent Advertising Value - measuring press activities by what it would cost to buy that space in advertising

Evaluation Calculating the impact and determining the significance or worth of an activity

Focus groups Research undertaken with a group of selected individuals who are invited to give their thoughts on a topic by a facilitator who runs the session



Incentives	Providing a reward to encourage customers to do something
Interactivity	A dialogue between an organisation and a customer - usually conducted online
Lead	A potential customer
Marketing Channels	Promotional routes through which you communicate with your customer eg press advertising, social media
Monitoring	Collecting information that will help you answer questions about your activity



Page impression	One page impression occurs when a user views a single web page
Response rate	The percentage of those who respond to an advertisement, survey or questionnaire
Return on investment	The ratio of the amount of spend generated by your customers against the cost of the marketing
URL	Uniform Resource Locator - the unique address of a website or webpage on the internet
Web analytics	Reporting and analysis of data on website user activity