

PROGRAM MARKETING SELF-ASSESSMENT AND TUNE-UP GUIDE

“21 Must-do’s for Tough Times – if not all the time.”

Each of the following items is based years of experience and reams of data on marketing thousands of professional education workshops. Each item focuses on a top priority marketing activity that is critical to generating successful enrollments. The type of mail piece – postcard, brochure or catalog – as well as program topics, audiences, and time of the year may require or allow bending of the rules. But if you rate your planning, analysis, and mail piece high on each of these dimensions, you will have a far more successful effort no matter what.

For each item, assign a number based on the following scale:

1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Always.

1. ___ I determine (or hope someone else determined!) that there is a definite perceived need for a program prior to starting the actual marketing process.
2. ___ I plan my marketing schedule for the brochure to be “in the mail” at 9-10 weeks in advance of a one/two-day workshop or multi-date certificate course, or 11-12 weeks for a three or four-day workshop. (I add at least one week to this if I am mailing outside a 100 mile or so radius from where the program will be held.)
3. ___ I allow 2-3 weeks for the printing and mailing process, adjusted accordingly for postcards versus catalogs.
4. ___ I start the marketing process 5-6 weeks ahead of when the brochure will go to the printers. (I know that catalogs, calendars, and conferences require much more time.)
5. ___ I write a “tell it like it is” title for the program that is obvious to the recipient no matter which side of the brochure they happen to pick up.
6. ___ I use a good sub-title, or a couple of good sentences or bullet items that expand on the title, on the front cover.
7. ___ I make the most of credibility, such as name of co-sponsors, certification requirements met by attending, quotable quotes from past participants.
8. ___ I highlight hot-buttons that may be important, like “a series of half day...”, “includes a tour of ...”, “offered in the evening from ...”

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9. ___ I take advantage of the fact that there are two covers on a brochure and I feature as much as I can of the key important copy elements on both front and back covers.
10. ___ I price the program consistently, knowing that if it's an extraordinary success, I can always raise it. I don't want to overprice in a test mode, unless testing price.
11. ___ I start my list research at least 3-4 weeks before I plan to print, and if I plan to rent lists, I contact my list broker at this time. .
12. ___ I am much less picky about how I segment and pull from my internal list (versus rented lists), since it is probably my best list, no matter what.
13. ___ If I have people on my internal list for whom this offering is a logical next step, I send them two copies, first class mail, with a very brief generic note enclosed, because the return on my investment will be ten-fold.
14. ___ If I have done this program before, or one similar to it, I review past attendee lists for geographical distribution and predominant titles before researching rented lists.
15. ___ I put as much succinct, well-written, "you" worded copy in the brochure as I can since I know more copy is better, regardless of whether they read it or not.
16. ___ I make sure I have my key coding or stone code plan in place to track response.
17. ___ Since I can identify the 100-200 people who send or approve many of our multiple and frequent enrollments, I send them at least 2 of the mail pieces in an envelope with a personal note.
18. ___ I do email reminders to my internal list, giving them a link to a brochure download and registration, starting about 3-4 weeks after the first mailing.
19. ___ I code every brochure and registration form on my web site so that I can track responses to the web site for any forms that are mailed or faxed.
20. ___ I am careful about letting the graphic design and photos detract from the primary message, because I want to use them to support and draw attention to the primary message, benefits and value.
21. ___ I always mail on time, or very close to it, because I know that if I do everything right except for the mail late, I am increasing my risk and depressing my response substantially.

So, pat yourself on the back for your 3's, tackle all the 1's as soon as possible, and watch enrollments increase. Need more marketing ideas or mailing lists solutions? Just give us a call or send an email to pgraf@proed.com

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