

PROMOTION BASICS: Philosophy, Committee Roles & Responsibilities

Promotion is selling a positive image of downtown based on authentic, creative assets of the community.

Promotion is:

- ◆ Communicating to the public in an attempt to influence the purchase of your products and/or services
- ◆ Used specifically to refer to a particular activity that is intended to promote the business, product or service
- ◆ As a word, an all inclusive term which could infer advertising and marketing
- ◆ Advertising is just one specific action taken to promote a product or service
- ◆ Inclusive of all the ways available to make a product/service known with the goal of increased revenue/positive economic impact

Three Types of Promotion

- ◆ Image
- ◆ Retail
- ◆ Special Events

Image Development Includes:

- ◆ Image advertising promotes downtown's unique qualities and market position through print media, social media, website, radio, TV, direct mail
- ◆ Developing a branding and marketing campaign with good graphics and memorable tag line
- ◆ Collateral materials including a logo that is consistently used and repeated on all promotional products from T-shirts to public signage/wayfinding. *Note this logo may or may not be the downtown organization's logo. Some organizations use a more professional stylized logo for the organization
- ◆ Generating publicity with accurate, detailed and interesting press releases and timely communication with carefully cultivated media contacts

- ◆ Communicate the image through all media with image-building events such as: celebrating downtown's progress & successes with public displays and special events

Retail Promotion (3 types):

- ◆ **Cooperative:** focuses on the comparative aspects of retailing in the district, clustering stores that are in the same category and can be promoted together
- ◆ **Cross:** groups business with complimentary goods and services in one retail event or in coordinated displays
- ◆ **Niche:** focuses attention not on the product mix, but on a specific consumer group targeted through specially distributed fliers, coupons, posters, media ads, social media, etc. Example: Military appreciation Day, Senior Day, target to a specific zip code, etc.

Special Events: All special events should be authentic to your community and tied back to your downtown vision. There are usually three types of special events.

- ◆ **Community heritage:** acknowledges the inherent qualities of the community which can include local arts, industry, talent, agriculture or celebrate the history and architecture of the community
- ◆ **Special holidays:** focuses on traditional and non-traditional or even unconventional holidays celebrating dates or events that have meaning for the entire community or dates of special interest to a specific ethnic or cultural group
- ◆ **Social events:** develop unusual activities that enliven public spaces and attract people who don't frequent downtown

Resources: People, Funding & Time

- ◆ Identify people who can help
- ◆ Look to other organizations for potential volunteers
- ◆ Prioritize via Implementation Plan and budget for promotions
- ◆ Identify in-kind resources
- ◆ Create a sponsorship program
- ◆ Partner with another organization to do the event (in particular special event)
- ◆ Seek potential grant opportunities
- ◆ Consider a merchant participation fee
- ◆ Admission to event
- ◆ Always evaluate all resources to determine if promotional event, particularly a special event, will be beneficial (return on investment)
- ◆ Promotional programs/events should be a part of the annual implementation plan denoting the number of hours for each program/event including committee meetings
- ◆ Avoid adding new promotional actions/projects to the implementation plan once plan has been adopted
- ◆ Never add a promotion unless it ties back to the vision
- ◆ Ask: Are you willing to make sacrifices for this project?

Determining where to promote & target audience:

- ◆ Ask: is the promotion for local audience or for regional, state or national?
- ◆ Know your media options
- ◆ Build relationships with media and avoid buying from media that doesn't target your audience
- ◆ Buy what is best for the particular promotion
- ◆ Strategize over where to market and how to market
- ◆ Radio, TV & Print may offer some free ads if promotion is unique by allowing you/organization to go on air or story for print
- ◆ Billboards can be economical
- ◆ Always include social media
- ◆ Trade-outs/discounts & co-op buys are possibilities ask media reps

The job of the promotion committee is to promote downtown as the center of commerce, culture and community life for residents and visitors alike.

**Note that depending on how your organization works the implementation plan rather than having a formal "promotion" committee, the committees are organized by Economic Development Strategies working the plan across rather than the four specific points. Even so the tips below may be relevant no matter which organizational approach the program uses to accomplish the implementation of the actions or projects.

Committee members regularly:

- ◆ Meets
- ◆ Analyzes data that helps accomplish actions identified in the annual plan of work for promotions
- ◆ Visits with merchants/businesses to solicit input and participation as well as inform
- ◆ Communicates with media as permitted (usually the director or organization chair will communicate)
- ◆ Coordinates groups to participate, attend, sponsor or partner with
- ◆ Organizes promotional projects/programs and runs the event

Responsibilities of Chair:

- ◆ Sits on the board representing committee
- ◆ Facilitates meetings
- ◆ Creates the agenda and sends to committee along with meeting notes
- ◆ Assigns someone to record notes, write and send to chair
- ◆ Assures that goals of any sub-committee relates back to the overall vision, goals, objectives of the program
- ◆ Forges consensus
- ◆ Works with Downtown Director/Staff
- ◆ Runs the promotion/event in partnership with committee
- ◆ Completes necessary paperwork

Qualities & Expectations for Chair:

- ◆ Agrees to chair for one year
- ◆ Commits 5-8 hrs. per month
- ◆ Understands & communicates Main Street Approach
- ◆ Genuine desire to lead the committee
- ◆ Strong organizational skills
- ◆ Enjoys managing and leading people and projects

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- ◆ Communicates well to the public
- ◆ Maintains positive attitude and encourages participation
- ◆ Displays integrity, self confidence, persuasiveness, decisiveness and creativity
- ◆ Recruits and orients committee members in partnership with staff
- ◆ Works with committee to organize the tasks that accompanies the actions/projects including scheduling of tasks
- ◆ Delegates tasks
- ◆ Takes responsibility and gives credit to others as appropriate
- ◆ Manages and rewards volunteers' efforts
- ◆ If personal conflict arises, removes him/herself from the position/or voting

Committee Responsibilities:

- ◆ Image development
- ◆ Retail promotions
- ◆ Special events
- ◆ Marketing strategy including, but not limited to branding

Expectations of Committee Members:

- ◆ Knows and supports the Main Street Approach
- ◆ Genuine desire to serve
- ◆ Keeps an open mind to be creative and learn from others
- ◆ Doesn't dominate the meeting giving others opportunity to give input
- ◆ Gives at minimum 2-4 hours a month
- ◆ Things about the "big picture" yet also concentrates on the details
- ◆ Knows when to be decisive and come to closure
- ◆ Willingly pitches in to run events
- ◆ Possesses skills and interest to be on the Promotion Committee
- ◆ Carries out plans and projects in timely manner
- ◆ Assist chair in identifying potential committee members
- ◆ Willing to take on leadership role of a sub-promotion committee if need arises
- ◆ Sticks to the actions/projects as outlined on the implementation plan resisting the urge to add more unless willing to take something off or recruit help
- ◆ Have fun serving!

Staff Role with Committee:

- ◆ Assist with committee development
- ◆ Assist with committee work plan development (actions/projects and tasks associated with actions/projects)
- ◆ Assist with promotion projects
- ◆ Assist with volunteer management
- ◆ Attend committee meeting

****All should be done in cooperation with board and staff approval.***

Components of a good meeting:

- ◆ Has a clear agenda and purpose
- ◆ Starts and finishes on time
- ◆ Has a good facilitator/chair
- ◆ Has agreed upon ground rules
- ◆ Assembles a good balance of people (skills and interest) to serve
- ◆ Has active group discussions and reaches conclusions with consensus

Signs of a bad committee meeting:

- ◆ No written agenda
- ◆ Agenda too long
- ◆ Wrong mix of people serving
- ◆ Starts late, ends late
- ◆ No purpose or conclusion
- ◆ Members unprepared
- ◆ Downtown Director and/or chair does all the talking or one committee member allowed to dominate

Typical Promotion Committee

Projects could include, but not limited to the following and *should be as unique as your community!*

- ◆ Promotional calendar
- ◆ Business directory
- ◆ Image building campaign
- ◆ Holiday lighting/events/etc.
- ◆ Strategic retail events
- ◆ Retail tie-in to an existing special event and;
- ◆ Takes lead on branding development
- ◆ Coordinating training and education on topics relevant to promotions/marketing for the business community
- ◆ Co-sponsoring events with other organizations

**Information for this tech sheet from the Main Street Committee Members Handbook www.preservation.org/main-street and from information gathered from NC Main Street Professionals*