

The Marketing Perspective

“Marketing is everything a business has to do to find, to win and to keep customers satisfied... profitably.”

At the crux of moving from a grant orientated, project perspective to an ethos of sustainability through sales is the adoption of the marketing perspective.

The following guidelines are designed to assist your research into whether there is a market for your goods or services.

Research

- Your **resources will be limited** – this is the case with all small business start-ups.
- Initial research needs to be **low cost and quick**.
- Go for **depth rather than coverage**.
Better to talk to one or two people with direct experience and knowledge of the business you are considering than widespread surveys of “potential customers”.
- On the other hand – **research never stops**.

Research doesn't stop when you start trading. As you prospect for customers you will build information, which will help refine your business proposition.

Research can be split into two categories: Primary & Secondary

Primary research involves:

- **Asking** – Competitors, small groups of potential customers.
- **Watching** – What the competition does and customer behaviour.
- **Trying** – probably leads to the best data.

Avoid Questionnaires!

Conducting surveys or compiling questionnaires that will result in meaningful feedback can be difficult to get right. The main thing to bear in mind is that you are only measuring verbal or written response. It is much more relevant to consider actual behaviour rather than how individuals or organisations say they will behave.

Competitors – ask these questions

- What do they offer?
- At what price?
- Where (distribution & location)?
- What could you offer that would give you a marketing advantage?



- Lack of competition is more likely to indicate the absence of a market rather than an opportunity.
- Look at what the competitors do – how do they promote themselves? What could you do better?

Secondary research – refers to existing relevant information that you can access – examples include:

- Trade journals
- Government reports
- Competitors promotional literature and price lists
- Publications and any other media aimed at your target market
- The Internet



Don't rely too heavily on secondary research – it is useful to identify trends in your marketplace and to look at competitor's literature but you must factor in local knowledge and recent events that may not yet be included in available reports.

The Target Market

Try to pin down your target market(s) as closely as possible. Pay attention to behaviour – what goods or services, similar to what you are going to offer, are they already purchasing? Can you identify any trends? What matters to your target market?

Proposition

- A unique selling proposition (USP) is a succinct, memorable message that identifies the unique benefits that are derived from using your product or service as opposed to a competitor's.

The Marketing Mix

Product – Can mean a **service** as well as a physical product. Encompasses tangible and intangible characteristics. Also includes people and the values associated with the brand.

Price – Should reflect the value placed on the product or service by the customer.



- Look at what the competition is charging – what will the market stand?
- Are purchasers making a decision on price alone?

Place – The product or service, where the customer wants it, when they want it.

Promotion – The “mix” can include – advertising, direct mail, PR, cold calling, etc.



- Make sure you have a clear proposition. (You should be able to sum it up in one sentence.)
- Consider what is going to be the most cost effective means of promotion.

Summary

Be your own Devil’s Advocate. Constantly put yourself in the place of your target customer and ask the “So what?” question. In other words – why should someone buy from you? What is unique about your proposition?

Checklist Questionnaire

Research

What resources do we need?

Who is going to conduct research?



When possible it is better to conduct as much initial research as possible yourselves – consultants can be very useful, but only with a well thought through, specific, brief – this is something SEDI can assist you with.

What time allocation and deadlines are we setting?

Who do we need to contact/visit (i.e. someone already trading in this market or similar social enterprise?)

Budget for research activity.

Competitor Analysis

What do they offer?

At what price?

Where (distribution, location)?

What could you offer that would give you a marketing advantage?

Target Market

Who?

Where?

What is their current purchasing behaviour in this market?

What matters to them, e.g.

- Price?
- Value for money?
- Quality?
- Level of Service?

Proposition

What is our unique selling point (USP)?

How can we respond to the “So what?” question?

Marketing Mix Grid

Product

Price

Place

Promotion
