



## IV. MARKETING YOUR ENTERPRISE

Effective marketing is a key element in any business enterprise. Landowners who do not have experience in marketing a service business often overlook its importance. Even the best-managed fee-recreation business can be unsuccessful if prospective clients are unaware of the enterprise.

Marketing is simply determining what people want, planning and providing products and services to meet those wants, and selecting the most effective ways of reaching those who might pay for these products and services.

### Developing a Marketing Plan

Your Business Plan should contain a section which includes your Marketing Plan. Keep your plan simple: define your audience, define your service, and develop a plan for getting information about your enterprise to potential clients. You must remember to budget each year for marketing.

As you develop a marketing strategy you will want to identify the two or three strong selling points of your service or operation. It might be the success rate of a fee-hunting experience, exclusivity and solitude, facilities, location and access to area attractions, price, or other services you provide. Determining your audience first will help choose the key selling points for your marketing strategy.

### Marketing Your Business

The type and amount of marketing you use in your fee-based recreation enterprise will depend on the specifics of your operation. Marketing can be as simple as word-of-mouth referral, or involve an intensive regional, national, or international media campaign.

Your marketing style and message must be directed to your identified audience. If you are providing dude-ranch activities, for example, you may emphasize the experiences of riding horses and outdoor activities. Anything you print must reflect these selling points in neat, high quality, and tasteful presentation. Sloppy advertisements or brochures reflect badly on your business.

The three basics of advertising include: the message (the two or three strong selling points and additional information about your service), the medium (publications, radio, TV, etc.), and the target audience you're trying to reach.

### The Message

Your message should tell about the type of activity or enterprise you offer, additional goods and services, directions to your location, costs of the activities and how to make reservations. Try to be original in your marketing. Keep your message simple. Always check dates, fees, addresses and phone numbers for accuracy. Make certain the goods and services advertised represent what you can deliver. Contact someone experienced in desktop publishing to assist in design and creation of printed pieces if you don't have this experience.



## The Medium

Marketing includes a wide range of activities, from public relations and advertising, to promotions and trade shows. Advertising is the most expensive approach. You should carefully consider all the following mediums and focus on those that fit your budget and reach your target audience.

The *medium* is the method by which the message is delivered to your potential clients. They might include:

Magazines	Newspapers	Local sporting good stores
Billboards	Local hunting or shooting clubs	
Brochures	Newsletters	
Local referral	Direct Mail	
Radio	Telephone book listings	
Television	Booking agents	
Video tapes	Travel agents	
Trade journals	Word-of-mouth referral	
Chamber of Commerce	Sport shows	
Trade shows	Visitors Bureau	
Cooperative Ads	Welcome Centers	



## The Target Audience

Target audiences are distinct groups or segments of clients that you expect to reach when you employ different marketing strategies. You may decide to target your service based on the characteristics of:

- income level
- age
- location (in or out-of-state; urban/rural, international)
- client preference (lodging, level of involvement —self guided versus guided, experience, etc.)

If you currently have people entering your property without paying (hunters, fishers, wildlife viewers, etc.), you may want to conduct a survey of their interests and ability to pay for services.

## Marketing Costs

The cost of marketing for a fee-recreation enterprise will largely depend on the size and type of your operation, the medium you select, and the number of times you repeat any advertisements. New operations typically spend 10-25% of total operational costs on marketing for the first few years. It's important to keep good records about response to specific marketing efforts so you can be more effective. Question or survey all customers about how they found out about your operation. With time and reputation, costs for marketing will be reduced.

## The Importance of Public Relations

Public relations is defined as the creation and maintenance of a favorable image. It is part of marketing and advertising, but it goes further. As a landowner, you should always be concerned with your business image. Your public relation goals can range from client's satisfaction with their experience, to acceptance of your operation by neighbors, local community leaders, and the general public.

It's worth the effort to foster the support of neighbors, state and federal agencies, local sheriff and law enforcement personnel, citizen groups and your local Chamber of Commerce or visitor bureau.

## Situation Analysis

*Adapted from the Agri-tourism Marketing Plan Workbook, Market Advantage, 1997*

Questions often force us to look at issues we might otherwise overlook. A situation analysis is a fundamental step in the “soul searching” that lays the foundation of your marketing plan. Here are some probing questions to help utilize the suggestions and tools in this section:

**Management Philosophies:** Describe any values, philosophies, or policies (written or unstated) that might influence your choice of marketing strategies. For example, do you like spending time with young children? Is “entertainment farming” your cup of tea? How much time do you have to devote to this type of enterprise? How much time do you have to spend with guests during the peak agricultural season?

**Decision Making:** Does your organization collect accurate, objective information about its customers, competitors, and marketing environment? Does the organization have record keeping system in place that allows the development of sound strategies and the ability to evaluate their effectiveness? Is there an able person assigned to analyze, plan, and implement the marketing work of the venture?

**Human Resources:** Does the organization have enough manpower to ensure that guests’ needs are met, even during peak farming seasons? Are temporary employees readily available to meet the short-term, emergency needs? Do employees know that “the customer is always right”? Are employees trained and empowered to provide guests with high-quality experiences?

**Financial Resources:** Does the organization have the capital needed to build or improve the guest facilities? Does the organization have the capital needed to operate at a loss until break even occurs?

**Product/Service:** Your product is everything you offer to satisfy customers’ needs—the features, optional services, quality, style, name, packaging, length of service, price, etc. In what ways is your product better than other options available to the customer? What do customers think of your facility, personnel and services? Are product improvements planned?

## Putting it All Together

1. Identify and describe the target market.
2. Decide on the Market Position—the positive idea that you want prospects to associate strongly with your business name. Keep it short and simple, descriptive of some benefit to the customer, and different from your competitors.
3. Decide on market expenditure level. Most established businesses spend 15-25% of gross sales on marketing. For start-ups, it may be significantly higher than that. A good rule of thumb is that expenditures during introduction should be twice the rate currently spent by competitors who have market shares equal to your organization’s objectives.
4. Develop the marketing mix. The marketing mix is the blend of tools that an organization will use to achieve its objectives with a target market. The tools, referred to earlier as “The Four Ps,” include produce, price, place and promotion. The elements of your marketing mix must be integrated so they work with, not against, one another.

“*Selling* is getting rid of what you have. *Marketing* is making sure you have what you can sell. The aim of marketing is to know the customer so well that the product fits him and sells itself.”

—Peter Drucker

# Marketing = the Four Ps

<b><u>Product</u></b>	<b><u>Place (Distribution)</u></b>	<b><u>Promotion</u></b>	<b><u>Price (Cost)</u></b>
Features	Location	Publicity	List Price
Optional Services	Frequency of Service	Sales Promotion	Discounts
Product Quality	Transportation	Personal Selling	Credit Terms
Staff Quality	Distributors	Advertising	Inclusive/Not
Style	Inventory	Mailing List	Remoteness
Brand Name			
Packaging			
Parking			
Scenic Beauty			
Guarantees			

Part of marketing is identifying the mix of “Ps” that makes your service unique. This is also called your *marketing mix*. The next step is to shape your *marketing mix* and *position* them so as to create a unique identity for your business that attracts and retains customers. Your market *position* is one or more selected benefits or features that makes you unique and different. The steps here include:

- Identify your target market.
- Determine what the target consumer desires.
- Assess whether you have any advantages over your competition in delivering the desired service.
- Choose the position that is most valued by the consumer.

## **Possible *Positions* for Marketing Your Operation:**

1. The feature that makes your product or service different than the offerings of competing attractions (e.g., a restaurant on an organic farm, a B&B on an exotic animal farm, a cornfield maze at a u-pick produce stand, etc.)
2. The length of time your organization has been in business (e.g., a family-run farm for over a century).
3. The unique people involved in your operation (e.g., clinics by a nationally-renowned horse trainer, entertainment by a cowboy poet, home cookin’ by a country fair blue-ribbon winner, etc.)
4. Your location (e.g., in the heart of prime bird watching habitat, within an hour of the Pacific ocean, far off the beaten path, etc.).
5. The size of your operation (e.g., a small, intimate inn on a working ranch; a 120,000 acre cattle ranch, etc.).
6. The benefits of your product or services (e.g., catch the romantic spirit of the West, restful solitude and tranquility, fulfill a childhood dream, guaranteed catch or wildlife sightings, etc.).
7. The services of your organization (e.g., outdoor recreation for young singles).
8. Your price (e.g., an affordable family adventure).
9. Your reputation (e.g., featured in Northwest’s Best Places to Stay)
10. The lifestyle-defining aspect of your offering (e.g., escape the ordinary, edge of danger rock climbing, etc.).

# Adding Value & Personalizing Your Services

As you consider your enterprise and the two or three key things that will be your main selling points, consider the following as options in adding that extra value that clients may be looking for. It may be the difference between you getting the business and the potential client going somewhere else.

Guests remember the little things, and happy customers will return, as well as tell their friends about your farm or ranch. You can add value to your guest's experience by offering refreshments. Select products that compliment what you are producing on your farm or ranch, such as cheese samples, fresh bread, apple juice, or beef jerky.

You can also distribute recipe pamphlets, pins, posters, and other goodies. Many of the Commodity Commissions and agriculture trade organizations in Oregon already have promotional items that are available free of charge or at a nominal cost.

With time and creativity, you can expand your recreation enterprise. Other fun, entertaining activities include contests, adult and children's classes and games, ranging from guessing how many apples are in a barrel, to horseshoe throwing and bake-offs. Children love straw mazes, pumpkin painting and scarecrow making. Adults may enjoy historic displays or classes on painting or herbs. Fortunately, visitors do not need to be entertained every moment. Make time for rest and relaxation. Some guests are simply looking to escape their busy routines. The better you profile the customers you want to attract, the easier it will be to create appropriate activities for the guests.

