

Marketing Sheets: Promoting Your Program



COMMUNICATIONS

A Step-by-Step Guide To Preparing an Effective Marketing Sheet

Launched in 1982 by Jim and Patty Rouse, The Enterprise Foundation is a national, nonprofit housing and community development organization dedicated to bringing lasting improvements to distressed communities.

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT LIBRARY™

This book is part of the Enterprise Community Development Library, an invaluable reference collection for nonprofit organizations dedicated to revitalizing and reconnecting neighborhoods to mainstream America. One of many resources available through Enterprise, it offers industry-proven information in simple, easy-to-read formats. From planning to governance, fund raising to money management, and program operations to communications, the Community Development Library will help your organization succeed.

ADDITIONAL ENTERPRISE RESOURCES

The Enterprise Foundation provides nonprofit organizations with expert consultation and training as well as an extensive collection of print and online tools. For more information, please visit our Web site at www.enterprisefoundation.org.



About This Manual

What is a marketing sheet?

A marketing sheet is a concise overview of your nonprofit organization's mission and your abilities to accomplish that mission. It defines your purpose, promotes your agenda and aligns you with the audience you intend to reach.

This manual is designed to help the staff of nonprofit community development organizations create an effective marketing sheet. To make the process less intimidating, we have included examples, a sample marketing sheet and information on:

- How to prepare a marketing sheet
- When to use one

This manual is part of the *Communication* series within The Enterprise Foundation's Community Development Library™. This series provides detailed information on all aspects of communications — from developing a central message to creating a comprehensive communications strategy. Other manuals in the series provide information on:

- Creating brochures and newsletters
- Developing annual reports
- Working effectively with the media
- Organizing neighborhood tours
- Creating action alerts
- Creating a message for your organization and identifying an audience

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The Marketing Sheet

A marketing sheet is one of the many tools you can use to get your message out. Contained on one page (use the back if you need to), it offers a concise overview of your nonprofit organization and how it contributes to the community. To be most effective, it should be clearly written — stating your mission, programs, services and accomplishments — and be targeted to the specific audience you want to reach. For example, a marketing sheet can be sent to potential partners, donors or policy-makers.

The information gathered to develop a marketing sheet is central to your nonprofit and can serve as the basis for many other communications efforts. It also ensures your message is consistent by providing a common reference source for staff, board members and partners.

When to Use One

Perhaps the better question is when not to. Always include a marketing sheet with informational kits you give to policy-makers (local, state or federal). Hand it out during presentations, events and tours. Use the information to help prepare a fund-raising request and then include it with your appeal. At events such as groundbreakings that attract reporters, give your marketing sheet to the media. Mail or fax it with news releases.

Marketing sheets help you:

- Introduce your nonprofit to potential donors, partners, as well as local, state and federal policy-makers.
- Enhance your nonprofit's image and credibility.
- Increase the visibility of community issues.
- Increase the visibility of your efforts to improve your community.
- Describe your organization to reporters and editors.
- Promote your organization's value as a player in local decisions.

Once you have gathered the information for your marketing sheet, you can use it to prepare:

- Brochures about your organization
- Presentations
- Proposals or grant requests
- News releases
- Your Web site

Step by Step: Writing Effectively

THINK ABOUT YOUR AUDIENCE

Your organization will have different audiences for its message at different times. Before you sit down to write a marketing sheet, determine its specific audience — partners, policy-makers, donors, employees, residents or media — and whether that audience will change. You may determine you need to create more than one marketing sheet.

It is important to target the content and phrasing of the marketing sheet to its intended recipients so your message addresses the issues that are important to them. For example, the media might be more attuned to how your organization addresses controversial issues, while donors want to know the mission and goals.

THINK ABOUT YOUR AUDIENCE'S REACTION TO YOUR MESSAGE

Often as part of a broader communications strategy, nonprofits create marketing sheets to accomplish a specific objective. Are you requesting funding? Looking for a reaction to or agreement with your perspective on certain community issues? Once you've determined your goal, you can write a marketing sheet that will help you achieve it.

For example, use it to introduce and describe a new program, or highlight your organization's activity on a particular community issue (community safety, home ownership, housing development or financing). The sample in this manual is targeted to potential donors. For more information on identifying and targeting the audiences and messages, see *Communications: Getting the Word Out*, part of the *Communication* series within the Community Development Library.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Your writing must be easy for the average person to understand. Avoid jargon and acronyms (capacity building, TA) and technical discussions. Give specific facts and figures to show your accomplishments.

Use bullets and subheadings so that your readers can quickly find the information most important to them. Also, avoid lengthy descriptions of services. These are more appropriate in a brochure.

Marketing sheets enhance your nonprofit's image and credibility.

STEP 1

CHOOSE A MAIN HEADING

In addition to placing your organization's name at the top of the sheet, create a large headline that identifies your purpose. Here are some headings used by other nonprofits:

- Our Vision
- Our Community
- Our Goals
- Our Partners
- Meeting a Need in the Community
- Good Works* Responding
(* insert the name of your organization)
- Helping Hands

STEP 2

INCLUDE YOUR MISSION STATEMENT

A mission statement outlines the purpose of your nonprofit and defines your long-term and short-term goals, direction and customers. If your organization's mission statement is longer than two sentences, you should condense it for the purposes of your marketing sheet. You might also ask your board to consider revising it. As a general rule, mission statements have more impact if they are short enough to remember.

You can find more information on how to write an effective mission statement in *Building and Managing a Better Board*, part of the *Governance* series within the Community Development Library.

Example:

The mission of Good Works Community Development Corporation:

Increase the amount of affordable housing and home ownership in Ward 10 in Washington, D.C., and help those residents achieve better lives.

STEP 3

DESCRIBE THE NEED YOU ARE ADDRESSING

Begin by describing your community. You can cite geography, use street or political boundaries, or describe the population that your nonprofit serves.

Compare your community needs, such as housing conditions, etc., to others in the city, state or country. Explain the community conditions that compelled your organization's formation and list what you are doing to correct them. Be sure your activities are consistent with the goals and vision of your mission statement.

Example:

The Good Works Community Development Corporation has a proven track record in renovating dilapidated houses in the Pleasant View community in Ward 10 and selling them to first-time home purchasers. Now we have expanded our initiatives to include targeted training and employment skill development programs for residents.

The reasons are clear. Unemployment in the Pleasant View community is 7.8 percent, compared to 2.7 percent for the rest of the city. Because of Good Works' increased attention to this issue, the mayor and city council members have started devoting time and funding to help find solutions. The city is now seeking partners to improve high school and community college training programs. Good Works expects to join these efforts and create better training for Pleasant View residents.

Other information you may want to include:

- A short history of the targeted community or its relevance to the rest of the region
- Additional challenges facing the community and its residents
- The spirit of the neighborhood and residents' response to your organization's work
- Other facts or statistics that illustrate community need

STEP 4

INCLUDE YOUR PROGRAMS, SERVICES, PARTNERS

Describe the programs and services your non-profit offers to the community. List the partners you work with and ongoing programs that show your capability to achieve your mission. Make sure you list the services you are providing that address the community needs you documented.

Example:

Good Works purchases dilapidated houses in the community, renovates the houses to a high standard of quality and sells them at affordable prices to first-time home buyers. Often lower-income families desire to leave their rental apartments and become home owners. For these households, Good Works has arranged for down-payment assistance through our partnership with the city and for first mortgages through the local branch of First National Bank. In addition, Good Works provides credit and home-purchase counseling for prospective buyers who live within the neighborhood. We will continue to create better home ownership opportunities in Pleasant View.

STEP 5

LIST YOUR GOALS

Describe only those goals that are key to your organization, and explain how you will reach them. These goals should be set off as bulleted or numbered lists with the most important ideas or phrases highlighted in bold type.

Example:

In the coming years, we will expand our initiatives to include employment and training for Pleasant View residents by:

1. Placing 10 community residents with contractors hired by Good Works to rehabilitate 20 homes on First Street.

Through our contracting procedures, we will set and enforce employment goals for training and hiring Pleasant View residents.

2. Creating training and employment opportunities for Pleasant View residents with local law enforcement agencies.

Good Works will seek to expand its relationship with Police District 5 into specific job training and recruitment partnerships.

3. Developing a work training program through six local businesses to elevate 30 Pleasant View residents into full-time jobs.

We will identify prospective employees and their training needs, and develop the appropriate training programs to match residents to jobs.

STEP 6

ALWAYS NOTE YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Include up to 10 fundamental accomplishments that chronicle projects or tasks your organization has completed. These are your success stories. Like your goals, list them and put the most important ideas or phrases in bold type.

Example:

Since our inception in 1985, we have:

1. Rehabilitated 50 homes on Market Street

Fifty families now own decent and affordable homes in what used to be a neighborhood of boarded-up row houses.

2. Placed 17 hard-to-employ residents in jobs

Fifteen of these residents have remained in their jobs for at least two years.

3. Organized a neighborhood cleanup

Working with 50 residents, we removed the trash from three square blocks.

STEP 7

GIVE CREDIT TO YOUR PARTNERS

By giving credit and recognition to your partners for their contributions to your current initiatives, you entice new groups to work with you. Include any government agencies, banks, foundations, nonprofits or affordable housing groups that fund or provide in-kind services or expertise.

Example:

We have formed a variety of community partnerships to accomplish our mission, and we would like to give special recognition to the following organizations that have helped us in the past:

- Pleasant View Community Council
- First National Bank
- City Community Development Office

STEP 8

PROVIDE A CONTACT NAME AND NUMBER

Always name a person to contact for more information who can respond to technical and detailed requests. Place this information at the bottom of the first page and include the following information:

- Contact name
- Name of organization
- Mailing address
- Telephone and fax number
- Email address and Web address, if you have one

Example:

For more information, contact:
Tom D. Harry, Executive Director
Good Works CDC
Good Works Way
Washington, D.C. 00000
Phone: 999.999.9999
Fax: 999.999.9999
email: goodworks@cdc.org
www.goodworks.org

STEP 9

LIST YOUR BOARD

It is important that your audience know who makes up your organization's board. List them on the marketing sheet in alphabetical order.

STEP 10

DATE THE MARKETING SHEET

To ensure you are distributing the most current copy of your marketing sheet, date it in small type at the bottom of the page.

STEP 11

UPDATE THE MARKETING SHEET REGULARLY

Making your marketing sheet easy to update is essential to its value. When goals become accomplishments — or when new goals, partners or donors are added — the marketing sheet should be promptly revised. Assign someone on your staff to manage updates and keep track of information so your marketing sheet is always current.

A Sample

TARGET AUDIENCE: POTENTIAL DONORS

STEP 1

Good Works Community Development Corporation

Meeting a Need in the Community

STEP 3

The Good Works Community Development Corporation has a proven track record in renovating dilapidated houses in the Pleasant View community in Ward 10 and selling them to first-time home purchasers. Now we have expanded our initiatives to include targeted training and employment skill development programs for residents.

The reasons are clear. Unemployment in the Pleasant View community is 7.8 percent, compared to 2.7 percent for the rest of the city. Because of Good Works' increased attention to this issue, the mayor and city council members have started devoting time and funding to help find solutions. The city is now seeking partners to improve high school and community college training programs. Good Works expects to join these efforts and create better training for Pleasant View residents.

PROGRAMS THAT RESPOND TO THE COMMUNITY

STEP 4

Good Works purchases dilapidated houses in the community, renovates the houses to a high standard of quality, and sells them at affordable prices to first-time home buyers. Often lower-income families desire to leave their rental apartments and become home owners. For these households, Good Works has arranged for down-payment assistance through our partnership with the city and for first mortgages through the local branch of First National Bank. In addition, Good Works provides credit and home-purchase counseling for prospective buyers who live within the neighborhood. We will continue to create better home ownership opportunities in Pleasant View.

STEP 5

In the coming years, we will expand our initiatives to include employment and training for Pleasant View residents by:

1. **Placing 10 community residents with contractors hired by Good Works to rehabilitate 20 homes on First Street.** Through our contracting procedures, we will set and enforce employment goals for training and hiring Pleasant View residents.
2. **Creating training and employment opportunities for Pleasant View residents with local law enforcement agencies.** Good Works will seek to expand its relationship with Police District 5 into specific job training and recruitment partnerships.
3. **Developing a work training program through six local businesses to elevate 30 Pleasant View residents into full-time jobs.** We will identify prospective employees and their training needs, and develop the appropriate training programs to match residents to jobs.

STEP 8

For more information, contact:
Tom D. Harry, Executive Director

Good Works Community Development Corporation
Good Works Way, Washington, D.C. 00000

Phone: 999.999.9999
Fax: 999.999.9999
email: goodworks@cdc.org

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Since our inception in 1985, we have:

1. **Rehabilitated 50 homes on Market Street.** Fifty families now own decent and affordable homes in what used to be a neighborhood of boarded-up row houses.
2. **Placed 17 hard-to-employ residents in jobs.** Fifteen of these residents have remained in their jobs for at least two years.
3. **Organized a neighborhood cleanup.** Working with 50 residents, we removed the trash from three square blocks.

ACCOMPLISHING THE GOOD WORKS MISSION

The mission of Good Works Community Development Corporation is to increase the amount of affordable housing and home ownership in Ward 10 in Washington, D.C., and help those residents achieve better lives.

We have formed a variety of community partnerships to accomplish our mission, and we would like to give special recognition to the following organizations that have helped us in the past:

- Pleasant View Community Council
- First National Bank
- City Community Development Office

Good Works CDC Board of Trustees

Joe Border, J.B. Incorporated
 John Brown, Brown International
 Jane Doe, First National Bank
 Joe Luck, Pack Corporation
 Mary Masterly, Lottel, Inc.

February 12, 1999

THE ENTERPRISE FOUNDATION

The Foundation's mission is to see that all low-income people in the United States have access to fit and affordable housing and an opportunity to move out of poverty and into the mainstream of American life. To achieve that mission, we strive to:

- Build a national community revitalization movement.
- Demonstrate what is possible in low-income communities.
- Communicate and advocate what works in community development.

As the nation's leader in community development, Enterprise cultivates, collects and disseminates expertise and resources to help communities across America successfully improve the quality of life for low-income people.

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For more information about The Enterprise Foundation or the Community Development Library™, visit us at www.enterprisefoundation.org. To review our online community magazine, check out www.horizonmag.com.



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