

## Session 4.4 Promotion and branding

### Key learning points



- Developing an identity for your organisation
- Trade marks and brand names
- Advertising
- Publicity and promotion
- Organising events and demonstrations
- Working with the media
- Using the Internet

### Main objectives of the session

By the end of this session participants will be better able to:



- Set marketing and promotional objectives
- Organise a publicity campaign and prepare an action plan
- Set a promotional budget and evaluate cost effectiveness
- Develop a recognisable image and identity
- Design, develop and register trademarks and brand names
- Target promotional campaigns to specific customer groups
- Prepare promotional materials
- Select appropriate advertising, channels and publications
- Work with the media, journalists and develop good stories
- Organise events, demonstrations, presentations and news conferences
- Design websites and promote effectively on the Internet
- Design good advertisements and press releases
- Write effectively
- Prepare good photographs
- Select appropriate promotional agencies, designers and staff
- Promote positive values and adopt positive attitudes
- Train staff in customer service

### 4.4.1 Developing an identity for your organisation

A good image of a company is important for successful marketing. An attractive product at the right price does not necessarily guarantee a sale. Customers do not like to buy from organisations with poor reputations. Similarly it is not possible in the long term to promote products effectively that are not equally consistent in terms of quality of supply.

Rarely do successful promotions focus simply on the attributes of a product. Added value messages, such as taste, freshness or quality help to give an extra dimension to a marketing campaign. But the product has to live up to the promotion in the eyes of the eventual consumer, otherwise long-term damage to a company or farm reputation will result.

All members of the marketing chain, growers, intermediaries and retailers have a role to play and a wide range of techniques can be used to shape positive customer perceptions of companies, products and brands. Promotion can be expensive particularly if it is not properly targeted and objectives need to relate to the overall marketing objectives of a company and detailed budgets prepared. Even so, some promotional activities, such as media relations or staff attitudes to customers cost very little but only work if sufficient attention is given to them by management.

It is useful to present an integrated, strong and instantly recognisable image of an organisation that is regarded in a positive way by customers. This will require devising a distinctive logo and organisational colours and typefaces that can be used on all stationary, vehicles and publicity materials as well as on premises. This ensures that an individual organisation is easily distinguishable from others that might offer similar services. A logo and a statement of a mission and objectives will form the central part of an organisational identity and should convey something about the business or farm. Identities need to work at trade and consumer level.

Some organisations have such a strong identity that they are instantly recognisable even when seen in a foreign language. These organisations are often able to charge more for products as customers feel, sub-consciously more confident in the value of the product.

If an organisation lacks a strong visual identity or has an outmoded image it may have to consider restyling it. Designers may be asked to produce some ideas and it may take some time to develop, particularly as you may have to live with it for a long while.

Missions and logos should aim to promote positive values. Patents, and design rights may be needed to protect identities and prevent others from using them. The organisation will also need to work hard to live up to the projected image and ensure that standards of customer care, service and quality are equal to them. An image can take years to develop and only a few moments to destroy.

Promotional objectives have to be linked to marketing objectives. The following table gives an idea as to how the two are connected.

**TABLE: Marketing and Promotional Objectives**

Marketing objective	Promotional objective
To build stronger and more lasting relationships with clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Organise a number of informal dinners with customers</li> <li>❑ Produce a quarterly newsletter</li> </ul>
To increase the awareness of the public of the organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Secure positive coverage in the media</li> <li>❑ Organise an open day to the organisation</li> </ul>
To promote a new range of products more widely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Secure articles in the trade and consumer press</li> <li>❑ Organise demonstrations</li> </ul>

Similarly team members will need to be valued and communicated with openly. Unhappy and unmotivated team members will tend to deliver poor service and provide negative feedback to their friends and customers. This will affect the organisations image. To attain 100% customer satisfaction an organisation will have to continuously train staff in customer service and introduce a customer charter, telling the customers what to expect if they the organisation fails to keep promises. If complaints do occur, it is important to see them from a customers perspective and make sure they are dealt with swiftly, fairly and courteously.

#### 4.4.2 Trade marks and brand names

A trademark is a brand that is given legal protection as it belongs to the originator. A brand is a name or term, sign, symbol, design, shape, smell, or a combination, which attempts to differentiate your products from those of a competitor. A trademark identifies the origin of the product and enables the purchaser an assurance of quality. A trademark needs to be officially registered as acceptable within international law, although it still can be imitated or pirated on occasions. An international brand name should aim to have no other meaning in any other language and may include a combination of both words and numbers.

Quality products backed by a strong brand are useful in increasing incomes. Strong and well-known products provide organisations with a real competitive advantage. The aim is to make people associate specific benefits with a brand. A strong brand is not a substitute for quality, but an enhancement to it and the power of branding can provide products with personality and meaning and so ensure they achieve a prominent position in the market place.

Branding means developing unique attributes so that products are immediately recognisable. Corporate colours, logo, packaging and promotional activity should also aim to strengthen the brand image, although some colours, words and pictures can have negative cultural or political connotations in different countries. Branding of fruit and vegetables is harder than for many consumer products. Very rarely has a brand been product based, although Jaffa has been synonymous with citrus since 1882 and other product groups such as bananas are under development.

Most fruits and vegetables however are most recognised either for their varietal name e.g. golden delicious or pink lady apples or by the marketing company name, such as Fyffes, Geest, Dole, Chiquita or Del Monte.

Associations of traders and producers as well as food promotion agencies, such as Food From Britain, the New Zealand kiwi growers association or the Chilean Fresh Fruit Association have also been established to promote particular varieties and product groups as well as specific country or regional production, such as Cornish king fruits. In this case both the brand as well as the consumer feelings towards a particular region can be promoted. Individual countries are normally unable to supply year round production and sometimes licences to use specific promotional names are given to producers and traders within approved assurance schemes. Some larger retailers may require agreements to promote particular brands in store or may support particular campaigns if they feel their own overall sales and incomes are likely to increase.

The right variety or product name helps to sell products and services and may enable a premium price to be obtained, but only if consumers are able to recognise it and are likely to automatically select it when placed alongside other similar products. Individuality and personality enables customers to identify with offerings and to get to know them. It makes products and services tangible and real. It is important to choose names that enhance the image of the organisation and which are appropriate for the product and its positioning in the market place.

It is also important to check that the name is available and registered so it cannot be used by others. If the market is international, it is important to ensure that the name is pronounceable in other languages and does not translate into a rude word or one with negative connotations. A good name is short, apt, easy to spell and memorable. It is useful to show a shortlist of product names to target customers and ask them what image the name conjures up and using the feedback select a name that has the most positive connotations.

Premium prices can often be obtained by establishing an identity and a reputation as a consistent high quality supplier. This can be achieved by:

- ❑ Drawing up minimum grading specifications for top quality graded produce
- ❑ Training growers/pickers in grading to this standard
- ❑ Agreeing on a name, symbol or brand image that can be printed on to the packaging
- ❑ Asking contract growers to sign an agreement that they will only send the correct quality produce under the brand name
- ❑ Getting each grower to mark branded packages with their own identification mark so that any produce that is below specification can be traced back to an individual grower

It should be remembered that it can take years to establish a good reputation but it can be quickly destroyed by one or two poor consignments.

### 1.4.3 Advertising

Advertising is a paid for and persuasive promotional activity that uses the media and other publicity channels, such as the Internet. It is used to sell products, build and maintain awareness, promote events and new products, to invite enquiries and to find new customers.

If a company is planning a major campaign they may consider calling on specialists. Media specialists or agencies will be able to organise things much more effectively and sometimes more cheaply and always more quickly.

A simple formula can be used to check that an advertising campaign will produce results. When adding up the total cost of your campaign, every item has to be included and not only the cost of the event itself. If forecast sales exceed the breakeven figure (C) success is likely. Allow a margin of error. Response rates are a guideline and not a guarantee.

**TABLE: Advertising Campaign**

A) Total cost of campaign	1000 Euro
B) Profit per sale	20 Euro
<b>C) Number of sales needed to break even (A) / (B)</b>	<b>50</b>
D) Mailing quantity/circulation figures or listening/view statistics	5,000
E) Expected response rate	80
<b>Forecast sales</b>	<b>62.5</b>

A number of questions should be asked before advertising. In particular:

- What do we hope to achieve as a result of advertising?
- Whom do we want to reach and what do we want to say to them?
- Which publications do your target customers read?
- How often do we need to advertise to get our message across successfully?
- How large will our advertisement need to be?

Press advertising offers a way to reach a large audience, but the company will have to choose the correct publications, advertisements will have to be designed carefully and the best deal negotiated. For advertisements to be effective they will need to reach the right target. A list of publications in which to advertise should be drawn up. Publications might include, local newspapers and information sheets, national newspapers, consumer magazines and professional publications. Each have advantages and disadvantages for a promotional campaign.

**TABLE: Publications**

Type of publication	Advantages and disadvantages
<p><b>Local newspapers and information sheets</b></p> <p>These are delivered occasionally or weekly to local regions or communities and are often free</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ They often rely on advertising for income but it is often cheap and easier to use relatively simple advertisements</li> <li>❑ They are good for targeting specific regions</li> </ul>
<p><b>National newspapers</b></p> <p>These are often daily papers for which there is a charge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ These are good for reaching many people</li> <li>❑ It gives a prestigious image</li> <li>❑ It can be expensive</li> <li>❑ Targeting is very wide</li> </ul>
<p><b>Consumer magazines</b></p> <p>There are a huge number of options including areas such as womens magazines, health, food, music etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ They are useful for targeting special interest groups</li> <li>❑ Readers are specifically interested in the topic and so they are likely to read it.</li> <li>❑ Competitors are likely to advertise in the same magazine</li> </ul>
<p><b>Professional publications</b></p> <p>These are magazines for particular professions such as agriculture, fruit growing etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ These are excellent for targeting a particular professional group</li> <li>❑ They are often retained for later reference so they last a long time</li> <li>❑ They are normally read by more than one person as they are passed around</li> </ul>

Each magazine can be asked to send a media pack (if they have one), and these provide information on readership profiles and circulation details. The best title for the company product and target audience will have to be selected. Details and dates of special features contained in the pack will help in deciding the best time for an advertisement. Space and time for the advertisement will have to be booked, particularly if they are running a special feature on the product area. If they are not does such a feature they can be encouraged to do so.

The media pack should also provide information on the deadline for placing an advertisement as well as technical data on the form in which to supply the artwork and text. There is no need to always agree to the quoted rate for advertising. The price can sometimes be negotiated downwards.

Various factors will affect the cost of an advertisement, including the time of year, demand, the size and position of the advertisement, circulation of the publication and whether it is in black type or colour. If demand is slack a discount is normally available.

If the price cannot be reduced a bigger advertisement may be negotiated for the same price, or a second advertisement agreed at half price or in a more prominent position. The best positions for advertisements in the written media are:

1. The front cover
2. The back cover
3. The inside right hand pages.

It is important to ensure that the elements making up an advertisement – style of language, tone, colours, graphics, photographs and illustrations – are chosen with a target reader in mind. Competitors advertisements can be checked too to see how they promote their products. A similar approach or a radically different one can be followed but a clear, simple proposition should be created and avoiding complex ideas that require hard work from the readers. It is also important to ensure that all the elements of an advert work together and text can be used to reinforce any photos or illustrations and an eye-catching design can help to hold everything together.

When readers see an advertisement for the first time their eyes follow a set route. Readers look first at the picture, then at the headline, bottom right hand corner (good place to put the logo), captions, sub-headings and then main text. This needs to be considered when designing an advertisement.

It is important to remember:

- ❑ That an illustration or photograph is the first element readers will look at and this will encourage them to look further
- ❑ To use the headline to attract attention because 80% of people will stop reading at this stage
- ❑ That captions on photographs will attract twice the readership of the main text
- ❑ That less than 20% of persons will read the main text but those that do are genuinely interested. It should be readable, informative, persuasive and directive, but also simple
- ❑ To bear in mind that spaces between paragraphs will increase readership
- ❑ To avoid too much small print because it is difficult to read
- ❑ To give an advertisement a heavy or dashed border to increase its impact
- ❑ That colour advertisements attract twice the readership of black
- ❑ To make sure potential customers know exactly how to contact you and for what reason

A few other considerations are outlined in the following table.

**TABLE: Defining the key steps to successful advertising**

Key steps	How to tackle them
Grab attention	Use a striking design, a strong headline, strong colours, large lettering, powerful photographs or other devices to get noticed
Hold interest	Devise an appealing, persuasive proposition that will make potential customers notice
Stimulate desire	Make your offer irresistible. Show how good the deal is and highlight valuable extras such as good after sales

	support
Gain conviction	Convince customers that they need what you are selling by giving powerful reasons that will appeal to them
Push for action	Urge customers to act using techniques that will help them to respond to you

Before submitting your advertisement it is useful to ask staff, passers by and (preferably) some of customers what they think about it. Do they find it attractive, readable and persuasive? They may be given two options to choose from (one could be a competitors) and asked which they like the best.

Many customers listen to the radio as the main source of their information. Radio advertisements are more difficult to ignore than printed ones and provide for excellent geographical and customer targeting. But products cannot be shown, only described, and listeners have to write down the details. Radio stations can sometimes help with production and give examples of advertisements they have already produced. Radio stations also have listener profiles and they should know what this is and be able to inform whether it changes through the day and night.

Elements of a good radio advertisement include considerations of sound quality, music, voices, accents and a conversational style in which speakers talk directly to the listener. Studio and specialist equipment will be needed and this will require appointing an agency or commissioning the in house creative team of the station to write and produce the advertisement.

Television advertising is much more specialist and technical and this will also require an agency to be commissioned and to advise on where, when and how to advertise as well as to develop a creative idea and oversee production. It is best to initially contact at least three agencies with a written briefing explaining what has to be achieved. An agency should be asked to present themselves, explain what they would do and how much it will cost. Examples of previous work and clients can also be shown.

The costs of radio and television advertising will have to be carefully assessed as there will be additional ones when compared to advertising in print, including possibly; a writer, a reader/actor and musicians plus equipment time. For all forms of advertising response to advertisements should be measured. How many enquiries were made? How many sales were made as a result? This will enable revision and improved targeting.

#### 4.4.4 Publicity and promotion

The aim of publicity and promotion is to win understanding and support from, and to influence the behaviour and opinions of, key target customers. A number of methods can be used.

Any letter or written form of correspondence is a form of promotion. All the materials sent should be looked at carefully, particularly letter and fax paper, the forms of letters, leaflets, brochures or catalogues, newsletters, envelopes, visit cards etc. Do they really the right impression? Written communications may be occasional or can be regularly used to keep in touch with clients. It may include sending information on the latest news

or developments, questionnaires, invitations to meetings, or as Christmas or other celebration cards. Bullet points in letters make benefits stand out from the main text. Letters should be read aloud before they are sent. Thoughtful mailing can help to build an image and maintain customer relationships. Mailing lists will need to be kept up to date at all times.

There are a number of other techniques that may be used. Many are often free and including developing relationships with the media, sponsoring local activities, such as charities or school events, attending or organising exhibitions or conferences or providing excellent and caring support to customers.

In store promotions, such as leaflets, tickets and stickers or demonstrations can be useful in exposing a product or brand at a trade intermediary premises or within a retail store. Publicity companies can provide a range of options or else ideas can be obtained from collecting examples from competitors. Moveable and flexible stands can be placed at customer premises (and also used at exhibitions) and presenting the product as well as the company, brand name or image to be portrayed, such as freshness, taste, quality or health issues.

Organisations need to find out how their existing and target customers view them by using research methods such as questionnaires and discussion groups and get their views on how successful specific promotional tools are even areas such as, your premises, the telephone manner of staff or publicity materials. Each will have to be examined in detail to see if this is the image the company want to portray.

If not a plan of action for bringing your desired image into line with your actual image will have to be prepared. A simple matrix can be designed to plan actions.

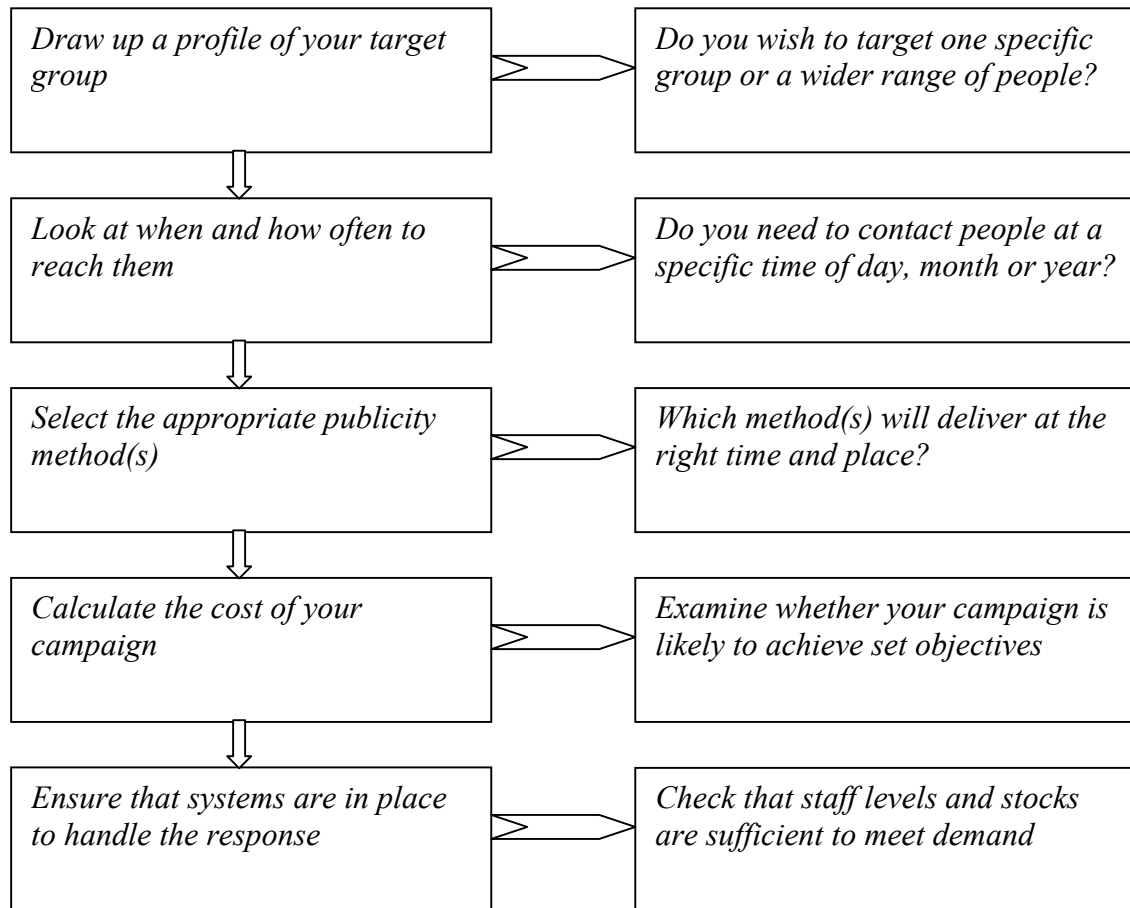
**TABLE: Action Plan Matrix**

	<b>Item 1</b>	<b>Item 2</b>	<b>Item 3</b>
<b>Item examined</b>	Reception area	Promotional brochure	Telephone answering for customers
<b>Image conveyed</b>	Run down and old fashioned	Cheap and unprofessional	Inefficient and unprofessional
<b>Desired image</b>	Welcoming and stylish	Attractive, professional and upmarket	Fast (with three rings) efficient and customer orientated
<b>Action required</b>	Redecorate and replace chairs	Produce new brochure with good design	Explore the use of more part time staff
<b>Budget</b>	5,000 Euro	15,000 Euro	Unknown
<b>Delegated to</b>	Victor	Dimitri	George
<b>Start/completion</b>	Feb/March	March/June	Feb/March

Vague statements should be avoided and clear, specific, measurable and time framed objectives set and that allows the company to focus the publicity budget to where it will

produce the best results. The best way to obtain maximum publicity will be to organise an integrated campaign combining several methods and where one technique builds upon the other. The following checklist for the design of the campaign may be used.

### Organising a successful publicity campaign



When assigning dates it is important to consider the importance of timing. Some ideas are best undertaken when there is an obvious marketing link. Promotion can be tied to significant or high profile days or events, such as Easter. Retailers also appreciated campaigns that help to promote fruit and vegetables during months where sales are slack.

Cheap publicity or attempts to deceive customers will eventually give a company a bad name. A well deserved image is based on a genuine commitment to provide excellent service and to be a good caring employer and responsible organisation. To support this there are a number of important points to remember:

- ❑ Check that any claims made in your publicity materials can be substantiated
- ❑ Avoid making false or exaggerated claims
- ❑ Ensure that materials are accurate and clear
- ❑ Be sure that publicity does not mislead or deliberately give the wrong impression

### 4.4.5 Organising events and demonstrations

A lot of publicity is based around events where products can be demonstrated and a wide range of possibilities exist including agricultural and food shows as well as cooking exhibitions and more obscure areas such as home or tourism events. To make them memorable it is useful to have a creative idea. Venues will need to be selected with care (and perhaps consider using unusual ones) and the event planned to the very last detail. There are a number of possibilities that can also be considered for events including launches of new products, opening of new premises, open days, press conferences, media or customer trips, seminars, training courses, exhibitions or conferences. All events offer the opportunity to raise a company profile, build customer loyalty and enhance a reputation. Dates for events might be obvious (such as your organisations anniversary) but more often it can be influenced by linking to some topical occasion.

Small events are normally easily manageable by one person but larger events will need the help and support of others. A planning team will have to be established for significant events and given specific tasks. The right people with time and skills will need to be selected and involved at an early stage in the planning. These are normally people who are organised and enthusiastic.

If speakers are involved it is important to get the right ones for the right events. This may involve a celebrity speaker. Speakers will need to be provided with detailed information well in advance and which sets out the purpose of the event, and including arrival times, the main areas they should cover and details of who will be there. Speakers will then be able to prepare themselves properly. This is particularly important if they don't know the company or product very well and it may be necessary to provide some background information on these areas.

A detailed list of possible venues for your events should be maintained and the advantages and disadvantages of each compared. Does this venue help to further enhance the company image? Each location will create a different type of atmosphere, such as serious, fun, formal or informal. Costs, location, capacity, facilities and safety will also have to be considered.

A detailed checklist of equipment and facilities needed should be drawn up in advance, such as the numbers of; tables, chairs, toilets, flipcharts, projectors, microphones, television and video recorders, badges, signs, pens and stationary, coffee, tea etc. All bookings should be confirmed in writing and records kept of ever of everything.

<b>Things to consider in planning an event</b>	
<b>Key component</b>	<b>What to consider</b>
<p><b>Venue</b> This must be carefully chosen to suit the type of event and to reflect the intended your image you want to project</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Can the venue accommodate all your needs? Is it large enough, does it have the facilities you need and are the staff friendly and professional?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Catering</b> Food and refreshments provided during the event. Consider quantity, quality, price and how long it takes to get there and be served</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Prices and qualities vary considerably so look around. Check menus and see if the site has a good atmosphere, friendly and efficient staff</li> </ul>
<p><b>Guest list</b> Include all persons including, guests, speakers and support staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Keep a reserve list in case some of your invited guests are not able to come. Design and print invitations and programmes for everyone and distribute them in plenty of time</li> </ul>
<p><b>Speakers and entertainment</b> All speakers at the event and any entertainment planned</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Try to see them in action before you recruit them. Find out what equipment and facilities they will need</li> </ul>

An exhibition provides a specific opportunity to present a specific message to the public and customers and inform them of work. It will be important to decide what has to be achieved, what should be presented and which materials will be available. Buying a stand at an exhibition, staffing it and producing attractive display boards can be expensive but provides an excellent opportunity to reach a target audience face to face and to engage them in discussions about work.

The key to successful exhibiting is to select the right venue - one that will attract the target audience. Organisers should be able to provide detailed audience profiles and details of other exhibitors and this will help in deciding whether it is suitable. They should also be able to provide details of how and to whom the exhibition will be promoted.

The venue should be visited in advance to check the location of the stand and to make sure it occupies a bright and central position where it will attract the maximum amount of visitors. Negotiations can be held with the exhibition organisers before paying for a stand and to get the best deal.

Information display boards in a chosen location will promote a company message well but staffed stands are even more effective. But overstaffed stands deter visitors. Rotas will have to be arranged to cover any breaks. Team members should be selected who are

outgoing, friendly, smiling, happy to talk to people and at the right level for the event. They will need to be instructed thoroughly so they know what message they are promoting and can answer any likely questions. Visitors should leave a stand carrying a company message in their hand or in their head. Sufficient supplies of company materials will have to be available and possibly including an information pack and gifts to particularly interesting customers. Balloons, badges, pens and carrier bags as well as many other items can be stamped with the logo of an organisation and are relatively cheap to produce.

Stands should be carefully designed to make sure it is accessible and with no barriers to entry. It should also be attractive, colourful and appealing. To further attract customers to a stand, refreshments or specialist consultations might be provided and videos, interactive computers, demonstrations or participative activities can be used.

Any requests for information should be listed and names and interests of as many people attending your stands as possible should be collected and placed into a customer database. This will require a record book. Any requests for information or help should be sent within one week following the exhibition

#### **4.4.6 Working with the media**

It is useful to build strong relationships with journalists, organise successful media events and monitor media coverage to ensure the message the company wants get across is being conveyed. Regular and systematic media contacts normally results in more favourable and positive media coverage. This will mean making a list of key journalists, editors and media staff and getting to know them personally. Companies will need to be proactive in media relations and not wait for the media to arrive. They can be telephoned and met for coffee or lunch. Companies have to work hard to create and sustain relationships with their target media. A good relationship can be mutually beneficial. Journalists are busy people but they need good stories and are always looking for them. Eventually the media will use their contacts and help for identifying good stories.

It is important to always be helpful, return their calls and keep to deadlines. These are vitally important to journalists. All journalists like exclusive stories but good stories need to be shared rather than given to a favourite reporter. Editors can be asked feature an organisation. Formal visits for a number of journalists to a company site to demonstrate work in action can be organised, with a programme including lunch with relevant staff. Staff will need to be instructed on what they can or cannot say. A good story can be prepared in advance alongside an information pack and souvenirs for them to take away.

Favourable press coverage significantly enhances the reputation of an organisation and helps to build credibility. A lot of this publicity is free if the right techniques are employed. Letters and articles may be written directly for the media but the simplest way to get on television, radio or in the press is to issue a news release. A press release is simply a news story written in a journalistic style. If they are written properly journalists like these releases as they, save time, give them ideas and help in compiling reports, features and programmes. But the release has to be interesting, unusual, controversial,

unique, unexpected and significant. It is important to cover all the facts and keep them short and succinct.

News releases can be written at any time and to publicise anything positive that is likely to attract media attention including:

- ❑ New products and services
- ❑ New team members
- ❑ The winning of awards or honours
- ❑ New premises
- ❑ Important announcements
- ❑ Technological breakthroughs of advancements
- ❑ Expansions and takeovers

It is important that they are written in the correct format. News releases normally:

1. Include the date of distribution
2. Have a factual but interesting headline
3. Begin with an interesting story
4. Use double spacing and wide margins to give journalists room to make notes
5. Include a quotation from someone to make the release look like an authentic media interview
6. Avoid using jargon unless it is to be sent to the trade press
7. Cover the most important issues in the first few paragraphs but ensure the article makes sense whatever part is cut off from the bottom
8. Include any background information in a “notes to editors” section at the end of the release
9. Provide journalists with information about the organisations web site and from where they can get relevant photographs and useful background material
10. Include two contact names, work and home telephone numbers
11. Are rarely longer than one page, but if they are the pages are stapled together

When the press release draft is prepared it is important to check that the following is included:

*WHO* will be doing the activity? An individual or the organisation?

*WHAT* will they be doing? It may be an activity or an announcement.

*WHEN* will they be doing it? Stating a date and where appropriate a time.

*WHERE* the event will take place?

*WHY* are they are doing it? What is the reason?

This information is ideally presented in the first two paragraphs.

The release will have to be checked and authorised by relevant management and issued to target media. Although it is important that the press release arrives on time to meet deadlines. Press releases should be addressed to a named person or for the attention of a news editor and either E-mailed, faxed or delivered. Organisations need to keep a database of local media addresses and contact names that can be obtained through personal contacts and telephone directories. A number of specialist directories are also available giving information about the world media including specialist magazines.

If you are launching a new product or organising an exhibition or special event an organisation may need to give journalists a lot more information about the organisation or product that might be useful. This might include promotional materials, case studies, biographies of important personnel, fact sheets, a list of the most frequently asked questions (with answers), photographs and product samples. These packs can be sent to journalists or handed out at a media event.

A news conference should only be arranged if the news is likely to generate considerable media interest. The idea is to bring team members and media together so that an announcement and any follow up interviews can be dealt with at the same time. Quieter rooms will need to be made available for later individual interviews. Team members will need to prepare well and learn how to respond to difficult questions to ensure that the interview presents the organisation in a positive way. Team members involved in news conferences will need to have good presentation skills, wear appropriate dress and show they are, confident, genuine, knowledgeable and calm. They will need to avoid any distracting mannerisms and give succinct answers to get the message across. Organising a news conference is time consuming and can be stressful and if it is felt that a news release will do the job just as well then this will save time and trouble.

The media like photographs and wherever an organisation creates news, the picture potential will need to be considered. Some local magazines and trade press will consider using high quality photographs that are sent to them. These might be issued alongside a news release and also placed on a company website. Any photographs that are sent should be explained on the back, and state (from left to right) who is on the photograph. This information should be written on to a label before attaching to the photograph. Even better is to send information to the media about the possible future opportunities they may have to take good photographs. This will mean telling them where and when the event will be and giving at least a weeks warning.

Having succeeded in getting news stories into print the next step will be to ensure that the organisation is being presented positively. Files of press cuttings can be kept and each one dated and referenced. Records should also be kept of all meetings and discussions with the media.

#### **4.4.7 Using the Internet**

E-mails allow direct contact with your customers and are an extremely cheap way of maintaining a lasting relationship. Occasionally legitimate excuses can be made for contacting them, but it is sometimes better to ask them first whether they want to be kept informed, otherwise it will damage your reputation and relationships. The Internet also enables access to a huge amount of information and provides a gateway to new markets that companies may not have envisaged.

Most organisations today have their own website and it is often the first point of contact for many customers and it is important that the quality reflects the right image for the organisation. A good website enables instant feedback from customers, it is operable 24 hours every day and can measure the number of people viewing the site. It is also useful because customers that download information are obviously already interested in what is being offered. Websites can be used to:

- ❑ Publicise and build awareness of a product, service or organisation.
- ❑ Provide customer support
- ❑ Maintain relationships with existing customers and attract new ones
- ❑ Conduct market research
- ❑ Provide product information

Templates are available off the Internet for websites and enable you to build your own website. Looking at competitors websites often provides useful ideas, but normally it is better to employ a specialist to design a good site and make sure it is linked with other sites and easily located. These companies normally also help to secure, register, maintain and update it. Even so there are a number of key points to ensure. In particular that:

- ❑ It is designed to reflect the overall image of the organisation
- ❑ It is easy and quick to navigate
- ❑ The user can return to the first (home) page at any time with one click of the mouse
- ❑ An E-mail link is included that will allow customers to contact the organisation quickly
- ❑ The site is registered with directories on the Internet that can help to publicise it
- ❑ Hyphens in names are avoided as they complicate things. Names should be kept short, easy to spell and remember
- ❑ The text should be kept legible, particularly as it is more difficult to read from a screen than from paper
- ❑ The site is maintained and kept up to date, fresh and relevant

Potential customers are likely to go elsewhere if the pages are over elaborately designed or take a long time to download. Information on the site will have to be updated regularly and the website address should be included in all publicity.

Advertising on the Internet continues to develop but it is relatively inexpensive, measurable, interactive and can be viewed at any time. It is possible to advertise on your own site or on other sites. Web brokers can provide information on the most appropriate site and where and when to advertise.

#### **CASE STUDY**

##### **KG Growers fruit cooperative**

The KG fruit growers cooperative has significantly boosted its Internet facilities over the last few years in order to significantly boost the services provided to both its customers and grower members. A website is now backed up by a comprehensive intranet site, accessible to password holders 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The growers and customers site has been made much more elaborate than the site available to general public.

The site is now used by members and customers as well as company staff to keep them up to date on a daily basis particularly in relation to quality issues, including all latest buyer specifications and labelling requirements, including sizes and wording.

The site also concentrates on optimising sales orders and despatch note systems which gives all grower members direct access to an internal database detailing all orders assigned to them. They can print out individual job sheets and generate individual delivery notes.

One of the most interesting features of the site are grower league tables, which growers can access to compare their own audited performance against their fellow members on a weekly basis.

### **EXERCISES**

#### **Promotion and branding**

In 3 minutes list as many logos, brands and marketing slogans that you remember. Why do you think you remember these?

Obtain a number of newspapers and magazines. Then cut out the words and pictures that you feel best represents your organisation. Make this into a montage and explain it to your colleagues

Obtain a number of newspapers and magazines. Go through them and select the ones you like the best and the worst. Discuss with your colleagues why you like or dislike them

Think of all the positive things that people might say in their everyday speech. Write them down. Think of all the negative things people might say in their everyday speech. Write them down. Now assess how many of them you feel you would use regularly or occasionally

Write down all the positive examples of things you have seen people doing and based on your experience of being a customer. Also list all your negative experiences. Why was the service so good or bad?

Bring a number of photographs from your home. Exchange them with your colleagues. Then compare them with photographs from newspapers and magazines. Why do they look different?

Prepare a short half page information leaflet. Whisper the information into the ear of your colleague. Tell them to tell someone else. The second person should tell a third and so on. Finally ask the last person what they have heard and compare it with the original information provided.

Select a number of pictures and words and show them briefly to other people. Then ask them to say which ones they remember.

Ask someone for their watch. Take it from them and ask them whether they can redraw it exactly on a board

Prepare a press release for an imaginary product. Follow exactly the instructions in this booklet and make sure it is less than one page

Write instructions for preparing your favourite recipe. Prepare also exactly the timeframe by which each action has to be completed. Then give it to someone else to complete. Make sure they follow EXACTLY the instructions outlined.