

Marketing Plan



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Executive Summary

The purpose of this document is initially to outline the business of Voluntary Action Shetland (VAS) and the environment in which it operates, thus illustrating the background and 'market' in which the Marketing Plan is to be used. The marketing objectives are outlined, and the tactics to be employed to achieve them.

Business Mission

Voluntary Action Shetland seeks to respond to and support voluntary services in Shetland by meeting present and emerging needs, developing and promoting new ways of responding and encouraging people in Shetland to offer voluntary service to their community.

Marketing Objectives

- Raise the profile within Shetland of
 - Voluntary Action Shetland
 - Market House
 - Shetland Community Portal
- Increase the number of contacts made with VAS staff
- Increase the level of support provided to member and non-member organisations
- Increase the profile of volunteering in Shetland
- Increase the number of volunteers in Shetland
- Increase the number of volunteers who are placed by VAS staff
- Increase the number of visits made to Market House
- Increase the number of hits on the Shetland Community Portal and the VAS website

Key Business Objectives

- Building on relationships with community planning
- Supporting and developing a strong third sector
- Developing Social Enterprise

Broad strategy for achieving those objectives

1. Provide information and reference materials on issues of current and ongoing interest to the voluntary sector in a variety of media: online, via mail and email and the print media
2. Provide and tailor training to meet the need of local voluntary groups and organisations and volunteer involving organisations
3. Work with groups to help them comply with regulations and their legal obligations
4. Offer services to member organisations and other voluntary groups such as
 - 4.1. Disclosure Service and
 - 4.2. Independent Examination of Accounts services
5. Provide help with funding applications and access to grant seeking software and to reference material on grant-making bodies
6. Offer one-to-one support to groups for particular issues and help with development
7. Promote volunteering and match volunteers with quality opportunities
8. Support volunteer involving organisations in their provision of quality volunteering opportunities

9. Provide facilities at Market House giving voluntary groups access to low cost:
 - 9.1. Room and equipment hire
 - 9.2. Use of computer, printer, photocopier, laminator, binder etc.
10. Provide access to groups to low-cost web hosting with free training and support
11. Representation of the third sector on strategic groups at both local and national level
12. Maximise income through provision of services to ensure that adequate resources are available to meet our objectives.

PESTE analysis of the third sector 'market' in Shetland

Political and legal changes

- Change of UK government and uncertainty about future direction
- Emphasis on the 'Big Society' and potential ramifications for third sector
- Potential change of Scottish government in 5th May 2011 elections
- Changes in protection of vulnerable groups and disclosure process
- Changes in Company Law to include the new category of Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Economic factors

- Depression of World and UK economies
- Diminution of funding by
 - Government
 - Scottish Government and
 - Local Authority
 - External Funders
- Increased competitiveness of bids to grant makers
- Increasing reliance on the third sector to deliver local services

Social factors

- Potential community capacity/social capital issues caused by the increasing community involvement of society expected by government
- Upside of projected increased local unemployment could be the increased availability of potential volunteers
- The entire population of Shetland constitutes the majority stake-holding in Voluntary Action Shetland, they are the community VAS serves

Technological factors

- Growing use of the internet
- Increasing provision of broadband and broadband bandwidth (and satellite broadband) to Shetland

Environmental factors

- Viking Wind Farm and the potential local exploitation of other sources of renewable energy

SWOT analysis (internal and external)

Strengths

- Recognised, trusted brand
- Relationships with organisations and individuals in the third sector
- Relationships with organisations and individuals in the public and statutory sector
- The knowledge and experience of staff members
- Market House hub: potential for the exchange of ideas within the voluntary sector and for partnership work

Weaknesses

- Uncertainties about future funding and support from Scottish Government
- Uncertainties about future funding and support from the Shetland Islands Charitable Trust and Shetland Islands Council
- Short term funding makes planning difficult and endangers continuity of services provision
- Fixed-term staff contracts mean that the knowledge and experience residing within individual staff may leave at the end of their contract

Opportunities

- Potential for diversification of funding streams through contracts such as Passport Agency, Digital Outreach, disbursement of Children in Need Small Grant Scheme, SLA from local authority to deliver Disclosure Service, etc
- Potential for increased contact with voluntary groups and training opportunities through changes in legislation regarding Protecting Vulnerable Groups
- Potential for increased contact with voluntary groups and training opportunities through changes in Company Law with the introduction of the Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation
- Increasing emphasis placed by schools guidance teachers and Skills for Scotland staff of the importance of volunteering as CV selling point for young people
- Potential for recruitment of older volunteers from involvement in SIC Later Life Planning seminars

Threats

- Increased competition for funding from grant-makers
- Potential for increased feelings of vulnerability and perceptions of competition from within the public sector
- Potential loss of the knowledge and experience residing within staff if the funding for their posts cannot be sustained

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Tactics

- Product
 - Quality information and support to third sector voluntary organisations to help them to deliver to the people of Shetland through one-to-one contact and via the following internally produced media:
 - the Shetland Community Portal
 - the Shetland Community Toolkit
 - the VAS website
 - the Voluntary Voice newsletter
 - the VISP mailing and e-mailing
- Pricing
 - free, at cost or low cost to the voluntary sector as far as possible
- Place
 - Within Shetland, where possible at a place to suit the client(s)
- Promotion (see also Appendix 1 - proposed Marketing Activities)
 - At events held by others
 - Agricultural shows
 - Careers convention
 - At and through our own and joint events:
 - Easter Fair
 - MV Awards
 - Shetland Youth Volunteering Awards
 - Through advertising in the local press
 - Shetland Times
 - Shetland News
 - Shetland Islands Broadcasting Company
 - Through our own internally produced media (as above)
 - Through no-cost online advertising
 - the Shetland Islands Council intranet
 - the Shetland Times What's On

- Shetlink events pages and such other social networking media as internal policies allow
- Through judicious use of market research, which as well as gathering usage data promotes the activities about which it is asking
- People
 - All staff have an input into the marketing of Voluntary Action Shetland, and in its external and internal communications
 - Certain staff have particular responsibilities, currently
 - Community Portal, VAS website, Voluntary Voice, general promotion: Sue Beer
 - Shetland Association of Community Councils: Kate Massie
 - Shetland Befriending Scheme: Lynn Tulloch (Colleen Inkster Flaws)
 - Shetland Bereavement Support Service: Anne Robertson
 - Shetland Carers: Jo Jack
 - Strategy: Catherine Hughson, Anne Robertson
 - Support and Development: Development Team
 - VISP: Wendy Hand
 - Volunteering: Gwen Williamson and Kathleen Williamson
- Processes
 - The media produced internally performs a three-fold function for our organisation, they provide:
 - a means of disseminating information and reference sources to the third sector which forms a key part of our service
 - a tool for marketing and promoting the services VAS provide
 - a vehicle for communicating with our stakeholders
- Physical evidence
 - Data collected in ongoing market research, such as at agricultural shows

Implementation

- Resources
 - Staff: specific responsibilities are delineated under People, some events occur outside office hours and help from all staff is appreciated at these times
 - Infrastructure: ensure infrastructure services are in place to support the marketing plan
- Cost
 - Advertising: All advertising should be placed with local media, as well as being more cost effective, this is more likely to be perceived by Shetlanders as 'being for them'.
 - Promotional materials: Quotes (ideally three) should be obtained for all promotional materials, and procurement should be authorised by the Executive Officer or Development Officer
- Control
 - All marketing copy should be checked over by another member of staff, and authorised by the Executive Officer or Development Officer.
 - All website entries by non-staff members (e.g. forum entries, guestbook entries) should be moderated, and not be visible to the public until authorised by a moderator
 - Project form in Procedures manual to be used when planning and costing all event