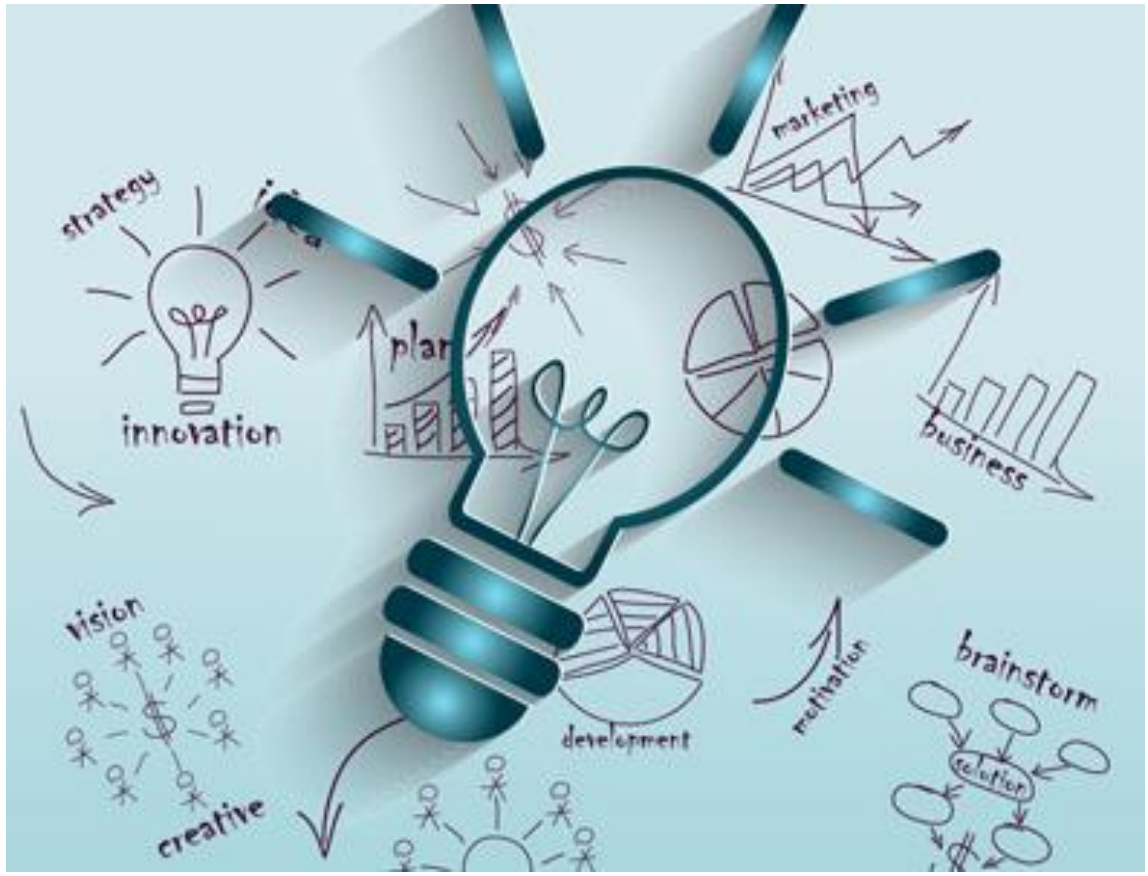
SENIOR CENTER MARKETING

Post COVID Practices – What Do We Do Now?

OBJECTIVES

* What is Marketing and Why Do I need to Know it?
* Marketing vs Branding
* Target Market & How To Reach
* Post COVID S.W.O.T analysis
* Creating a Marketing Plan
* Marketing Challenges of a Senior Center
* Tools to help you market better
* Questions



WHAT IS MARKETING? WHY SHOULD I CARE?

*Marketing is about reaching the people you WANT to reach with a clear message

*It is the process of promoting your centers as well as the programs and services you offer

*Marketing encompasses everything from market research to community events, newspaper advertising to Facebook posts

*You ARE a marketer – everyday you get involved in activities to promote your center – you may call it “outreach”

*THAT IS MARKETING – you do it daily

ITEMS IN YOUR "MARKETING TOOLBOX"

*Here are things that may already be in your "Marketing Toolbox" that you didn't know you were marketing:

- Events
- Flyers/Posters
- Neighborhood networking
- Newsletters
- Partnerships/Collaborations
- Programs & Services
- Public Recognition
- Radio
- Social Media
- Surveys

MARKETING VS BRANDING

*Marketing & Branding are related but you do need to understand the difference.

**Marketing* is actively promoting a program or service. Marketing is all you do to get people to pay attention!

**Brand* is the image people have of your organization, your programs and your services. Successful branding is what you do, not what you say or show!

*Marketers use your brand and market your business in the community. That is why it is so important to make sure you are putting the right message out.

ITEMS IN YOUR "BRANDING TOOLBOX"

*Here are some items you might use as part of your "branding toolbox"

- Senior Center name, logo, & tag line
- Name & Content of your newsletter, events, etc.
- Images you convey through pictures (we will talk about this later)
- The color scheme you use on your marketing materials
- Impressions callers receive over the phone
- Impressions visitor receive when they enter your building
- Your van or bus

WHO ARE YOU TRYING TO REACH?

*Now that you understand the difference between marketing and branding – you need to identify your "target market"

*Most of you are probably thinking – I'm trying to attract "older adults" – but is that all?

*Think of it like this:

- Current participants
- Future participants
- Elected/appointed officials
- Taxpayers
- Families
- Community Members

*Each of these is a potential group of people who may receive your message. Make sure your message is clear and easy to understand.

REPEAT, REPEAT, REPEAT

*The key to marketing is repeat, repeat, repeat

*Most people don't hear your message the first time

*Do you hear people say "I didn't know that" about services you offer or an event?

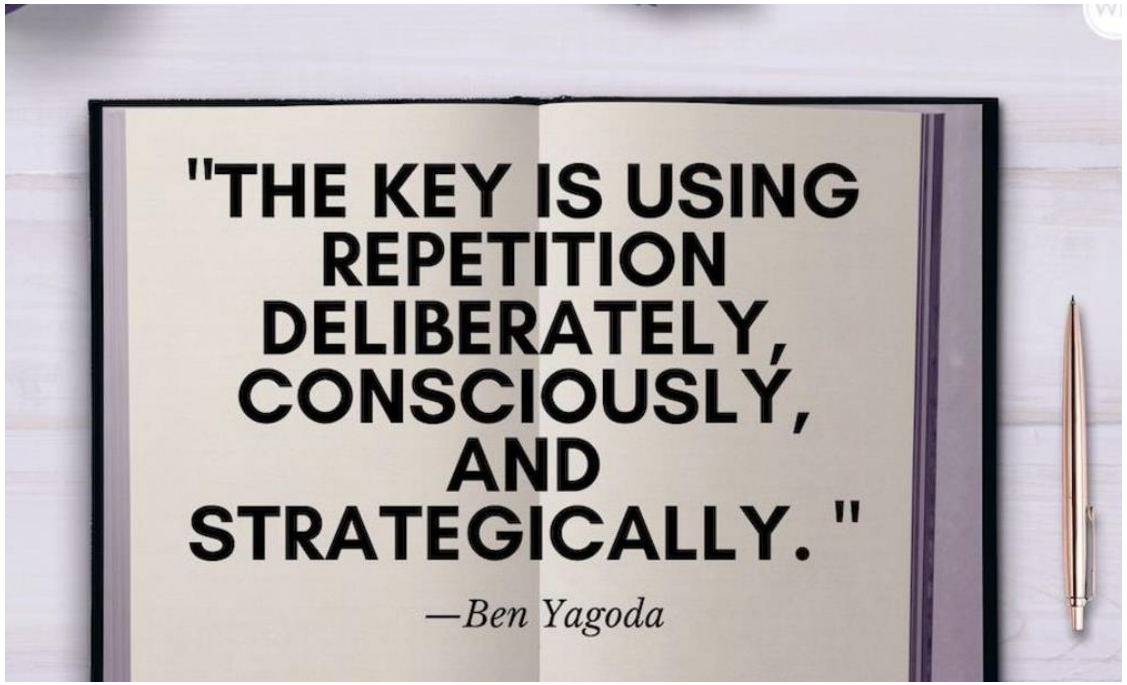
*Repetition is KEY – "Effective Frequency"

*Today in an era of information overload it takes many times before someone hears what you are trying to say

*Typically anywhere from 6-20 times before someone makes a move

*Marketing is NOT a one time thing

*More Frequency = More Effective



CHALLENGES WITH MARKETING

*Most senior center directors want to help people & feel like marketing is sleazy and "icky".

*There is little time and few resources for marketing; but you want participants to keep coming back

*Think of marketing as TOOL:

- *Tools aren't good or evil
- *Marketing a good cause is a good thing
- *Marketing is a way of doing what we already do but better
- *Marketing is respectful & efficient

*The key to marketing is to BE TRUE TO YOURSELF. Meet your audience where they are both physically and mentally. Stay true to your mission and only promise what you can deliver

POST COVID S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS OF YOUR CENTER

* Something good to do with your center after going through something difficult like COVID

* S.W.O.T refers to Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats

* It is the process where you identify the internal and external factors that will affect your center and its future performance

* Strengths and Weakness are internal factors – what are you good at and what needs improvement?

* Opportunities and Threats are external factors – where can we grow and what may stop us from growing?

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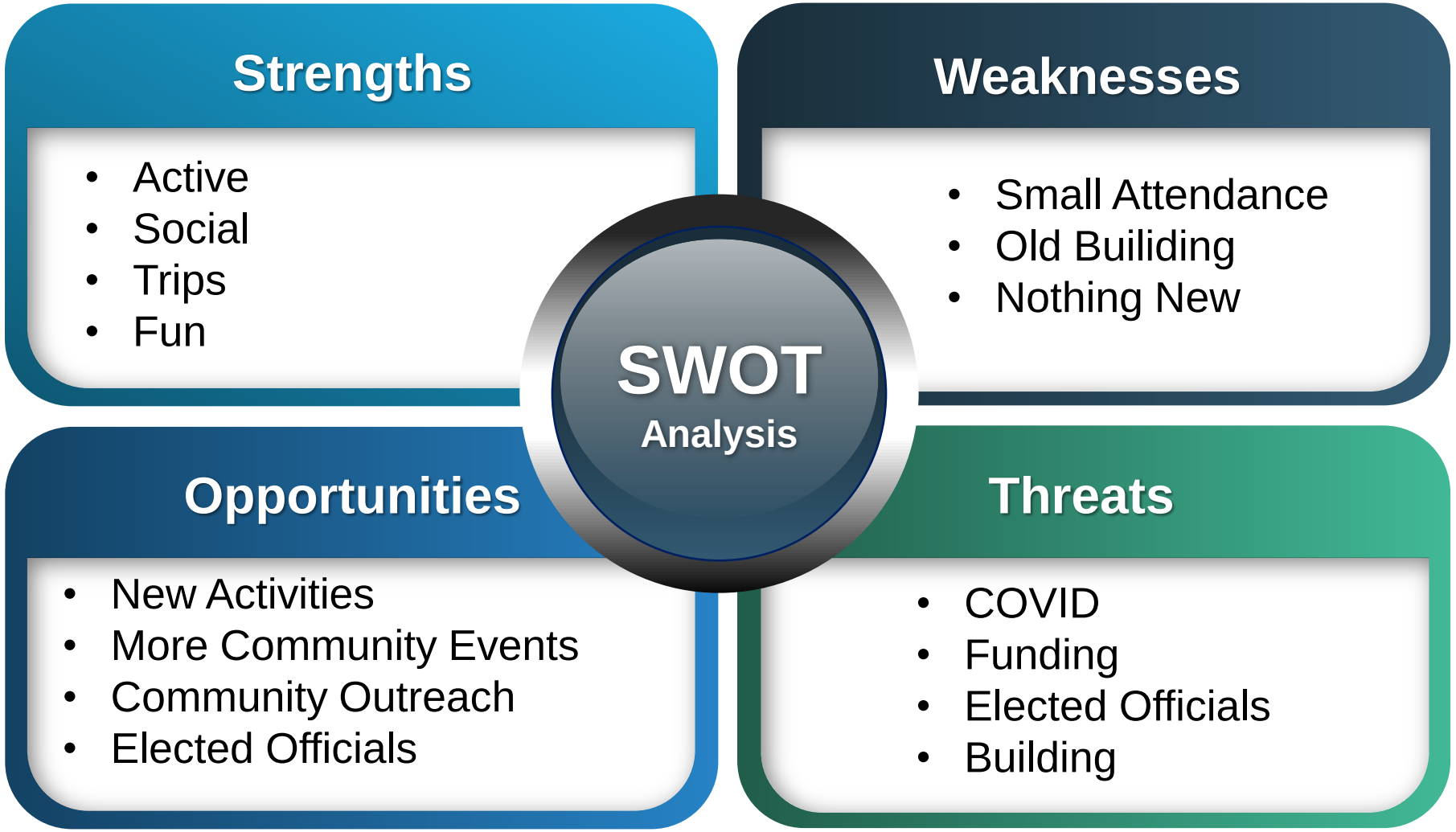
Strengths
Active
Social
Trips
Fun
Weaknesses
Small Attendance
Old Builiding
Nothing New
SWOT
Analysis
Opportunities
New Activities
More Community Events
Community Outreach
Elected Officials
Threats
COVID
Funding
Elected Officials
Building

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF WHEN YOU HEAR "SENIOR CENTER"?

*Do you picture older people (much older than you) sitting around, playing cards, talking, looking sad?

*Do you picture older adults eating bland meals with a TV blaring in another room?

*Truth be told – most people probably picture just that

*Today's senior centers are vibrant, action-packed combinations of local fitness centers; job and volunteer headquarters and tasty dining.

*THIS IS A STRENGTH AND AN OPPORTUNITY for you to promote the good

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND – S.W.O.T EFFECTIVENESS

*Make sure you are putting the correct message out there. You are a senior center and you want to make sure you are showing content that is displaying how ACTIVE you are – do not show someone just sitting – show someone DOING something

*Be aware of what is in your background – move around to get the right photo – be sure to look at everything around that photo; if there is a garbage can in the background – move it or take photo from another area

*LIGHTING – lighting is VERY important to make things look fun and inviting. Be sure you have enough light before taking a photo or video. If it is dark – your center will look depressing and no one will want to visit

*Photo/Media Release – Be sure to have your center visitors to sign a media/photo release BEFORE posting their image on social media or using for marketing. It is better to be safe than sorry

CREATE A MARKETING PLAN

* The marketing plan is your road map to set your goals and put your ideas in motion

* Having an annual and monthly marketing plan helps keep you on track as to what to do

* There is no ONE or “right” way to create a marketing plan

* Start by assessing your current efforts, inventory marketing materials, see what you have done, what has worked, what hasn’t and what are areas of improvement?

MARKETING PLAN – DEMOGRAPHICS & TRENDS

*Make sure you know the demographics of your town's older population. This helps with your goals

*Example: If your Latino older adult population is increasing one goal may be to add a Spanish speaking volunteer who can outreach in the area

*Types of demographics and trends:

- # of older adults & percentages of total town population
- Age breakdown
- Projected growth
- Significant population segments
- Where your older adults live

WHERE TO FIND DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

* People in your town will have this data
  - Town Clerk
  - Assessor's Office
  - Chamber of Commerce
  - Planning Dept
  - Voting Rolls
  - Veteran's Agent
  - Regional Planning

* Also TN Commission on Aging and Disability produces a "State of Aging" report broken down by county with aging information:

https://www.tn.gov/aging/administration/forms-and-publications/2020-state-of-aging-in-tennessee.html

MARKETING PLAN CONT.

* Organization Goals – what you want to accomplish; improve wellness and safety of older adults; increase town collaboration, etc.

* Marketing Goals – Build awareness, Increase number of NEW participants, increase positive perception of center, etc.

*Call To Action – what do you want your target audience to do? Subscribe to e-newsletter, attend an open house/event; partners – collaborate on a project; share information about center

*Rolls – know who needs to do what and when

*Timeline – have a timeline on when to have it accomplished

DELIVER THE MESSAGE

*Now you know your target audience, you have a marketing plan – IT IS TIME TO DELIVER IT

*Use media – both social and local

*Create a newsletter (paper or online)

*Make flyers and post in the center

*Create a partner email list and send email blasts

*Share with local chamber – they typically will advertise for free

*Share with local churches

MEASURE THE RESULTS

*If you don't measure the impact of your marketing plan/activity then you may as well not be doing anything

*Keep up with how people heard about your center – ASK THEM

*Do satisfaction surveys after big events

*Survey current members

*Ask for their input – do they want something new, where do they go, where are their social circles?

*See an increase in participants

*Change in volume of inquiries – ask how they heard about you

*Adjust your plan as necessary

*One of the best things about marketing is you are NEVER done learning!

OVERCOMING SENIOR CENTER MARKETING CHALLENGES

* Image – create a positive perception of older adults (Overcome the social stigma)

* Visibility – get better known in the community; educate and reach your town's elected and appointment officials (and influential residents)

* Attract People – get people to come to your center; engage all ranges of older adults (newly retired, baby boomers, etc.); reach traditional underserved populations

IMAGE – POSITIVE PERCEPTION OF OLDER ADULTS

* Promote a positive view on aging

* Train volunteers and staff about ageism and how to overcome it

* Be alert to potentially ageist comments

* Host a program on "Overcoming Ageism" for the ENTIRE COMMUNITY

* Make sure all images of older adults are positive

*Put on your image lenses and look at your center with fresh eyes. What words do you hope people will use when they describe your center?

ACTIVITIES FOR ALL – BE INCLUSIVE

*Remember the changing times and aging population. Do not discriminate against beliefs, religion, color and sexual preference. Make sure when you are being inclusive you are including ALL. Even if you don't agree – it isn't your job to agree or not – it is your job to include everyone and make their time enjoyable and feel like they matter

*Physical/Cognitive Impairments – host a "memory café" to talk about things in the past and possibly things they remember – invite caregivers as well

*Socialization – for homebound you can do a "tea" delivery where you deliver flavored tea and an inspirational card once a month; for others have a special "Theme Meal" and decorate, dress up, etc. to make it special than regular meals

*Transportation is always a barrier – that is why you need to do things where YOU go out in the community; it doesn't have to cost a lot, it will just take some time and creativity but you can include people in the community and show the kindness of your center even if they cannot join in person

VISIBILITY: GET BETTER KNOWN IN THE COMMUNITY

*Why is visibility important? If they don't know about you – they won't come. Taxpayers won't fund you, elected officials may not back you.

*Ideas to make your center more visible:

- Hold an open house
- Offer special presentations or host a speaker
- Hold a book reading/signing for local author
- Do an art exhibit for local artist
- Take advantage to speak about the center anywhere
- Hold a fun event: chili cookoff, talent show, music
- Do a 'afternoon movie' event
- Highlight unique aspects of the community
- Collaborate with local high schools for BP checks for medical students

VISIBILITY CONTINUED

* Attend city council meetings

* Introduce yourself to elected officials

* Add the elected officials to your email/newsletter list

* Send thank you notes to officials that have backed and supported you or who supported your budget or attended an event

* Invite elected officials to the center to speak with participants – let it be a type of town hall – let the officials hear from the actual people they serve

* Host an appreciation breakfast for first responders

MARKETING TOOLS – KEEP IT SIMPLE

* There are may ways to market and honestly you are probably already doing most of it. Here are a few ideas of some tools to keep handy

- Thank You Cards/Birthday Cards
- Facebook/Social Media posts
- Annual Report – it can be a book or an inforgraphic
- Business Cards
- Book Marks
- Newsletter
- Using special dates and events to market (i.e. Fall Prevention Month, Senior Center Month, Grandparents Day, etc.)

RESOURCES FOR MARKETING

1. Canva.com – infographics, flyers, etc.
2. Constant Contact – email marketing & newsletters
3. Mailchimp – Email services
4. Survey Monkey – online surveys
5. Design Wizard – graphic design
6. Adobe Spark – design flyers
7. Piktochart – infographics
8. WordCloud – create fun word clouds

*This list is not everything available – you can always google for other ideas

* Not knowing how to create things can be difficult

* There are some free online resources where you can create infographics, flyers, posters, newsletters, etc.

* They can be printed in-house or sent to a printer to print

* Use fun, eye catching images – always search for “free images” online

MORE RESOURCES

* Create a welcome packet for new participants and maybe even a brochure to give to the chamber.

* New people come to town – let the Chamber promote you like they do any other business

* Items to include in packet:
  - Staff list/contact info
  - Welcome Letter
  - Copy of newsletter
  - Copy of Calendar
  - Lunch menu
  - Special events flyers
  - List of services
  - Information Form/Emergency Contact
  - Photo Release

* Keep materials up to date – out of date materials send the wrong message

* Make sure it reflects the image of your center you want to put out in the community

* If you do not have an information form/Emergency Contact create something so you can keep up with important info about members (address, birthday, anniv., etc.)

FINAL THOUGHTS

* Think like a marketer – BECAUSE YOU ARE

* Train everyone who works at your center that THEY ARE MARKETERS (volunteers, cooks, etc.). Be friendly and consistent

* Look for ways to make newcomers feel welcome

* Seek permission for photos and art – if you take a photo – get permission first

* THANK EVERYONE – volunteers, participants, tax payers, officials – they all are the reason you are there

* Collaborate with others in the community – speak at local clubs, go to town meetings, ask for help from the community

* Present a consistent and happy message

* The most important and impactful thing to take away……

BE POSITIVE AND HAPPY

No one likes a negative Nancy!

QUESTIONS?

*If you have any questions or need help let me know – I'm here to help!

* Keita's Contact Info:
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  *Social Media:
    *MyRide: www.facebook.com/myridewesttn
    *AAAD: www.facebook.com/swaaad