



**Association of
Independent
Museums**

Helping Heritage
Organisations Prosper

A black and white photograph of a woman and a young boy. The woman is in the foreground, smiling, with her glasses perched on her head. She is holding a tablet computer. The boy is leaning over her shoulder, also smiling and pointing at the tablet. In the background, there is a museum display featuring a long, light-colored dress hanging on a mannequin, a framed picture on the wall, and a wooden chest of drawers.

Success Guides

SUCCESSFUL MARKETING FOR MUSEUMS

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INTRODUCTION

This guide aims to demystify marketing for small and medium-sized museums, providing an overview of what marketing is, a framework for developing a strategy and a template for an action plan.

AIM's Success Guide 'Understanding your audiences'¹ is a good starting point to read ahead of this guide.

What is Marketing?

Marketing is much more than simply selling or publicity.

The Chartered Institute of Marketing's definition of marketing is:

"The management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably."

It involves:

- Understanding who your competitors are, the context and environment you operate in and relevant trends and developments
- Identifying and understanding your current and potential audiences
- Understanding these audiences' needs and preferences
- Providing a service or product that your audiences want and value - at the right price, place and time
- Reaching and communicating with your audiences
- Engaging them and retaining their custom.

In museums, marketing involves identifying and satisfying audiences' needs, thereby ensuring there is demand for the museum's products and services. Marketing is an exchange process, meaning a museum aims to offer its audiences something that they value (e.g. a day out, a learning experience, information, entertainment) in exchange for their money, time and attention.

Marketing is closely linked to audience development, and for some organisations the terms "arts marketing" and "audience development" are even used interchangeably.² Others see marketing as being about increasing income and visitor numbers, whilst viewing audience development as being about deepening engagement and engaging under-represented audiences, with less of a focus on driving income or big visitor numbers. Either way there is certainly a lot of overlap between the two terms.

Many small and medium-sized museums do not have any dedicated marketing staff, so marketing will often be a shared responsibility or part of one person's broader remit. Whilst the lack of marketing staff and budgets can make marketing more challenging, it can also make decision-making

¹ This – and all of AIM's Success Guides – can be viewed at: www.aim-museums.co.uk/resources/success-guides/

² Here is a useful article of the differences between the terms 'arts marketing' and 'audience development' by Ivan Wadeson if you are interested in exploring this in more detail: www.culturehive.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Audience-Development-Unpacking-the-baggage..Ivan-Wadeson..20031.pdf

more focussed and the planning process principles are the same, regardless of budget.

Today there are also many opportunities open to museums that don't require any budget, from social media marketing to e-newsletters and partnership cross-referrals. And in an era of fake news, climate change and vast political and societal changes, there are huge opportunities for museums. Museums can play a pivotal role as places of reflection and inspiration as well as of wonder and escapism; as trusted and safe spaces; helping people to understand big issues and navigate change; and connecting audiences to their local community and heritage.

CONTEXT

Why is marketing important?

Marketing is a requirement of Museum Accreditation:

- It will support and feed into your business or forward plan and support your income generation and financial sustainability (Accreditation Standard 2)
- It is necessary for you to understand and develop your audiences (Accreditation Standard 8)
- It is necessary for you to engage with your users and improve their experience (Accreditation Standard 9).

But more than that, effective marketing:

- Helps you to understand your audiences
- Develops lasting relationships and trust with your audiences
- Means you have a product or service which there is demand for
- Ensures you are responsive to changes and developments around you
- Generates and improves brand awareness and fast recognition
- Helps you to build authority and credibility
- Positions your organisation so you stand out from your competitors
- Facilitates communication and engagement with audiences
- Drives visits, participation, donations and sales.

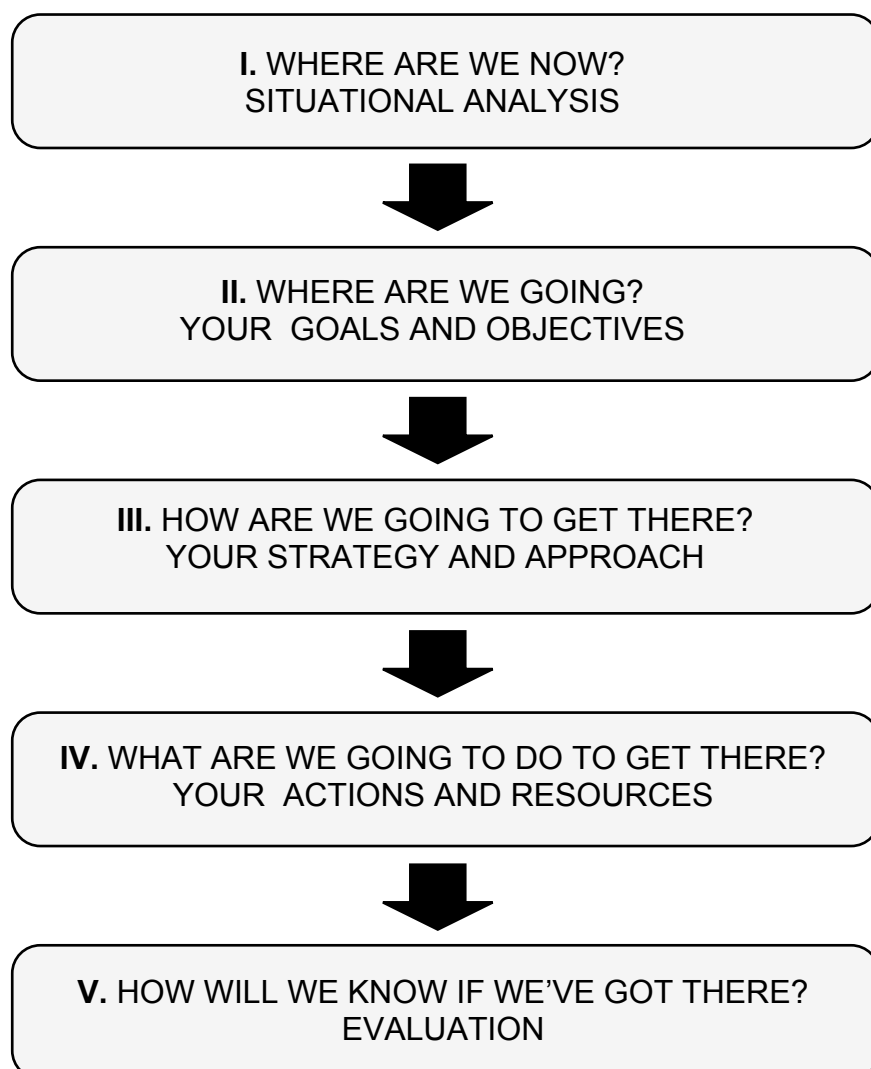
Effective marketing requires:

- An understanding of your audiences
- An understanding of the context you operate in and your competitors
- Clear objectives
- A plan
- Some investment of time and/or money
- Review and evaluation.

A MARKETING STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

Strategic marketing supports a museum's business and forward plan, to help the museum achieve its mission and goals. A marketing strategy will set out your approach to marketing, what you need to achieve and why.

A marketing strategy can vary in length, but the process involved is the same. Typically, it will cover a period of one to three years. The framework below is a guide that you can use to create a marketing strategy and adapt to your requirements:



I. Where are we now? Situational analysis

This step helps you to analyse your starting point and set a baseline for you to build on. It involves information gathering so you can base decisions on data.

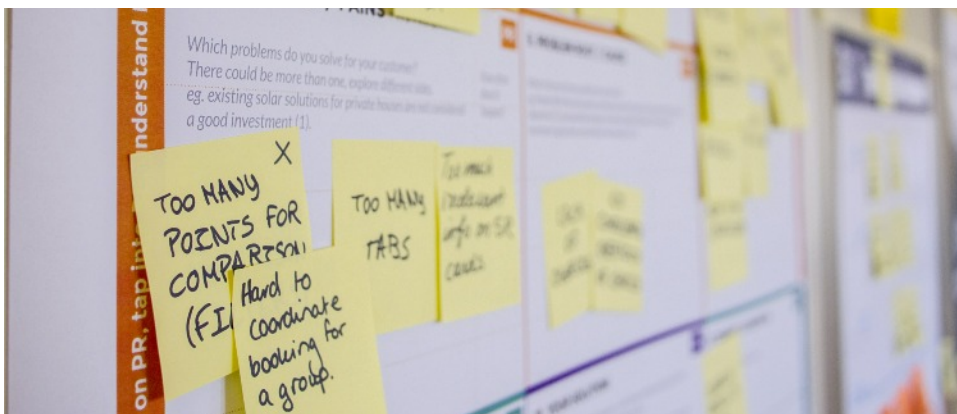
Consider and summarise:

- Your mission and/or vision statement
- Your museum's organisational or business goals
- Your museum's values
- Your organisation's people: staff, trustees, volunteers and their skills, roles and capacity
- Your audience and non-user research
- Your target audiences
- An audit of your current marketing channels, activities, budget and results
- A competitor analysis.

If there are significant gaps in your data or information available, can you plug these with additional research?

Consider who you are competing with for your audiences' attention, money and time and consider how your target audiences view you in comparison to your competitors. What makes your museum distinctive compared to these competitors? Do you offer good value for money, convenience, something particularly interesting, a community space for all, a warm welcome, fun activities, a roof on a rainy day...?

A great way of capturing the key takeaways from this step is in a SWOT analysis that includes your organisation's internal strengths and its weaknesses, and identifies any external opportunities and threats that may affect your marketing. For the opportunities and threats, you might find it useful to consider a PESTEL analysis, looking at: Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal factors that may affect you.



For Example:

Internal Factors	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Passionate and committed team of staff and volunteers ● Competitive cost compared to other local attractions ● Excellent visitor feedback and reviews on TripAdvisor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No dedicated marketing staff ● Limited marketing budget ● Repeat visits make up a low proportion of visitors despite us offering free return within 12 months
External Factors	
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improve relationships with partners and local stakeholder organisations ● Capitalise on the trend for staycations and UK population holidaying at home ● Improve our green credentials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Crowded and competitive cultural market in our city ● Lack of secure and sustainable funding ● Uncertainty over the impact of Brexit

Please see the [Appendix](#) for a case study on how Eureka! undertook a marketing audit and research to explore a recent decline in school visits, and action to address this.

II. Where are we going? Your goals and objectives

Here you will identify your marketing goals and objectives. A goal is a desired result you want to achieve, and is typically broad and medium or longer-term. Your goals should support your overall organisational mission, vision, values and business goals and be based on your findings in step (I). For example:

- Your rate of repeat visits has been declining and you want to reverse this
- Compared to your local area's demographics and other similar museums to yours, a particular age group is very under-represented, and you want to appeal to them more
- You need to increase your income from events
- You want to increase the reach of your digital channels.

Inevitably you will not be able to do all things at once and be all things to all people, so you will need to prioritise and focus on key goals.

Translate your goals into objectives that will give you a target to work towards. Ideally they should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-framed).

Taking the goal of increasing digital reach as an example, you might create several objectives to follow, such as:

- To sign up 250 new subscribers to our e-newsletter during 2020
- To increase our Facebook followers by 10% from 1 January 2020 to 1 January 2021.

Audience segmentation

Aim to segment or group your target audiences, i.e. break down your audiences into distinct groups that behave in similar ways or have similar needs. The main ways of segmenting your target audiences are:

<p>Geographical segmentation:</p> <p>Segments based on where your audiences live. For example are visitors local, day-trippers, overnight stays or from overseas?</p>	<p>Demographic segmentation:</p> <p>Groups based on who your audiences are, for example based on their age, family lifecycle stage, ethnicity, social class.</p>
<p>Behavioural segmentation:</p> <p>Audiences are divided according to their behavioural patterns. For example, are your audiences regular, sporadic or lapsed? Do they soak up your galleries over several hours or mainly look at your 'hero' objects?</p>	<p>Psychographic segmentation:</p> <p>Divides audiences according to their personality, values, attitudes, interests and lifestyle. For example, how culturally engaged are your audiences? Why do they visit? What's important to them?</p>

Consider the size of your audience segments - very large segments are likely to be too broad, and your approach would need to be very generic to try to reach them (thereby defeating a key point of segmentation); whilst creating many small segments to go after will be costly and time-consuming.

There are pros and cons with each segmentation approach. Do what makes most sense to your museum and your team of staff and volunteers who will be using the segments in their work.

Please see the [Appendix](#) for a summary of work that the Museum of Cambridge undertook in creating goals and audience segments.

III. How are we going to get there? Your strategy or approach

This is the strategy part where you will decide how you are going to meet your aims. You will need to have a clear idea of the parameters that you operate in as your approach needs to be realistic and achievable. Consider:

- Which audience groups (or segments) are you going to prioritise?
- What are you going to offer them?
- How are you going to attract and engage them?
- What is your available budget, time and skills?

The Ansoff Matrix

The Ansoff Matrix is a model that is often used in strategic marketing planning. It is used to help organisations evaluate opportunities, showing different combinations of target markets (audiences) and products and services offered.

It can be applied to museums to help you explore different options for growth and consider whether your growth will come from adapting and expanding what you currently do, attracting new audiences or a combination of the two:

Adaptation of Ansoff's Matrix		Your products or offer: programming, events, exhibitions, Friends scheme etc	
		Existing	New
Your audiences	Existing	<p>MARKET PENETRATION What: Increase the visit or purchase frequency of current audiences with your current products and programmes.</p> <p>Examples: expand your opening hours; run your toddler activity every fortnight rather than every month; promote your planned temporary exhibitions and events to encourage more repeat visits.</p>	<p>PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT What: Attract more of your current audiences or the same type of audiences with a new offer, giving them more reasons to return or engage in a deeper way.</p> <p>Examples: put on a new temporary exhibition; develop a new workshop, talk or activity aimed at your existing audiences; initiate a loyalty scheme; develop a podcast.</p>
	New	<p>MARKET EXTENSION What: Attract new audiences with your current products and programmes.</p> <p>Examples: run a marketing campaign to change perceptions or raise awareness of your museum with new audience groups; run a special offer; promote an existing schools' session to new schools.</p>	<p>DIVERSIFICATION What: Attract new audiences with a new offer that meets their interests and needs.</p> <p>Examples: develop outreach events for care homes; provide sensory kits, staff training and early opening for visitors who need a quieter environment to visit; create a co-produced exhibition with community partners; expand your catering offer (e.g. to include vegan and gluten-free options).</p>

Whilst there is often pressure to entice new audiences, don't do this at the expense of your existing audiences. Cherish them and nurture your relationships with them - they have the potential to be your biggest advocates and a steady source of income. It is also often said that it costs five to seven times as much to win over a new customer as it does to retain an existing one.

Your positioning

Consider your positioning: what you can do to help audiences understand what your museum is all about, what it stands for, what it can offer them, what they can expect from it and how you differ from the competition.

For example, consider whether your museum is:

- A full day out or a brief visit?
- A place with hands-on exhibits that visitors can touch and explore?
- Aimed at children?
- Somewhere to escape the hustle and bustle of daily life?
- Purpose-led and activist in nature?
- A fun place where people can be entertained?
- Embedded in its local community?
- Home to any star objects?
- Quirky or unexpected?

Answers to these types of questions will feed into your brand identity and visual identity: your photographs and images, slogans and straplines, messaging, tone of voice and stories you tell.

People are busy and overwhelmed with information, advertising and content daily. How will your museum stand out? How will you ensure that your target audiences perceive you in the way you would like them to?

You need to be clear, distinctive and consistent when you market your museum to ensure it cuts through this 'noise'. Consider undertaking some research to explore what resonates with your target audiences. For example, A/B split testing of adverts on Facebook³ to see which advert gets the best engagement or focus groups which explore different images and key messages with target audiences.

An example of branding and positioning work undertaken by Jane Austen's House is in the [Appendix](#).

³ Changing variables in your advert, such as image, message, audience or placement to determine which version performs best and use this insight to improve future campaigns.

IV. What are we going to do to get there? Your actions and resources

This is the action planning step where you will come up with actions to help you reach and engage your target audiences and meet your goals.

The Chartered Institute of Marketing recommends using the 7Ps model, which shows that promotion is only one element of the 'Marketing Mix', a set of tools you can use in your marketing. Each of the elements is needed to be effective in marketing and no element should be considered in isolation.



Museums and the 7Ps

In museums, some of the 7Ps are not always seen as part of marketing. For example, the 'product' element can typically sit under programming, engagement or audience development; and the 'people' element under front of house or visitor services. Do what works for your museum but the main points to remember are the value in understanding and being receptive to your audiences' needs, and that marketing is more than just a bit of advertising.

Product

In your museum, you're likely to have many 'products' - for example your temporary exhibitions; events such as workshops and talks; a Friends' scheme; your café; your merchandise.

The starting point for developing an existing or new product should involve identifying what your audiences (existing and/or target) need, want and expect, now and in the future, to ensure that you will meet a demand. As the Chartered Institute of Marketing says:

"we must give our customers what they want, not what we think they want."⁴

Undertake some competitor research to identify what products, services and experiences your competitors offer. Even if you are the only local interest museum in the area, you are still competing with other organisations and activities for people's attention, time and money. For example, what other things could a local family with young children do on a Sunday apart from visit your museum? What do you offer that those rival activities don't? How do you compare on price? On ease of access?

When considering a new 'product', think about who it is aimed at, what demand there is for it, what purpose it fulfils, how it will benefit your audiences and whether it is relevant and appropriate to their needs as well as your aims.

Price

Your audiences should perceive your products to be good value for money. This doesn't mean you have to be the cheapest, but your audiences should feel that the pricing is fair, and that they are prepared to pay for the value that they get.

Things like the size of your venue, the amount of time visitors spend on site, quality of exhibitions, amount of changing content, facilities and customer service will all influence how customers rate your charges.

Again, consider what competitors offer and charge, including other museums and heritage sites in the broader area, cinemas, adventure play areas, libraries, local history society talks and workshops.

Generally the higher the price, the higher a customer's expectations will be. Whilst some customers are very price sensitive and would welcome low prices, others equate low prices to low quality and may not consider visiting as they assume there isn't much of value to see or do if there's a very low entry price.

⁴ www.cim.co.uk/media/4772/7ps.pdf

Your museum needs income, and setting prices is a fine balance between generating income and appealing to your audiences. You can have a range of prices, for example lower prices for concessions, a rate for groups, off-peak pricing, early bird discounts.

Existing customers are generally less sensitive about price than new customers, so remember to provide a good visitor experience and encourage return visits.

Place

'Place' deals with how the product is distributed to the customer: your product needs to be available in the right place and the right time for them.

Most museums have a fixed physical location which cannot be changed. However, many museums also run outreach events taking the museum out to their audiences, rather than expecting them to come to the museum. For example, education workshops in schools, reminiscence activities in care homes, pop-up museums and stands at community fairs and shopping centres.

Make sure your opening days and times are appropriate for your target audiences and consider whether different times (either as a one-off, regular or frequent slot) might pull in a new audience, for example an evening opening.

You can also think about where and how you sell entry tickets, event tickets, membership and your merchandise to help you reach more potential audiences and make it convenient for them to buy. As well as in the museum, you might consider selling on your website (or using providers such as Eventbrite or Shopify), at the local tourist information centre or in a local gift shop.

Consider your 'shop window', whether this is the entrance to the museum (how can you attract passers-by?) or your website (for example, ensure it is optimised for mobiles and has key information easily accessible).



Promotion

This is the element that people often use interchangeably with 'marketing' and jump straight in to, without having established whether there is a demand for the products and whether the price and place is appropriate. If those elements are misguided, no amount of money or time thrown at promotion will make that product a success. For example, a museum running a teddy bear picnic event for younger children at 7-9pm, which is past their bedtime.

Promotion is the way an organisation communicates what it does and what it can offer to audiences. It can include your website, social media marketing, media relations, advertising, leaflets, posters, banners, email marketing and more. It is important to use communication channels that are appropriate for your target audiences and use messages that are likely to resonate with them and appeal to them. This includes the language and tone of voice you use and the images you choose.

Consider:

- Why do you want to communicate? (Purpose)
- Who do you want to communicate to? (Audience)
- What do you want to communicate? (Message)
- How do you want to communicate it? (Channel)
- Who should you contact / how do you use those channels? (Distribution)

Communication is a two-way dialogue which welcomes and facilitates communication **from** audiences, not just your organisation pumping out sales messages **to** them. This is especially important on social media, where taking a content marketing approach is advisable: the creation and sharing of online content (e.g. social media posts, blogs and videos) that does not explicitly promote a brand but is intended to stimulate interest in its products or services. It's more subtle but more likely to generate more interest and engagement than simply saying 'buy this', 'visit us', 'donate to us'.

Where possible, tailor your approach to each audience group or segment. For example, parents looking for a school holiday activity will have different needs and reactions to marketing than teachers planning a school visit, or someone wanting to undertake some local history research. To make sure you have considered the needs of all your audience groups, there are a couple of tables you might find useful to plot.

The first includes audiences and communications channels so it is clear how you are reaching each group and whether you have any gaps you need to plug:

	Channel 1	Channel 2	Channel 3	Channel 4	Channel 5
Audience group 1					
Audience group 2					
Audience group 3					

The second considers your key messages, which are the most important point(s) you need to convey to those audiences, and what you want them to take in:

Audience Group	Key Message
Audience group 1	
Audience group 2	
Audience group 3	

An example of promotional activity the De Havilland Aircraft Museum undertook as a result of its visitor survey feedback is summarised in the [Appendix](#).

You'll find a template marketing plan on page 17 to help you plan your communications.

People

The people in your organisation are an incredibly important asset to be valued, including trustees, volunteers and staff - from front of house to operations and back office.

Your organisation's people represent your museum and everyone who meets your visitors can impact customer satisfaction positively or negatively.

At a museum there are so many potential interactions with visitors that can improve their visiting experience including welcome greeting, help navigating the site, assistance with any additional needs or special requirements, shop sales, information about objects and exhibitions and so on.

A museum's people also have the potential to be brand advocates and champion the museum outside their work and volunteering.

More on this can be found in AIM's Success Guide Successful Visitor Experience.⁵

⁵ This – and all of AIM's Success Guides – can be viewed at: www.aim-museums.co.uk/resources/success-guides/

Process

These are the systems and processes that deliver a product to a customer. Consider the whole process of how a customer becomes aware of your museum, considers whether to visit, makes the decision to visit, visits, then decides whether to visit again and tell others about it, thereby starting a new customer journey:



The whole process should be pleasant, user-friendly and seamless for the customer. This will include everything from the ease of finding opening times and directions on your website; responsiveness to questions on social media; to how to navigate queues at the venue; information provided by staff and volunteers; ability to give feedback; and opportunities to find out about future events. Ensure you focus on the customer's journey and experience through this process, not your organisation's convenience.

Physical evidence

These are the elements of the physical environment that the customer experiences.

Deciding whether to visit an unfamiliar museum can be risky, especially for a first-time visitor because they don't know what to expect and whether they will enjoy it and feel it is a good use of their time and money.

There are factors that you can influence that will minimise this risk and help show potential visitors what they can expect. For example, having a welcoming, tidy and attractive entrance area; having photos in marketing materials to give visitors an indication of whether you are a formal setting or a relaxed and interactive place; sharing reviews from visitors who talk positively about their experience.

Providing key information on your museum's website will also help people plan a visit and feel reassured and well-prepared. For example, how to find your museum and what support and facilities are available for people with additional needs.

Finishing the action plan: the resources

Once you have decided what needs doing, add in:

- Who will be responsible and involved
- A timeline of when the main actions are taking place and how long they will take
- The budget

- Any risk factors.

You may be able to work out what needs to be done and what it will cost, have a set budget to work to, or a combination of the two.

V. How will we know if we've got there? Evaluation

Continual monitoring and then evaluation are key to ensure that you're on track to meet your objectives and that you don't waste time or money on things that don't work.

Whilst a plan is a good starting point, you need to be flexible and may need to make tweaks as you go along. Whilst an extreme (and hopefully very rare) example, the Covid-19 pandemic has rendered most marketing planning from before the crisis redundant or in need of an overhaul. Review and update your SWOT analysis once a year to help you adapt to changing circumstances. Monitor competitor activity on an ongoing basis so you can adapt things if necessary, to react to a new threat or opportunity created by them.

If you have set SMART marketing objectives at the outset, evaluating whether these were met should be quite straightforward. In an example 'To increase the number of visitors under 16 by 10% in 2020 compared to 2019', you can use ticketing data (or a visitor survey if your museum doesn't charge for entry) to gauge if this objective was met.

Data such as ticket sales, people counters, event bookings and workshop participants are all useful to log. Your museum's visitor survey is also worth looking at to see answers visitors give to questions such as "What ways have you heard of us?" or "Which of the following had you seen or heard before your visit today?" followed by a list of communications channels such as Our website, a Facebook ad, Our leaflet and so on. This will help you to understand which marketing channels are driving the most visitors and help you decide what channels to focus on (or leave out) in the future.

Digital marketing can also give you a lot of metrics that will help you monitor and evaluate your marketing - use these insights. For example:

- Website analytics (e.g. where is traffic to your website coming from?)
- E-newsletter subscribers (open rates and click-through rates)
- Social media analytics (e.g. which types of posts get the most engagement, which types of adverts have the best cost per result).

Try to monitor your marketing regularly so you know if things are progressing well or if something needs to be tweaked before you get to the end of the year or campaign.

Below is a template that you can use to create a marketing action plan which could cover an event, exhibition or campaign which can be scaled up or kept short and sweet for a small campaign. Whilst the marketing strategy framework above sets out the overall approach and 'why', a marketing plan

A MARKETING PLAN TEMPLATE

answers the 'what' and sets out the actions you will deliver. Both can answer 'how?' You may create a few marketing plans per year which feed into and support your marketing strategy, and may sit under section (IV).

The 7Ps are included to show how you can consider them as part of your planning. There is an example completed in the [Appendix](#).

Event / exhibition / campaign name		
PRODUCT: What is the activity, project or campaign about?		
What is its purpose? Why are you doing it? What research has led to it? What is the need or demand for it?		
What do you want to achieve? How does this support your overall marketing goals? What are your marketing objectives? Try to make them SMART		
How will you get there? Your strategy / approach		
Who is this aimed at? Your target audience(s)		
PLACE: Where and when will it be available?		
PRICE: What will it cost your audience?		
PROMOTION	What will you do to reach and attract them? What communications / marketing channels will you use? If you have several different audiences, consider plotting these on a table as in the promotion section above.	
	What are your key messages? What do you want to tell them, what do they need to know, what will interest / resonate with them? Can you include a call to action (encouraging your audience to do something e.g. visit a website, buy a ticket)? If you have several audiences with different needs and interests, consider plotting these on a table as in the promotion section above.	
PEOPLE: Who is involved? Who is responsible? Who needs to sign the marketing off? Who needs training or keeping in the loop?		
PROCESS: What do we need to consider for the audience experience to be user-friendly? Where will audiences find more information? How will they book? Who will welcome them? Etc		
PHYSICAL EVIDENCE: How can we help audiences to "see" what they'd be experiencing before they come?		
When will you do it? Your timescales (working backwards is a good idea)		
What will it cost your organisation? Budget and resources		
How will you know if you have succeeded? Monitoring and evaluation		

LOW BUDGET MARKETING

Many smaller museums can't afford a dedicated marketing budget. Whilst it may be harder, it's not impossible to do effective marketing with a limited budget. But you need to acknowledge and accept that marketing will require time and effort over a sustained period - it's not something that can be done in a burst and then be forgotten about.

Tips on how to do effective marketing without a substantial budget include:

- Base your decision-making on research and insights to avoid wasting time and money on things that there is no demand for and won't work
- Focus on a few key audience groups and activities and doing them thoroughly rather than spreading yourself too thinly
- Make the most of free tools and training available (see [Further Support and Resources section below](#))
- Write a marketing element into funding bids and be smart about how you invest this funding e.g. in professional photography that can be used over several years, or templates for posters and social media graphics designed professionally that you can tailor on your own
- Nurture your existing audiences to encourage repeat visits, word of mouth and deeper engagement
- Make the most of your museum's own spaces e.g. posters on the backs of toilet doors, flyers in holders on café tables
- Work with appropriate partners to cross-promote each other's programmes and reach each other's audiences
- Encourage and facilitate visitors, staff and volunteers to share their visits, experiences and reviews to amplify your reach and increase word of mouth. For example, make it clear that photography is welcomed (where it is), provide a hashtag and your social media handles for people to tag you in, perhaps provide a selfie frame or dressing up clothes
- Create good content for your website, blog, newsletter and social media channels that your audiences will want to consume, react to, comment on and hopefully share. Ideas could involve a behind-the-scenes look at conservation; guess the object photos; archival images with information for those who want to reminisce; turning paintings from your collection into online puzzles
- Repurpose and recycle your content in a smart way. For example, can a Facebook post be expanded into a blog post for your website, can some content you developed last year be tweaked and used again this year?
- Piggy-back on relevant key events and hashtags such as #MuseumSelfieDay, #WorldBookDay, #InternationalWomensDay, #ChristmasJumperDay.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Marketing is more than promotion
- Marketing is an ongoing process, not something you do once
- Marketing needs investment in time and/or money
- You are not your audiences - marketing needs to resonate with them, not you
- Segment your audiences and tailor your approach to each segment
- Everyone in your organisation can play a part in successful marketing
- Experiment - if you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always got
- Review and evaluate your marketing and base future decision-making on insights and lessons learned.



APPENDIX

Further support and resources

Definitions, explanations and frameworks:

Chartered Institute of Marketing: A brief summary of marketing and how it works: www.cim.co.uk/media/4772/7ps.pdf

American Marketing Association's definitions of marketing terms: www.ama.org/the-definition-of-marketing-what-is-marketing

The Content Marketing Institute: What is content marketing: www.contentmarketinginstitute.com/what-is-content-marketing

The Audience Agency's guide to segmentation: www.theaudienceagency.org/resources/guide-segmentation-made-simple

Inspiration:

Arts Marketing Association blog: www.a-m-a.co.uk/blog

The Arts Marketing Association's Culture Hive: Case studies and how to guides: www.culturehive.co.uk

Chartered Institute of Marketing podcast: exchange.cim.co.uk/podcast

The Museum Next website has a lot of articles on marketing: www.museumnext.com/articles/

Free marketing training courses:

Google Digital Garage: Free online courses in digital marketing: learndigital.withgoogle.com/digitalgarage

Future Learn: Free online courses on a range of marketing topics: www.futurelearn.com/search?q=marketing

Networks and communities:

The Marketing Meetup community and resources: themarketingmeetup.com/

Facebook group Museum Social Media Managers: www.facebook.com/groups/musesocial/

Further reading:

Kotler, N. G., Kotler, P. & Kotler, W. I. (2008) *Museum Marketing & Strategy*. 2nd edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Wadson, I. (2014). Audience Development: Unpacking the Baggage (article on the terms audience development and arts marketing): www.culturehive.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Audience-Development-Unpacking-the-baggage..Ivan-Wadson..20031.pdf

EXAMPLE MARKETING PLAN

Event / exhibition / campaign name	A Teddybear's Picnic	
PRODUCT: What is the activity, project or campaign about?	A fun storytime session for under 5s on a Thursday morning	
What is its purpose? Why are you doing it? What research has led to it? What is the need or demand for it?	<p>We want to engage our local families with children who are not yet at school. We want to run a pilot event for our first storytime session to test whether it has potential.</p> <p>Our till data has shown that only 1% of our visitors are under 5 years old. Benchmarking data shows young children are underrepresented as visitors to our museum (6% of the local population is under 5 years old and conversations with other museums similar to ours show such museums regularly getting 5-9% of visitors under 5 years old). A focus group with local parents with children under 5 who haven't visited before found that they assume the museum doesn't cater for them.</p>	
What do you want to achieve? How does this support your overall marketing goals? What are your marketing objectives? Try to make them SMART	<p>We want:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● to encourage families with young children to visit the museum for an event which is designed specifically for them ● them to feel welcome and comfortable in our spaces and have fun ● to evaluate the session to feed into future planning. <p>Our objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● to attract at least 10 local families (who live within 10 miles of the museum) to the session ● to get at least 8 completed feedback forms about the session. 	
How will you get there? Your strategy / approach	There's no marketing budget for this session so we will make use of our existing digital channels and ask local relevant partners and stakeholder organisations to help us spread the word to families who we're not already communicating with.	
Who is this aimed at? Your target audience(s)	Children under 5, with their carers (parent, grandparent, childminder, guardian etc) who live within 10 miles from the museum.	
PLACE: Where and when will it be available?	<p>Thursday, 17 September, 10-11am in the education room.</p> <p>Tickets available by booking through Eventbrite, via Facebook, calling us and in person at the museum.</p>	
PRICE: What will it cost your audience?	£2 per child	
PROMOTION	What will you do to reach and attract them? What communications / marketing channels will you use? If you have several different audiences, consider plotting these on a table as in the promotion section above.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Put details on our website ● Create a Facebook event; post on Facebook and Twitter about it ● Include it in our e-newsletter ● Create simple poster/flyer in www.canva.com (free graphic design software) ● Put a poster/flyer at reception, on the backs of our toilet doors, and on tables in the café ● Ask the local library if we/they can put a poster up in their children's section ● Ask the local SureStart centre if we/they can put a poster up in their children's section ● Ask the teachers of the local baby yoga and toddler paint classes if they can mention the session to their communities.

EXAMPLE MARKETING PLAN

	<p>What are your key messages? What do you want to tell them, what do they need to know, what will interest / resonate with them? Can you include a call to action (encouraging your audience to do something e.g. visit a website, buy a ticket)? If you have several audiences with different needs and interests, consider plotting these on a table as in the promotion section above.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's fun • It's for under 5s • We're welcoming • We have space to park pushchairs, nappy-changing facilities and a café • Book your space now.
<p>PEOPLE: Who is involved? Who is responsible? Who needs to sign the marketing off? Who needs training or keeping in the loop?</p>		<p>Education and learning officer (ELO) to deliver the session and brief the marketing volunteer Marketing volunteer to draft social media posts with ELO approving. ELO to contact partner and stakeholder organisations and brief front of house volunteers.</p>
<p>PROCESS: What do we need to consider for the audience experience to be user-friendly? Where will audiences find more information? How will they book? Who will welcome them? Etc</p>		<p>Make sure information is on the website, especially with details of pushchair accessibility, nappy changing facilities etc. Booking available online, by phone and in person. Front of house volunteers to be briefed about where to direct families.</p>
<p>PHYSICAL EVIDENCE: How can we help audiences to “see” what they’d be experiencing before they come?</p>		<p>Share photos and information about our family-friendly facilities in our promotion (link to our website page on this). Include a photo of young children having fun at our museum at a previous event.</p>
<p>When will you do it? Your timescales (working backwards is a good idea)</p>		<p>Start promotion 4 weeks before the session.</p>
<p>What will it cost your organisation? Budget and resources</p>		<p>There's no budget. Estimated time on the event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 hours preparing the session and marketing • 3 hours on the day • 2 hours evaluation
<p>How will you know if you have succeeded? Monitoring and evaluation</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least 10 local families attend the session • at least 8 feedback forms about the session are completed.

CASE STUDIES

Eureka!

Eureka! (the national children's museum in Halifax), undertook in-depth research to explore a decline in school visits, and potential opportunities to address this. This included focus groups with teachers; consultations with staff; looking at industry data and trends; looking at other comparable sites' education offers; and analysis of the museum's internal data.

The research identified that the school audience was being underserved by the main museum website, with constraints on the depth and presentation of information needed.

The solution was to create an **education microsite** linked from the main Eureka! page but allowing tailored content and presentation for this audience segment. The priority was to make the process easy and reassuring for teachers, with detailed information and clear curriculum links. The key messages conveyed are that a class visit to Eureka! will be fun, memorable, safe and straightforward.

The launch of the microsite was promoted by email, social media, a leaflet sent to schools in the region and Google ads.

As a result, visits to the microsite homepage in the first six months were up 41% compared to the previous schools landing page, and there was a marked rise in school and group visits in 2019. Eureka! has also seen a drop in telephone enquiries asking basic questions which are now answered online, freeing up staff time to deal with detailed booking enquiries.



The Museum of Cambridge

[The Museum of Cambridge](#) commissioned a marketing consultant to create a marketing strategy and plan for the museum, with the aim of maximising visitor numbers and therefore income generated from ticket sales. Actions had to be free or low cost and be feasible for the very small staff team and volunteers to deliver.

The strategy identified four key marketing objectives and three key target audience groups for the museum to prioritise, which has given the team a clear direction and focus when deciding how to use limited resources and time.

The consultant also created a simple marketing training module which all new staff and volunteers are encouraged to access so that everyone is aware of and understands the marketing plan.



Jane Austen's House

[Jane Austen's House](#) in Hampshire recently undertook some work to audit and improve several key areas of operations, including marketing and communications, thanks to a Heritage Lottery Fund Resilient Heritage grant.

As part of this project, the museum worked with a marketing consultant on its positioning and brand.

The team jointly determined the House's unique selling points - the factors that differentiate it from its competitors - and the proof points which back up these claims. The team also identified Jane Austen House's core attributes, its values, 'personality' and benefits (both rational and emotional) to its audiences.

This work has fed into the House's marketing, to ensure it is confident, consistent, authentic, credible and distinctive.



The de Havilland Aircraft Museum

The de Havilland Aircraft Museum in Hertfordshire undertook a visitor survey which found that a large proportion of their visitors were older, came due to an interest in aircraft and were first-time visitors. Children were under-represented compared to benchmarking data the museum looked at.

The museum wanted to increase repeat visits, family visitors and people visiting for reasons other than the subject matter alone.

Actions the museum took included providing a free admission voucher to visitors to encourage them to return; increasing their opening hours in the summer holidays; improving their family offer with quizzes and improving their website; providing money off vouchers in relevant media to reach their target audiences; and some local cinema advertising.

The following year the museum had its best ever season and family visits were up by 75%. Repeat visits increased, visitors are visiting for a broader range of reasons and the visitor data has been used in two successful funding bids.



IMAGE CREDITS

Cover	The Museum of Cambridge, © David Kirkham / The Museum of Cambridge
Page 5	photo by Daria Nepriakhina on Unsplash
Page 12	Commonwealth War Grave Commission's Community Outreach Project Manager speaks to members of the SAHELI BAME group in Kingston,
Page 19	photo by Júnior Ferreira on Unsplash
Page 23	The Eureka! education microsite
Page 24	The Museum of Cambridge, © David Kirkham / The Museum of Cambridge
Page 25	Jane Austen's House in Hampshire © Jane Austen's House
Page 26	Young visitors at de Havilland Aircraft Museum © de Havilland Aircraft Museum



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About the author

Christina Lister is a marketing and audience development consultant, trainer and facilitator working in the cultural sector. She has worked in marketing and communications for 17 years including for a global skincare brand, PR agency and heritage charity. As a consultant she specialises in strategy development and is passionate about empowering organisations and teams to undertake effective marketing.

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