

SECTION 9

MARKETING AND MEDIA



Getting the Word Out: How Marketing and Media Can Strengthen Your Auxiliary

BCAHA's member Auxiliaries are as varied as the healthcare institutions they support. They run the gamut from large to small, and from rural to urban; yet all Auxiliaries share certain needs and challenges, if they are to enjoy a bright, strong future. This section provides information on developing a marketing strategy for your local Auxiliary, and on getting your message out through traditional and social media.

Developing Your Marketing Strategy

While a marketing strategy may seem a rather formal approach for a non-profit, charitable organization such as your Auxiliary, it offers a useful way to organize your thoughts and guide your activities, and most importantly, to measure the success of those activities.

Among your members there may well be someone who has developed such a strategy for a business or organization in the past; they may welcome the opportunity to put that experience to good use. Alternatively, you may choose to target your recruitment to find a volunteer with marketing experience.

The basic components of a typical marketing strategy are: goals, situation analysis, calls to action, target audiences, messages, methods, tactics, resources, benchmarks, and measurement.

Here are some guidelines to assist your Auxiliary in developing your strategy.

Goals (What you want to accomplish)

What are your Auxiliary's one to three main organizational goals for the next 12 to 18 months, and what are your one to three marketing goals (which indicate how you'll use marketing to reach those organizational goals)? Here are some examples:

- Organizational goals for your Auxiliary:
 - Increase the number of members by ten per cent.
 - Increase the diversity of our membership.
 - Increase funds raised by five per cent.
- Marketing goals for your Auxiliary:
 - Build awareness about your Auxiliary's work and impact.
 - Motivate 75 area residents to attend an open house to build their understanding of how your Auxiliary helps ensure a well-equipped hospital;
 - Form new partnerships and strengthen our existing relationships with key organizations in your community.

Situation Analysis (Conditions inside and outside your organization)

What is the environment in which you are working? There are several things you might consider:

- What could help or hurt your marketing success (for example, a change in the services your hospital will provide in future)?
- What are other volunteer organizations in your community doing, and how successful are they?
- What do the community, healthcare colleagues and other key people think about your Auxiliary and the work you do?
- If you are currently carrying out marketing activities, what is succeeding, what needs to change, and how?

Calls to Action (What you want your audiences to do)

What specifically do you want your target audiences (i.e., those who have a role to play in your success) to do in order to help you achieve your marketing goals? Examples might be:

- Visit your website.
- Subscribe to your e-newsletter.
- ‘Like’ your Facebook page and share their questions there.
- Participate in your open house.
- Sign up as Auxiliary members.
- Buy from your thrift store or gift shop.
- Collaborate on a project with you.

Target Audiences (Those you need to engage if you are to succeed)

Who are the one to three groups of people whose help you need, and who are most likely to help OR most unwise to ignore? These are your target audiences. What would you want them to know about your Auxiliary? What are their points of view? What do they want, and what do they care about? How can you reach them? Some examples of target audiences are:

- Local residents who are potential Auxiliary volunteers. You will want to build their understanding of what your Auxiliary does, how important that is to them and to people they care about, and how they themselves might benefit from volunteering. They will care about quality healthcare in your community, and they will want satisfying volunteer opportunities.
- Prospective partner organizations in your community. For example, if you are considering the local high school as a partner, you will want to build their understanding of your Auxiliary’s role and impact in supporting community health, and what engaging with your Auxiliary might mean to their students. They will care about the value to students in signing on as youth volunteers to build up volunteer hours in a worthwhile setting, and perhaps to qualify for a bursary.

Messages (What will make your audiences understand and remember you)

Your messages will ‘stick with’ your audiences if they describe in an interesting way why your supporters should care, and what’s in it for them.

For example, it is important that your messages convey the role your Auxiliary plays in helping to ensure that their children, other family members and friends have access to good quality care. In seeking to recruit youth volunteers, when developing your messages you will also need to bear in mind that young people may feel that there are too many other choices of ways to spend their time, and that they are busy – so you will need to make the benefits of volunteering very clear.

Methods (How to achieve your marketing goals)

How can you best motivate your target audiences to act? Some options are:

Build your network: Nurture relationships with prospective “supporters” within relevant local organizations, from the Lions Club to the Chamber of Commerce.

Build your brand: Develop consistent messages, approaches, and materials so people know right away it is your Auxiliary they are dealing with.

Tactics (How you put your methods into action)

How you connect with your supporters will be based on your target audiences’ habits and preferences, as well as which tactics work best to achieve your goals. Some examples might be:

- Build your network with local high school students by meeting with the local guidance counsellor, speaking to a student assembly, or inviting them to participate in a fun activity such as washing cars to raise funds for your Auxiliary.

Build your brand by developing talking points, training your Auxilians on public speaking, and refreshing your look, e.g. with a new logo reflected in print and electronic materials. You will find some information on the benefits of rebranding at

<http://www.zenelements.com/blog/reasons-to-rebrand/>

Resources (What it takes to get the job done)

Roles and Responsibilities

- Who does what?
- Can you rely on existing volunteers to do your marketing, or do you need to recruit new volunteers? Might you need to outsource some of the work to a local business? Might they give you a break on pricing?
- How much time will it take?
- How much training will be needed, and who will deliver that training?

Budget

- How much will implementing your plan cost? Ideally, you should begin the planning process with an idea of what you can spend, so you can plan realistically.
- How will you track expenditures and results in the coming year, to inform planning for the following year?

Benchmarks (What indicates success, or identifies opportunities for improvement)

Decide on three to five concrete, specific and measurable steps to achieve each of your marketing goals. Some examples might be:

- Partner with two new organizations that can help you recruit Auxiliary members.
- Increase the number of articles in your local newspaper that mention your Auxiliary.
- Increase the number of incoming inquiries about opportunities to join your Auxiliary by 10% in the next calendar year.

Measurement (How you are doing against your benchmarks)

To measure your progress, or to give a clear early indication of where you may need to adjust your tactics, you need to know:

- What is working best so your Auxiliary can do more of it?
- What target audiences are engaged, and which do you need to engage differently?
- What messages are generating action, and what seem to be failing to motivate?

Here are examples of measurement tools that might work for you:

- Inquiries about your Auxiliary, in person, by telephone or through your website.
- Turnout at events.
- Online survey findings.

NOTE: Once you have developed a marketing strategy, and it has been approved by your local Auxiliary Executive, your next step is to identify every task that needs to be done, who tackles each task, and a start date and deadline for each task. If it is ‘nobody’s job’, you can be certain that nobody will do it!

Local Media Relations for Auxiliaries

Media relations at the provincial or national level are the responsibility and purview of BCAHA's Provincial Office, and the BCAHA President or his/her designate is the official spokesperson of the organization.

At the local level, your health authority and local healthcare leaders will need to be advised if the media comes to you with a question, or you are planning to reach out to the media. This can be as simple as identifying the name and contact information of the person responsible for media relations with your health authority – your local healthcare leaders can assist you with that.

Here are some guidelines and techniques for increasing your Auxiliary's media relations success.

Establish an official spokesperson for your Auxiliary. Usually, this will be your president, but they may choose to designate another member who perhaps has experience and a greater comfort level in dealing with the media.

Develop, and regularly update a set of key messages about your Auxiliary, to be used when media opportunities present themselves, and in any media releases your Auxiliary may send out. These may include:

- how long your Auxiliary has been supporting healthcare in your community;
- how much money your Auxiliary raised over the past year, and if possible, how much it has raised since its inception;
- the value to be gained by those who volunteer, for example the opportunity for youth volunteers to apply for a bursary;
- how the public can tangibly support your Auxiliary.

Please note that your Area Representative, BCAHA's Executive Director, or the Director of Marketing and Communications are available to assist you in developing and refining these key messages.

If a reporter contacts your Auxiliary with a query, be sure to respect their deadlines and to provide clear, concise information that will be of interest to their readers or viewers. Establish good working relationships with your local health authority's communications team, and let them know right away about any media queries that come to you, which might have a bearing on their work.

If a reporter asks a question more appropriate for the health authority to answer, politely advise the reporter that you are not the right person to speak to that matter, and suggest that they contact the health authority. Your health authority likely has a number dedicated to media calls – obtain that number from their communications team, and keep that number handy. You may wish to invite the person responsible for your health authority's media relations to address one of your meetings, either in person or by teleconference, in the interests of collaboration and mutual understanding.

Here are some tips to help you come away from a media interview with a feeling of success.

1. Ask what the reporter wants to discuss, and establish your own focus for the interview. For example, if they want to talk about changes to your local hospital, you might say “I am not the right person to speak about the changes themselves, but I will be happy to discuss with you how our Auxiliary has supported healthcare in this community over the past 60 years...”
2. Prepare for the interview. Decide on the three key points you want to make; write them down in clear, concise language; and find someone with who you can practise for ten minutes so you can get your messages across with confidence.
3. Back up what you say. Don’t use numbers or examples for which you have no concrete proof; rather than saying “We are very successful at raising funds”, say “We raised \$450,000 last year for healthcare in our community.”
4. Speak only to your area of expertise. If the reporter is interested in what your Auxiliary does, you are the ideal spokesperson – but if they have questions about a new treatment or some other specific aspect of healthcare, suggest the best person for them to contact.
5. Don’t just say “No comment”, as those two words on their own can be taken as a negative comment. Rather, say, “I can’t comment on that, because it is not my area of expertise”, or “I will be glad to discuss with you how our Auxiliary supports healthcare in our community, but in answer to that specific question I suggest you contact.....”
6. Don’t use the reporter’s negative words, even to deny them. For example, if you were asked “Why can’t the people working in your thrift store get along amicably?” you would not want to respond “I wouldn’t say they CAN’T get along...” Instead, you might say “Good working relationships are very important to all of us in our Auxiliary, including in our thrift store, and here is what we are doing to ensure a positive experience for our customers...”
7. Don’t bluff. If you don’t know the answer, just say so. If it seems appropriate, offer to find the information and call the reporter back; or refer them to another source, for example by providing your health authority’s media relations contact number.
8. Don’t get angry, evasive or flippant. Keep your cool, and if the reporter’s approach makes that impossible for you, tell the reporter you have time for just one more question, then you will need to let them go as you have another appointment.
9. Remember your audiences. Pretend your mother, your best friend, or the ideal future Auxilian is listening or reading...they just might be!

10. Avoid jargon – explain any technical words and phrases you might use. Speak in clear, easily understood language, or the audience may tune you out in self-defence.

How Social Media Can Increase Awareness and Support Recruitment

Social media is the term used for web-based and mobile technologies used to turn one-way communication into interactive dialogue. It's all about creating conversations, cultivating relationships online and maximizing your presence online to maintain relevancy, and it offers those who may not always be able to stop by in person a meaningful way to connect with you, wherever they may be. For your Auxiliary, it can be a valuable tool to help increase awareness and support recruitment, and in particular, it is a useful tool to recruit and engage youth volunteers. In today's digital world, it is important keep current with these widely used communications channels.

Here are some recommendations to assist you in using social media to leverage the successes of your Auxiliary:

- **Create a website.** A website is a central place where people can go to learn more about what your Auxiliary is doing and how they can get involved. You can use your website to:
 - Share exciting news and announce activities in which your Auxiliary is involved.
 - Provide a call to action for potential volunteers, and provide a 'digital space' where people can sign up to volunteer with your Auxiliary. Include a sign-up form on your website to make it easier to attract and recruit new volunteers.
 - Boost the legitimacy of your Auxiliary – most organizations, charities and non-profits today have a website. Don't get left behind!
- **Create a Facebook Page.** Facebook is the most popular social media tool today; on average, users spend approximately forty minutes per day on Facebook. This is an excellent opportunity to show the human side of your Auxiliary. Using Facebook, you can:
 - Build an engaged following; as more people "Like" your page, all of your updates will appear on their newsfeed. This increases your reach.
 - Share interesting things happening in and around your Auxiliary.
 - Recognize volunteers and encourage volunteers to participate online. Have volunteers post a "selfie" (a photo of themselves they have taken on their own cell phone) showing them volunteering. Encourage them to like, share and comment on your posts.

Engaging with users online is a great way to garner relevancy, gain more visibility, strengthen relationships, and create a go-to place and a hub of activity for your Auxiliary. Again, this is one area of expertise you may wish to search for as you recruit volunteers – many potential volunteers, as well as your current Auxilians, use social media to keep in touch with friends and family, and stay "up to speed" with events in the world that are of interest to them.

