

A Shark*Proof* Marketing Plan

Eric P. Canada

“A marketing plan is not a complicated task if the proper model is used and the task is approached systematically. This article looks at alternative marketing models and the use of life-cycle analysis. Finally, the Shark*Proof* Marketing™ formula describes a methodology to guard against gaps in the plan.”

Economic Development Review

Spring 1997, Reprint

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A SharkProof Marketing™ Plan

By Eric P. Canada
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A marketing plan is not a complicated task if the proper model is used and the task approached systematically. The following article describes alternative marketing models and demonstrates a life cycle analysis tool to assist in selecting a development strategy. The SharkProof Marketing™ formula then describes a methodology for organizing components of a plan and guards against missing elements critical to the plan's ultimate success.

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INTRODUCTION

Putting together a marketing plan is not a complicated task if approached systematically. Unfortunately, for the vast majority of development organizations, marketing is a series of crises tied together by a critical path clear only in the rearview mirror. From this perspective, it is too late to take evasive action. Results suffer. The reasons for inadequate marketing planning in economic development fall into a variety of categories.

Annual Plan — An annual plan is not a marketing plan. An annual plan lays out specific actions to be accomplished in the short-term. A marketing plan deals with long-term strategy and broader goals needed to provide meaning for short-term activity. The short-term annual plan focuses on the needs of the seller. *The long-term marketing plan focuses on the needs of the buyer.*

Too Busy — As I talk to dozens of development professionals every month, I am constantly surprised by the number who are "too busy" to put together a marketing plan. In my experience, when management's uncommitted time or creative time drops below 15%, fire fighting ensues and performance suffers. Former President Eisenhower put it best: "Those who fail to plan, plan to fail."

Risk Averse — Planning not to fail is a common management style in development organizations. As noted in Blane, Canada Ltd.'s October 1993 newsletter, *Clients and Friends*, "many of the development marketing strategies and plans we review lack opportunity strategies. If marketing objectives are consistently reached, standards are probably too low.

Challenge your organization. Accept some risk by setting high standards. A high standard stimulates high output. Using a baseball metaphor: *If every trip to the plate is a bunt, there will be no homeruns.*"

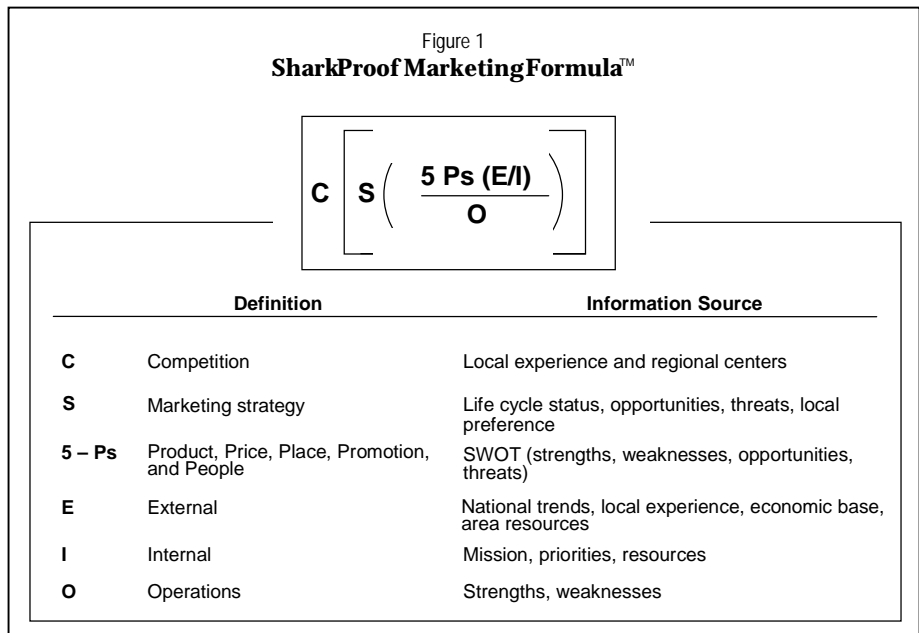
Oreo Marketers™ — *Oreo Marketers™* insist on starting in the middle. Just like a seven-year-old who always eats the center of an Oreo first and leaves the cookie, *Oreo Marketers™* believe promotion is marketing. They think tactically, not strategically. They fail to realize that marketing is a game of chess, not checkers.

SHARKPROOF MARKETING™

The key elements for crafting a proactive, aggressive marketing plan and avoiding being shark bait for some development marketer are:

- Strategy
- 5Ps
- Internal vs. External
- Operations
- Pyramid

SharkProofMarketing™, characterized in a formula, is used to make a client's organization more competitive. Just like in a mathematical formula, the secret is how these elements are combined, Figure 1.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT'S MARKETING MODELS

Before digging into elements of the SharkProofMarketing™ Formula an appropriate frame of reference is necessary for successful development marketing. Economic development marketing is truly a specialized marketing niche. While the tools are no different, their application must be different to meet the specific needs of development.

In economic development, marketing models tend to come out of corporate America's consumer marketing. The techniques used in advertising, public relations, and even themes are borrowed directly from consumer marketing. These techniques are applied with the feel and style of a consumer campaign. This has occurred and continues because development organizations:

- rely on public relations and advertising firms with roots in consumer marketing.
- desire to purchase services locally, forcing reliance on marketing firms with a client base often dominated by consumer marketers. Very few marketing firms specialize in economic development and offer services nationally.
- relatively few individuals involved in economic development programs are trained marketers and even fewer are business-to-business marketers.
- development professionals are consumers first. It is natural to bring this personal experience into the office and apply it to problems.

Consumer dominated marketing firms approach economic development problems from a consumer marketing perspective. As a result, development organizations are reflecting the bias of their counselors. "Advertising still claims the largest share of outlays for principal marketing tools..." according to the findings of John T. Bailey in his study, *Marketing Cities in the 1980s and Beyond*. He went on to note, "In 13 programs ... advertising accounted for 43% of budgets for these activities, compared with 25% for public

relations and 27% for collateral materials."

In my opinion, this consumer perspective has slowed the evolution of marketing in development organizations. Many development organizations, predominantly large city, state, and electric utilities which have had the major resources, still fight to make the old consumer marketing model work in economic development.

A consumer marketing model is one of three basic marketing models: consumer, industrial, and service.

CONSUMER MODEL CHARACTERISTICS

- personal use items
- purchase decision generally made by user
- mass markets with slight variations identifiable as distinct segments within the broader market (young/young married/young married with children, etc.)
- advertising is king
- creative talent draws a premium

Consumer marketing is where the money is. This draws the most dynamic and creative talent. The best and the brightest marketers want to work for powerhouses like Proctor & Gamble, Quaker Oats, Coca Cola, BBD Needham, J. Walter Thompson, and other consumer product companies. Consumer marketing represents the greatest body of marketing knowledge. Additionally, extensive market data is available through sophisticated consumer research companies like A.C. Nielson or J.D. Powers. Marketing trade publications predominately cover consumer marketing.

INDUSTRIAL MODEL CHARACTERISTICS

- goods of commerce, institutional use, and government
- buying decision seldom made by actual user
- personal selling is the primary means of persuasion
- agents provide a high level of customer support service
- critical to establish an effective customer-supplier relationship

Industrial marketing is a specialized body of knowledge limited in use and appeal outside the industry. Market research budgets tend to be smaller than in consumer market research; and, therefore, marketing firms specializing in industrial marketing are far less prevalent than those providing consumer marketing services. Industrial marketing is low glamour because of the low profile products represented: screws, roll steel, plastic pellets, equipment, etc.

Advertising in the industrial model plays a small support role. It is used as a door opener, acquainting the prospect with the product while allowing a sales person to gain an audience. Advertising is always in vertical industry trade magazines seldom seen outside that industry.

Limiting *personal risk* in the buying decision is a critical factor in the industrial marketing model. The wrong choice can be "career limiting." Therefore, industrial buyers frequently minimize the personal risk of a bad choice by concentrating on established, well-known products rather than to take a chance on a new product or firm. Industrial buyers are governed by the need to maintain a profit. They seek the best possible price-quality-service mix, and cost is more critical than in consumer product marketing.

This profile of an industrial marketer's role is an accurate description of the assignment for corporate real estate executive. The corporate real estate executive seeks to maximize the price-quality-service mix while minimizing corporate and *personal risk*. The twin issues of corporate and *personal risk* are undoubtedly critical factors in the site selection decision because of the magnitude of the investment. These factors warrant special research by development marketers.

The industrial marketing model uses specialized distribution channels comprised of networks of industrial distributors, manufacturers' representatives, and manufacturers' sales offices. These individuals constitute industry and company experts familiar with competitive information and strategic plans of corporations in virtually every industry. Because of their role and relationship to the manufacturer, industrial distributors and manufacturers' representatives furnish a network of industry specialists who can be tapped by development marketers for industry and company specific information. These individuals should be recruited into development

programs. They should also be the focus of special research.

- *Industrial distributors* — Take title to goods and inventory, provide credit, and sell
- *Manufacturers' representatives* — Operate on a commission basis; do not take title; sell; relationships tend to be short-term and opportunistic; specialize in product types but can change from manufacturer to manufacturer
- *Manufacturers' sales offices* — A branch office of the manufacturer

SERVICE MODEL CHARACTERISTICS

- intangible product
- high degree of customization to meet the individual needs of the user
- close contact between the customer and the service provider
- selection, training, and monitoring of personnel are critical to success
- capacity constrained by labor and resources
- repeat business more important to financial success than winning new customers

The segment most closely aligned with the needs and interests of the economic development organization is business-to-business service marketing. Business-to-business service marketing provides a number of interesting parallels to be explored by development marketers, namely:

- intangible qualities of a community
- customization
- capacity limitations

Service marketing is a broad topic covering consumer, corporate, institutional, and government audiences of service companies. A growing body of literature has appeared over the last 15 years as services have become a more dominant element of the economy. Yet again, there is a distinction to be made between consumer services and industrial services. The dominant portion of the literature is on consumer services.

Services are consumed as they are created allowing a high degree of customization to meet the specific needs of the user. The physical and labor resources of service companies cannot handle more than a certain volume within a given period.

MOMENT OF TRUTH PROCESSES

Service intensive organizations like economic development operate in a "moment of truth" environment. A.T. Kearney, an international management consulting firm, identifies two service environments: *operations processes and moment of truth*.

Kearney defines an operations process as one which produces the same tangible output, time after time, like a factory, warehouse, or insurance claims processing center. A moment of truth process, on the other hand, produces the same output over and over in an interpersonal customer service setting, i.e. airline check-in counter, bank teller station or business consultant. Unlike an operations process, the output is intangible and the results are difficult to measure and control. *The key to total quality management for moments of truth environments is training and empowering employees to meet customer needs now.*

Examples of the moment of truth in economic development include: when the prospect calls late in the day asking for a site survey by 10:00 a.m. tomorrow. Or, when the investor (member) asks what have you done for me lately?

Moment of truth performance is critical in economic development. In one recent case, a Midwest company needing space for an operation in the South, sought a location along Interstate 81. Twenty-two communities met the initial site criteria and were invited to

provide information. Fifteen were selected for serious consideration. The final decision was not made on the basis of numbers alone. The dominant decision factor was attitude and results. The winning community's economic development professional and community leaders provided the necessary information, but *they also demonstrated a willingness and ability to overcome less than desirable circumstances.*

Fortunately, development organizations, some spurred by frustrations, others by more modest resource bases, have been forced to be more creative. These development organizations have begun breaking the mold. Through research, personal

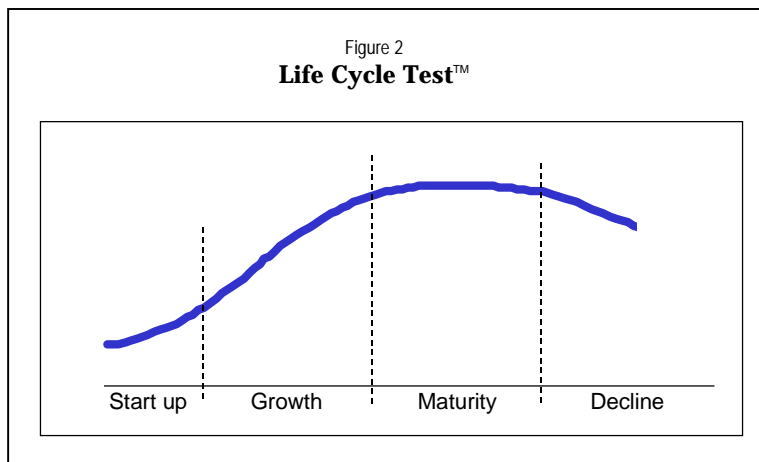
experience, and trial and error experimentation, some development organizations have challenged accepted practices. They have adopted new models

and new role models as their marketing influence. By moving to tools and techniques that satisfy their specific needs, they have moved, perhaps unknowingly, to marketing activities that mimic the industrial and/or service model. Organizations known to be following this pattern include Cedar Rapids Chamber of Commerce (IA), Greater Phoenix Economic Council (AZ), The Economic Development Corporation of Utah, Virginia Department of Economic Development, and Adams County Economic Development (CO). More investigation and experimentation is still needed in this area.

In moment of truth encounters, quality is evaluated subjectively on the strength of the response. Proven performance over time is not always considered.

STRATEGY USING THE LIFE CYCLE TEST™

One way to test the focus of your marketing strategy is the Life Cycle Test™, Figure 2. Life cycle testing is one of the



many tools I have adopted from business marketing for use in development marketing. This concept is used with clients to help them visualize where their community is in its development cycle. This visualization gives volunteers the perspective to fully understand their marketing needs. One of the most important benefits of life cycle charting is building consensus among volunteers. I have found the Life Cycle Test™ to be a superior tool for stimulating discussion among board members and volunteers engaged in planning.

The test consists of selecting a point on the life cycle graph that best represents the community's current position in its life cycle. Each participant must decide if a community is best characterized as being in a start up, rapid growth, maturity, or decline mode? To make a decision, it is necessary to judge the community's assets and liabilities as well as the level of economic activity, changes, and trends that have occurred. Determining where a community is in its growth (life) cycle makes a notable difference in marketing strategy. Only by first determining the competitive condition of the product (price, place, product, people) can one formulate an appropriate marketing strategy.

The Life Cycle Test™ gives groups a concrete way to discuss differences and build agreement. By forcing participants to pick a point on the graph, each must begin to articulate why that point represents the current state of the community's growth. As differences of opinion are discussed, group members become aware of assets and liabilities they may have been unaware of or overlooked in their own decision process. Changes in economic condition may become apparent to others. Ultimately, through this discussion, the group begins to develop a consensus life cycle position for their community.

Two Canadian communities, Vaughan and Etobicoke, Ontario, provide interesting examples demonstrating the importance of a life cycle analysis to formulating marketing strategy. Charting Vaughan, one quickly sees a suburban community in a rapid growth situation. The

community has a great deal of open space for industrial development. New industrial investment is occurring on a regular basis. Charting Etobicoke on the life cycle chart, one sees a totally different picture. Etobicoke is a mature suburban community facing alternative choices of initiating a new growth curve or beginning a period of decline. The contrast in this example highlights the difference strategic requirements in each stage.

To achieve growth from a mature state, a community must work to stimulate a transition to a new future by creating new product to attract development. It will also be necessary to provide support for the expansion of existing businesses, as well as insuring business retention. These strategic choices frequently require public sector investment in redevelopment or infrastructure. Strategic decisions must be made, and leadership must act to create new opportunities that will launch the community into a new growth cycle.

A community in a rapid growth mode like Vaughan's will benefit from a marketing strategy that focuses resources on promotion, prospect management, and prospect support. During the growth period, strategic choices hinge on which of the competing

opportunities will serve the community's needs and interests.

By nature, development volunteers are optimistic. This optimism causes some volunteers to believe their community is in a late start-up stage with great growth potential just ahead. In reality, communities, like the national economy, go through a number of growth cycles. Conditions in the early start-up period can appear very similar to conditions in a period of early maturity allowing overly optimistic development volunteers to assess conditions as late start-up when in fact the community is entering a mature state. Such misinterpretations can result in serious problems, surfacing as disagreement when marketing strategy is being formulated. The Life Cycle Test™ draws assumptions out into the open exposing differences in assessment that occurred during the planning phase.

Another benefit of the life cycle test is a check on proposed evaluation criteria. Since different circumstances dictate different units of measure, I have found that discussing the life cycle makes it easier for leadership to see how different measurement criteria are more appropriate for certain situations. Figure 3 shows the evaluation criteria Blane, Canada Ltd. discusses with clients. The community's life cycle mode, strategy, and priorities should dictate the form of measurement used.

Figure 3
Evaluation Criteria

ULTIMATE SUCCESS MEASURES	Life Cycle Mode			
	Start up \triangle	Growth \bullet	Maturity \square	Decline \blacklozenge
External Measures				
<i>Quantity</i> — number of jobs	\triangle		\square	
<i>Quality</i> — economic impact of jobs (skills and wages)			\square	\blacklozenge
<i>Distribution</i> — location of jobs				\blacklozenge
<i>Type</i> — business sector (industry attracted or retained)		\bullet	\square	
<i>Reach</i> — number of business assisted	\triangle	\bullet	\square	\blacklozenge
<i>Sensitivity</i> — meeting needs of subregions				\blacklozenge
<i>Capital Investment</i> — private investment	\triangle			\blacklozenge
Internal Measures				
<i>Contribution</i> — increased tax base	\triangle			\blacklozenge
<i>Return on Investment</i> — investor benefits	\triangle			\blacklozenge
<i>Customer Satisfaction</i> — existing employers satisfaction level			\square	\blacklozenge
<i>Goal Attainment</i>	\triangle		\square	\blacklozenge

THE FIVE PS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MARKETING

Product, promotion, place (sometimes referred to as distribution) and price are the four variables directly within the scope of marketing. The 4Ps as commonly referred to among marketers, must be controlled to create success. Each is considered a variable because it can be changed, adjusted, modified, or controlled. This is no small challenge in economic development as many of the product features, benefits, and price are determined by actions of political bodies.

The concept of the 4Ps is an outgrowth of the production-oriented definition of marketing. It was valid in the 50s and remains so today in consumer goods. However, to make the transition to the 90s and service marketing, there is need to address the influence of the customer.

In his book, *Service Management and Marketing: Managing the Moments of Truth in Service Competition*, Christian Gronroos argues that in service marketing the 4Ps are too limiting. Gronroos supports the addition of a fifth P first suggested in 1987 in V.C. Judd's book *Differentiate with the 5th P: People*. In service, and particularly in economic development, people are a critical element of the marketing scheme. People must be considered one of the variables in the mix to be managed by development marketers, Figure 4. The outer ring in the Figure shows the environmental influences impacting all of the marketing variables.

The following explanations briefly describe each of the marketing variables.

Product

The product variable is the combination of community features, services, and resources. Marketing is concerned with tailoring the community to meet the broadest possible group of users.

In economic development, product improvement can include: building an industrial park, erecting a shell building, extending a sewer line, upgrading a fire rating, or eliminating

regulatory or zoning barriers to development.

Promotion

Promotion is the broad title given to all of the techniques used to increase awareness, educate, identify, qualify, and convert a suspect into a prospect or into a user of the product.

Techniques favored for use in economic development include: advertising, direct mail, telemarketing, trade shows, or public relations.

Price

The price variable is concerned with the cost relative to the quality of and benefits offered by the product. Because price is always important to consumers, it is a critical marketing variable.

Price is used frequently in economic development marketing, sometimes to the exclusion of other valuable benefits. To read the ads in economic development trade journals, it appears that almost every community is the low cost alternative. In reality, price is too often overstated and under documented by development organizations. In economic development, it is the total cost of developing and operating a facility which corporate real estate executives want documented.

Many development organizations use incentives to offset up front costs or mask higher operating costs. The alternative strategy taken by some development organizations is to eliminate factors that increase operating costs. The benefit of this strategy is that it equally supports existing and prospective companies.

Place (distribution)

In retailing, place is the challenge of delivering a sufficient quantity of the product at a location convenient for the consumer. As an element of product marketing, this is very logical and an important component of marketing. In economic development, place has two meanings. Place is where the product can be offered — a community in a specific location relative to other locations. Place becomes a two-fold challenge. First, it provides alternative space for local companies outgrowing current facilities. Secondly, place is the challenge of enticing the customer to come to the product. Until the suspect has made the investment of coming to inspect the community, he is not a serious prospect. Place also contains many product elements which cannot be controlled from within the community. For example, place is partially defined by the public utility service, transportation routes, higher educational institutions. While these are features of the product, they are controlled by place, not the choice of the community.



People

The people variable enters service marketing through the exchange of promises. Promises must be met on both sides if a successful relationship is to be maintained through to conclusion. The service relationship is characterized by an ongoing series of moments of truth experiences where promises are tested. People are also a variable in terms of the selection and training of staff and/or volunteers who must provide the customized services demanded by prospects and investor/members.

Service in economic development requires a true customer/people orientation.

EXTERNAL VS. INTERNAL MARKETING

A performance evaluation demands action. Where development professionals have been successful, they have managed the fundamentals of marketing to identify and satisfy the needs of their key clients.

One marketing challenge for economic development professionals is the distraction of two competing dominant audiences, internal and external. Each audience places distinctly different demands on the professional. Success requires these differences be addressed, Figure 5.

Mastering marketing skills to meet the different demands provides the development professional an opportunity to gain control of these competing audiences by identifying and satisfying their needs. A plan allows the professional to determine how marketing activities will interrelate and how marketing materials will be used. As an example, direct mail campaign materials sent to suspects could also be sent to investors and community opinion leaders with a brief cover note. This gives investors and leadership a direct insight into the marketing activity and reinforces their support for the program. This has a much higher impact and a lower cost than a newsletter mentioning the fact a campaign was conducted. Through a little planning, materials for external use can also satisfy the needs of an internal audience.

Figure 5
Internal/External Marketing

Internal marketing is needed to build consensus, support, and organizational strength. Internal marketing also stimulates retention and expansion of the existing business base. Internal audiences include:

- Board members
- Investors
- Political leaders
- Existing employees
- Allies
- Local media
- Public
- Critics/Enemies

External marketing is needed to generate new businesses on the ground and jobs in the community. External marketing builds awareness and cultivates interest. Primary external audiences include:

- Business attraction candidates
 - prospects
 - suspects
- Regional media

A FOUNDATION FOR MARKETING

The fundamentals of good organization are essential before marketing can be successful. To succeed in development marketing an organization must be competitive on both:

- site selection factors
- organizational performance

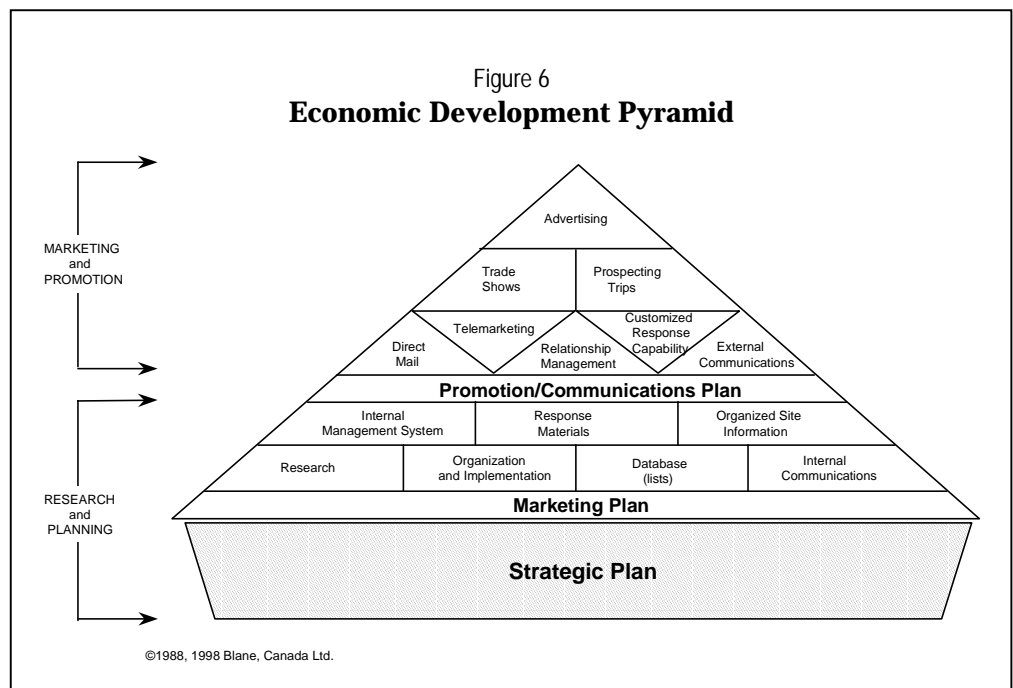
A development organization can lose in the quest for corporate investment as quickly from poor organizational performance as from lack of competitive product. In a process of elimination, like site selection, there is little time to

gather and organize when engaged in the process with a prospect.

The final factor in the *SharkProof Marketing™* Formula is the organization and its operations. The first assumption in development marketing is frequently that the organization, without change (people or money), can do whatever is required to support the proposed marketing initiative. In reality, this is seldom the case. Therefore, the sharkproof marketing plan must take into consideration the organization's assets, liabilities, and weaknesses.

Every marketing plan requires a solid organizational foundation as shown in the Economic Development Pyramid, Figure 6.

Figure 6
Economic Development Pyramid



This foundation includes: databases of information, an information system, internal communications systems, stable long-term funding, and human resources (staff and volunteer) to name a few.

As with the community, Blane, Canada Ltd. use the Life Cycle Test™ to discuss operations and help volunteers *discover* the need for new or different resource mix in the organization. Using a life cycle curve like the one shown earlier, plot a position for the organization on the curve. Invite board members to plot the organizations position on the curve. The ensuing discussion will allow consideration of the organizations strengths and weaknesses such as: staff training, volunteer leadership, support skill mix (staff and volunteers), equipment, facilities, funding, and other operational factors critical to successful marketing.

Generally, the development organization will not be in the same mode as the community. When a major plant closing occurs, a common reaction is to form a new development corporation or infuse new capital into an existing corporation. When a community is growing steadily, leaders and investors lose interest. Funding and activities plateau taking an organization into a mature mode when resource demands could well be increasing.

This imbalance is one of the challenges we see most often in client organizations. As a result, the resource constraint inhibits the organization from taking advantage of the community growth mode or moving a community from a mature position into a new growth cycle. The Life Cycle Test™ along with supporting analysis tools we have designed bring together the status of the community and organization to underscore conflicts in mode for volunteer decision-makers. This helps volunteers and investors recognize how failure to adjust the organization can allow opportunity to slip away.

SHARKPROOF MARKETING™ PLAN

Every marketing plan is built around goals and objectives. By definition, these goals and objectives

should seek to *leverage* strengths wherever they are found, *overcome* weaknesses, *exploit* opportunities, and *deal* with threats.

I use the SharkProofMarketing™ Formula, shown in Figure 1, as a self check to make sure critical issues are covered when building marketing plans for clients. I also use the formula in training courses as a memory device to help participants remember the important components of a marketing plan.

Every element included in the formula is important. None can be omitted without completing a full analysis. The formula works for any economic development product. It can be applied to different strategies like tourism, entrepreneurship, or retail development. For industrial development, strategy is most often some blend of business expansion, attraction, and retention.

All of the 5Ps are important to a successful marketing effort. Yet, there is confusion because some development organizations have a limited mission devoted exclusively to one element, promotion for example. Where this is the case, there is generally someone else in the community concentrating on the other elements, i.e. product improvements, or price.

When a development organization has a limited mission, should the marketing plan show product improvement goals if they are only responsible for promotion? *YES!* A student in one of my training courses recently was particularly troubled by this concept. She explained that her job was marketing, and the Chamber handles product improvement. Why should she list product improvement goals in her marketing plan?

Leaving important objectives out of your marketing plan can be career limiting. Even when the organization or department is not responsible for an element in the formula, it *must* be shown in your marketing plan. For example, my position is that marketing success assumes a competitive product. Without competitive product, there is little chance of marketing success. Therefore, it is essential that the marketer be aware of and keep the pressure on those who are responsible for product improvement.

Selfishly, if my performance is to be evaluated by decision-makers and they are unaware of product problems rendering my community uncompetitive, what chance do I have of a good performance evaluation? My perfectly crafted and executed promotion/sales plan can be neutered by a weak product. So, my responsibility as the marketer is to make decision-makers totally aware of anything that can impact success. If I fail to do this, their evaluation of my job performance will only take into consideration the marketing (i.e. promotion) activities and the results.

Put everything in front of the decision-maker. Make it clear when items are not the responsibility of your organization. Make it clear that your organization cannot succeed without the accomplishment of certain objectives others are committed to accomplishing. Let them decide what the consequences will be when an ally misses a deadline on an important community goal. Make the group and/or person responsible for that objective a strategic ally. Provide support in your marketing activities. Show the strategic ally as the responsible party in your marketing plan. Let decision-makers become part of the pressure working to insure strategic ally(ies) continues to work toward the timely completion of objective(s) important to the marketing organization.

CONCLUSION

How important is good marketing planning to the average development professional? Take the case of the development professional who was judged a *failure* after accomplishing 37 of 42 goals including almost 2,000 jobs and a new technical college in four years.

What went wrong? Everything started out well enough. One consultant left a "to do" list of 42 goals and an impression. A second consultant raised the needed new money and expectations. The executive tackled the list spending hundreds of thousands of new funds. Four years later, 37 goals were accomplished but there was no *big* new company. This example highlights two problems. First, while the to do list included useful activities, it failed to address critical *product* issues thus limiting the potential of the marketing effort. No one in the community was responsible for bringing new product, industrial park and/or a spec building online. No one mentioned that without addressing product, it was impossible to land the big one or even larger little ones. Decision-makers were not included in

the goal setting process. They assumed their product was already competitive. In their minds, spending the money to accomplish additional goals would make their community unbeatable (you know how unrealistic volunteers can be). Being unaware of the product problem, they believed a *big* one was not only possible but probable. This assumption led directly to the second problem — two yardsticks. The executive assumed goal accomplishment was the yardstick to use to measure success. Investors were looking for a very specific result — a new major employer — a very different yardstick. A well designed marketing planning process could have avoided both problems saving time, money, and frustration for the executive.

Is the SharkProofMarketing™ Formula everything an executive needs to craft a top-notch marketing plan. No, there are issues of balance like short and long-term, reach, positioning, resources, measurement, and dozens of others. Adopting an industrial/service marketing model is critical. Understanding the impact of a moment of truth environment is important. Knowing how to use tools like the life cycle test to build understanding and agreement is essential. But, I have yet to see a development marketing plan — and I read dozens of *purported* marketing plans every year — that could not be improved significantly by adhering to the simple formula for SharkProof Marketing™.

The bottom line is, a promotion schedule or series of goals is a poor substitute for a comprehensive marketing plan. When your career is riding on the outcome, the SharkProof Marketing™ formula will make a marketing plan more powerful, more comprehensive, and more influential.

Can success be far behind? ☆

When your career is riding on the outcome, the SharkProof Marketing™ Formula will make a marketing plan more powerful, more comprehensive, and more influential.

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