

Introduction

The Aging Network is gaining remarkable attention. As the number of older adults increases, conversations are taking place in every corner of the nation. While policymakers and frontline program leadership are exploring ways to reach more seniors and adapt to a shifting demographic, the “market” is exploding with new competitors who offer innovative services tailored to the growing needs. At the same time, the media world has become complex, offering new marketing channels, creative methods, and a 24-7 cycle of personalized messages for every category of personal taste and interest.

At the intersection of these changes is a tremendous opportunity to pivot our practices to harness the future. Never before have we seen the level of competition that today’s landscape presents. We can no longer assume that we are the only option available to provide meals (and other services) to seniors. Therefore, how do we communicate value, illustrate impact, and preserve relevance in a crowded market? Revisiting your thinking and your strategy surrounding “marketing” may shed light on the way forward.

What is marketing?

Client-centric

At the core, marketing is client-centric. It’s not safe to assume all audiences are the same, primarily because it simply isn’t true.

How can this be used in the Aging Network?

Get to truly know the seniors that you serve. With the changing medical needs and lifestyle choices in American communities, now is a great opportunity to re-examine who you are serving—so you can serve them well.

Strategic

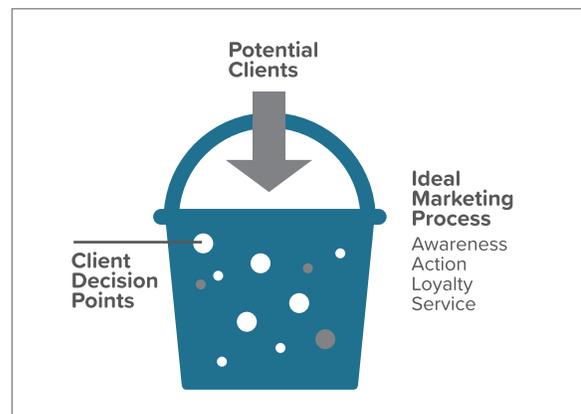
Marketing’s ultimate goal is to influence consumer decision-making which is why over the past two decades, “marketing” has been increasingly moving away from a simple “nice to have” business function to the responsibility of high-level executive teams.



How can this be used in the Aging Network?

Think of your marketing efforts as a bucket. You are trying to fill the bucket with as many clients as possible in order to fulfill your mission of being the best senior nutrition services provider possible. Your challenges:

1. You have to find the source for the water to fill the bucket (this represents your clients)
2. Your bucket—like everyone else’s!—has some holes in it (this represents client decision-making).



Consider this metaphor when managing your marketing program. As you fill your bucket with potential clients, there are areas of churn where clients are losing program awareness, the desire to act, loyalty to your brand, and satisfaction with your client service. So, where along the way can you improve?

Holistic

Professional roles and responsibilities are also shifting with the times. More and more, organizations need interdisciplinary staff that can offer additional value to power your mission. By leveraging these talents, the function of your marketing program can help influence how your clients make decisions.

How can this be used in the Aging Network?

Host a workshop and invite a cross-section of your organization. Use the bucket metaphor as a conversation point to engage your staff and colleagues in understanding where your current client-centered marketing efforts are focused.

So, what are you waiting for?

Use your new tactics from this issue brief to redesign the complete customer journey experience and refresh your marketing so it's a well-oiled machine—that everyone has a hand in!

Read the extended brief to learn more.

<https://nutritionandaging.org/briefs/>

RESOURCES

Seven Things You Need to Know About Marketing in the 21st Century, Bain & Co.: <https://www.bain.com/insights/seven-things-you-need-to-know-about-marketing-in-21st-century/>

No Market for Marketing, Stanford Social Innovation Review: https://ssir.org/articles/entry/no_market_for_marketing

The Ultimate Guide to Nonprofit Marketing in 2019, HubSpot: <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/how-to-run-a-lean-mean-nonprofit-marketing-machine>