

Developing a Market-Based Psychological Services Practice

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Outline of Talk

- Practice environment in Ireland
- Rationale for marketing perspective
- Defining and understanding service markets
- Strategies, suggestions, examples, resources that might flow from marketing analysis

Whether you work in a public mental health setting (statutory or voluntary sector) or are in independent practice, you are engaged in a “business” and subject to marketplace forces.

Why is it hard for psychologists to think of professional practice from a business perspective?

What's happening in the mental health marketplace?

The mental health marketplace of the future is likely to be more open, competitive, driven by productivity demands, and outcomes-oriented. Ignoring these realities is risky.

Marketing Perspective on Psychological Services

- Understanding the environment and context of your psychological service programme
- Identifying and listening to multiple “customers”
- Creating a marketing analysis and plan
- Designing services based on what customers want and need, not what you like to do
- Establishing the marketing mix
- Transacting with target market(s) in systematic and continuous manner
- Assessing progress toward marketing goals

PEST Analysis Template for Psychological Services Programmes

POLITICAL

- ecological/environmental
- current/future legislation
- regulatory bodies and processes
- government policies & structures
- key people in government

ECONOMIC

- economy trends
- taxation specific to product/services
- market cycles
- funding streams
- mental health industry factors
- distribution trends

SOCIAL

- demographics
- consumer attitudes and opinions
- media views
- stigma
- social factors

TECHNOLOGICAL

- competing approaches
- information
- communications
- consumer buying patterns
- innovation potential
- technology access

Internal Scan & Personal Audit Related to Your Psychological Services Programme

Strengths

S

Weaknesses

W

Opportunities

O

Threats

T

Describe Your Target Markets

Demographics

- Age
- Proximity
- Gender
- Occupation
- Income
- Education
- Status & role

Psychographics

- Attitudes and values
- Strengths
- Skills and competencies
- Associated problems and issues

Behaviour

- Benefit sought
- Usage rate
- Usage patterns
- Readiness to “buy”
- Product end use

As you see them

- Who are your “best” customers?
 - Different subgroups of recipients
 - People within the organization
 - People external to the organization
 - Departments
 - Agencies and organisations
- Who benefits most? Least?
- Who relies most heavily on the service?
- Who does not participate but would likely benefit?
- Can they be described as subgroups with varied characteristics and needs?
- What do they have in common?

As they see themselves

- What are their self-perceived needs?
- What do they want? How much do they want it?
- What are the impediments to receiving services?
- Success in attaining results?
- Satisfaction with services?

The Marketing Mix

- **Product** - any service that satisfies a market need or want; relies on consumers perception that they have a problem and that psychological service offering represents a good solution
- **Promotion** - persuasive communication with markets; creating & sustaining demand; personal selling, advertising, media advocacy, public relations, PSAs, community outreach
- **Place** – physical location of services; pathways to care; systems of distribution
- **Price** – what the consumer must do to obtain the product (time, effort, embarrassment, disapproval, monetary); consumers must weigh potential benefits against these costs
- **People/Publics** – consumers; internal organizational (management, colleagues) and external (gatekeepers, policy makers, families & relatives)
- **Policies, Procedures, Protocols** – facilitating access and availability; advocating for services
- **Purse strings** – Who pays the bills?

Designing a Market Analysis for Your Psychological Services Programme

A Case Example

Implement Metrics to Assess Change

- Service utilization rates
- Number of new consultation requests
- Requests for service by market segment
- Consumer satisfaction ratings
- New service opportunities
- New offerings
- Market penetration

Closing Summary

- Listen to all of your “customers”
- Decide who and what to target, and continue to refine your plan
- Get feedback and support routinely
- Work at developing relationships across the spectrum
- Communicate, but don't oversell or overpromise
- Pay attention to the data about effectiveness & satisfaction
- If you transact regularly with your markets, and they perceive that you: (1) address their needs & wants; (2) are effective job; (3) are worth the “cost”, your practice will be sustainable
- Remember that the marketplace is always changing