

Sail training guide to writing a marketing plan

This marketing plan gives an outline of the different areas National Sail Training Organisations, vessels and vessel operators need to consider before using the rest of the Sail Training Marketing Toolkit.

Every NSTO and vessel is unique in the sail training opportunities it has to offer, the marketing expertise it already has and available budget. This plan will help you develop a strategy that fits your organisation and shows you where you could potentially use the different downloads available from our [Sail Training Marketing Toolkit](#).

Why write a marketing plan?

Marketing, good public relations and effective communication is vital to the success of not-for-profit organisations.

No matter how brilliant WE know you are, you should not expect that everybody will know about you, or have even of heard about sail training or your vessel. Proactive communications is essential. From building awareness and credibility, to supporting fundraising efforts, a well-executed, strategic marketing plan can make the difference between achieving your business objectives, or falling short of them.

STEP ONE: What are your objectives and desired outcomes?

Ask yourself - what are your business objectives and what are the outcomes of these? For example:

- 1 Fill berth places in The Tall Ships Races and Regattas so you can deliver the sail training experience to young people
- 2 Raise sponsorship so you can generate income from organisations that appreciate the value of sail training to people and offer bursaries
- 3 Attract funding, or corporate hospitality, so you can generate income for specific reasons i.e. youth development, support maritime careers, provide a wider educational programme

Top tip: You probably want to achieve a lot more than this, but if your budget is tight restrict your list to your three or four priorities. Concentrate on doing these well, you can always add more later.

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Members: the national/representative sail training organisations of Australia, Belgium, Bermuda, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, India, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, UK, USA

Probationary Members: Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, India

STEP TWO: Identify your target audiences

Once you are clear about what you want to achieve then you need to segment your chosen audiences so that you are targeting the right groups of people.

So, based on the example objectives above:

- 1 Trainees, parents, schools, youth groups and other organisations that may provide trainees
- 2 Potential sponsors of bursaries
- 3 Funders, local authorities, governments

Top tip: Target those groups that, within your own culture and country, will best deliver your desired outcomes. This may involve you doing some audience research because they might not be that obvious – so ask a young person aged 16-24 years old what they think; read the local paper and business magazines to see what local companies are offering sponsorship etc.

STEP THREE: Define your message and unique selling point

Decide exactly what it is you have to offer these different groups of people, what makes you attractive compared to other opportunities and what it is you want them to do – this forms your key messages. For example:

- 1 A sail training experience which is fun, adventurous, educational, challenging, develops life skills. You can provide these opportunities through The Tall Ships Races. See [Sail Training Key Messages](#).
- 2 Corporate social responsibility values of developing a working ethic in young people and helping young people to reach their full potential. You can offer aligned brand awareness and visibility.
- 3 International experience, opportunities for all abilities, European citizenship. You can provide a range of targeted, specialist opportunities according to your NSTO or vessel.

Top tip: Consistency is important. To maximise the impact of your message and what you have to offer you should summarise your messages for each audience in three key points which can be repeated. Communications is all about storytelling – use interesting, human interest stories and good photos.

STEP FOUR: Decide what resource you have to deliver this plan

How many people do you have to work on this and what is their level of experience?

How much time do they have available and how much budget can they spend on the plan? This will all dictate how much you can do and help you prioritise what activities will have the biggest impact in order to achieve your objectives.

Top tip: When you've come up with your plan you can always put more resource to it at a later stage as you review how effective your activities are.

STEP FIVE: Decide on the activities you will get involved in

Decide on the activities that are most appropriate for reaching your desired audience and tailor these to the level of resource you have available. For example:

1 To target young people in schools you might want to:

- give a talk to a class. Use our Sail Training PowerPoint presentation' (*to follow soon*) which you could use as a template and add your own information
- show a video. See our [Sail Training YouTube](#) play list.
- hand out a leaflet so the young people have something to follow up on if they are inspired. See [Sail training general leaflet](#).

2 To target potential sponsors you might want to:

- explain the benefits of being involved. See [Sail Training key messages](#) and [Sail Training facts and figures](#).
- demonstrate that you are attractive to the local media and have good stories to tell. See [Sail Training guide to writing a news release](#).

3 To target other funders you might want help introducing yourself as a worthy cause. See [Endorsement letter from Sail Training International](#).

STEP SIX: Evaluation

Put your plan into action and keep a record of your results – how many extra enquiries have you had? How many additional Facebook likes? Consider the results carefully and use them to amend your strategy as time goes by.