

# Promotion

## Key concepts

The main concepts covered in the chapter are:

- The role of promotion within marketing
- The different forms of promotional technique or marketing communication
- 'Push and Pull' strategies
- The stages involved in the creation of a promotional campaign
- The growth of the international media scene
- The legal framework for promotional activities.

## Introduction

The previous three chapters have looked at the development of well-designed products and services which are distributed effectively. The effective marketer must also communicate these product and service ideas to the target customers.

Effective communication with target customers is carried out by a variety of methods which in total is referred to as *marketing communication*. This chapter will look at the different methods of promotional techniques which are used by leisure providers.

For many people, marketing *is* promotion, for promotion is the highly visible, public face of marketing. However, this chapter is based on the view that promotion is only one of the four Ps, and is only part of marketing. It is the tip of the iceberg, the part which can be seen by passersby, while only a few scientists have an opportunity, as head of office, to see the whole iceberg.

We will look at the role of promotion in the leisure sector. In doing so, consideration will be given to a number of promotional techniques, including:

- advertising
- brochures
- press and public relations
- sales promotions
- personal selling
- direct mail
- sponsorship
- point of sale material.

The chapter will go on to look at how organisations decide which promotional techniques to utilise and how to combine them in a promotional plan for a particular product.

Towards the end of the chapter, there will be a discussion of the ways in which technological developments are changing the nature of the promotional mix in the leisure sector.

## The role of promotion

The role of promotion is to convince potential customers of the benefits of purchasing or using the products and services of a particular organisation. Promotion is defined as:

The role of promotion is to communicate with individuals, groups, or organisations so as to directly and indirectly facilitate exchanges by informing and persuading one or more of the audience to accept an organisation's products.

Coulson-Thomas (1986)

The organisation will use marketing communication methods to take potential customers through a series of steps before they adopt a product or service. These steps can be illustrated below:

Awareness	The potential customer becomes aware of the new product or service. This is often activated by mass communication methods.
Interest	The next stage is to get the potential customer interested in the new product or service. This is often achieved by linking the product or service to a well-known brand name or company name. Mass communication methods are also used at this stage.
Evaluation	The potential customer will then evaluate the product or service offered. This will often involve them referring to reports about the product or service and talking to friends and relatives about its potential benefits.
Trial	The potential customer must then be encouraged to try the product or services. This is the stage in which personal selling and sales promotions are often used to encourage trial.
Adoption	The potential customer is finally convinced that adoption of the product or service is appropriate. This will be achieved by the perceived quality of the product or service. The customer will also talk to friends and relatives to reassure themselves that they have made the right decision. Mass communication techniques will also reinforce their decision to adopt the product or service.

Organisations use marketing communications for many reasons other than simply launching new products. The main uses of advertising, for example, have been explored by Dibb et al. (2001). Clearly the organisation which is using marketing communication will be using a variety of techniques to achieve these particular objectives.

An organisation may, for example, be trying to encourage potential customers to try their product or service at the same time as encouraging their existing customers to purchase or use the product and service again.

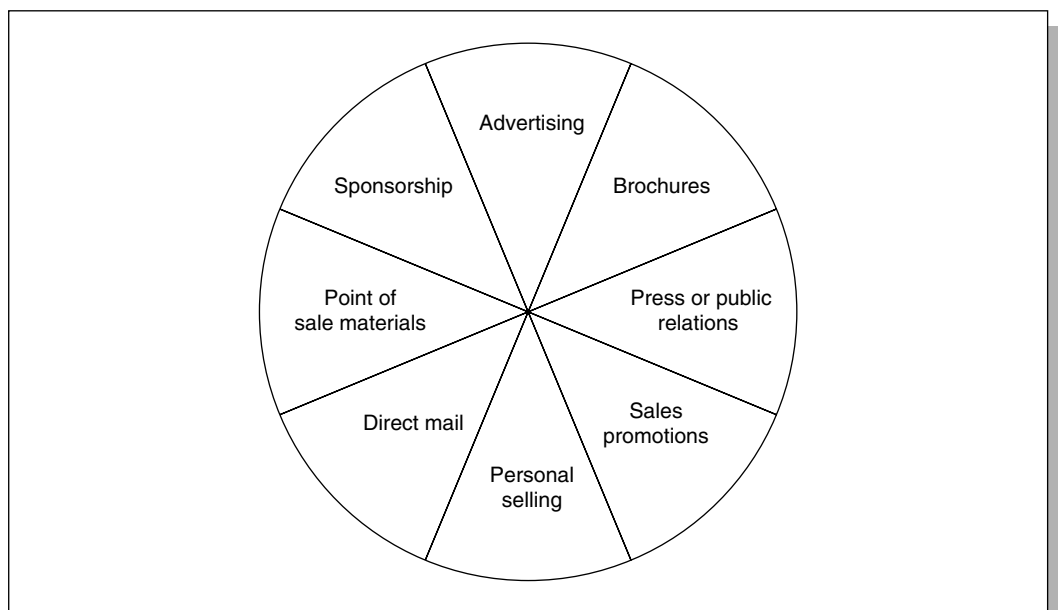
The main uses of advertising:

- Promote product organisations and causes;
- Stimulate primary and selective demand;
- Offset competitors advertising;
- Aid sales personnel;
- Increase use of a product;
- Remind and reinforce;
- Reduce sales fluctuation.

Source: Dibb et al., 2001

## Different methods of marketing communication

Organisations use different methods of marketing communication to achieve their aims. It is important that they choose the correct mix of the different methods to achieve an effective *promotional campaign*. The different methods of marketing communication are shown in Figure 9.1.



**Figure 9.1** The different methods of marketing communication used by organisations

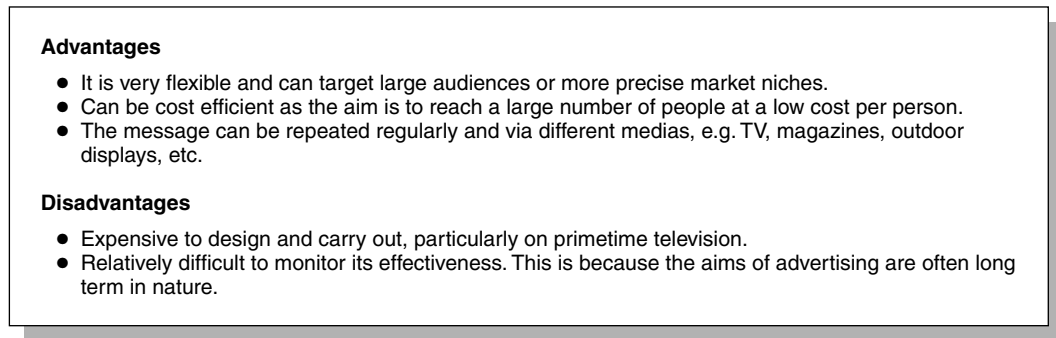
## Advertising

Advertising is a paid form of non-personal communication about an organisation's products or services which is transmitted via the media of television, radio, newspapers, magazines, public transport, outside displays and catalogues. Advertising has been defined by Kotler and Armstrong (2004) as:

Any paid form of non-personal communication and promotion of ideas, about goods, or services by an identified sponsor.

The choice of media to be used will depend on the objective of the campaign and the budget to be spent. Organisations often use a variety of methods and techniques at the same time to meet their marketing objectives. There are both advantages and disadvantages of using advertising as a method of marketing communication. These are summarised in Figure 9.2.

Advertising has the advantage of targeting large audiences via different methods, but it is expensive to design and implement and it is often difficult to monitor its effectiveness.



**Figure 9.2** The advantages and disadvantages of advertising as a method of marketing communication

There are a wide range of advertising methods that an organisation can use. Some large organisations such as airline companies and theme parks, and important special events can afford television advertising which is expensive. Other smaller organisations may use advertising on a one-off basis to promote special events such as open days. The press is a major part of the main paid advertising medium which many organisations in this sector use. These may range from local, regional and national newspapers to magazines and guides. Many organisations in the public sector have very low advertising budgets and therefore have to learn how to spend their budget wisely.

The cost of advertising media is related to a number of factors including the number of people who will see the advertisement and how influential the medium is thought to be in persuading people to buy or use the product.

Swarbrooke (1999) pointed out that most attractions do not market mass market products, but rather niche market products. This means that they usually do not need to utilise the expensive mass media techniques. Highly targeted advertising strategies are usually more relevant. This targeting can take a number of forms including:

- Targeting media which are aimed at appropriate niche markets;
- Advertising at certain times of the year only;
- Targeting potential customers in a particular geographical area.

The types of advertising that can be used by an organisation are shown in Table 9.1:

<b>Types of Advertising</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Television</b>	Visual and moving Reaches wide audience Expensive
<b>Radio</b>	Relatively low impact Inexpensive
<b>Newspapers</b>	Visual image Can be stored Modest production costs Often tied to particular times
<b>Periodicals</b>	Visual image Good for reaching target audience Often infrequent production
<b>Annual guides and yearbooks</b>	Often consulted by groups of people who are interested Often high cover price
<b>Posters and visual displays</b>	Visual image Colourful Stationary image May be expensive for prime sites

**Table 9.1** The types of advertising that can be used by organisations

## Brochures

The brochure is one of the main forms of marketing communication in the leisure industry. The services which are on offer by the organisation are often depicted in a brochure to enable the potential customer to choose the right product. Boyer and Viallon (1994) recognised that the brochure is of particular use in the communication of tourism products.

Brochures are increasingly being accompanied by video cassettes. These help the organisation to show real images of the holiday, destination or hotel. In the future, the use of virtual reality images will allow the potential customer to view the actual location and even to 'try out' the potential purchase. In the meantime, the brochure production exercise forms a major part of the promotional activity budget of many major leisure companies.

Marketers, clearly, also need to consider the importance of brochure distribution as a superb brochure is ineffective if it does not get into the hands of the right people at the right time.

## Press and public relations

Publicity refers to non-personal communication in news story form about an organisation on its products, transmitted through the media for no charge. Kotler defines publicity as:

Non-personal stimulation of demand for a product, service, or business unit by planting commercially significant news about it in a published medium or obtaining

favourable presentation of it on radio, television or stage, that is not paid for by the sponsor.

Kotler and Armstrong (2004)

The public relations mechanism should be well established by an organisation and it should control and manage the use of effective publicity. Many large organisations are now employing *public relations agencies* to help them manage their publicity effectively. An organisation should also develop an effective method of generating press releases and develop suitable relationships with the editors involved in the media with their coverage. Public relations are therefore an important part of the communications process. Buttle (1986) defined this role as follows:

Improving awareness, projecting credibility, combating competition, evaluating new markets, creating direct sales leads, reinforcing the effectiveness of sales promotional and advertising, motivating the sales force, introducing new products, building brand loyalty, dealing with consumer issues and in many other ways.

Press and public relations activity is important in both the public and private sectors of leisure. The opening of a new hotel, for example, would involve an extensive press and public relations campaign. Some of the activities which would be involved in the launch of the new hotel are shown in Figure 9.3. It can be seen in this example that the activity involves both paid and non-paid communication methods.

- Arranging of news releases to all regional, national and international media at the appropriate time.
- Arranging a 'pre-opening' campaign by inviting press, local dignitaries, etc. to look around the new facility.
- Arranging an opening reception for the facility with a major personality to carry out the official opening and having an impressive guest list for this event.
- Making sure that well known and liked dignitaries who make news are invited as the first guests to get maximum media attention.
- Making sure that the new facility is well covered in all the major trade press in the country in which it is operating.
- Making sure that the new facility is well publicised in other facilities and advertising material within the group.

**Figure 9.3** The press and public relations activities involved in the launch of a new hotel

For organisations that are operating in the public sector, the correct handling of press and public relations is very important. It is important for a museum, for example, which is funded by government or local authority sources of money to develop a very favourable impression with the local, regional and national media. This will encourage the media to cover the stories about the museum which shows it in a good light. Unfortunately, the development of a high profile image will also encourage the media to cover any issues which show the organisation in a bad light.

If an organisation which has been developing a reputation for 'green' products and services, for example, is suddenly shown to have carried out an activity which is damaging to the environment, then it is almost guaranteed that the media will cover the story. The amount of coverage will depend on the interest of the story and the handling of the press and media by the press offices of the organisation.

Organisations should also develop a well thought out press and public relations strategy to cope with incidents which could damage the long-term reputation of the business. Many large organisations have now established various forms of 'emergency committees' which are composed of a number of key individuals who assemble to deal with a major disaster. This could range from the death of a customer to a major pollution incident. The emergency committee will then deal with the incident and talk to the press and media in a well thought out and planned approach to try and minimise the damage caused by the incident.

It is when these major incidents happen that it is vital that a good relationship with the media has been developed over a number of years. This will help the organisation to deal honestly and effectively with the media with the objective of minimising the long-term negative effects of bad publicity.

Press and public relations activity is therefore vital for any type of organisation involved in the leisure industry. It will help to show the organisation in a good light and enable the organisation to cope with major incidents which could damage the organisation's long-term image.

## Sales promotion

Sales promotion is an activity or material that acts as an inducement to sale for potential or existing customers. It includes the use of coupons, bonuses and contests which are all examples of techniques which an organisation can use to boost sales. Sales promotion has been defined by Kotler as:

Short term incentives to encourage purchase or sales of a product or service.  
Kotler and Armstrong (2004)

The emphasis here is on the short term, rather than the longer-term objectives of advertising. Sales promotion is often used by companies at irregular intervals, particularly if the market is seasonal. The package holiday companies, for example, boost initial sales or their summer sun holidays by sales promotion techniques such as free holidays for children. Sales promotions can offer *discounts*. An example of this would be 'money off' promotions which are offered to stimulate demand. Sales promotions can also *add value* to the product or service offered. This means keeping the standard price, but offering the customer more for their money.

Hotel companies have become very skilled at using added-value sales promotion techniques. The bottle of champagne which is provided in the guests' room on arrival is an example of the use of sales promotion techniques.

## Personal selling

Personal selling techniques are of key importance to organisations which are marketing service products because of the inseparable nature of the offering. Personal selling involves persuading customers to purchase products and services in a personal face-to-face situation. The nature of leisure products means that there should be a heavy emphasis on personal selling effort as part of the marketing communications process.

Personal selling has been defined by Kotler as:

Oral presentation in a conversation with one or more prospective purchases for the purpose of making sales.

Kotler and Armstrong (2004)

The oral presentation can be made to the final customer and also to intermediaries in the distribution channel.

Personal selling has both advantages and disadvantages. It is directed at smaller groups of people or individuals compared to advertising, but has the advantage of achieving greater impact and immediate feedback.

When a sales person and customer meet face to face in a personal selling situation, it is important that the sales person give the right signals to the customer and recognise their needs.

It is important to remember that all 'front of house' personnel in leisure organisations are sales personnel. The person who serves you in a restaurant, a sports centre or a travel agency, for example, all carry out selling activities. It is important that all sales personnel give the customer the right signals. Consider the example of the food server in a restaurant shown in Figure 9.4. This example shows that the customer is looking to the food server as an important sales person and can have many expectations which will affect their overall experience in the restaurant.

The customer of the restaurant will look for one or more of the following features:

- The way the food server dresses should befit the customers' expectations.
- The language which is used. This will be both spoken and unspoken. Body language such as how the food server moves his head, eyes, arms and hands is just as important as what he says. Hand gestures and head nodding are often important.
- The way in which the menu is presented to the customer and what, if anything, is recommended.
- The way in which the food server gets the balance right between ignoring the customer and visibly hovering over them. The customer requirements will depend on who they are with and their particular mood.
- The way in which the food server deals with children as customers.

It is important to remember that each customer will be looking for a different set of features.

**Figure 9.4** The food server as a sales person

This example shows that personal selling is very much an 'art' and is very complex in nature. There is a great difference between a 'soft' sell and a 'hard' sell approach. The 'soft' sell seeks to point out opportunities which the customer may wish to take advantage of. The 'hard' sell puts customers under pressure to purchase.

Restaurant companies often try to increase their spend per head by encouraging service staff to 'upsell'. This means that customers are encouraged to buy drinks or extra menu items which they had not otherwise considered purchasing.

The sale of excursions by package holiday representatives at the resort or the selling of themed merchandising at major music concerts or football matches, are other examples of upselling. It is important, however, that customers are not pushed into spending levels that they are uncomfortable with. This may increase their spend in the short term, but significantly reduce their repeat-customer level.

Personal selling to the final customer or to intermediaries in the distribution channels is a key part of the marketing communications mix for leisure organisations. It is vital that the methods are well developed and the front-line personnel are well chosen and trained to deal with their important selling function.



## Direct mail

Direct mail and telephone selling are used to contact prospective customers to initiate sales. They are also used to contact existing and past customers to initiate repeat purchases. The use of these techniques has been developed over several decades and targeting of customers is becoming more sophisticated particularly with the use of computers.

Many service organisations involved in the marketing of leisure products have access to sophisticated customer databases. This makes the use of direct mail selling a particularly attractive proposition as a promotional technique. The use of direct mail as a promotional technique is not just confined to customers. It can also be used to target customers in the distribution channels which are often referred to as business-to-business marketing.

It is essential that direct mail is correctly targeted, and that the material which is sent is designed so that it encourages the receiver to open it. To achieve effective targeting, organisations must develop *mailing lists*. These can either be generated internally from previous sales data, which is very attractive for service organisations which deal directly with customers. Alternatively, the mailing list can be purchased from mailing houses or list brokers. Many of the geodemographic techniques of segmentation produce databases which are used for direct mail purposes.

Direct mail can be customised to the individual which makes it an attractive method of marketing communication. The disadvantages include the fact that people often consider direct mail as junk and never open it. There are critics who also hate the idea that organisations can 'buy' their name and address to send them targeted mail. These criticisms are likely to grow as organisations have more and more information concerning individuals and their associated lifestyles.

The development of long-term contact with customers has become a topical issue over the last few years and academics have published books and journal articles about *relationship marketing*. It will be interesting to see how this develops in the future.

## Point of sale materials

For many organisations marketing leisure products, the POS material is often a very important promotional opportunity. Point of sale material is any material which is used to promote the products and services on offer, and is usually displayed close to retail units.

Point of sale material has been defined by Dibb, Simkin, Pride and Ferrell as:

A sales promotion method that uses items as outside signs, window displays, and display rails to attract attention, to inform customers and to encourage retailers to carry particular products.

Dibb et al. (2001)

Customers often enter into a leisure business knowing that they are going to purchase something but not quite sure what. It is more likely that the customer has been attracted to the range and type of food on offer at a restaurant, for example, rather than a specific list. In a hotel setting, the customer knows they are staying there, but perhaps is unaware of the extra services which they will use. A customer entering a travel agent is often keen to buy a holiday, but is unsure of the various products on offer.

Here there is a promotional opportunity. The organisation can use POS promotional material to influence the customer and steer them towards a particular choice. The restaurant, for example, may want to steer the customer to try a new dish on their menu, with the intention of broadening appeal and increasing the frequency of the visit. Alternatively, it may want to steer the customer towards selecting a dish which produces more profit. It may also wish to increase customer spend by encouraging the customer to purchase a starter, dessert, side dish or bottle of wine. Care needs to be taken when designing POS material.

It is not in the long-term interest of the organisation to 'push' people into purchase decisions that they later regret. If a customer goes out for an everyday meal but ends up spending more than anticipated, then they may not select the venue for another meal occasion.

Use of selective POS material which is sensitively designed has a very important role to play in communicating products and services to customers. In the restaurant setting, counter displays and posters are all forms of POS material. In hotels, for example, hotel service brochures play a vital role in promoting services of which the customer may otherwise be unaware. Reception staff can also use the check-in period as an important opportunity to promote other hotel services. Point of sale material is also very important at major events such as music concerts or sporting events.

Point of sale material may also have a role to play in achieving objectives which are not financially related. An employee restaurant, for example, may want to encourage its staff to eat more healthily. A public house or bar may want to encourage its customers to drive responsibly by not drinking and driving, and selecting low alcohol alternatives.

For these reasons, POS promotion is used extensively in leisure organisations and is an important component in the overall promotional mix.

## Sponsorship

Sponsorship has been defined by Dibb, Simkin, Pride and Ferrell as:

the financial or material support of an event, activity, person, organisation, or product, by an unrelated organisation or donor. Generally funds will be made available to the recipient of the sponsorship deal in return for the prominent exposure of the sponsor's name or brands.

Dibb et al. (2001)

Sponsorship has become very popular in the arts. Some theatrical companies, museums, and galleries rely more and more on sponsorship, as government subsidies of the arts decreases. The Victoria and Albert Museum, for example, covered in the case study, relies heavily on major sponsorship deals to finance many of the large-scale exhibitions.

Another area in leisure which relies on sponsorship are organisations involved in sport. Football teams, for example, found that gate receipts were insufficient to cope with rising bills and operating costs. The way round this financial dilemma was to encourage sponsorship deals. Sponsors were encouraged to appear on players' shirts and new spectator stands, for example.

Sponsorship has also been a major part of promotional activity for major sporting events. The Olympics, for example, are always accompanied with an array of official sponsors, ranging from drinks to sportswear manufacturers. If the company feels that

company image or brand awareness will be helped by sponsoring an organisation or event, then it will go ahead with this type of promotion.

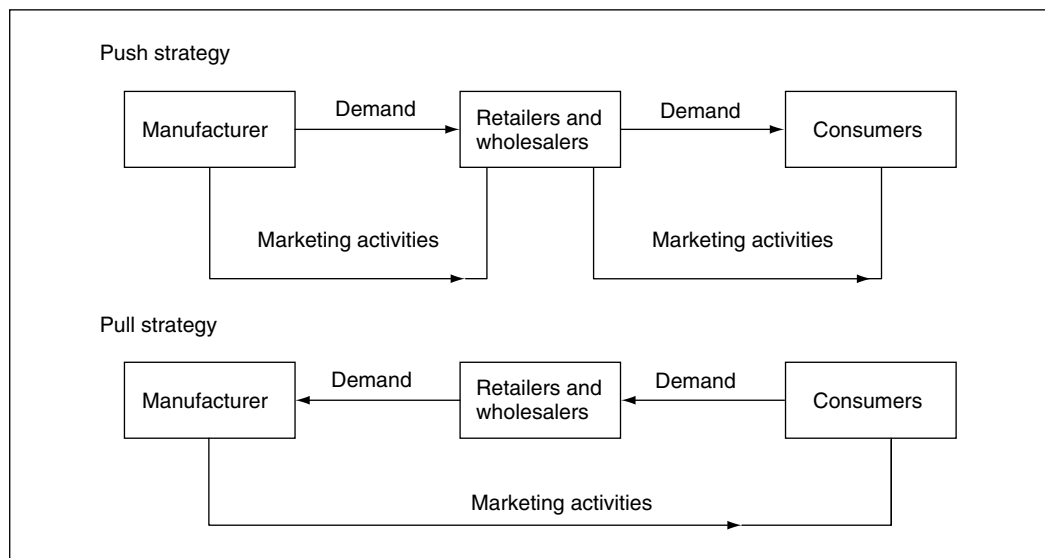
For the recipient organisation, this is often an important part of their revenue.

## Push and pull strategies

Organisations use different promotional strategies as part of their overall marketing communications mix. These have been referred to by Kotler and Armstrong (2004) as *push strategy* and *pull strategy*. These two different forms of promotional strategy are shown in Figure 9.5.

*Push strategy* refers to a method by which the organisation promotes directly to the intermediaries in the distribution chain, thereby hoping that these organisations promote the items to the final customer. For a package holiday company, this would involve the organisation promoting their holidays to travel agents who will then sell them directly to the final customer.

*Pull strategy* relies on the idea that if an organisation communicates to their final customer, then the customer will demand the item from the intermediaries. The package holiday companies, for example, advertise directly to the customer via television, magazines and press advertising. It is hoped that the customer will then demand the holidays from the travel agent. The package holiday companies can also use data on their advertising programmes to convince the intermediaries, in this case the travel agent, to stock their brochures.



**Figure 9.5** Push versus pull strategy (Source: Horner and Swarbrooke, 1996)

In reality, organisations use both *push strategies* and *pull strategies* in their total marketing communications strategies.

## The special nature of marketing communication in services marketing

The *intangibility* of services means that they require special treatment when the marketer is planning the promotional campaign. It is difficult to know what to feature in advertising because of this intangibility. Service providers often use *symbols* to stress the nature of the service on offer. German operator TUI uses a symbolic smiling face to suggest the psychological effects that a customer will derive from one of their holidays.

It has also become important in service organisations to differentiate effectively between competitors. Many service organisations have used *branding* as a very effective method of differentiation and a platform for their promotional activity. Accor, for example, the French hospitality group has used a portfolio of brands including Novotel, Formule 1 and Thalassa International to differentiate their service offerings in a crowded market. It is also important that the advertising for services emphasises the special nature of what is on offer. This is often achieved by using a slogan or a phrase.

The *inseparability* of service means that the role of personnel selling by front-line employees of the organisation is paramount. Training of these staff in selling techniques should be an important part of the promotional activity. It is important that the customer quickly recognise and associate with the front-line employees.

This is often achieved by the use of a well-designed and attractive uniform. The development of sophisticated leisure centres such as Greens or Esporta has incorporated the development of staff uniforms that pick up on the brand identity.

The *perishability* of services means that organisations often have to try and smooth out demand by using sales promotions techniques. These are often combined with some form of discounting. Large leisure centres, for example, will try to target different groups in the population at quiet periods of operation with special packages. This will avoid closure of the facility during this quiet period as long as enough people in the target group are attracted to the facility.

The final special requirement for a service provider is that word-of-mouth communication has been shown to be very important, and for this reason should be encouraged. The restaurant who asks the customer to tell their friends about it if they enjoy their visit is an example of this. Hotels can encourage word-of-mouth communication by offering customers free services or discounts for encouraging their friends or relatives to visit the hotel. Theatres often rely on positive word-of-mouth communication to encourage more people to attend productions and special events.

## Designing an effective promotional campaign

Marketing communication is a complicated concept and organisations often find it difficult to design effective promotional campaigns which persuade customers to buy. For this reason, organisations often rely on *advertising agencies* to help them design their promotional campaigns, advise them where to place them in the media, and finally to help them buy the space in the appropriate media whether it be for print, or television or radio schedules. The organisation should provide the advertising agency with an *advertising brief* which is a statement of the aims of the advertising campaign. This should be agreed between the client and the advertising agency before work begins on the promotional campaign.

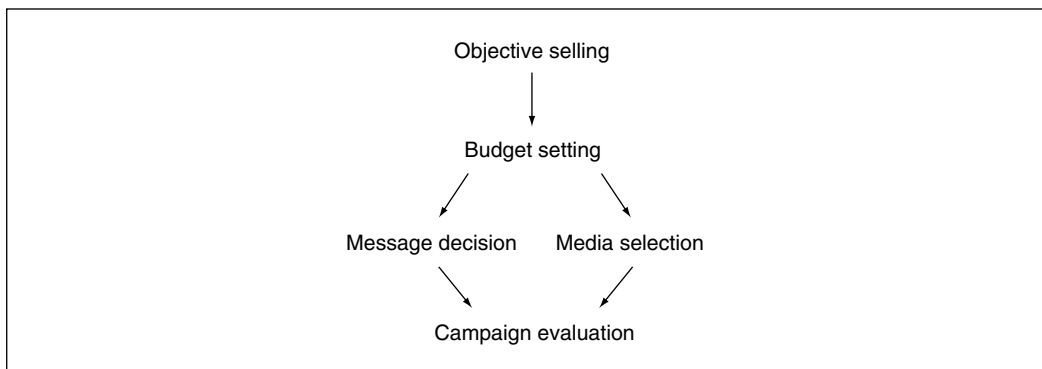
A creative brief to an advertising agency should contain the items shown in Figure 9.6.

- What is the advertising trying to do? e.g. address falling sales, increase sale levels in the next period
- The size of budget
- What is expected exactly from the promotional mix?
- Who is being addressed? This should include a statement about the target customer
- What is the single most important point that the target customer should take from the promotion?
- Is there evidence of emotional support by the customer for the product/service? For example, a well-recognised brand name
- Any other information which is relevant.

**Figure 9.6** The components of a creative brief for an advertising agency

Advertising agencies are very creative but will produce effective campaigns only if they are briefed correctly.

The organisation should consider the objectives of the campaign and should decide on an appropriate budget. The types of messages which will be used in the total campaign will be formulated and decisions made as to where the promotional campaign will be placed in the appropriate media. Finally, the organisation will have to decide on how a campaign is to be evaluated. This process, described above, is shown diagrammatically in Figure 9.7.



**Figure 9.7** The main stages involved in creating a promotional campaign

To illustrate these various stages in the creation and evaluation of a promotional campaign, an example of an organisation opening a new hotel will be considered.

## Objective setting

The organisation should consider the overall objectives of the promotional campaign. There will be a mixed set of objectives for a campaign for the opening of a new hotel, including:

- Raising awareness amongst target customers;
- Raising positive 'word of mouth' response from the general public, press and potential customers;
- Encouraging trial of the hotel by target users;

- Raising the profile of the hotel amongst many important distribution intermediaries, e.g. travel agents, tourist offices;
- Achieving a set sales level and occupancy level in a set period of time.

The organisation will have to prioritise the objectives which have been identified.

## Budget setting

The next stage in the design of the promotional campaign is to set a budget. This can sometimes be difficult for a new operation, since there is no established level of sales and profitability. The organisation should however, in the planning process, establish an estimate of expected levels of turnover for the new business.

The budget for the promotional campaign could be based on one or more of the following items:

- A percentage of predicted annual sales;
- The levels of promotional spend which competitive organisations are spending;
- Past budgets which have been used by the organisation;
- The amount that the organisation can afford;
- The level of budget which the objective of the campaign dictates. A huge capital investment in a new hotel, for example, will dictate the level of promotion necessary to recoup the money invested over a set period of time.

## Message decision

Once the objectives of the campaign have been established and the budget set, it is important that the types of messages which are to be portrayed in the campaign are established. The advertising agency often advises organisations about the style, tone and format of the proposed campaign. Creative copy is produced to portray the proposed sorts of image for the promotional campaign.

## Media selection

The next stage in the design of a promotional campaign is to select the type of media in which the campaign will be featured and the timing for the campaign. The opening of the new hotel will probably use different types of promotion. These will probably include:

- Media advertising
- Publicity launch
- Sales promotion.

The campaign will be featured in a number of media types including:

- Local and/or National Press;
- Speciality magazines and Trade Press;
- Direct mail to existing customers of the group.

There will be a series of timings which will be crucial for the successful launch of the new hotel. These will include:

- A press campaign leading up to the launch;
- Major press activity at the time of the launch;

- Direct mail prior to the launch and on an ongoing basis;
- A continuing campaign after the launch to sustain market growth.

The selection of the media used for a promotional campaign will vary for every organisation, depending on the objectives of the campaign and the available budget.

## Campaign evaluation

It is important that the results of the campaign are monitored by the organisation on an ongoing basis to see if the original objectives are being met. There are a variety of ways in which the effectiveness of a campaign can be measured. Some of these methods include:

### *Sales*

The build-up and continuing sales revenue from the hotel can be measured at regular intervals. This could be broken down into separate profit centres, e.g. restaurant, rooms, conference facilities, health clubs, etc.

### *Customer reaction*

The reaction of final customers and the distribution intermediaries to the promotional material for the hotel can be monitored.

### *Audience achievement*

The target audience for the promotional material can be monitored to see if they actually saw the promotion.

It is vital for the organisation to establish whether the original objectives of the promotional campaign are being met on an ongoing basis. If this is not the case, then corrective action will have to be taken.

## International marketing communication

We have already seen that many leisure organisations are becoming international players. The question arises in marketing communications as to whether these organisations can adopt standardised marketing communication strategies or whether they have to adapt these to the local setting. There has been a long debate in the academic literature about this topic. Levitt (1983) proposed that organisations should treat the world as a single marketplace but should 'think global, act local'.

Research carried out by Porter (1986) found that it was easier to standardise certain elements of the marketing communications mix such as brand names and advertising themes, but more difficult to standardise other elements such as personal selling and media selection. This research was supported by Moriarty and Duncan (1990) who found that it was easier to develop a standardised creative concept theme and that media buying was much harder to standardise. We can think of some of the international brands that have been developed in the leisure sector such as Nike, who have adopted this approach.

Research has also suggested that consumers actually like advertising styles that are sensitive to different national cultures and that different nationalities like different styles

of advertising. Different European countries, for example, have adopted very different approaches in advertising styles (Munzinger, 1988; Lannon, 1992).

There is also the requirement to produce advertisements in the language of the consumer, although this can be overcome by either producing advertisements that can be dubbed over with another language or producing them in English with the assumption that English is becoming more universally spoken. Care must be taken, however, in simple translation because of the inextricable link between advertising and culture. This was explored by Anholt (1993) as follows:

Advertising is so intrinsically linked with the popular culture, the social fabric, the laws, the conventions, the buying habits, the aspirations, the style, the humour, and the mentality of the people that messages just cannot be communicated in precisely the same way in different countries.

Anholt (1993)

This suggests that the copy for advertising has to be written in a different way, rather than just written as a straight translation. He illustrated the point with reference to the Nike commercials that had the same appearance but different copy for the English, French, Italian and Flemish regions.

It is easier to run standardised sales promotions across boundaries because of the emergence of common international interests. These were explored by Toop (1992) and have developed further since the early 1990s. Common interests include sports such as football, the Olympic Games, tennis, motor racing; music such as that of international pop stars; travel items such as destinations and luxury cars; television programmes such as *Friends*; children's interests such as Lego and Disney; international fashion item such as Levis and Benetton, and social concern issues such as Oxfam and the World Wide Fund for Nature.

It is interesting to note that many of these common interests are leisure pursuits. The interest in Lego and Disney, for example, provides us with a common international theme that companies such as McDonald's have used as the basis for sales promotions to target children on an international basis.

The evidence suggests that although there are substantial differences in the expectations of people from different cultures in relation to the style of advertising, there is an opportunity to build on common international themes in certain forms of advertising and promotion.

The growing availability of *international media sources and international advertising agencies*, and growing *harmonisation of legal frameworks* have also fuelled the development of standardised marketing communications strategies.

Access to cable and satellite television channels across the world is growing and there has been a growth in the number of printed newspapers and magazines that appear internationally. Women's magazines such as *Cosmopolitan*, *Marie-Claire* and *Elle*, and men's magazines such as *Penthouse* and *Playboy* have a strong international presence. Publications aimed at international business people such as *Reader's Digest*, *The Economist*, *Inflight* magazine and the *Financial Times* also have wide international circulation.

There has also been a growth in the number of international advertising agencies to help organisations deliver international campaigns. Organisations that do want to promote across national boundaries have to recognise the different legal frameworks for every country in which they operate. Different European countries, for example, do have different legislative requirements but there are signs that Europe is increasingly trying to harmonise the legislation related to marketing communication. The control of



sponsorship in the leisure industry by companies who were previously banned from advertising by other means is a particular issue for the leisure sector. Restrictions on companies such as tobacco companies and alcohol producers in sponsorship will mean that many leisure companies and events organisers will have to look for alternative sources of funding.

### Discussion points and essay questions

1. Outline the role of promotion within marketing, particularly in relation to the other elements of the marketing mix.
2. Compare and contrast the promotional techniques used by a major hotel chain with those adopted by a small public sector museum.
3. Discuss the obstacles that are restricting the growth of common international approaches to advertising.

### Exercise

Choose *one* of the following hypothetical new products:

- (i) A new long-haul holiday destination in a tour operator's programme, which is aimed at an up-market clientele who seek exclusivity. You must base your project on a real destination.
- (ii) A newly built theme park aimed at a family market. You should specify where your hypothetical theme park is located.
- (iii) The launch of a new service between two cities by a scheduled airline.

For your chosen product, you should:

- (a) Design a brochure that will appeal to the target market.
- (b) Prepare an advertising campaign to promote this new product, including your choice of media that would be used and the design of proposed advertisements.