FIRST THINGS FIRST

EARLY CHILDHOOD SUMMIT 2015

LEARN. SHARE. GROW.

Marketing Strategies to Serve More Children and Families

Introductions

FIRST THINGS FIRST

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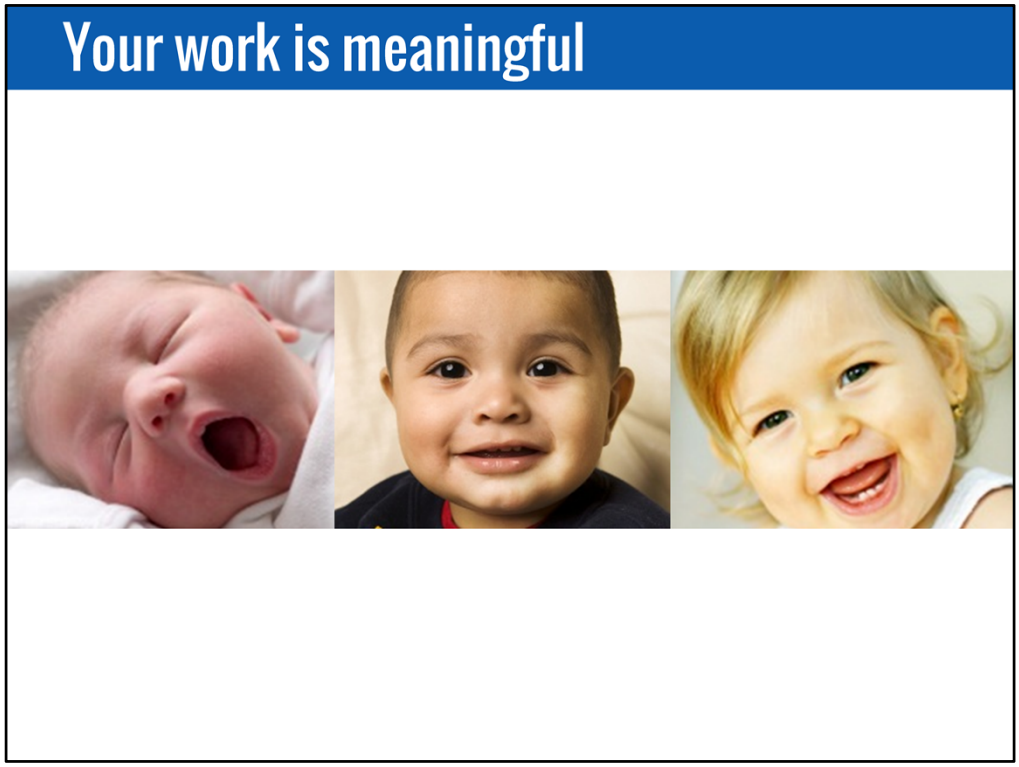
What do you want to achieve? What are your marketing goals?

What are the challenges/obstacles you're facing?



We're going to be talking about today - some fundamentals of marketing that can be helpful in your outreach efforts. Bethany will delve into some best practices specific to social media. There's also going to be a hopefully-fun little quiz throughout the session.

As it relates to marketing, the good news is that your programs and services provide real value for children and families. The same is not always true in the big world out there.

So, quiz question number one:

Q1

Which of the following consumer products is not real?

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a Solafeet portable foot tanner

Q1

Which of the following consumer products is not real?

a Solafeet portable foot tanner

b iArm Forearm Mount

Q1

Which of the following consumer products is not real?

a Solafeet portable foot tanner

b iArm Forearm Mount

c Garbage Pantz trash can cover

The product that is not real is B. Actually, it is available as gag gift, a box to put an actual present in. But the product itself does not exist.

Again, luckily, the programs and services you all offer have real value for young children and families. That's an advantage, but if that alone were enough, we wouldn't be in this room. You want to serve more families, do more good.

So, a good place to start is setting goals.

What does success look like for your program? What do you want to achieve? What are the specific results you're hoping for?

It could be pure numbers – you want more people to participate.
It could be that you want more of those who sign up to stick with it and complete the program.
Your goal might be to create more interaction with your staff – people asking for recommendations, etc.

Whether it's one of these or something else, you should spend some time thinking about your goals. And if you have more than one, which is the priority. Making these kinds of determinations is called planning, and it's important. Because when you have defined your goals, you can decide on your **call to action**. This is what you want people to do.

A call to action should be short, simple and clear. It tells your audience what you want them to do.

If you want folks to sign up in person, message that: “Stop by the front desk to sign up!”. If you want them to sign up online, message that. Whatever it is, be consistent and use it everywhere you’re promoting your program. Use it on your flyers, in your emails, talking points for your staff. Everybody should know it.

Who is your audience?

- Who are your typical customers?
- What are their needs?
- What do they care about most?
- What do they need to know to choose you?
- Where can you reach them?

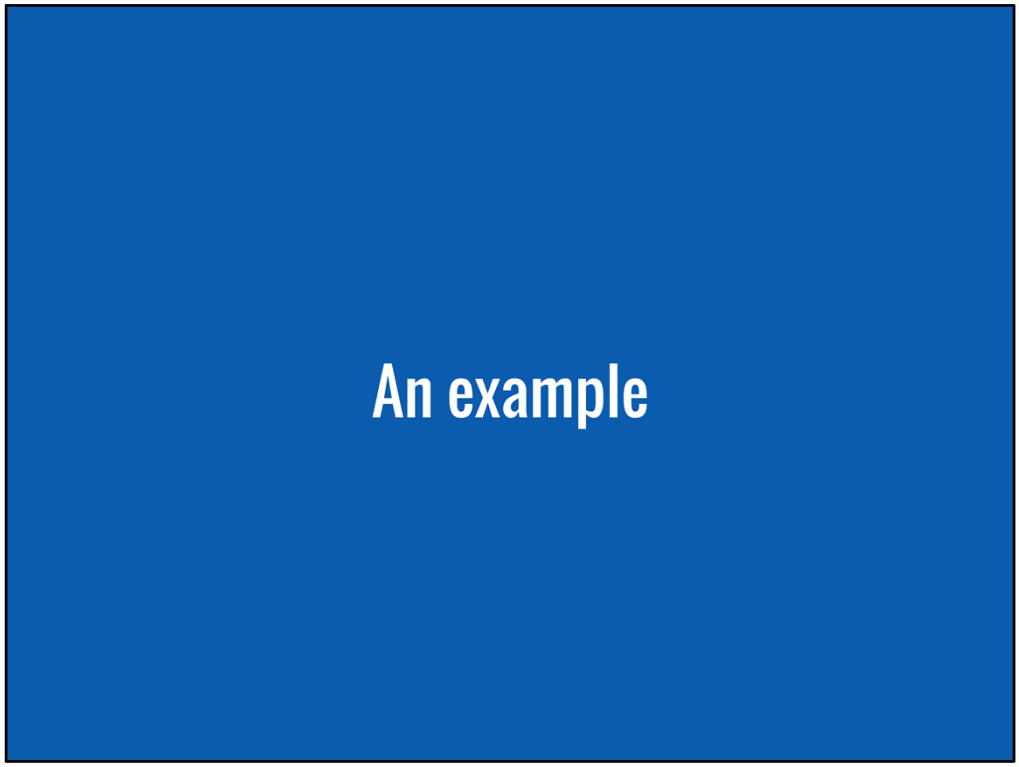
When you understand your audience, you know how best to position your service to be of most **value** to them.

If you've been doing this work for a while, you probably have a fairly sophisticated understanding of your customers already, but even on an informal basis, some research can still help you learn a lot about your audience.

- Talk to your existing customers
- Create a survey (You can use Survey Monkey and invite people on your mailing list to answer a few questions)
- Do a focus group
- Study your competitors

Even just sitting down with your existing customers and having a conversation about why they decided to sign up, why hadn't they previously, what do they like best about the program and what do they like least… That's very helpful information to know

Doing some market research can confirm you assumptions, and that's valuable. But you'll usually learn something, too, a nuance that can help you be more effective.



When rolling out our website for Quality First, one of our primary objectives was to help define the components of quality child care and preschool for parents and families. One of the components is teacher training. So we conducted a fairly large survey of parents of young children and asked them to rate different things, worded in different ways, in terms of importance.

Quiz question --

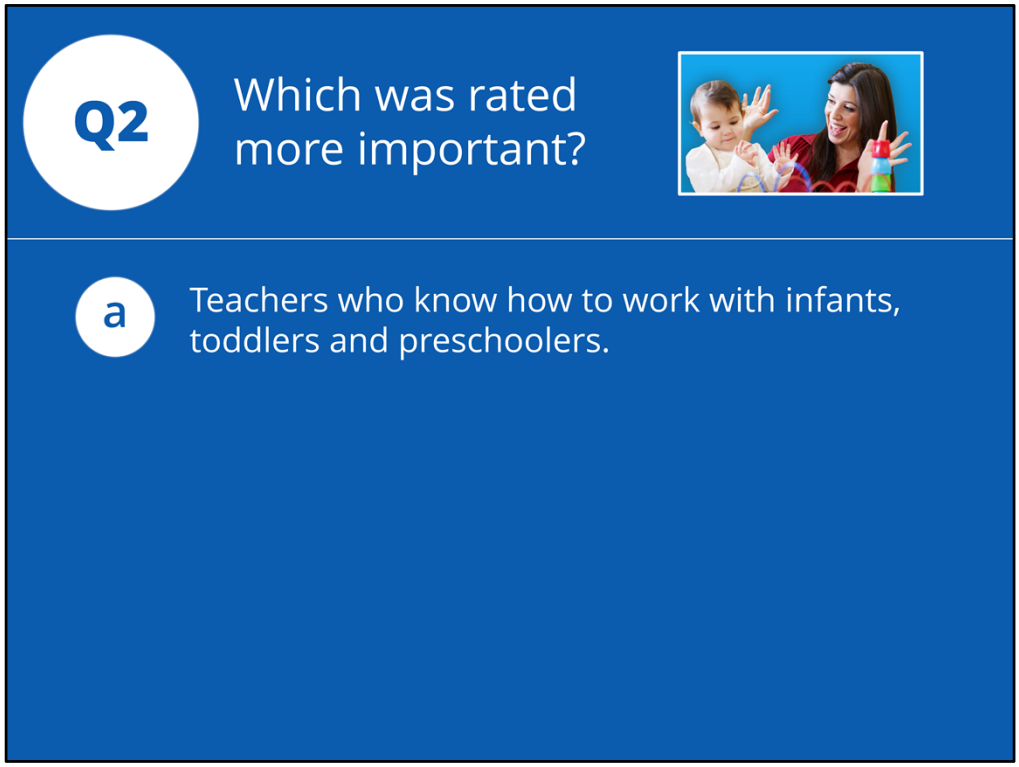
Q2 Which was rated more important?

a. Teachers who know how to work with infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

b. Teachers with degrees or credentials in early childhood education.

c. Teachers who went to college to learn how to work with infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

People were asked to rate the importance of different factors when it comes to quality in child care. Which of these phrases rated highest?



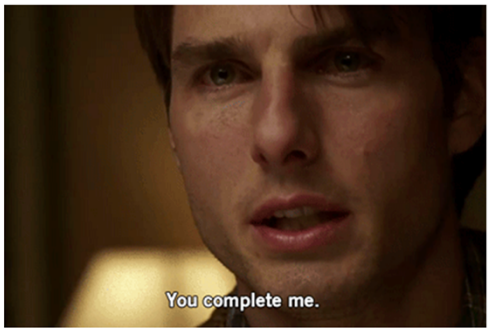
The highest rated phrase was A. On a 1-7 scale, it rated 6.41 for importance, a full point higher than the other two responses.

The survey also asked this question as a one-or-the-other question:

The most important characteristic of a teacher working with kids birth to age 5 is...

84% chose 'knowing how to work with infants, toddlers and preschoolers' and 16% chose 'having a college degree in early childhood education'

Meet their needs



Knowing your audience enables you to position your program/service as something of value to them.

What do we mean by *position*?

Describe your program in ways that fulfills the needs your audience. Implications for how you talk about your program, Iwhat you put in your newsletters and flyers and on social media, etc.

If you're a child care program, does your audience research show that most families come to your program because they want to help their child get ready for kindergarten? Or more to help their child build social skills? Subtle, but there's a difference.

Your research helps you know what to emphasize. To know what your selling point is.

Also important to note that your selling point can and likely will be different for different audiences (parents vs. funders, etc.)

Do they need convincing?

Does your audience need to know anything in order to see the value in your program/service?

Does your audience need to know anything in order to see the value in your program/service? Do they need to be convinced?

This question is saying, you can't assume they'll see the value. If you have an oral health care program for infants, your audience may not understand that oral health care at such a young age is important. You may have to do some educating first.

Again, understanding your audience enables you to appeal to their needs. **Be consistent**; people need to see/hear your message, the same message, multiple times. And always finish with that simple, **clear call to action**.

And you have to EXECUTE WELL, with good writing and design. Quality matters. Write in language that means something to them; Be conversational and concise. People don't read much. If it's too long, they'll tune it out. So keep your newsletters and emails and to-the-point.

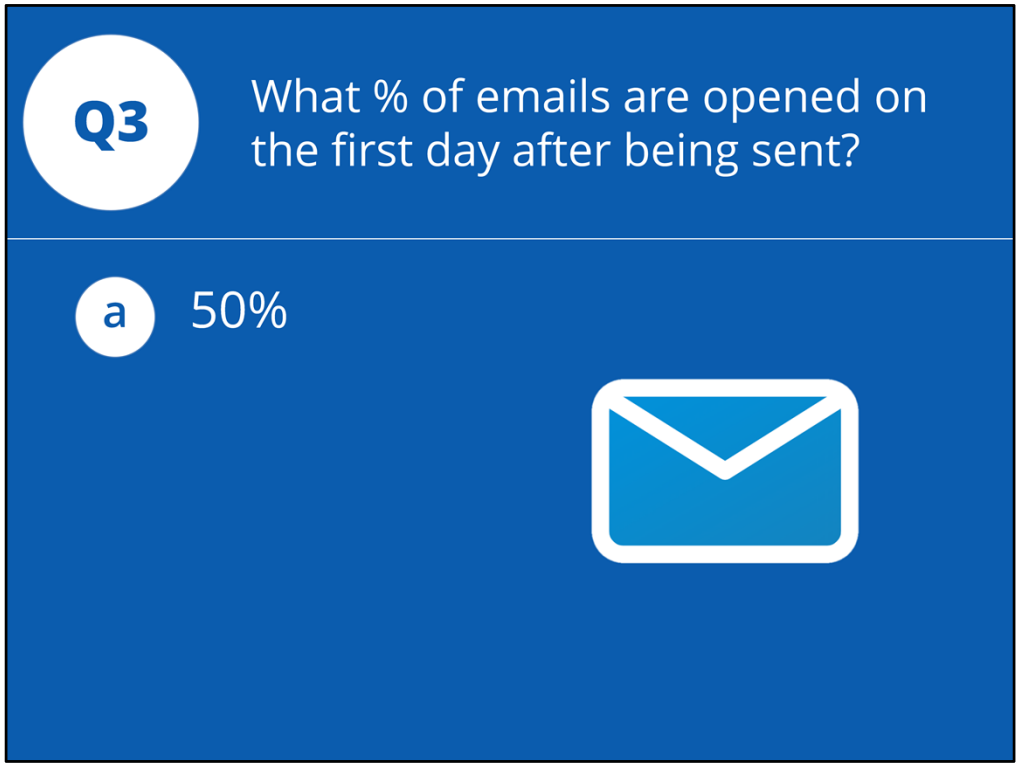
We'll get to design in just second, but on the subject of email:

Q3 What % of emails are opened on the first day after being sent?

a 50%

b 75%

c 90%



The answer is A – 50% in the first day. After that, open rates flattens out over time until about 80% by day 12.

What about text messages?

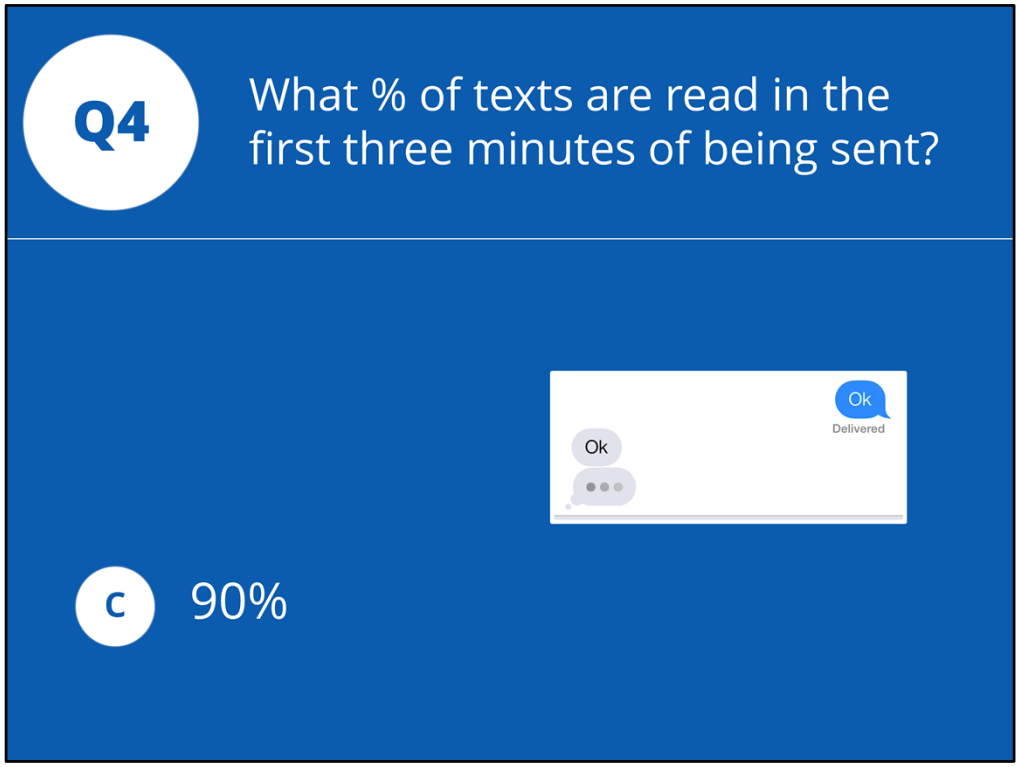
Q4

What % of texts are read in the first three minutes of being sent?

a 50%

b 75%

c 90%

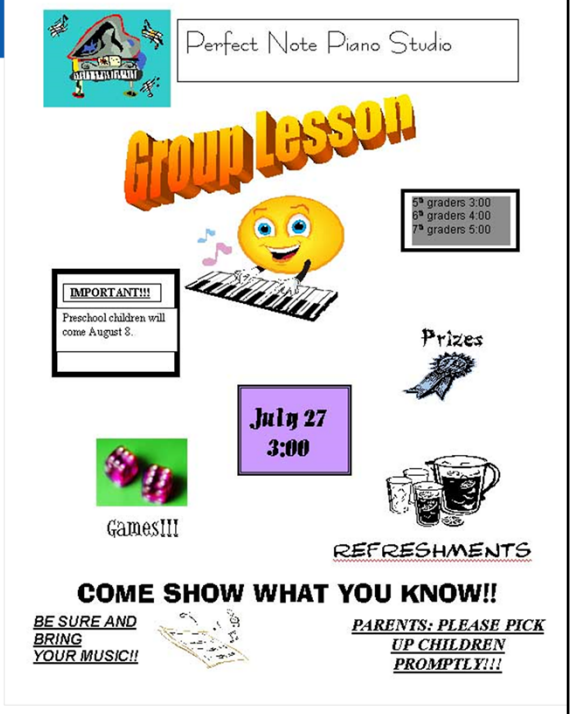


90% read in the first 3 minutes. Pretty powerful tool, especially among young people.

Design 101

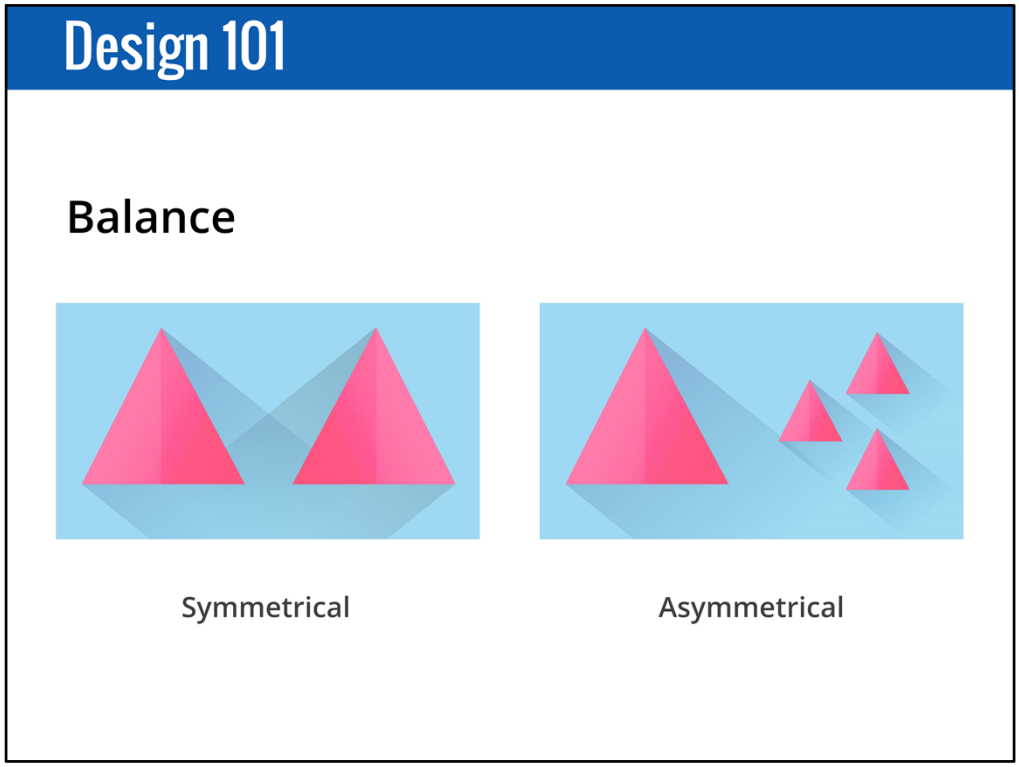
Design 101

Not so good



Design does matter. What's going on here?

First, it's not easy to read or understand. And it communicates that Perfect Note Piano Studio is sort of disorganized. Now, if word of mouth about this teacher is great, this flyer probably isn't doing too much damage. But for potential new customers who haven't heard anything about them? I don't think too many of them are going to be showing up on July 27. Especially since the flyer doesn't include the location.



A few broad concepts to keep in mind. Try to keep your designs balanced – among parts of equal size, or a group of smaller parts that together balance a larger part.

Design 101

Emphasis

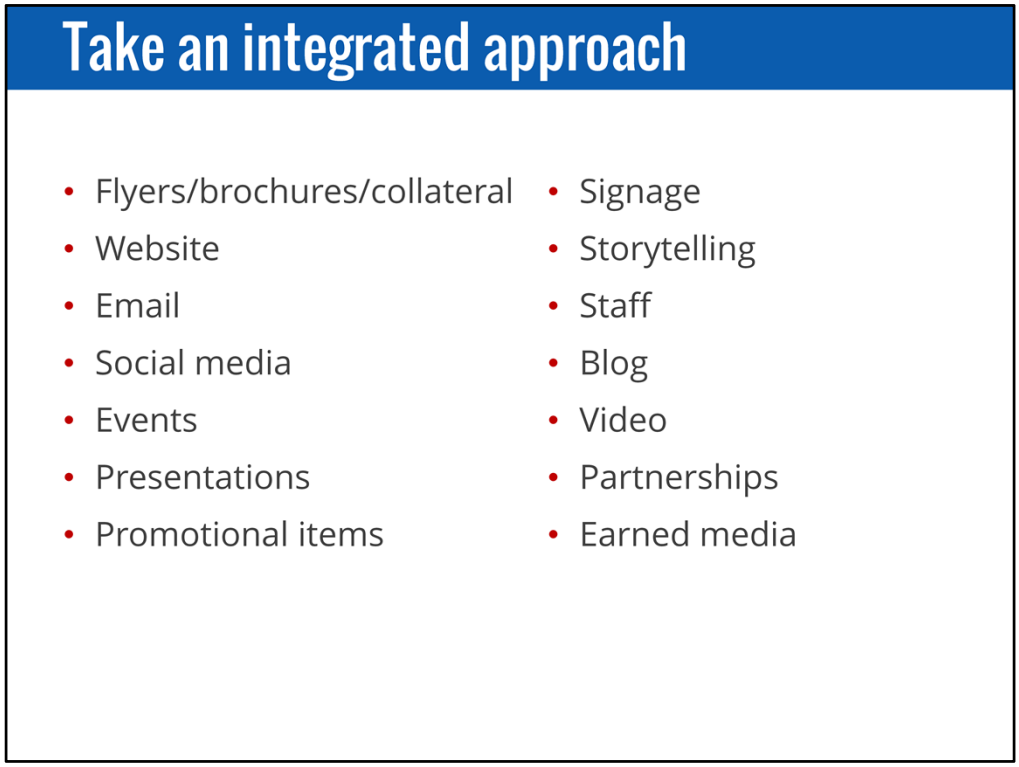
Feature one part; all can’t be equal. Emphasize the most important info. The who’s it for, what it is and when.

Design 101

Unity

Be consistent in your use of fonts, sizes, elements. Don’t have too many different things going on at once. Visual clutter is not good.

Where and How to Reach Your Audience



So, you want to carry your carefully crafted, consistent messaging through as many channels as you can. Here are some, and they may not all apply to your program.

Use your research to choose the best communication channels to reach your audience:

- Meet audience where they are (online, social media, etc.)
- Leverage existing partnerships (school districts, Boys & Girls Club, partner's eblasts and newsletters, etc.)
- Leverage existing events
- Signage
- Website (home page slider, dedicated event page, etc.)

There are literally dozens of social platforms out there.

Pick a Platform

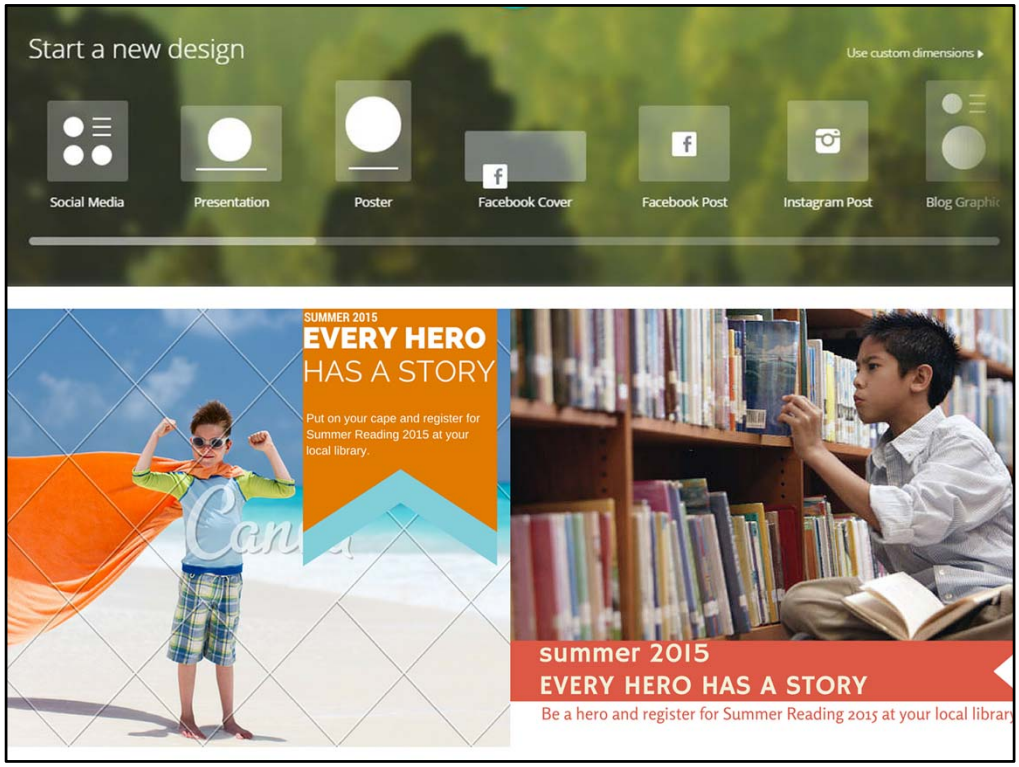
Concentrate your efforts on one social media platform – the one where most of your audience is.

Your research can tell you where most of your customers are on social – FB, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, etc. Your time and resources are limited, so pick that platform and make a plan to share content and engage. Your audience will grow slowly over time, but you'll make an impact. Do one thing well first.

- Provide good, valuable content.
    - Original + curated/share
    - Images
    - Use social as a way to keep in contact/engaged
        - Takes time and effort

Canva.com

There are many other online tools available, too.



Spending a few minutes on Canva can give you an appropriately sized, design-quality images for social. Remember your Design 101 tips here.

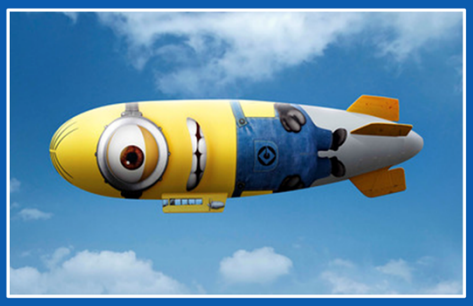
Get ready
for the number one most important
highest priority above-all-else
hold-the-phone essential key
take-away

Q5

The most effective form of marketing is _____.

Q5 The most effective form of marketing is _____.

a Blimps



Q5

The most effective form of marketing is _____.

a. Blimps

b. Sign flippers

Q5 The most effective form of marketing is _____.

a Blimps

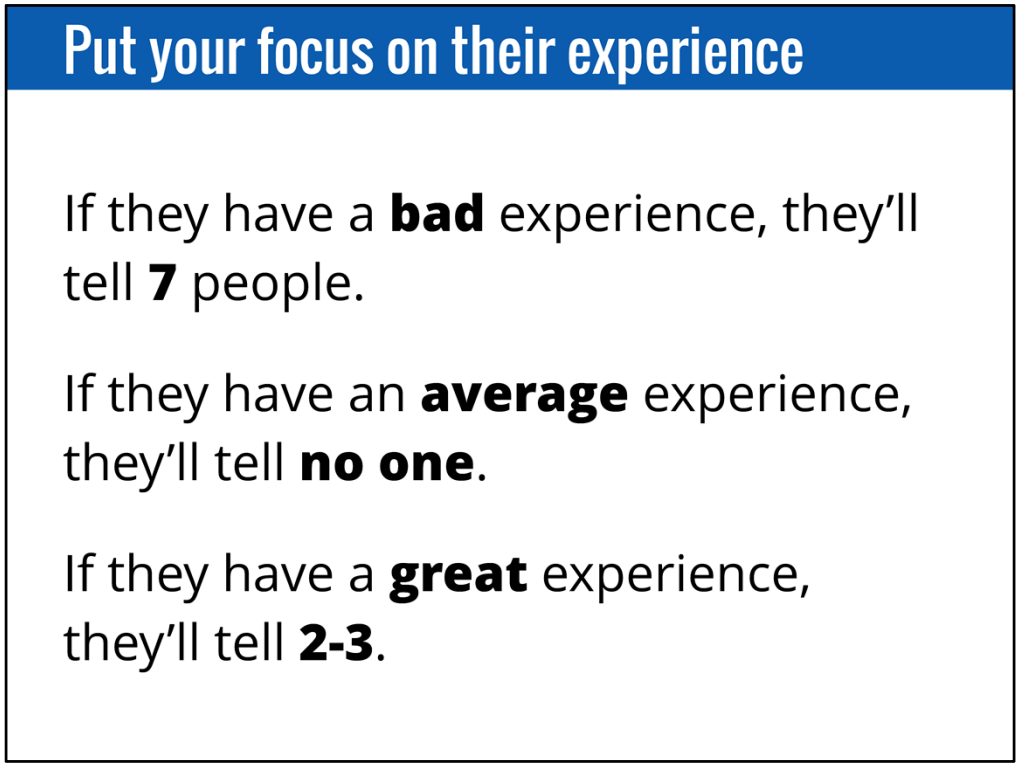
b Sign flippers

c Word of mouth

Q5

The most effective form of marketing is _____.

C Word of mouth



This is from Starbucks customer service training.

Put your effort into making the parents and families you serve feel welcome, respected, cared for, loved, engaged, entertained… Give them a great experience. Work hard at making your programs wonderful and effective.

The best marketing happens when you're not around and your customer is telling a friend how your product changed her life.

When it comes to marketing…

It’s your job to give your customers a story to tell.

Thank you

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