

Market your way to success

Whatever approach is adopted, successful marketing involves discovering all you can about the needs of end-users, then satisfying those wants.

We established that the aim of energy management is to control and reduce your organisation's energy costs and consumption, and provide a variety of information about energy efficiency to senior management and general staff. Moreover, the energy manager has a responsibility to promote energy management and market your organisation's energy reduction activities.

Know your market

Energy management must be sold to different groups throughout your organisation—from senior management to general staff. You need to engage the attention of each of these groups and motivate them to practice sound energy efficiency measures. In particular, you have to promote respect for energy management and increase its popularity.

Another important market is the general public or specific audiences outside your organisation. Your energy management program can be an important element in raising the organisation's profile and reinforcing its good relations with the community.

How marketing can raise the profile of energy management

Marketing means the process of establishing, within the general confines of the expertise and resources you have, what it is that your target group (audience) perceives they need, and then determining how to meet those needs.

Put in another way, the energy manager must concentrate efforts on three key issues:

- identifying the target group (audience)
- understanding their needs
- satisfying their needs

To demonstrate how this works, let us examine the most important group in many organisations: senior management. The energy manager's relationship with senior management represents an opportunity to promote energy management. They will most likely want to know how energy efficiency improves profits and performance, increases market competitiveness and productivity, and enhances the organisation's public image. These are some of their major needs.

To satisfy these needs, reports to senior managers should attempt to demonstrate the important benefit of 'value for money' which emanates from energy efficiency. A chart showing monthly energy use plotted against consumption for the previous year could be compared with the current period. Or you could introduce a system that warns when energy is being used inefficiently and identifies the likely fault. Many organisations are conscious of reducing their CO₂ emissions—your report could show how your organisation is contributing to a reduction of these gases.

Whatever approach you adopt, successful marketing involves discovering and satisfying all you can about the needs of end-users, then satisfying those wants. It also involves a degree of 'selling'. Energy management must be sold to the target groups as a 'product' that delivers satisfaction and value for money.



Creating a marketing plan

Focus your efforts

In order to generate consistent and increased interest in energy management, you need a Marketing Plan. This is a road map to tell you where you are going and how you are going to get there. It need not be a lengthy document, probably only one side of an A4 page. A Marketing Plan comes in two parts:

- analysis
- strategy

In your 'analysis' you must understand your market.

This means knowing:

- who your existing 'customers' are?
- what their needs are?
- if there are any other potential 'customers'?
- what services you provide your customers at the moment?
- can these services be extended?

You need to conduct research to learn as much about your market as possible. You also need to be educated in all aspects of your organisation since most of your opportunities to inform people about energy efficiency will lie outside your own area.

So you need to understand the structure of your organisation, whom you must influence and how to go about it.

You need to distinguish different audiences for your marketing activities. This means that you should develop a range of promotional material targeted at specific levels in the organisation. What the General Manager wants to know will be different to the Security Officer.

Your strategy must then tell you how you are going to satisfy your market's needs. You must determine your objectives in quantitative terms:

- how are you going to achieve these objectives in terms of personal contacts, publicity?
- what are the dates of these initiatives?
- what is the cost of these in terms of time and money?
- how are you going to fund this activity and justify it to your senior management?

This last point is an important one. Marketing takes time. The amount of time and money you budget for marketing are perhaps as much as a fifth of your time, certainly not less than a tenth, and initially about 10 per cent of your budget, settling back to 5 per cent after the first year or two.

Your marketing budget must cover all costs of research, advertising, public relations and promotion.

Momentum

Once you start getting results, you will want to ensure the momentum continues. Raising the profile of your activities guarantees that energy management has a long-term future.

Communications

Communicating energy management to all the target groups involves promoting achievements inside and outside your organisation to raise an awareness of the benefits of energy efficiency.

Internal communications include regular discussions with decision-makers, regular meetings with budget controllers of departments and constant discussions with an energy committee, if your organisation has one. You may also consider promoting your activities in the company newsletter or magazine, notice boards, annual reports, or other publications, and videos if your organisation produces them.

External communications focus on mainstream and industry media to promote your organisation's energy reduction activities.

Your communication to the general public or industry may take several forms such as:

- articles in the local newspaper or daily press
- feature stories in trade journals or magazines
- entering awards
- spots on community television
- coverage on commercial television or radio

Use your organisation's public affairs department as you construct your story. They will probably have a press officer who can help you decide what is newsworthy.

Energy conservation is of increasing interest and concern and the public will be interested in your organisation's achievements. So give your story a 'human interest' or an 'environmental' angle.

Sponsorships, links with schools and donations to charities are valid ways to improve the news value of a story. For example, an energy manager might train the local primary or secondary school to run a monitoring and targeting system for their school.

This type of activity not only motivates users, but it also has a public relations spin-off that you can use for a wider effect.



CASE STUDY 6

The Parkroyal on St Kilda Road implemented a wide-ranging environmental strategy, which included energy efficiency improvements. All staff were involved in the process to ensure their commitment.

The wider objectives included the communication of the strategy and the results to other hotels in the Southern Pacific Hotel Corporation chain, the largest hotel group in Australia.

External communication included providing information for guests, the publication of a case study brochure in cooperation with Green Jobs Unit and a story in a major Melbourne daily newspaper.

