

## **Next Step in the Planning Process: Identify Your Audiences**

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Targeting audiences for your marketing communications plan seems straightforward enough but in reality most organizations try to encompass too many – or in some cases, the inappropriate – audiences. There is no company in business today that appeals to everyone; however, every organization can appeal to more than one audience.

As you evaluate your audiences, keep in mind who buys the product or service may not be the right person to target. For example, in nursing homes, while the ultimate 'customer' is primarily aging citizens who need full-time care, the audience to market to are the adult children of these senior citizens as well as doctors and healthcare placement specialists. In that same vein, products targeting children must also be marketed to parents or other adults: those individuals that spend the money on the items.

As you begin the process, identify who would – and who has the ability – to purchase the product or service, as well as who would utilize the product or service.

In the non-profit world it's essential that you categorize your audiences into those individuals that use your agency's services and those donors who can keep your organization in business.

For those companies that focus on the business-to-business world, it's more critical to identify the appropriate person or department within the purchasing company to target versus spending your valuable dollars in futile efforts.

Marketing dollars are tight so the better you can aim your focus on the key audiences, the better likelihood you'll hit a bull's eye with your communications efforts.

In the next column, more insight will be given on how to target the appropriate audiences once you've identified them.