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Industry Snapshot · Community Sector

Disability Positive: Marketing Practices Post-Pandemic

AUTHOR & DATE

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INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT

Disability Positive: Marketing Practices Post-Pandemic

Disability Positive is a large community sector organisation with an annual income of over £1M. It provides services, opportunities, and a voice to over 10,000 people with lived experience of disability and long-term conditions, and their families — via public sector contracts, income generation, grants, and fundraising. Approximately 75% of its workforce (c.120 paid staff and volunteers) has lived experience of disability and long-term conditions.

This snapshot explores existing marketing strategies, the marketing mix, and how digital and societal marketing differ from and could be applied to the wider community sector.

THE KEY MARKETING LITERATURE

Marketing and management theory in a community sector organisation focuses on social and environmental impact — achieving positive social change over and above commercial profit. Disability Positive found the following frameworks particularly valuable:

- SOSTAC — strategic marketing framework adapted for community sector context
- BCG growth share matrix and Ansoff matrix — for growth opportunity identification
- SWOT and PESTLE analysis — for assessing impact and environmental factors
- Blend of traditional and digital marketing techniques to drive customer value
- Extended marketing mix (8 Ps) — covering service delivery specifics
- Social and environmental impact reporting frameworks

WHAT DISABILITY POSITIVE DID

The revisited marketing strategy aimed to increase membership, diversify income via charged-for services and social investment opportunities, reach new customers, and build partnerships with organisations sharing a common vision.

Key objectives:

- Achieve an annual turnover of £5 million by year end 2030
- Reach 20,000 customers using Disability Positive services by 2030

Disability Positive aligned its marketing and communication approach for new market and service expansion. SWOT analysis highlighted limited in-house marketing expertise but identified key strengths — including a new brand aligned with company values, enabling the organisation to embrace lived experience in its marketing.

The PESTEL analysis highlighted implications of UK changes to EU legislation impacting services, and enabled development of a clear Social Value policy and action plan. The BCG and Ansoff matrix identified profitable growth opportunities including existing services marketed to new geographical areas, and new activities such as corporate sponsorship.

KEY RESULTS — BY YEAR END 2024



"The lived experience of 75% of our workforce sets us apart and shapes everything we do — from strategy to service delivery."

FUTURE DIRECTION

- **Sign up new members** — adapt member benefits and marketing to close the gap between people supported and those who choose to become members
- **Diversify income** — continued commitment to new income streams including social investment
- **Concentrate on key revenue streams** — particularly marketing services and support for businesses
- **Social marketing** — continued commitment to highlighting social and environmental impact

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Periodically revisit your marketing strategy

Continuously update strategy to reflect the needs of a complex charitable organisation and its growth potential.

Invest in resource

Disability Positive increased its marketing budget and built a dedicated team including a Policy and Communications Manager, Head of Business Development, Business Development Manager, Communications Officer, and Policy Research Officer.

Tools are useful but not perfect

Common marketing tools and blended traditional/digital marketing can be equally effective in community and commercial sectors — but approaches must be adapted for beneficiary-customers versus funder-customers.

Relationships are paramount

Management of funder relationships is imperative where both beneficiary-customers and funder-customers exist — to achieve customer value and positive social change.