

CHARTERED MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

DIPLOMA IN MANAGEMENT

Unit O44

Managing Marketing Activities



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Youth Offending Team

In 1996 an Audit Commission Report 'Misspent Youth' identified shortcomings in the Youth Justice System and made recommendations for radical change. In 1998 major new legislation contained in the Crime and Disorder Act required that Local Authorities form new multi-agency Youth Offending Teams.

Swindon Youth Offending Team (Yot) began in June 1999, starting with five main contributory partners, Social Services, Police, Probation, Health and Education. I was one of the 'founders' of our team when I was seconded from the Police to the team at its inception. The aim of the team is to 'prevent offending and re-offending by children and young people'.

Over time the team has grown to 40 staff and 60 volunteers. My role now is 'Head of Service', my main responsibilities are: -

- Line manage 4 operational managers
- Foresee and respond to strategic developments
- Prepare strategic plans and develop new services
- Negotiate budget and resources and deliver services on budget
- Analyse and evaluate performance and data management
- Collaborate with partners at a senior level for joint working
- Promote the service through effective public relations
- Motivate staff to fulfil their potential and improve services

Terms of Reference

This management report will demonstrate my skills, knowledge and abilities and my understanding of my role in managing marketing activities.

On completion of this report I will have demonstrated my understanding of: -

- The different ways organisations can be structured and operate.
- My organisations values and how this affects my planning.
- Identified my organisations stakeholders and how their needs affect my role.
- Applying the principles of marketing to research, analyse and determine my customer's expectations and needs.
- Using a range of planning techniques to address the customer needs I have identified, demonstrate how my plans add value for customers and the Yot, and how I would guide others on how the objectives will be achieved.
- How I monitor plans which have been implemented and adjust them as necessary to ensure that the required results are achieved.

Part A – Me And The Youth Offending Team

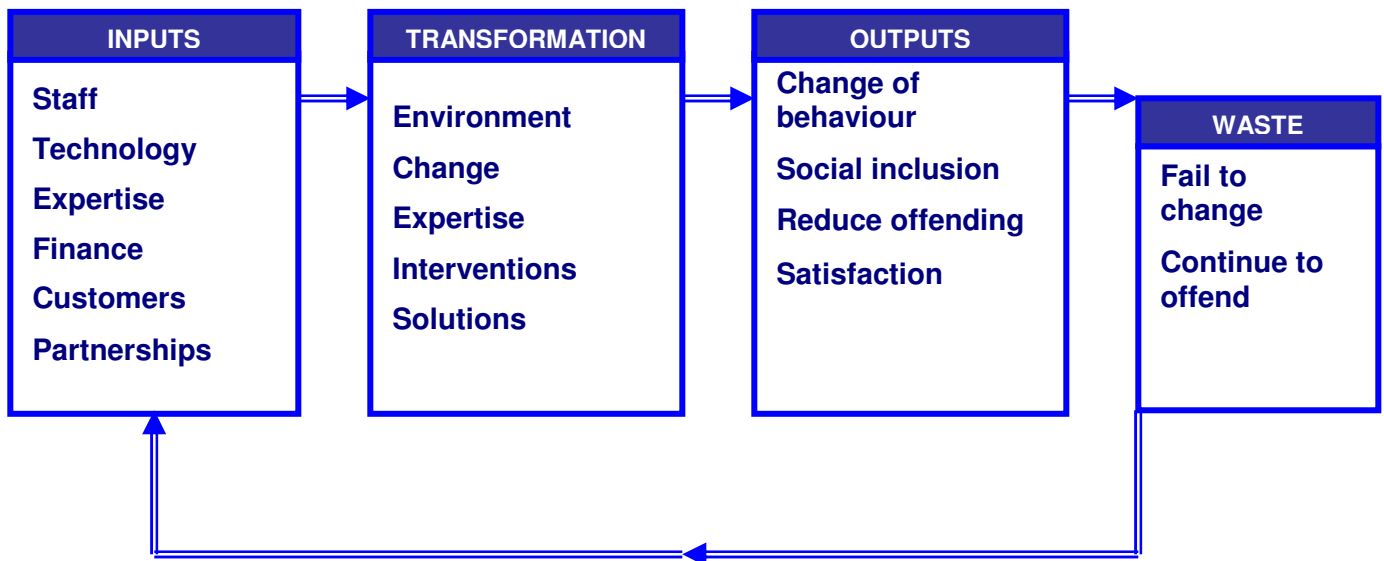
Introduction

It is important that I understand what sort of organisation I am managing. Schein says that a formal organisation is ‘the planned co-ordination of the activities of a number of people for the achievement of some common, explicit purpose or goal, through division of labour and function, and through a hierarchy of authority and responsibility’.

The self-study guide shows that organisations can be split into three categories:

- **The Public Sector** – Paid for by taxpayers
- **The Private Sector** – Paid for by shareholders and owners.
- **Not for profit** - Funded by donations and grants.

The Yot fits into the Public Sector as it was created by government legislation, is owned by the Local Authority and is paid for by council taxes, government grants and contributor statutory partner organisations.



Understanding The Yot As An Open System

Introduction

The Yot operates an ‘open system model’ in that it takes in resources such as people, finance, raw materials and information from its local environment and transforms or changes them. Once change is complete it returns them (The customer in this case) back into the community in a condition that society requires.

Because the Yot has to interact with the environment as a living or open system it is strongly influenced by a range of external environmental factors and opportunities. To see how these can affect the Yot's ability to provide a service, I have completed a PESTEL analysis.

POLITICAL FUTURE

- Prior to and after any change in government there is either a rush or reluctance to pass new legislation. This makes new laws relating to the work of the Yot untimely and often ill thought through, can be knee-jerk reactions to recent events.
- Recent policy has caused an increase in young people going into custody. The secure estate is full, this uses up the majority of our budgets and prevents us from targeting resources at alternative community options.

SOCIO-CULTURAL FUTURE

- There is a drive to intervene earlier with potential offenders to prevent offending in the first place. This will take many years to be evaluated (at least 10). However, society often wants quick wins which tend to be punitive.
- Yot staff are working with a wider range of service users. Previously aged 10-17, they can now be as young as 5 years old. This impacts on service delivery, staff skills and abilities and the possibility of negative contamination by older offenders on new younger potential offenders that are coming to us.

ECONOMIC FUTURE

- All partner agencies who contribute to the Yot in staff, kind, and cash are expected to make savings. If they all pass on these cuts to the Yot it will collectively bankrupt the team.
- Zero budget increases have come at a time when utility costs have rocketed, such as gas and electric. These costs divert funds from direct service delivery.

TECHNOLOGICAL FUTURE

- The speed of change in expectations to use complex technology such as secure e-mail and computer recording systems has left some staff unable to keep up and to do what is now expected as the 'basic norm'. This has led to stress and time management issues for some staff.
- Wiring up systems to be able to talk to one another in different government departments is a good idea as it will contribute to sharing information and lead to better safeguarding of young people. However, this is extremely complicated and costly and ultimately may not be our decision and may become a 'double entry' system with little benefit in the end.

ENVIRONMENTAL FUTURE

- Environmental changes, surprisingly can have an influence on the business of the Yot, warmer weather and light evenings lead to more social interaction and offending opportunity for young people. Therefore, in a good summer we have more assaults relating to alcohol, gang fights and criminal damage such as graffiti.

LEGAL FUTURE

- Case law from the High Court can change the way all sentencing is made. This can cause longer sentences such as 'three strikes and you're out' for dangerous offences. The Yot spends more time and money on travelling to distant prisons than it used to because of this.
- New legislation to tackle anti-social behaviour is complex and can actually be at variance with existing legislation and partner organisations key performance targets, such as a police target to arrest more people and a youth justice target to work with less young people. These perverse targets have to be managed together.

The Yot Mission And Values

Introduction

A good definition of a mission statement can be found at Wikipedia.com, 'A summary description of an entity's purpose'.

The study guide suggests that research has found that the best performing companies have statements with 9 common components.

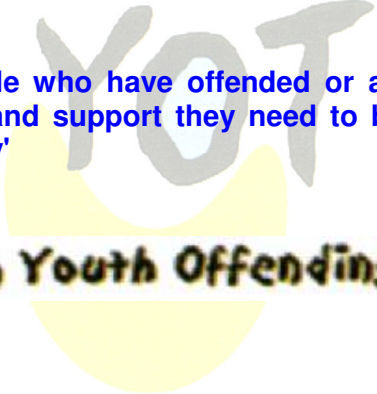
The Yot encompasses a number of statements due its multi-agency composition. They are the Youth Justice Board's 'Prevent young people from offending and re-offending'. This is written into the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act which legislates for the Yots existence. The Yot sits within the Local Authority and is placed in Children's Services, because it has got to be somewhere! Both have their own statements. However, we also have our own, which was written by the management team without the benefit of knowing the 9 key principles (see below).

Our Statement

Swindon Youth Offending Team

'Children and young people who have offended or are at risk of offending will be offered the opportunities and support they need to become valued and productive members of our community'

Swindon Youth Offending Team



COMPARISON TO THE 9 PRINCIPLES

Customers	Yes, we state who they are.
Product or Service	Yes, we say what we do.

Location	Yes, we say where we do this.
Technology	No, we do not state what level of technology we use to do this, but this is not particularly important to say this.
Concern for survival	Yes, we want our service users to be productive members of our community.
Philosophy	Yes, children and young people should be valued and productive and not offend.
Self concept	No, we are the only team, we do not need to 'compete'.
Concern for Public image	Yes, we will do our best to deal with our communities young offenders.
Concern for employees	No, we have focused on young offenders only. In hindsight, this could have been in the statement and would show how we value our employees.

Conclusion

Because we are very focused and aware of our aims and objectives it appears that we were able to produce a statement that matches the 9 principles as much as it can for a Public Sector organisation.

Yot Values

The self-study guide suggests that an organisations values describe what the managers are trying to achieve, what are acceptable standards and behaviours for individuals in the team, so that people do not pursue their own individual value systems.

The Yot shared values are particularly important as we are a multi-agency team where new staff from very different organisations bring their own organisational cultural values with them, this can be challenging for all – in both a positive and negative way.

SOME IMPORTANT VALUES, FROM A YOT STAFF WORDSTORM			
FAIRNESS		PERSONAL INTEGRITY	
PRIDE		CAN-DO ATTITUDE	HARDWORK
TEAM INTEGRITY	DETERMINATION	TEAM WORK	SOUND KNOWLEDGE BASED WORKING
			CARE ABOUT SERVICE USERS
	CHALLENGE		PASSION
RESPONSIBILITY		COMMITMENT	QUALITY WORK
SUPPORT FOR EACH OTHER	RESPECT	HONESTY	COMMUNICATE

For these values to continue to have worth they need to be 'lived', according to the self-study guide.

CONSTANTLY COMMUNICATE THE VALUES

The Yot has strived to do this by ensuring that all external communications have our statement on them. An example of this is our Business Plan which has it emblazoned across the front page. This goes to all our partners.

ENROL NEW FOLK

All new staff have an induction into the Youth Justice System, the Yot and Children's Services 'family'. Specific questions in the selection process test out these values. The majority of new staff are also interviewed by a panel of young people, some of whom have been service users.

REVISIT AND REFRESH THE VALUES

The Yot tries to revisit our basic values on periodic training days. An example of this was a day revisiting our values with regards to Race and Diversity where the whole team took part.

CONFRONT CONTRADICTORY BEHAVIOUR

The Yot management team are always on the look out for behaviours that do not live up to our shared values, we will always confront them. Many staff are happy to do this too. Due to the pressure of work there are times when people let things slip, such as offering support for each other or showing respect when communicating, this has to be managed with care.

PERIODICALLY CHECK OUT WITH FEEDBACK

Staff are encouraged to feedback in open forum, supervision, open door policy or individually. Service users always complete feedback on completion of interventions.

The Importance Of Stakeholder Management

Introduction

For management purposes a definition of what a stakeholder is can be found on Wikipedia.com, 'A person or organisation that has a legitimate interest in a project or entity'. This means that the Yot has many different stakeholders, from those with an interest in us delivering a service to those having the service delivered to them. These two groups can be described as

STAKEHOLDER GROUPS	
Primary	Secondary
Those ultimately affected, positively or negatively.	Those with an intermediary role such as governments, unions or banks.

Stakeholder Analysis

By analysing who the Yot stakeholders are I will be able to work out their power, interest and influence over Yot business and service delivery.

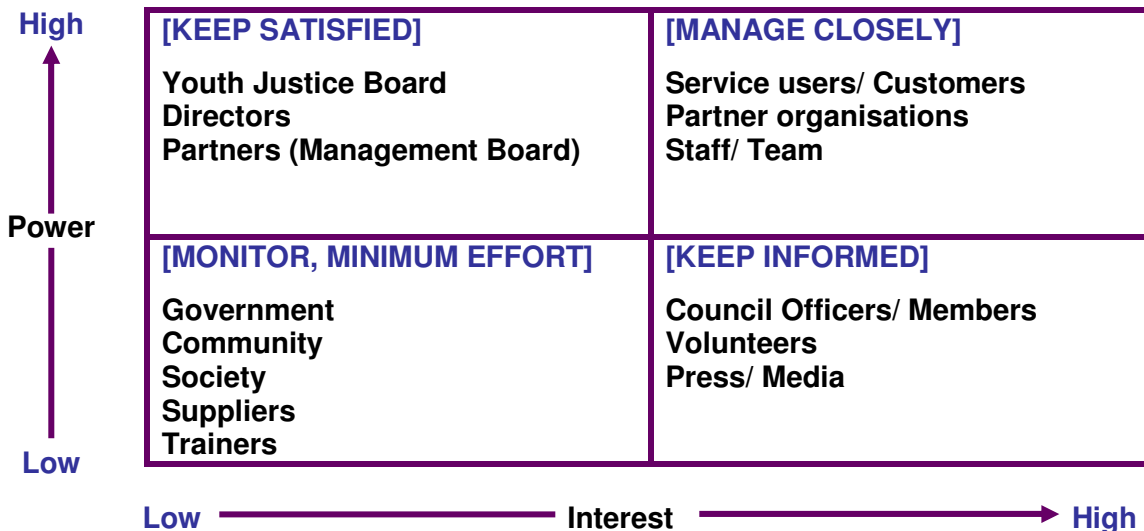
STEP 1: Identify my stakeholders

My director Her director Council Officers and members Youth Justice Board Government Politicians Voters Law makers	My managers My team My customers Partner organisations Volunteers Local community Society	Suppliers Lobby groups Trainers Consultants Press/ Media
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STEP 2: Prioritize my stakeholders

The self-study guide suggests using a grid in order to group stakeholders by importance. This will help me determine who is powerful and not and who is interested and not.

STAKEHOLDER MAP



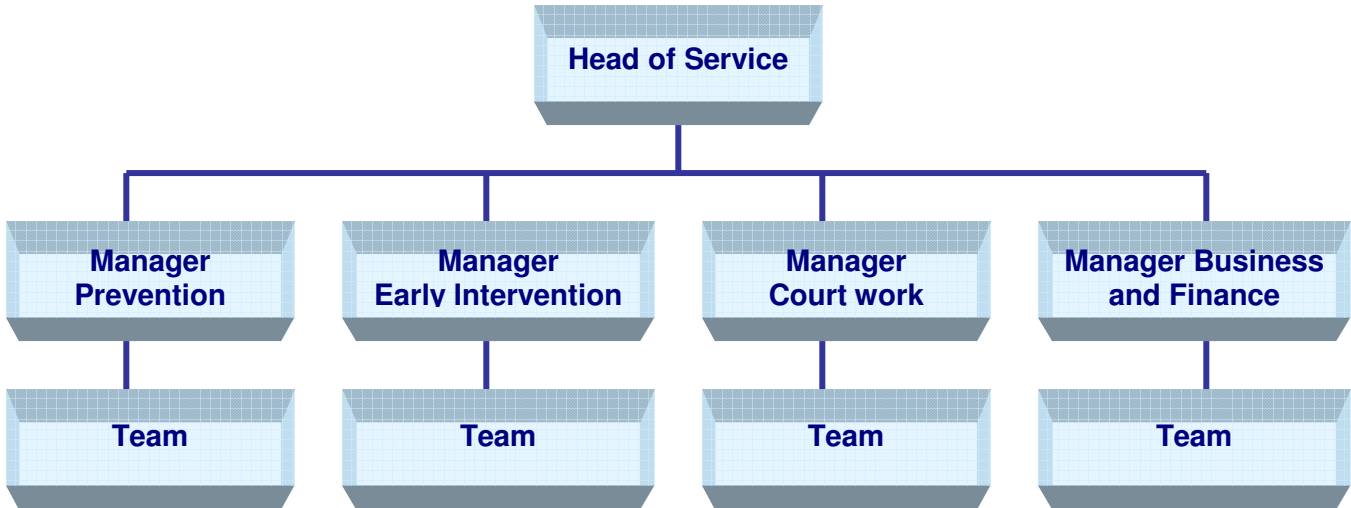
STEP 3: Understand my key stakeholders

In order to populate the map I also need to consider some key questions about them. The self-study guide offers a list of questions which include the following to apply to each stakeholder: financial, emotional, motivation, communication (including barriers), current opinion, influence, support, opposition and wider influence.

The completed stakeholder map is above. From this exercise I can clearly see whose support I have to focus on in the future.

How The Yot Is Structured

There are a number of different ways organisations can be structured, both formal and informal. The Yot is structured as follows:



The above model shows the Yot uses a ‘product/ service’ structure – where services are clearly grouped. This ensures direct lines of accountability and communication for both managers, staff and service users. Teams and managers are able to support each other like ‘buddies’ and to be specialists in their field of knowledge. There can be disadvantages when there is a need for generic working or to move someone across from one area to another.

Understanding The Culture Of The Yot

Introduction

According to Morgan G. the culture of an organisation can be described as ‘ complex systems made up of their own characteristic sets of ideology, values, rituals and systems of belief and practice’.

The self-study guide suggests that organisational culture is influenced by common factors. I have applied this to the Yot culture.

THE HISTORY OF THE YOT	The Yot came about following the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act. Yots had to be set up by 2000 and volunteers were sought with a ‘can-do’ attitude to get one going in Swindon. Staff came from a mix of cultures, some caring, some more outcome focused such as the Police.
THE SIZE OF THE YOT	The Yot formed with less than 20 staff in total. The workload was high, but there was a very hands on supportive – ‘lets do it!’ attitude that helped the small team bond. It now has about 45 staff and this culture is now less easy to maintain.

WHO OWNS THE YOT	The Local Authority has responsibility for the Yot and how it performs. It is 'owned' by a management group made up of partners who have a statutory responsibility to support its aims and goals. This is very unlike most public sector services where accountability is clearly defined.
THE PURPOSE OF THE YOT	This is clearly defined by legislation and included in all strategic and operational plans. Because the objectives are so defined this can stifle any creativity or local 'good ideas'. However, it does keep our work focused on offending.

The self-study guide references a number of different cultural types. The Yot easily fits into the 'role culture' because everyone has clearly defined roles which are based on statutory requirements, with regulations and procedures that dictate what will happen in any given event. That said, the staff with direct supervision of young people are encouraged to 'manage' their caseload, be creative in what they do and make decisions, which are elements found within 'Task cultures' and 'Person cultures'.

Part B – Putting The Customer First

Introduction

'A customer is someone who makes use of or receives the products or services of an individual or organisation'. (Wikipedia.com)

The Yot customers are young offenders who have been caught offending or displaying anti-social behaviour. The majority of them initially do not want to be a customer and do not want the services we are offering them! Our job is to befriend, assist and guide them into socially acceptable behaviour.

This means that we need to be smart about who we work with, what we do with them and how we reintegrate them back into the community.

Who Are My Customers And What Do They Want?

Introduction

The Yot has internal and external customers. It is important that I understand that they should be treated the same.

External Customers – Yot

- Service users – Young people
- Service users – Parents and carers
- Victims and those affected by crime
- Organisations dependent on Yot interventions

- Local Authority
- Partnerships
- General public

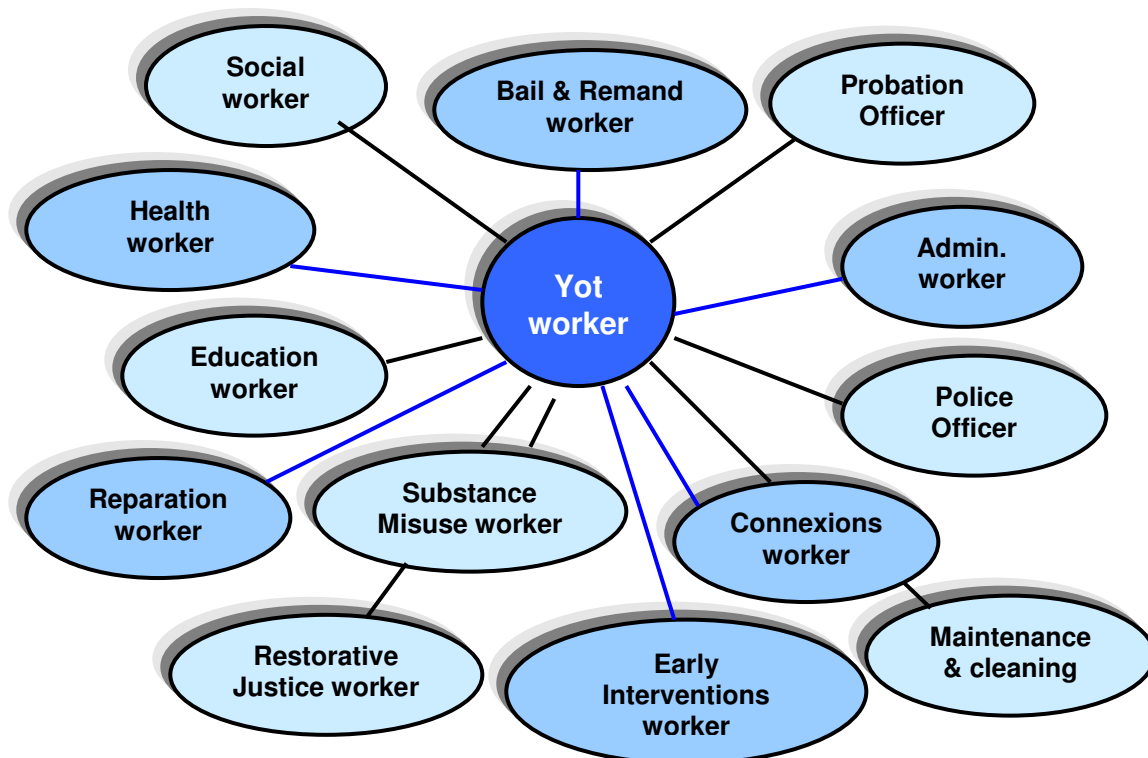
These customers tend to have 2 different expectations; an example is shown below for a victim of crime

FUNCTIONAL	PERSONAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dealt with by a suitably qualified and experienced member of staff. ○ Engaged in a safe, confidential and tested Restorative Justice system or process. ○ Dealt with at a pace and intensity that reflects the victims needs first. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An understanding member of staff who stays as their personal point of contact throughout. ○ Being looked after by someone who understands and cares about you. ○ Willing staff who will listen and empathise and not rush or push you into anything.

This customer would have confidence throughout and would be able to recommend engagement with our worker to any new service users.

Internal Customers

As a multi-agency team co-located in one building, it is easy to see that we are all internal customers of each other. If an intervention plan identifies a need that another member of the team can supply to a young person, then a request is made a service is delivered for the internal customer to the external customer. A diagram of Yot internal customers is shown below.



This system works very well. The self-study guide suggests that internal customers should find out what their expectations are and design my role around them. I think this is the case as any of these internal customer relationships work both ways – as they are all holders of intervention plans on different customers with different needs. However, there is some overall control over the process as there are expectations for minimum standards, timeliness and required outcomes that are monitored and measured.

What Do Customers Expect?

The study guide suggests 5 key issues to consider. I have applied this to the parents and young people we work with, to offer parental support.

EXPLICIT SERVICE PROMISE	Parents of young offenders are personally engaged with and given literature that clearly explains what service they will be offered under what circumstances.
IMPLICIT SERVICE PROMISE	Some parents are ordered by Court to engage with parenting services. They receive literature from the Court and us which clearly defines minimum expectations. This is backed up by a signed parenting contract.
WORD OF MOUTH	People who have experienced the parenting intervention are encouraged to peer mentor prospective customers. Some have gone on to talk to the press, make videos and go on TV such as Newsnight.
PAST EXPERIENCE	We have found that some parents have been very resistant to joining a parenting group. However, once on they complain that it will 'soon end' and they will no longer have support. This has led to the formation of peer support groups across the town.
PERSONAL NEED	The location, timing and content of each group is adjusted to accommodate individual needs. Physical, social, diversity, functional e.g. childcare requirements.

The parenting programme can be seen by the above exercise as giving customers what they expect. This has been evidenced this year by the Parenting group winning the coveted Beacon Award which is a national competition.

What Creates The Customer Gap?

It is fair to say in any service that engages with the public there are going to be some customers that are dissatisfied. The self-study guide suggests 4 reasons why our service could lead to an unhappy customer:

- **Not knowing what the customer expectation is:** This tends to be where a young offender has more than one set of parents. One set is harsh and punitive and the other is too soft and undisciplined. The young person plays the Yot worker and both sets of parents against each other, to try and avoid confronting his or her behaviour and blame someone else. Once we have worked this out to be the case, we join forces for a common goal – sorting out the young person.

- **Not selecting the right product or service:** This can be where we are working on offending behaviour without knowing that the reasons for it are which might be due to a drug habit, so we are not delivering the right intervention to help stop the cause of the offending.
- **Staff do not deliver products or services properly:** Some staff are better than others at different aspects of Yot work. It is possible to measure the success of interventions against different staff by looking at re-offending rates over a set of time. Training can address this.
- **Misleading promises:** This can be where we work to find accommodation for a young person which 'fits the minimum standard' – but is actually a poor quality B&B with no support.

Some of these examples have led to formal complaints. However, we share these with the partnership board and find solutions together. This can lead to extra resources, thus improving future customer service.

Part C – The Marketing Planning Process

Introduction

According to Boone and Kurtz, marketing is a process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods, services, organisations, and events to create and maintain relationships that will satisfy individual and organisational objectives. The Yot has a marketing strategy as it is important to maintain or raise the public confidence in the Criminal Justice System.

Carrying Out Market Research

Before starting the planning process, I understand the need to do some research. The self-study guide suggests 2 steps to take, one has already been done in part A of this report, this is internal information – mission, values, organisation, structure, culture and so on. The external research comes from the areas the Yot has little control over and has 6 main headings.

THE YOT EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT	
CONSUMER RESEARCH	
○ Market trends	Yot offending data is analysed and offending trends are identified. These are collated locally and nationally.
○ Breakdown into geographical areas or groups	Offending frequency, seriousness and times are mapped by wizards on the Yot recording system. This information is shared with partners to predict future needs in specific areas.
○ Develop a profile of potential customers	This work is ongoing and has shown a change in the percentage of girls offending increasing, being younger and more violent.

PRODUCT RESEARCH	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Testing consumer reaction ○ Coming up with new product ideas ○ Assessing market opinion on rival products 	<p>Everyone the Yot works with completes an exit interview. However, this is normally conducted by the Supervising Officer and the data is not often analysed.</p> <p>As the need of the town change, so does the way we tackle offending. The Yot needs to find resources that are relevant, this could be interpretation services for asylum seekers or prevention advice to reduce teenage pregnancy.</p> <p>The professionals that make up the team have their own specialist forums to meet and exchange ideas. This has helped us avoid expensive purchases of intervention programmes that they have found not to work. Service users always feedback on exit.</p>
PRICING RESEARCH	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Asking customers what they think about pricing ○ Finding information on competition pricing ○ Looking at the effects of discounted sales 	<p>The Yot do not sell any services to service users and do not have a definable product. However, we do commission services and should find the time to be sure we are getting best value for money throughout the life of any contract.</p>
PROMOTIONAL RESEARCH	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Asking customers what they think about the way the product is advertised ○ Packaging ○ Promotion packaging 	<p>For Yot, this could be looking at our branding on our buildings, badges, literature, in the press and the internet.</p> <p>This could be the way we advise partners how we deliver interventions and what the expected outcomes would be for a particular intervention.</p>
DISTRIBUTION RESEARCH	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identifying retail and wholesale outlets ○ Looking at transit and storage issues 	<p>This is looking at where and when the Yot deliver services to young people. Have we chosen the best location and time? (not in school time etc.).</p> <p>This could be looking at waiting times to receive specific interventions / breaches timeliness.</p>
BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Current political influences and pressures ○ Local and national economy ○ Changes in society ○ New technology ○ New legislation ○ Environmental issues 	<p>This is an area that is particularly relevant to my role as Head of Service. I need to be aware of all these issues and try to mitigate and filter these external pressures so that staff can continue to deliver front line services without abstraction/ distraction.</p> <p>The majority of this research is done at a national level by the Youth Justice Board who keep me informed with research results, good practice guidance and signposting to relevant sites for more information.</p>

Types Of Market Research

The Yot collects 2 kinds of data, firstly from the service users direct as part of every exit from intervention, and secondly from aggregated information from the Youth Justice Board and other local and national government sources, such as the DfES and Home Office. The study guide described these as:



This data can be either quantitative or qualitative in nature.

Analysing Information From External And Internal Sources

Having completed this research, I now need to analyse it further, one way of doing this is to complete a SWOT analysis.

INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT	<p>STRENGTHS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Diverse staff group with multiple skills. ○ Strong knowledge base. ○ Manageable workforce co-located. ○ Good image & reputation. ○ Responsive to change. ○ Resilience. 	<p>WEAKNESSES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Short-term financial planning/ no spare cash. ○ Accommodation limitations. ○ Staff shortages/ difficulty in recruitment.
EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT	<p>OPPORTUNITIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New opportunities to pilot new government initiatives. ○ Well placed to take advantage of new technologies. Going digital. 	<p>THREATS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff turnover. ○ Political change. ○ Reduced funding from partnerships. ○ Business risks. ○ Changes in legislation.

This SWOT analysis should not be viewed without also considering the desired outcomes for the service users, as you can have a fantastic organisation, that ticks all the boxes, but does not really do what the customer wants.

Developing A Marketing Plan

Introduction

A marketing plan will give me the detail and actions necessary to achieve a specified marketing objective. Due to the wide ranging and diverse nature of the services the Yot delivers, I have chosen to demonstrate this exercise by focusing on one target which is to expand the number and diversity of people engaging in Yot parenting interventions. This is important to the Yot as it is proven that good parenting does reduce entry into the Youth Justice System (Courts). The self-study guide suggests using the ANSOFF matrix to decide on a product/ service growth strategy.

	Existing Products	New Products
Existing markets	Market penetration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 24/7 Parenting group ○ One to one work ○ Court ordered work 	Product developments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Peer mentoring Group post 24/7
	Market development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 24/7 Parenting on line (Internet access) ○ Fathers ○ 24/ 7 BME group 	Diversification:
New markets		

Whilst there are other parenting groups available in the town it is not our intention to interfere with these by 'market penetration' to increase our share. What we aim to do is 'market development' where we offer existing services to new markets to take account of the changing needs of our community. Any 'product development' is done to enhance and support existing services. The parenting group and services have no intention to 'diversify' into other areas other than parenting.

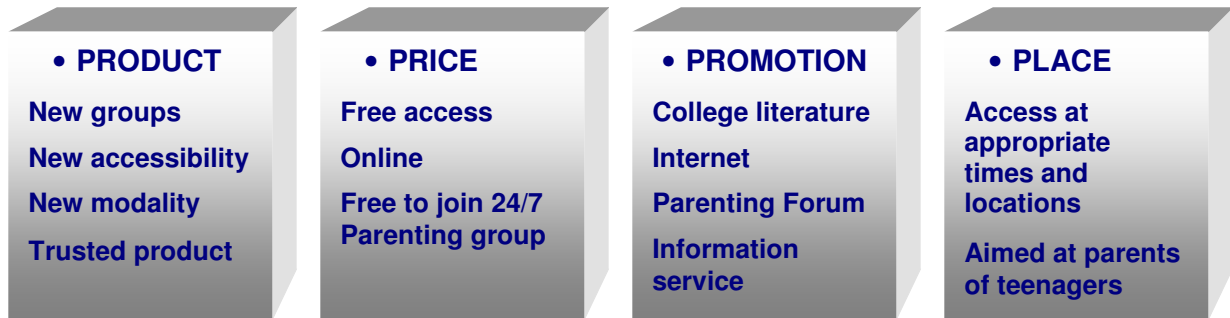
Marketing Objectives

The objective to increase parenting provision throughout the Yot is consistent with the overall Yot (Corporate) objective which is to prevent offending and re-offending ...I would write this into my Yot Plan – ensuring it was SMART.

Increase 24/7 parenting provision in Swindon to reach all diverse groups including BME, fathers and via the Internet for those wishing to learn from home, by working with 100 parents in 2007 and 150 in 2008.

Influencing Demand For Our Products And Services

The self-study guide recommends a tool called 'The Marketing Mix' to work out how to influence demand, this consists of looking at '4Ps', I have applied this to parenting.



Service Marketing

The study guide also shows three other 'Ps', these are

- **People** – There are Yot staff who deliver the service to the customers and other team members who look after the team itself.
- **Physical evidence** – This is the buildings and environments we use to meet our customers - This can also include their homes or schools.
- **Processes** – This is how we provide our services. These are constantly being reviewed and adapted taking into account availability, cost and lone working policies.

All the above Ps are very important to our ability to deliver services. If I consider parenting again, I need to have the right staff, in the right buildings, at the right time for everything to come together and the right service to be delivered to the right customer.

The Structure Of A Marketing Plan

There are structured marketing templates easily available on the Internet [see Wikipedia.com/marketing plan]. In brief there are 8 main headings to consider:



Part D – Planning To Keep Customers Happy

Introduction

In order to maintain or improve customer satisfaction, I need, as the manager, to be proactive in ensuring the activities of my team meet both internal and external customer expectations.

Collecting Information

If I am to be confident that customer needs are being met, then I need to analyse current customer information. The study guide suggests a couple of tools I could use. I would draw a 'Fishbone' diagram rather than the 'Pareto' or 80/20 rule, as this would get all the problems and their causes on one page.

For information to be of real value it needs to be gathered from both formal and informal sources. I have applied this to the 24/7 Parenting group with the following findings:

FORMAL INFORMATION		
Statistical Reports	✓	The number of parents receiving interventions is collated monthly and reported formally to the management team.
Reports Completed by Outside Agencies	✓	The 24/7 Parenting group was externally evaluated and came first in the country – receiving the Beacon Award.
Project Demand Reports	✓	These are produced by the parenting worker for partner agencies and contain mainly statistical data.
Market Research	x	This has been done many times across the country, but not specifically in Swindon for Parenting.
Audits	✓	In 2006 the Parenting provision was audited by HM Inspectorate as part of a whole team inspection. There is also an Effective Practice Quality Assurance audit over 2 years where it received a 2 score – where 3 is top marks. This will be reviewed later in the year and will move to a 3.
Letters	x	There has not been a post audit due to other, better methods being used.
Telephone and conversation	✓	On the close of all interventions, customers (service users) are asked to score their satisfaction. This is recorded.

Informal Information

This is a viable option for an approachable and friendly team like ours. However, some people are very uncomfortable in giving feedback, especially if it is negative in nature or requested by someone of a different status. Either way, there certainly is no harm in talking with customers when they visit, or drop in to have a look around when something is happening. This does happen, as we often stand in for each other at short notice or 'hold the fort' for a while.

The Planning Process

Introduction

According to the self-study guide, planning is ascertaining where I am now and where I want to be with a particular course of action.

For this exercise I want to put a plan in place to reduce the time it takes, to take a breach for failing to attend appointments back to Court.

SMART Goals

My objective must be SMART. In this case it would be to have all young people in breach of their order returned to Court within 14 working days.

Who Will Help Me Achieve My Plan?

It is important that I select the right people to achieve this. Enthusiasm alone will not do. I would pull together someone from the Supervision team, Court team and Admin team to work together.

Allocating Time To My Plan

I always use 'reverse scheduling' rather than 'forward scheduling'. I find that setting a realistic deadline and working backwards allows different work styles to start when they want – as long as it is done by the end date!

Measuring How You Are Getting On

This plans success can be measured by taking the time it takes currently as a baseline and then periodically checking the time in the future. Electronic recording allows me to do this automatically using available wizards on the computer.

Making Changes As Necessary

On measuring and reviewing it is better to make small changes that improve efficiency or performance there and then.

Dealing With Customer Complaints

Introduction

'You cannot make an omelette without breaking a few eggs'. That is to say we work with the public in a highly emotive period in their lives. We do not always make the perfect judgement call, we are only human too. However, we should take any complaint seriously and take it as an opportunity to improve services.

Handling Complaints

The Yot has a compliments and complaints procedure in place. The staff and managers are aware of how the system works and stick to the guidance. This is an SBC (Swindon Council) procedure linked in to HR. It is co-terminus with the study guide which suggests the chartered management guidelines. I have used the guidance as a check sheet to confirm the SBC procedure is robust:

1. **Establish a common approach.** This happens regardless of who takes the call or opens the envelope.
2. **Draw up a standard form.** On receipt of a complaint an acknowledgement letter is sent out within 48 hours which confirms set details such as date, name, the nature of the complaint, who is dealing and the process we will follow.
3. **Ensure complaints are assessed properly.** All complaints are passed to the manager with responsibility for that area of work – who takes ownership to conclusion.
4. **Ensure staff take ownership and responsibility.** All complaints are discussed by the management team, who monitor progress weekly.
5. **Decide if a system or process needs changing.** This has happened at the Yot, we have changed the way we do some things, as the complaint highlighted a flaw in our systems.
6. **Build in customer checks.** This is done by a final phone call and closing letter that confirms the outcome.
7. **Analyse complaints.** Thankfully we have few complaints that find that we are at fault in what we do. Any that do show fault are useful to inform future planning for service delivery.

I have also checked the suggested Do's and Don'ts against what we do.

DO		DO NOT	
○ Make customer service a part of the team culture	✓	○ Blame the computer	✓
○ Empower staff to deal with complaints	✓	○ Say its another department	✓
○ Keep in contact with customers to ensure their complaint is being dealt with	✓	○ Take the complaint personally	✓
○ Analyse complaints regularly	✓	○ Allocate blame	✓
		○ Use paper work to block a fast response	✓

These suggestions are sometimes easier said than done. Sometimes it is another department and often the complaints are very personal – about a particular person in the team.

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