Marketing Module

River Valley District Marketing Plan Worksheet (Example)

I. Situational Analysis

Background Description

K-State Research and Extension-River Valley District serves as a partner in the Clay, Cloud, Republic and Washington County communities and provides educational, research-based information to its community members. It follows the K-State Research and Extension vision by being committed to expanding human capacity and by delivering educational programs and technical information that result in improved leadership skills. These skills can enhance the economic viability and quality of life in communities.

Its programs focus on five core themes:

1) healthy communities: youth, adults, and families.
2) safe food and human nutrition.
3) economic development through value-added products.
4) natural resources and environmental management.
5) competitive agricultural systems.

Agents find themselves having to adapt to changing community and societal norms. Individuals and families are becoming increasingly busier with less time to dedicate to traditional extension meetings and program formats. This demands different, more accessible information distribution.

Funding is also becoming increasingly uncertain, as budget cuts and reallocations loom over the national, state and local branches of goverment.

River Valley District finds itself in a unique situation, having begun the districting process (Cloud County + Clay County + Republic County + Washington County). Each agent and staff member must adapt to working with different clients and audiences. This will present challenges and opportunities as the district continues to establish itself.

River Valley District's resources include agents and office staff, the Department of Communications, as well as volunteers and local funding sources.

Key Findings

- Over the past ten years, all four counties have seen negative growth in terms of population. The most severe has been in Republic County, which saw a -9 percent change from 2000 to 2003 and a total of a -10 percent change between 1990 and 2000 (2003 U.S. Census Data).

- Seniors make up a significantly high portion of the population in all four counties, with numbers ranging from 20 to 26 percent of the total county populations. This is nearly twice the state value of 13.3 percent (2000 U.S. Census Data).

- The River Valley District is relatively homogeneous in terms of ethnic population. In all four counties, 97 percent or more of the population is made up if white persons not of Hispanic/Latino origin (2000 U.S. Census Data).

- River Valley District residents have a lower level of education than the average Kansan, as only 14 to 18 percent of persons age 25+ have a bachelor's degree or higher, relative to the state average of 25.8 percent (2000 U.S. Census Data).

II. SWOT

Strengths

- Experience
- Variety of expertise
- K-State as a resource
- Location in state is an area with greater financial resources than others
- District block allows all areas of district to be easily accessible for agents
- Staff
- District support throughout the communities
- Strong 4-H base
- Low turnover among personnel
- Media
- Extension is lifelong learning and therefore applies to everyone
- Volunteer dedication

Weaknesses

- Too many programs, not enough time
- Role definition gets confused between professional and personal
- Boards have homogeneous mindset
- Don't reach diverse audiences like they should
- Lack of professional sounding boards
- Functioning as a commercial industry with government regulations
- Awareness
- We are workaholics
- Lack of solid structure for district

Opportunities

- Professional development
- Education of district professionals
- Marketing plan
- Networking/coalitions
- District
- Reaching district diversity
- Web site

Threats

- Funding
- Internet
- Competing industry
- Athletics/activities/competing for time
- Families have changed
- Internal staff that does not support the district
- Continual rate of change
- Small population
- Loss of specialists
- College grads not prepared to be agents

III. Target Audiences

Primary

- Young adults
- Non-producer land owners
- Professionals
- Military families
- Urban residents

Secondary

- Ethnic minorities
- Seniors
- 4-H families
- Producers
- Schools
- Media
- Community college

Tertiary

- Coalitions/networks
- Legislators
- County commissioners
- PDC members
- K-State
- Economic development professionals
- Community libraries

IV. Objectives

A. Increase awareness of the breadth of Extension programs among district residents.
B. Develop better understanding of the district in place of four separate county offices.
C. Increase awareness and usage of Extension programs among young adults.
D. Become more accessible to non-traditional audiences.
E. Become better prepared as a district to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population.
F. Maintain strong relationships with district stakeholders.
G. Establish seamless communications between all four offices.
H. Position Extension as educators for River Valley District professionals.

V. Key Messages

A. "Knowledge for Life"
B. Unbiased, research-based information
C. River Valley District – so we can serve you better.

VI. Strategies/Tactics (Action Plans)

A. Strategy: Utilize non-traditional modes of delivery to non-traditional audiences.

1. Development of district-wide Web site
2. Placement of Extension newsletters and publications at community businesses.
   a. Doctors offices
   b. Libraries
   c. Child care facilities
      * Place in kids' backpacks
   d. Garden centers
   e. Hardware stores
   f. Laundry mats
   g. SRS offices
   h. Head Start
   i. Banks
3. Offer e-mail distribution of newsletter
4. Make PDAs available to all agents interested
5. Utilize teleconference technology for district office conferences, PDC meetings and 4-H committee meetings
6. Host online chat Q&A forums at non-traditional hours (i.e. evening 9-11)
   a. Will be specific by program and agents will rotate
   b. Have an online discussion board where questions can be posted during the week
7. Produce evaluation/information cards to be filled out by program participants and walk-ins. Record all names and information into single contact database.
8. Explore options for providing adult education to county residents through K-State in order to better reach professional audiences
9. Produce an informational booklet and brochure regarding land management issues encountered by local non-producer land owners.
   a. Post materials as a PDF on Web site
   b. Make sure Web site includes links to important information sources such as the FSA, Conservation district, NRCS, Kansas Department of Agriculture, Kansas Agriculture Statistics
   c. Distribute to other locations including county agencies

B. Strategy: Develop consistency between all agents and publications

1. Develop template for all program announcement flyers.
2. Develop and design district-wide newsletter.
3. Develop single agent Extension elevator speech.
4. Agents always wear nametags when out in the district.
5. Produce K-State Research and Extension napkins to be used at all events at which food is served.
6. Acquire K-State Research and Extension River Valley District apparel for agents to wear when out in the county.
7. Purchase/print thank you cards to be used by all agents.
8. Develop consistent references to name of district and agent titles to be used when answering the phone and making public or written introductions.
   a. K-State Research and Extension River Valley District
9. Produce office signs to be posted on each office door/front sign.
10. Make sure K-State Research and Extension logo, slogan and River Valley District name appear on all publications.
11. Utilize the same stationary at all four offices.
    a. All four offices listed on this stationary
12. Develop River Valley District business cards.
13. Develop River Valley District magnets to be distributed at events.
14. Develop River Valley District mail enclosures and sticky notes.
15. Produce informational district brochure.
16. Develop color and font palettes to be applied to all publications
17. Develop and utilize a single impact report template.

C. Strategy: Develop stronger communications with district wide media.
   1. Develop a news column header and make it available in both printed and electronic form to all newspapers in the district (in multiple column widths).
   2. Contact each newspaper to determine preferences on:
      a. Column length (word count)
      b. Electronic or printed format
      c. If electronic, what word processor program they use
      d. Column header (which design layout program)
      e. Advance time for articles, event notices, news releases, columns, etc., to be sent and printed
   3. Have staff photo professionally taken for distribution to newspapers.
   4. Designate staff member to coordinate distribution of all releases/columns
   5. Take advantage of news writing training opportunities offered through K-State or other resources.
   6. Each office acquire updated AP stylebook
      a. Replacement every 3 years
   7. Keep on hand recent Collegian and Prairie Journalist's Companion
   8. Acquire radio PSAs and distribute to the local radio stations.
   9. Contact radio stations and determine preferences on:
      a. Electronic vs. hard copy delivery
   10. Develop agent FAQ sheets to be distributed to all media sources identifying agents as experts in their certain fields.
   11. Target news releases/columns to specific time periods throughout the year (i.e. holidays, seasons, etc.)

D. Communicate more effectively with district wide stakeholders.
   1. Have at least one agent present at all legislative listening sessions.
      a. Contact legislative offices to determine session dates ahead of time.
   2. Report to county commissioners throughout the district regularly
      a. District director – twice yearly
      b. Other agents – monthly
   3. Develop monthly impact report compiled from all agents to be distributed to stakeholders.
   4. Develop impact postcards to distribute to local stake holders (4 photos? 4 fairs? 4 courthouses? Seasonal – Xmas cards?)
   5. Find out legislator preferences on how they want to receive information (electronic or hard copy).
   6. Invite stakeholders to annual picnic.
      a. Recognize both old and new members.
   7. Make an effort to speak with stakeholders on an informal basis.
   10. Deliver programs to district civic organizations and take the opportunity to inform them on Extension
      a. Kiwanis
      b. Lions Club
      c. Chamber of Coffee
      d. Rotary
      e. Optimists
      f. Etc.
   11. Have agents attend annual school board meetings.
   12. Have agents become involved in county organizations on a personal level.
   13. Have agents attend Farm Bureau/Farmers Union annual meetings.

E. Become better prepared as a staff to serve increasingly diverse audiences.
   1. Seek our professional development opportunities to train agents on how to reach and work with the 'working poor.'
   2. Seek out resources to aid agents in serving the special needs audiences.
      a. What they need and how to reach them
   3. Have all agents attend the multicultural conference in Garden City on a rotational basis.
   4. David will sit on the 4-H Operational Military Kid committee in order for the district to be informed on post 4-H developments.
   5. Take advantage of training opportunities for agents to better familiarize themselves with the Hispanic/Latino culture and language.
      a. Select agents will pursue basic Spanish language courses for basic conversational capabilities.
      b. Seek out both primary and secondary research to review to better understand the Hispanic culture.
   6. Post a variety of links to other universities, professional organizations, educational resources, etc. on Web site to better serve the higher educated, more knowledge-seeking audiences.
   7. Organize training for agents in working with clients with disabilities.
   8. Explore possibility of conducting a needs assessment of district residents to be able to better target resources to audiences.
   9. Agents attend military relations training updates in order to be better prepared to work with this incoming audience.
   10. Pursue partnering with neighborhood counties to develop an on-post presence for Extension.
      a. Separate plan would be developed for this effort.

F. Communicate impact of Extension programs to county residents.

VII. Budget and Timeline

Strategy A:

1. Web site
   a. COST: $600 approved by District Board as a start
      i. To me maintained by high school classroom
   b. TIMELINE: Basic Web site established through IET by July 1st
      i. Professional site to be in place by October 1st
2. Newsletters
   a. District-wide, all subject newsletter to be set up and printed in-house for right now
   b. COST: 4 counties @ 500 newsletters – bulk mail at 20¢ a newsletter per mailing - $400 per month for postage. Copying and set-up $80 to $100 per month.
   c. TIMELINE: Hard copy – October 1, 2005.
      i. E-mail distribution to be available January 1, 2006
3. Brochure kiosks
   a. Available at key sites within the District for publications and newsletters
   b. COST: 3 per county initially, at $100 each = $1200
   c. TIMELINE: Fall 2006
4. PDA purchases (Glenda)
   a. Potential need is all agents utilize the system
   b. COST: $500 each x 8 =$4,000
   c. TIMELINE: Fall 2006
5. Teleconference technology (Glenda)
   a. COST: $60 per month (5-7¢ per minute per person)
   b. TIMELINE: in use immediately
6. Online chat rooms and Q/A sessions (David)
   a. BUDGET: To be determined through work with Web site specialist
   b. TIMELINE: Spring 2007
7. Evaluation cards for programs (Tandy)
   a. BUDGET: $100
   b. TIMELINE: September 1, 2005
8. Creation of a contact database (Ross)
   a. BUDGET: Office professional time
   b. TIMELINE: Begin work as evaluation cards come back from fall 2005 agent programs

Strategy B:

1. Template for program announcement flyers
   a. BUDGET: Office professional time
   b. TIMELINE: Fall 2005, as agent's fall programming begins
2. See strategy A – item #2
3. Single agent elevator speech
   a. BUDGET: Agent time
   b. TIMELINE: December agent meeting
4. Staff name tags (Glenda)
   a. BUDGET: $85 ($5 each from the university)
   b. TIMELINE: July 15, 2005
5. Napkins for district programs (Tandy)
   a. BUDGET: $160 for 4,000
   b. TIMELINE: February 2006
6. River Valley apparel (Glenda)
   a. Will annually reorder one article per staff member
   b. BUDGET: $375
   c. TIMELINE: July 5, 2005
7. Thank you cards (Glenda)
   a. BUDGET: $65 for 8 packs of 25 cards
   b. TIMELINE: July 1, 2005
8. Consistent district references per phone and print
   a. BUDGET: Staff time
   b. TIMELINE: July 1, 2005
9. Office signage (Glenda)
   a. Will pursue grant to help fund
   b. BUDGET: $500 (indoor and outdoor needs)
   c. TIMELINE: January 2006 and January 2007
10. See #8 above
11. Consistent stationery/business cards/mail enclosures/sticky notes
    a. BUDGET: $500
    b. TIMELINE: July 1, 2005
12. See #11 above
13. MAGNETS
    a. BUDGET: $400
    b. TIMELINE: May 2007
14. See #11 above
15. Informal district brochure (Kira)
    a. BUDGET: $300
    b. TIMELINE: January 1, 2006
16. Color and font palette (Kira)
    a. BUDGET: $0
    b. TIMELINE: January 1, 2006
17. Single impact report template – basic board report form (Glenda)
    a. BUDGET: Staff time
    b. TIMELINE: September 2005 Board Meeting
    c. Utilization of state database form
       i. BUDGET & TIMELINE: Already in place

Strategy C:

1. News column district header
   a. BUDGET: Staff time – minimal cost to place on a CD or KSU publication
   b. TIMELINE: December 2005
2. Contact newspapers for column information preferences (Glenda)
   a. BUDGET: Staff time
   b. TIMELINE: September 30, 2005
3. Professional staff photos (Glenda)
   a BUDGET: $285
   b. TIMELINE: June 16, 2005
4. Designate staff member to coordinate news releases/columns
   a. New office professional
   b. BUDGET: Staff time
   c. TIMELINE: September 30, 2005
5. K-State news writing training
   a. BUDGET: Staff time – registration fee $?
   b. TIMELINE: As offered
6. Acquire AP stylebook for offices
   a. BUDGET $60 (Prairie Journal $20)
   b. TIMELINE: Following training
7. See #6 above
8. Acquire radio PSAs (Tandy)
   a. BUDGET: Publication allocation
   b. TIMELINE: February 2006
9. Agent FAQ sheets (Kira)
   a. BUDGET: Minimal staff time
   b. TIMELINE: December 2005
10. Target news releases
    a. BUDGET: Minimal cost
    b. TIMELINE: Process in place by Fall 2006

Strategy D:

1. Legislative listening sessions and legislator preference for communications (Tandy)
   a. BUDGET: Minimal
   b. TIMELINE: November 2006
2. County commissioners reports
   a. BUDGET: Minimal time for agents per month
   b. TIMELINE: November 2006
3. Impact report/postcards
   a. BUDGET: $200
   b. TIMELINE: Seasonal – attempt Christmas 2005
4. See #3 above
5. See #1 above
6. Invite stakeholders to annual picnic
   a. BUDGET: $6.50 per meal – 125+ = $850
   b. TIMELINE: June or August 2006
7. See #6 above
8. Deliver programs to civic organizations/ school boards
   a. BUDGET: Staff time
   b. TIMELINE: As requested at event times – early winter 2006-2007

Strategy E:

1. Staff training to serve diverse audience
   a. BUDGET: $100 per agent per year registration/expense
   b. TIMELINE: Immediately and throughout plan implementation as opportunities arise
      i. Goal to have each agent participate in one opportunity by the summer of 2007

VIII. Assessments:

- Track number of Web site hits
- Focus group perception study
  ~ To evaluate knowledge of River Valley District two years following districting
- PDC survey of district awareness in two-year time frame
- Track numbers of primary audiences enrolled in programs/visiting office/sending e-mails/calling, etc. (total contacts)
- Monitor public/stakeholder support through positive commissioner feedback
- Rate of usage of publications in publication racks placed in "nontraditional" locations
- Monitor number of calls asking specifically for district specialist (versus the caller's past county generalist)
- Track percentage of phone calls/e-mails that reach the necessary agents in one transfer or less (To test efficiency of communications system and public knowledge of new district structure)
- Rate of participation among residents in technological communications (IMs, teleconferences, etc.)