**Marketing First Step**

Marketing is generally all about growing public knowledge of your business. Business occurs when people want to turn to an expert to handle their problem. Successful business marketing is about making your potential customers believe you are that expert.

**Marketing Context**

There is a good side to marketing your business today. You have more ways to market your business today than at any time in history, and the cost of marketing is more affordable than ever before.

There is also a bad side to marketing your business. Competition for people’s time, attention and dollars has never been greater. People are bombarded, not only from your competitors, but from almost unlimited sources across a very wide range of platforms. You must prepare your message well and produce information they seek regularly to stand out in your market area.

**Internal Alignment**

Within that context you’re not only making every effort to reach potential members, but you’re also working hard to make sure everyone in your organization is supporting that same effort. Here’s a quick list of actions you and your association should take before even considering marketing ideas:

* Establish your marketing goals. Set out exactly what you expect your marketing effort to produce for your business and when it should occur.
* Set your priorities and list them in order. This will give you a guideline for your marketing efforts.
* Create a list of objectives. These are firm points in the effort that lets you measure your success or shows you the need to modify your effort.
* Define ways to measure your progress. You can’t turn things around overnight. But you still must have targets to hit.
* Decide how to fund your priorities and provide the time to achieve your goals. Put your money and time where it is most needed.
* Build a way to regularly measure your results and make needed course corrections. Use the objectives you’ve set earlier, along with their measures, to clearly examine progress. If progress isn’t happening, find out why—and do something about it.

Marketing experts often talk about the marketing funnel. When you have finished with this list, you have designed the funnel. Now it’s time to explore how, when and where to use it.