



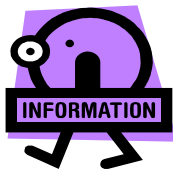
*BME Learning  
Network -  
Build2Impact*

**Communication and Marketing  
Strategy**

**2008 - 2009**

## A Communications and Marketing Strategy to support the BME Learning Network to develop awareness of the Build2Impact Programme

Effective communications and marketing will be keys to the success of the Build2Impact Project especially because the project and its work will have so many key stakeholders with different interests and because the outputs and outcomes are going to be monitored by different organisations and Funding Agents.



In addition, a clear idea about who needs information on the project, its proposed activities and the outcomes to be achieved and how best to communicate with the range of audiences will help to shape the project.

The main components of the communication and marketing strategy therefore need to be:

- Communications and marketing aims and objectives – what and why are we trying to communicate?
- Target audiences – who are we communicating with
- Communications and Marketing Tools – what methods of communications are appropriate to our audience?
- Timing and frequency – when and how often to communicate or market
- Responsibilities – who is going to communicate?
- Communication and marketing quality – key concepts for excellent communication



## Communication and Marketing Strategy Aims and Objectives

### **Aim**

To strengthen the relationship between the Build2Impact project and its users, potential users, key stakeholders and supporters and to develop a relationship with those who can support the delivery of the projects aims and objectives.

## Objectives

- To strengthen the relationship between the project its users and supporters
- Provide key stakeholders with information about the intention, activities and outcomes of the project
- Make contact with decision makers, making them aware of the project and work with them to develop a vibrant BME VCS
- To assure quality and accountability at all stages of the project by remaining mindful that others will have access to information about the project
- Actively develop and support continuous improvement of the project by developing a shared understanding with the key stakeholders through appropriate communication
- To engage with members and potential members who have skills and interest in being involved and promoting the benefits of the project



### Why the Network and Build2Impact?

WY BME VCS organisations are delivering learning and skills services to the most deprived and hard to reach communities in the sub-region. Members feel disadvantaged when trying to access funding for learning and skills delivery with mainstream partners.



Members feel as individual organisations that they need to develop their knowledge, skills and confidence to enable them to access contracts, tenders and funding at local level. Through Build2Impact they believe that they can work together to develop some common frameworks which will enable them to obtain the necessary accreditation for their organisation and staff which will support funding applications and improve the quality of services for the users. Additionally, to enable them to secure larger tenders/commissions/funding, supporting longer term sustainability, there is a view that coming together as consortium under common structures will.



Public Sector commissioners and providers are committed to the development and sustainability of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector and understand the qualities they bring to the delivery of services at the front line. However, the ability and capability of sector to compete for

and secure funding is severely hampered because they lack the basic infrastructure (accreditations, systems, processes and people), performance measures and impact materials to successfully navigate the commissioning and tendering processes. In order to support the VCS structure to improve its position the Public Sector has already committed significant funds to turn everyone's aspirations for a strong, vibrant and successful 3<sup>rd</sup> sector into reality.



## Sector Analysis

The Networks marketing strategy takes advantage of two concurrent trends: The needs of the membership to secure long term sustainable funding, and the aspiration of Funding Agencies to allocate funding to the BME sector. However, it is clear that there are already organisations within the sector that have the desire to provide the support to BME communities and as such have generated income to deliver projects.

The BME Learning Network has a unique position in the regional market following its decision to concentrate on the development of BME organisations in the delivery of learning and skills. However, it is also clear that the major funding streams are focused on improving the educational level, achievement and employment position of people within the community, all of which are underpinned by learning and skills programmes. It is the view that struggling Networks will seize the opportunity to move into the learning and skills sector therefore this unique position may be disappear.

It is important therefore that the quality and applicability of the Networks offer is excellent and that the members are a major vehicle in marketing the services of the Network as they benefit from its work.

It is also important the Network, its membership and its impact are clearly communicated to strategic influencers and funding Agencies so that the Network becomes the provider of first choice.

## Mission of the Network and Build2Impact

The Build2Impact Project is a key element in of making the BME Learning Networks mission a reality.

**“Connecting and supporting the BME VCS learning providers in West Yorkshire to create a powerful force to influence the learning and skills agenda”**

To deliver this mission, the Network has committed itself to



- developing and delivering infrastructure support services
- work together as Consortia of organisations to secure larger more complex commissions
- developing a strategic voice to represent the needs of the sector

**Key messages about the Network and Build2Impact**

The project is about:

- developing the capacity, infrastructure and skills of BME VCS sector in West Yorkshire to enable them to secure contracts, tenders and funding to deliver learning and skills services at local level
- providing practical support, information and guidance at a level which suits the organisation to develop their capacity to succeed
- enabling the BME VCS to have an even greater impact on the lives of the communities they work with through partnership working and collective approaches
- creating the platform for the BME VCS to influence the accessibility, availability and appropriateness of learning and skills provision locally, regionally and nationally

**Target Audience**

Many different groups and individuals are interested in the activities and results of the Network and the Build2Impact Project. However, people are busy and increasing overloaded with information from many different sources. For the Networks and the Build2Impact messages to break through the clutter, information distribution must be based on the needs of the target audience, not on the priorities of the Network or Build2Impact. Therefore the information and messages communicated and the means of communication will differ according to the specific audience(s) to inform or influence. For our communication to be effective therefore the audiences have been selected and will be directly targeted.



The Network and the Build2impact project essential needs to communicate with six key audiences, however there be some interrelationship between some of the audiences:

- Existing Network Members
- Potential members
- Statutory and Public Sector providers at local, regional and national level
- Funding bodies e.g. Big Lottery
- Other networks
- Friends and supporters

## Communication and Marketing Tools

### The visual brand and identity

A brand has the capacity to convey considerable meaning to a target group. Research has shown that the association with the meaning of the brand can be more important than the actual service being offered. In such cases the emotion conveyed by the brand can often be the basis for choice.



The Network has already developed a brand which is starting to become identifiable. It is the intention that the Build2Impact Project uses the Networks brand with a slight addition to give it a visual identity. This will ensure that there is no confusion about the strategic position and owners of the project.

There are many and varied communication and marketing tools which can be used to deliver the key information and messages to the target audiences. Some examples include



- Paper communication – newsletters, leaflets, pamphlets, etc
- Electronic communications – emails, web sites, notices
- Face to face communication- seminars, conferences, meetings, demonstrations, open days

There are also communication systems already established by other organisations which can be used, such as regional/local newsletters and placing notices on other organisations web sites and within their newsletters.

For more exposure there is also an opportunity to develop a strategy to work with the press and media to increase the profile of the projects and the outcomes being achieved.

## Timing and Frequency

The timing and frequency of communication and marketing will depend on a number of factors related to the availability of information, the needs of the audience, the resources of the project and the time that different communication and marketing tools take to deliver and to get to the required audience. The most important thing is to optimise the opportunities of communication and not simply to send out information because we have it.



Some important things for this communication plan to recognise are:

- Understanding the times when key decisions are being taken by stakeholders e.g. public sector providers set budgets for the coming year in early Autumn and therefore talking about funding for the coming year needs to take place before the end of the summer
- Waiting for the appropriate time to influence decisions rather than diluting messages by sending out information when the audience is not ready
- Maximising the use of existing communications and marketing methods to reduce costs.



## Responsibilities

The responsibilities for each stage of preparing communication and marketing materials and stages leading up to communication will need to be decided on an activity by activity basis with the target audience in mind. There will be a responsibility to determine the task to be undertaken, allocating the tasks and setting deadlines on an activity by activity basis. The tasks required when using different communication and marketing tools will be different for different activities.

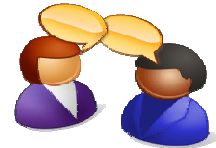


Where appropriate the Project Co-ordinator and Administrator will lead on deciding what, who, how and when communication and marketing will be carried out. Where there is media interest then this will be within the remit of the Chair of the Executive Committee or a nominated representative.

## Quality of Communication and Marketing

To ensure that quality is applied to the communications and marketing at all stages the

- Clarity – target audience must understand the communication and have limited opportunities to misunderstand. The use of technical terms and jargon therefore will be minimised which will also aid any translation or interpretation of materials which need to take place.
- Consistency – messages about the project must be consistent over time. Everyone needs to be saying the same things to minimise confusion and opportunities for mischief making.
- Tone and appeal – the messages communicated may be straightforward, reassuring, challenging or even controversial depending on the audience. Clarity about the response required before communication will help to set the tone and appeal.
- Credibility – in all communication the Network and the Project must be believable and trustworthy, and should be recognised for its credibility.
- Openness – the ongoing success of the Network and the project will depend on the support from key stakeholders, response from decision makers and the ability of the project to respond to the needs of stakeholders. It will be important therefore to demonstrate that the Network and the project are open to comment, positive and critical feedback and able to listen to and use new ideas.



## Monitoring and Review

The communication and marketing strategy will be monitored on a quarterly basis and amended accordingly. Activities contained within it will be reflected in the work programmes of the responsible officers.

The Executive Committee will receive a report on



the progress of the communications and marketing strategy on a quarterly basis.

### Budget



Although costs will be incurred in the initial launch of materials it is hoped to demonstrate that the spending has been value for money and created the impact required

Costs will be incurred at the following stages:

- developing the creative brief / brand
- photography and design of literature
- design of web-site
- print (promotional leaflets/literature/advertising)
- staff time and travel
- events

### Accessibility & Equality

Communications and marketing methods must pay regard to hard to reach and vulnerable groups of people. This includes any translation and interpretation requirements. All communications and marketing will be in plain English.

### Sustainability

When deciding on the form of communication there will be consideration of the environmental impact of the method used. The use of natural resources will be minimised.

