



Taking Care of your Business: Integrating Business and Marketing Tools for Success in Social Welfare Policy

Elaine T. Jurkowski, Ph.D., LCSW, MBA

Social Work program, School of Human Sciences, College of Health & Human Sciences, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, United States.

Article Details

Article Type: Commentary Article

Received date: 06th June, 2026

Accepted date: 11th June, 2026

Published date: 13th June, 2026

***Corresponding Author:** Elaine T. Jurkowski, Ph.D., LCSW, MBA, Social Work program, School of Human Sciences, College of Health & Human Sciences, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, United States.

Citation: Jurkowski, E. T., (2026). Taking Care of your Business: Integrating Business and Marketing Tools for Success in Social Welfare Policy. *J Soci Work Welf Policy*, 4(1): 203. doi: <https://doi.org/10.33790/jswwp1100203>.

Copyright: ©2026, This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0](#), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Introduction

As social work private practitioners or manager a not-for profit agency and interested in building a thriving practice/agency? Are you using principles of business management to plan and execute your agency policies and practices? If not, you may want to consider updating your agency policies and practices to include principles from our business colleagues and marketing specialists [1].

“Why” you ask?

- Utilizing marketing strategies to promote your business/practice to your target audience can help you grow and build your niche of social work policies/practice.
- Utilizing business practices and strategies to promote yourself and your business portfolio is more effective when intentional, but also useful to grow and expand your social welfare policies, practices and agency.
- Marketing practices can help you to build brand equity and identify products/services unique to your agency which can be of interest to others and make you distinct from other private practices or human service agencies.

Now that you are aware of the importance of building marketing tools into your practice as social workers and within social welfare, how do you begin to design a marketing plan that can be effective for your particular agency and niche? Consider some of the following initial broad strategies to begin, and then we will move onto some specific marketing strategies. A first step is to consider a mission statement [2].

If you have never thought of a mission statement or ask what it is, it is basically your “elevator speech” which helps you define what you do, how you do it and to whom. It also incorporates your vision, so prospective clientele knows what your agency/practice serves and

represents. It helps to align your values and goals with your prospective clients.

Secondly, consider, “what is the customer/client’s need and your solution? Presenting a solution to one with a dilemma or need will only help reinforce the need for your programs/services. For example if you much expertise in working with middle aged adults and cognitive behavioral therapy, you may want to consider marketing your services to include what issues do people experience in their middle adulthood, and how can you help address the personal crises and/or challenges that they experience. In addition to counseling, you may also want to offer an online educational website and a series of support groups that meet during one’s lunch hour. These additional services become a part of your marketing plan as well, so that potential clientele become attracted to your practice as compared to a competitor because of what you can uniquely offer as value added from your practices.

Thirdly, consider the target market and factors such as demographics, your location and the reach of potential clientele within the target area. Demographics become important because you may not have the “reach” of potential clients if you locate your office in a neighborhood strip mall that caters to a mature demographic, when your expertise is working with young families and children. Knowing the population base and demographics of the community is also critical when trying to build a successful practice.

Fourthly, consider “who are your competitors? Who else within the area where you plan to carry out a private practice is also working in your area? What can you offer that is unique from your competition in terms of programs and services and/or the overall counseling experience? This step can also include branding – that is when people see your name or logo, what is distinct about it that brings people to recognize you and what your agency/practice has to offer and name

recognition., which in turn may be something distinct from your competitors. Once these initial steps are considered and developed as a part of your agency/practice realm, you then may want to go on and consider specific marketing strategies [3, 4].

Marketing Strategies

In today's current world of information exchange and explosion, it is quite typical and logical to ask "What types of marketing strategies yield results?" In many of my circles, the first idea that comes to mind is the use of "Facebook", "Twitter" and "Instagram". While popular among some specific age group and demographics, one should ask, if in fact these are the best strategies for the market or type of client you are searching for to be a potential client within your agency or private practice? For example, in a practice which addresses the needs of older adults in rural communities, these digital marketing and media strategies may not be very realistic, since many older adults within rural areas may not frequent Facebook, nor may they have the technology to even think about this as venues where they would look for solutions to their needs. While digital media strategies are on the rise, once again, one must consider their market and potential clientele and think about where would be the best approach to reach the group they are interested in reaching. In some cases radio advertising and marketing may be effective. While younger people gravitate to their technology and devices to keep up with the news, people who are middle aged to older adults are still influenced by newspapers and can be reached through advertisements within the newspaper. Other ways to market your private practice and services may be through community connections, and guest speaking engagements. Public speaking engagements, puts you in front of audiences of potential clients, and can be a low budget approach to reaching your potential clientele. Local public libraries, service clubs, churches and recreation facilities are always looking for guests or interesting speakers for meetings and events. This can also help you build your image and name recognition and create a market niche for your services/agency and promote social welfare [5].

For many of our colleagues, the idea of borrowing ideas from our business community may seem very foreign, especially since the field of social work is often perceived quite differently than the business community's goals and practices. However, success within our field of practices and within the realm of social work can benefit from integrating business acumen and marketing tools into our private practice or agency's practice and operations.

Dr. Jurkowski currently teaches at SIU Carbondale, and has been exploring the integration of business acumen into social welfare policy/ practice as a strategy toward successful policy/practice/ agency management.

References

1. Ardiansyah, Muhammad. (2024). Integrating Corporate Social Responsibility into Business Strategy: Creating Sustainable Value. *Involvement International Journal of Business*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.62569/ijjb.v1.1>.
2. Chao, P., Dolnicar, S., & Lazarevski, K., (2009), "Marketing in non-profit organizations: an international perspective". *International Marketing Review*, 26 (3). 275–291. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1108/02651330910960780>
3. Clark, T. (2023). Marketing Management Course Materials. Southern Illinois University Carbondale.
4. Gee, H. G., Nahm, P. I., Cannella, A. A., (2022). Not-for-Profit Organizations: A Multi-Disciplinary Review and Assessment From a Strategic Management Perspective. *Journal of Management*. 49, (1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/014920632211165>
5. Jurkowski, E.T. (2023). *Integrating Business Acumen into Social Work Practice and Policy Development*. A presentation to the National Association of Social Workers, Carbondale Illinois.