

Sustainability Discussion Guide

Marketing Your Program: Creating the Sales Document

Sustainability planning requires a series of logical steps that move from the project's launching to its results, and on to its future funding. Project Managers are often charged with demonstrating the *effectiveness* of what is being sustained—showing that an innovation worked, specific outcomes that have been achieved while proving to prospective funders that the innovation was successful and should be refunded. Also, they are charged with articulating the organizational *impact* of the innovation. This discussion guide is intended to assist programs think through the critical elements in a marketing approach, while providing guidance about what to include – and what not to.

A marketing document needs to make the case for continuation funding for the RPG project in simple, clear language that addresses these elements:

What is the project?

Materials should include brief background and context for RPG initiative. Content should stress the partnership aspect. For example, the project cuts across systems, and not a siloed approach.

Who does it benefit?

Describe the numbers served and the clients

How does it do it?

Cite key strategies or services in lay terms.

What problem does it address, and what data is available on how serious the problem is?

If the costs of the problem are available, cite them

What are the benefits of the project?

Be prepared to describe how much the intervention improves client outcomes compared to the baselines in the current system. If there are systems changes as well, highlight those. Funders are often interested in how the interventions contribute to their own stated priorities. For example, how does it respond to the stated priorities of *child welfare* i.e. keeping children at home, reunification, recurrence of abuse and neglect, differential response, family involvement or *treatment* i.e. more effective treatment, faster engagement in treatment, fewer repeat customers? Dependency courts will want to know how quickly do parents move through the court system and how do their outcomes

compare with other court clients? Other child-serving agencies want to know how are children helped?

Why should the project be continued or expanded?

Cite accomplishments, both process and outcomes. Why is this a better way of doing business? Will this have a broader systemic impact (or the possibility of if the project is continued) than just the services in this initiative.

The Sales Document

Once you have gathered the material needed to develop your program marketing strategy, marketing materials should:

- Avoid phrases that are highly abstract such as “improve parenting,” “cross-training,” and “collaborative efforts.”
- Avoid the passive tense: “services will be provided,” or “evaluation was presented by the team.”(Word processing software can be set to flag all passive voice sentences.)
- Explain things using action words such as “completed treatment,” “attending preschool,” and “children returned home to their parents.”
- Avoid jargon that policy leaders, the media, and the general public are unlikely to understand, such as “collaborative capacity” or “interagency protocols.”

The marketing document should be no more than two pages long, backed up by additional evidence that specialized funders will find credible. A one-page version should be available. As the project builds up additional data on its effectiveness, incorporate the recent data to remain current, and does not become outdated.