

The Promotions Mix

In the commercial world the Promotions mix tends to include seven modes of promotion: personal selling, sales promotion (which covers money-off promotions, competitions, free accessories, coupons, buy-one-get-one-free), public relations (the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics), direct mail, trade exhibitions, advertising and sponsorship.

Promotions can be plotted along an axis of confrontation vs collaboration; with time set against involvement of the public.

1. At one of end of the spectrum are protesting and activism strategies. These include direct action.
2. Public education and mobilisation tends to involve getting large numbers of people to write, petition, march, join or otherwise show their support for a cause.
3. Litigation is a particular (in fact the original) form of rights-based advocacy.
4. Persuasion, lobbying often involving high-level networking are classic arts in policy influence and usually sit under the public affairs departments of larger companies.
5. Action-research and model programmes, often with a strong evaluation function to learn lessons, is a key way to show that a proposed new approach or policy change can work.
6. Coalition, constituency and campaigning / influencing network building is a core way to increase impact.
7. Public relations and communications (sometimes including advertising and marketing) and publications.
8. The media is a key way of communicating, including high-brow editorials or opinion pieces in broadsheets or trade press, or papers in academic journals.
9. Citizen engagement, consultation, participation and consensus in decision-making and policy delivery.

It is important to consider these forms of promotions in relation to the Policy strategy quadrant which emphasises the degree of confrontation / collaboration and the degree of interest vs evidence base. Thus different organisations may choose the same overall methods, but may use them in very different ways, with different language. The table below illustrates what these differences might look like in practice.

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Area of action	Advising organisation chooses...	Activist organisation chooses...
Communication and publications	Policy briefings	Maildrops
Media	Opinion leaders in broadsheets, trade-press	Coverage of publicity stunts in tabloids
Collaboration	Partnerships	Campaign coalitions
Lobbying	Private clubs	Petitions

