Creating marketing messages that will be heard

1. Identify your target audiences. The same messages do not typically work for everyone.

2. Figure out what matters to each target audience. You want your message to speak directly to their goals. Keep the focus on them.

3. State concisely how your CEP will help your target audience. Your audience needs to know immediately if your message is for them or not. How can you help them meet a challenge, resolve a problem, or make an improvement? This information should be prominent. It is the reason people will want to read more about your program.

4. Know, don't guess.   Collect and use data that is important to each distinct audience.

5. Reinforce your message with statements from satisfied students, teachers and administrators. These help to make your services real to your target audience and show that you can deliver on your promises.

Common marketing pitfalls:

- Leading with a description of your services rather than a statement of how your services will help your target audience.

- Using too many words. Less is often more in communications.

- Assuming that your reader will read every word you write. You have only a few seconds to secure your reader's attention.

- Taking your message to your audience without proofreading it. Grammar and spelling mistakes will destroy your credibility with some audiences.

- Emphasizing a catchy phrase over a clear message. Your goal is to explain your service in a simple, understandable way. The cleverest phrase will be wasted if no one gets it.

- Changing your marketing message just for the sake of change. You might be tired of using the same message but that doesn't mean it isn't working. Remember Coke's fiasco!

- Having unrealistic expectations about the results of any single promotional effort. Plan to deliver consistent marketing messages to key audiences throughout the year. Successful marketing requires careful planning and a sustained effort.