PURPOSE

1. Provide guidance for strategic planning of mentoring programs
2. Provide tools for marketing mentoring programs to different stakeholders
3. Supply different marketing strategies for different media

This chapter has been adapted from the High School/High Tech Program Manual (National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth, 2003).

WHAT IS MARKETING?

The American Marketing Association defines marketing as “a set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders” (American Marketing Association, n.d.). As this definition suggests, marketing involves a variety of interrelated, ongoing activities that permeate an organization’s operations. Marketing activities range from creating a service or product that meets the target market’s needs, to promoting the product, to making sure that the customers are satisfied.

People sometimes mistakenly equate marketing with its individual components, such as advertising, sales, or public relations. Although these components may be important in an overall marketing effort, strategic marketing takes a much broader view. It involves designing services or products that meet a specific market’s needs and then getting those services or products to the target market or customer.

Conduct a Google or Amazon search — or take a trip to a local library or bookstore — and you will find an overwhelming selection of books and other materials on the subject of marketing. Most of these resources offer excellent information about marketing methods and tools. However, none will offer advice directly applicable to marketing a specific mentoring program. This chapter does just that. Marketing is embedded throughout Chapters 5 and 6 of this document, through the Foundations for Successful Youth Mentoring. This chapter presents some basic marketing principles and offers ideas for strategies can be applied to a mentoring program.

Why market your program? Establishing a mentoring program is an important accomplishment, but strategic program marketing can be the key to the program’s long-term viability. Whether a program already exists or is just now getting underway, strategic marketing...
planning can help it to flourish and make a real difference in the lives of the young people the program is intended to serve.

Before deciding how to market a mentoring program, you must first determine why the program needs to be marketed. In the context of mentoring, the ultimate marketing goals might be to

- **Increase** career exploration and career development opportunities for youth with disabilities in the community;
- **Inform** stakeholders about the benefits they will reap by participating in the program;
- **Educate** people in business and industry about the advantages of employing persons with disabilities, including youth with disabilities;
- **Increase** the program’s visibility among youth with disabilities and their families, employers, school system staff, funding sources, and staff at One-Stop Career Centers and other community agencies;
- **Persuade** youth and prospective stakeholders to participate or “invest” in the program; and,
- **Establish** and convey a clear program identity.

Although the prospect of doing “strategic marketing” may sound intimidating at first, keep in mind that effectively marketing a mentoring program does not require a degree in business or decades of marketing experience. Rather, it requires enthusiasm, resourcefulness, persistence, thoughtful planning, and an ability to persuade others to become part of the program. Also keep in mind that marketing is as much art as science. Each situation is unique, so there is no right or wrong approach to marketing — only more effective or less effective marketing!

**BECOME A STRATEGIC MARKETER**

Corporate giants spend billions of dollars to market their products and services. Even mid-sized companies dedicate as much as 10% of their revenues to packaging and advertising their wares. Fortunately, the task of marketing a mentoring program requires more ingenuity than monetary outlay.

The section below suggests a step-by-step process for planning and implementing program marketing efforts. In some cases, some of the suggested steps overlap and may be conducted at the same time. It may also be the case that some steps need to be revisited while gathering information and gaining experience.

The information gathered and developed while proceeding through these steps should be compiled into a detailed, written strategic marketing plan. Keep in mind that a marketing plan can be as simple or complex as desired, but should be realistic and achievable. Also keep in mind that the plan should not be set in stone, but should evolve as the mentoring program and marketing needs change.

**FOUR STEPS TO MARKETING YOUR PROGRAM**

**Step 1: Analyze the situation.** Before diving into marketing a mentoring program, it is important to analyze the current situation. Gathering information from a variety of sources will give you a better understanding of the current environment and the marketing challenges and opportunities of the program. It is useful to understand the hiring, retention, and competition challenges that local employers face. Understanding the internal and external environments will also add credibility when speaking with colleagues, employers, or others about the value of the mentoring program. The “situation analysis” should focus on both the strengths and weaknesses of the internal (or organizational) situation and resources and the threats of the external environment that may influence the marketing strategy and program directions. Take notes while collecting information and then compile the notes into a written analysis.

Sources of information for your internal and external situation analysis may include the following:

- The advisory committee or board of directors.
- Co-workers.
- Youth with disabilities and their families.
- Current employer contacts.
• The business sections of local newspapers.
• The Yellow Pages or other telephone directories.
• The local Chamber of Commerce and other business organizations (e.g., the Rotary Club).
• The reference section of your public library.
• State and local professional and trade associations.
• Community-based organizations serving persons with disabilities.
• Employment service agencies (e.g., the local Vocational Rehabilitation agency and local One-Stop Service Center).
• Other local, state, and federal government agencies (e.g., the U.S. Census Bureau).
• The Internet.

As part of the situation analysis, be sure to visit employers in the community. Develop a contact database (see box) and plan to conduct site visits with known or new contacts. Let the employers know you are with XYZ Mentoring Program and that your work involves assisting youth with disabilities in exploring career opportunities. Initially, the focus should be on learning about a particular industry, although such visits also offer opportunities to get to know employer representatives — and for them to get to know the program.

Step 2: Define the marketing goals and objectives. Before choosing the specific marketing strategies, it is important to determine what the goals are. Use the information gathered through the situation analysis to define the goals and objectives. For example, if it is learned that most youth with disabilities in the area are aware of or already participate in the mentoring program, but that few employers are familiar with the program, it would be best to focus efforts on employers, not youth.

The marketing goals should define the overall changes you hope to accomplish in the process of marketing your program. For example, does the program hope to

• increase the number of youth with disabilities who participate in the program?

• build parents’ awareness and support of the program?
• recruit local advisory committee members?
• obtain a grant or other funding to operate the program?
• increase the number of mentors who are individuals with a disability?
• identify guest speakers who are also individuals with disabilities working in diverse careers?
• engage “untapped” mentor recruitment sources in the community?

After the overall marketing goals have been defined, write down objectives that describe the steps that must be taken to achieve each goal. Unlike goals, which are broad statements of what the program hopes to achieve, marketing objectives should be measurable and time-specific. For example, one of the marketing goals might be to establish new opportunities for the program participants. Associated objectives might be to

• increase the number of mentors at XYZ Corporation to three within the next year; and

• establish at least five summer internship opportunities at new genetics research firms in the community by April.

Step 3: Identify your target market. To define the target market, think first about the broad “universe” of “customers” (e.g., youth with disabilities, family members, school staff, employers, foundations, and employment service agencies), and then divide the universe into narrower market “segments” (e.g., members of a congregation active in your community, or members of a community service group such as Kiwanis or a Lions Club). Refer to the situation analysis and the marketing goals and objectives to help define the target markets for the mentoring program.

If the resources and time are limited, it may be helpful to focus initially only on the one or two market segments that will give the mentoring program the greatest benefit. Channeling efforts to reach only those segments will help focus the efforts and ensure that the program can achieve the goals with the resources.
available. With time, it is possible to expand the program’s efforts to target other markets as experience is gained and as the program grows.

Features to benefits  Because mentoring programs rely on a variety of partners, it is important for marketing efforts to be targeted. This is achieved by translating the program features into customer benefits. Features are defined in terms of products or services. A car, for example, may feature a manual transmission and power accessories such as windows, door locks, and radio antenna.

The customer, on the other hand, defines benefits. Depending on the customer, the benefits of a manual transmission may be in handling and responsiveness or in improved gas mileage. Power accessories may represent luxury or may simply be elements of convenience. Again, the benefits are determined by the customer. Think about express mail. Most people would think companies dealing with express mail are in the shipping business, but in essence they are in the reliability business. Many of its customers are businesses that want the absolute, positive assurance that their valued shipments will be delivered the next day or even the same day. These customers are so motivated by reliability that they will pay a substantial premium over other shippers, simply for their own peace of mind.

Now, think about the services provided by the mentoring program. How could these “features” be thought of as “benefits” to the audience base? This becomes your marketing “script.” Consider the following program benefits for potential stakeholder groups:

- **Schools**  Research findings on mentoring indicate that youth who participate in programs that include stand-alone mentoring or mentoring as one component of a comprehensive intervention have improved outcomes in school attendance, class performance, and postsecondary participation.

- **Employers**  Employers involved with youth mentoring have found that mentoring increases employee and company morale; that it develops skills needed for management; that it enhances the image of the company; that it gets the company involved in the educational community and the community as a whole; that it informs and increases the competence of employees; and, most importantly, that it assists in the development of a competent future workforce.

- **Workforce Development Organizations**  Career-focused mentoring helps to bring new workers into the American mainstream. Success for these organizations means that workers are employed in jobs that offer the promise of financial stability. Mentoring strategies that engage business with other community stakeholders helps to revitalize the community while building partnerships among schools, communities, and businesses to develop a more competent and prepared workforce.

These are just three examples of how potential benefits can be marketed to school, employer, and workforce development stakeholder groups. For each stakeholder group you identify as part of your marketing plan, you can also customize benefits that resonate with the mission and goals of a particular audience.

**Step 4: Develop and implement a marketing action plan.**  A carefully designed and written action plan will serve as a road map for the marketing efforts, helping the mentoring program get to its desired destination. The methods and techniques chosen to include in the action plan will depend on many factors, including the program vision, the solidity of the existing relationships with employers and others in the community, the size of the program and target market, the human resources, and the budget.

Your written marketing action plan should provide clear, concise direction for your marketing efforts and help you to measure the success of your efforts. The action plan should do all of the following:

- State the broad marketing strategies (e.g., personal contact or media relations) and tactics (specific activities selected to implement the strategies) you plan to use;

- Establish target dates for each activity;

- Assign responsibilities and define individuals’ involvement;

- Specify how your marketing efforts will be evaluated, as suggested below.
As you begin to develop an action plan, think carefully about your marketing goals and objectives and carefully choose strategies and tactics that will help you to achieve those goals. Sometimes, a targeted approach aimed at reaching specific types of employers (government agencies or small graphic arts firms) and involving only one or two strategies and a few tactics will suffice. In other situations, you may find that a broader approach that involves several strategies and tactics will be more effective. As you draft your action plan, be sure to solicit input from your advisory committee, board, colleagues, and trusted representatives of your target markets.

Marketing strategies and tactics There are eight primary strategies for marketing your mentoring program and reaching your target audiences:

1. Personal contact
2. Print communications
3. Electronic communications
4. Media relations
5. Public service advertising
6. Paid advertising
7. Specialty advertising
8. Special event sponsorship

See Exhibit 7-1 for a detailed explanation of the marketing strategies and tactics as well as the advantages and disadvantages for each.

Don’t forget that participants in the mentoring program are your best advertisement. Involve them whenever possible in special events, personal contacts, presentations, and the design and content of ads, articles, promotional material, and websites.

A STRATEGIC MARKETING PLAN TYPICALLY INCLUDES A(N)

- **Introduction**: States the program’s mission, describes the rationale for marketing the program, and summarizes the marketing goals.
- **Situation analysis**: Describes internal and external environmental factors that may impact the program’s marketing efforts.
- **Target market**: Specifies the target audience. Marketing goals and objectives: States what the goal is in terms of broad marketing goals and more specific objectives.
- **Action plan**: Specifies the marketing strategies and tactics that will be used to achieve each goal and objective, sets target start and finish dates, and states who will be responsible for and involved in each activity.
- **Evaluation plan**: Describes how the success of the marketing efforts will be evaluated.

*(National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth, 2003)*
PERSONAL CONTACT:
- Send personalized letters and a pamphlet on your program or a business card to selected employers or others in the community to let them know about your program and to invite their participation in the program or a specific event. When sending letters, be sure to follow up by telephone to confirm receipt and answer any questions.
- Call or send e-mail messages to people with whom you have an existing relationship to let them know about your mentoring program and to invite their participation. Before making contact, know what you want to communicate and what you will ask them to do.
- Make “cold calls” to canvas employers, schools, and faith and community-based organizations; let them know about your program, and get a sense of their potential interest in becoming a part of the program. Even though you may be making cold calls, be sure to take a warm approach!
- Educate others at your school or organization about the goals and activities of the mentoring program.
- Arrange for site visits to help you better understand employers’ operations and business cultures.
- Represent your program at community, business, and professional events as a speaker, host, or exhibitor.
- Network at professional conferences, in classes you may be taking, or through your involvement in community or volunteer activities.
- Visit the websites of employers, employment service agencies, and funding sources, or call their offices to obtain e-mail addresses. Send e-mails to targeted individuals to let them know about your program.
- Volunteer to serve on boards or committees of stakeholder organizations.
- Arrange for booth space at conferences attended by youth with disabilities or their families, local employers, or community agencies.
- Attend or exhibit at high-tech trade shows to meet and network with employer representatives.
- Invite target market representatives to become a part of your local advisory committee.
- Ask your current employer partners to tell their colleagues in the business world about your program.
- Follow up after each contact by sending a letter or by calling with additional information.
- Focus on building long-term mutually beneficial relationships, rather than making a sale.

Advantages of Personal Contact:
Allows control of results; requires few material resources; allows you to use your interpersonal skills and known contacts.

Disadvantages of Personal Contact:
Can involve significant time; offers limited reach.

PRINT COMMUNICATIONS:
- Develop a program brochure or fact sheet for your program to mail with letters, to disseminate at meetings or workshops, or to post in targeted locations.
- Create an inexpensive newsletter that periodically updates current and prospective employers and others about your mentoring program and participants’ success stories. Produce the newsletter in a print format and post it on your website.
- Design and print business cards and stationery that convey a professional, consistent program image. Be sure that the business card includes your telephone and fax numbers, mailing address, and e-mail and website addresses. Carry business cards with you at all times.
- Develop program progress reports or an annual report to update stakeholders about program activities and accomplishments.
- Make copies of articles that have been published about your program, and share them with stakeholders and prospective stakeholders.

Advantages of Print Communications:
Lets you control the messages and timing; allows you to target specific audiences.

Disadvantages of Print Communications:
Requires funds for reproduction; can involve significant time for writing and layout; requires lead time to develop materials; does not involve the personal aspect of communication, which plays an important role in establishing and keeping a lasting relationship.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS:
- Create a website that informs your target markets about the program and provides your contact information. Be sure to keep the website current and add new material to encourage viewers to return to it.
- Register your website with search engines to improve the chances of the site being found when Web users conduct a search. Register for free on search engines’ sites (e.g., www.google.com) or pay to use a search engine registration service.
• Disseminate program updates, event invitations, and other information by e-mail.

• Create and send periodic e-mail newsletters.

• Create a video or CD-ROM that explains the program’s goals, activities, and successes.

• Participate in online communities such as electronic bulletin boards and listservs that are used by community organizations, schools, business leaders, workforce development representatives, or disability employment professionals.

• Ask employer partners to include information about the program and their involvement in it on their websites.

• Arrange for reciprocal website links with other organizations (e.g., website of employer partners).

• Include your program contact information and website address on your e-mail address block.

Advantages of Electronic Communications: Lets you control the messages and timing; allows instant, low-cost dissemination of messages; allows you to target specific audiences as needed (i.e., through targeted e-mail); enables interactive, around-the-clock communication.

Disadvantages of Electronic Communications: Requires expertise, technology, and time to develop, launch, and maintain a website; requires staff time to respond to e-mail inquiries, manage listservs, etc.; does not involve the personal aspect of communication, which plays an important role in establishing and keeping a lasting relationship.

MEDIA RELATIONS:

• Create news by “pitching” story ideas to local media representatives. Suggest interesting angles for covering your mentoring program, youth participants’ accomplishments, or collaboration with employers.

• Mail, fax, or e-mail news releases or media advisories to reporters, editors, or producers at local newspapers, television stations, and radio stations to inform them of program events and activities. Be sure to use the proper format and always include your telephone number and e-mail address for any questions the recipient might have.

• Write articles about program activities for placement in local newspapers, trade publications, employers’ in-house or external newsletters, or school system publications. Before writing the article, be sure to contact the publication to determine the editor’s interest in a particular story idea.

• Use — but don’t abuse — any connections you may have with local reporters, editors, or producers.

• Develop and use a database of media contacts.

• Tap into the expertise of media relations experts within your school system or ask your employers if their public relations staff can advise you on media relations.

• Invite media representatives to become a part of your local advisory committee.

• Invite reporters to attend your program events.

• Make yourself or your program participants available for media interviews.

• Talk with representatives at your local public access cable television station about being included in their programming (e.g., in a panel discussion about youth and employment).

Advantages of Media Relations: Often allows rapid dissemination of messages; involves few or no material costs; allows you to reach a broad audience.

Disadvantages of Media Relations: Provides limited control of messages and timing of message release; requires sustained work to maintain relationships with reporters and others; requires time to communicate and follow-up with reporters and others.

PUBLIC SERVICE ADVERTISING:

• Submit announcements about events, needs for volunteers, and needs for partner organizations to local newspapers, radio stations, and broadcast and cable television stations.

• Work with program partners (e.g., employers) to develop issue-oriented print or broadcast public services announcements.

• Use the proper format for the media outlet you are using. Try to limit Public Service Announcements (PSAs) for television and radio to 30 seconds and indicate the running time on the announcement.

Advantages of Public Service Advertising: Offers free promotion air time or print space; can offer wide reach.

Disadvantages of Public Service Advertising: Offers little control over timing and editing of messages; can involve costs to develop print or broadcast ads.
PAID ADVERTISING:
• Do a cost-benefit analysis for paid advertising, which can be very expensive. Investigate circulation numbers, who the readers/viewers are, and other relevant information. (Which TV channel has the highest viewership among your target audience? Should you run your display ad in the sports section, business section, or near the education columnist in the newspaper? What day of the week would be best from an exposure and impact standpoint?)
• Develop a template or “look” for your print advertisement with a graphic designer or with your mentoring program participants.
• When looking for employer partners, place paid advertising in local newspapers and on radio, broadcast television, or cable television.
• Place ads in local business magazines, newsletters, and directories.

Advantages of Paid Advertising: Lets you control messages content; lets you control where and when messages are disseminated; can offer targeted or wide reach.

Disadvantages of Paid Advertising: Involve costs to create and place ads; requires repeated ad placement to achieve the greatest impact.

SPECIAL EVENT SPONSORSHIP:
• Invite representatives of business and industry, employment service agencies, schools, and prospective or current funding organizations to an annual informational meeting or kick-off event.
• Hold an annual employer or funding organization recognition event, or present awards to employers, youth participants, and other stakeholders at an annual program banquet.
• Invite local employers, community colleges, and universities to participate in a career fair for people with disabilities.
• Create an annual, issue-oriented awareness event that involves program stakeholders.

Advantages of Special Event Sponsorship: Provides visibility in the community or targeted communities; offers opportunities to recognize and solidify support of program stakeholders; offers opportunities to make new contacts.

Disadvantages of Special Event Sponsorship: Can require funds to rent event space, produce materials, and provide refreshments; requires significant staff time for planning, logistics, and follow-up; can be negatively impacted by weather, traffic, and other problems.

SPECIALTY ADVERTISING:
• Create T-shirts, mugs, magnets, bookmarks, mouse pads, pens, or other giveaways bearing your mentoring program’s logo or slogan. Distribute the items at events, when you meet employers, or have other contact with representatives of your target markets.
• Consider selling specialty advertising items to raise funds for your program.

Advantages of Specialty Advertising: Offers low-cost program visibility; offers control over product design and distribution.

Disadvantages of Specialty Advertising: Requires funds for product design and production; requires staff time to oversee item production, distribution, and inventory.
CONTACT: CONTACT NAME IN CAPS
NAME OF ORGANIZATION/COMPANY IN CAPS
PHONE: (XXX) XXX-XXXX
FAX: (XXX) XXX-XXXX

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DATE TO BE RELEASED

TITLE OF RELEASE SHOULD SUMMARIZE THE CONTENT OF THE RELEASE IN ONE LINE
AND SHOULD BE IN CAPS, BOLD, AND CENTERED

NAME OF CITY IN CAPS AND BOLD – In the first paragraph of a news release, state the basic who, what, where, when, and why information. A release should lead with the most important information and end with the least important. As a general rule, news releases should be no longer than two pages.

Indent all new paragraphs. Paragraphs should consist of approximately three to four concise sentences. The body of a news release should be double-spaced, whereas the contact information should be single-spaced.

Print news releases on organization or company letterhead if available. Include the month (spelled out), day, and year in your dateline at the top. Provide at least one-inch margins on each side of the paper if possible.

Use three number marks (###) centered on the bottom of the page to indicate the end of a release. If an additional page is necessary, indicate that the release continues onto the next page using the following centered on the bottom of the first page: -more-. If you must continue your release onto the next page, never break a sentence up. Simply begin the next page with the entire sentence. Do not indent this sentence.

-more-

Source: The Able Trust, (n.d.).
In the “slugline,” use one to two words that summarize the entire release. These can usually be pulled from the title, and should be in all caps. Always place “Page 2” underneath. Slugline and date should be single-spaced. However, the remainder of the release body will be double-spaced.

There is no need to use letterhead for subsequent pages. Plain white paper will do fine. Your last paragraph should be separate and list contact information in case the reader would like more information.

For more information, contact ________________, at _________________. You can include telephone numbers, fax numbers, e-mail address, or mailing address.

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*Source: The Able Trust, (n.d.).*
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NAME OF ORGANIZATION/COMPANY IN CAPS
PHONE: (XXX) XXX-XXXX
FAX: (XXX) XXX-XXXX
DATE TO BE RELEASED

RE: YOUTH EMPOWERMENT SOLUTIONS ISSUES MAYOR MENTOR CHALLENGE

Youth Empowerment Solutions (YES) is a devoted group of Faith-Based and Community-Based organizations that have been funded under a grant supported by the Office of Disability of Employment Policy of the U.S. Department of Labor to promote positive employment and transition outcomes for youth with disabilities through mentoring. The goal of the mayor challenge is to involve not only good will but the work expertise of community leaders. YES representative, Pastor Jim Smith of the Coquille Praise Center says that “every responsible adult needs to be a mentor.” Coos and Curry youth who have a disability need a little assistance exploring their careers and education options. In response to these needs, YES issued a challenge to mayors in Coos and Curry Counties to become a mentor. The response from the mayors has been overwhelming. Mayors are busy people. However, their sense of commitment to excellence sets a high standard for the community. The following mayors have answered the challenge: Mayor Steve Britton of Coquille, Mayor Mac Brown of Coos Bay, Mayor Rony Mercer of North Bend, and Mayor Julie Becker of Gold Beach. These Mayors stepped up to the plate by giving one hour each week to a youth (ages 16-24) who could use some one-to-one mentoring. Joining the mayors is State District 9 representative Ann Elias. You can be a mentor too and join the YES effort to assist youth with disabilities transition into employment. Our goal is to find 150 mentors to match with 150 mentees. For information call the our office at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

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CONTACT: JESSE ABERNATHY, GRANT ADMINISTRATOR
NAME OF ORGANIZATION/COMPANY IN CAPS
PHONE:  (XXX) XXX-XXXX
FAX: (XXX) XXX-XXXX

MEDIA ADVISORY/PHOTO OPPORTUNITY
(CENTERED IN BOLD, CAPS AND LARGER FONT SIZE)

WHO: Name of the organization hosting the event
WHAT: Name of event/what is taking place
WHERE: Physical location — provide address
WHEN: Date and time of event
WHY: Purpose of event

You may choose to provide a brief summary underneath (one to two paragraphs) with more detailed information on the event. Highlight particular aspects of the event that are newsworthy and not included in the basic who, what, where, when, and why, such as dignitaries attending, special awards or honors being presented, activities surrounding the event, or announcements made.

For more information, contact ____________ at _____________.

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Source: The Able Trust, (n.d.).
EXHIBIT 7.4: PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT TEMPLATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE OF PSA SPOT</th>
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ANNOUNCER:

PSA COPY SHOULD BE TYPED ON THE RIGHT-HAND SIDE OF THE SHEET IN CAPITAL LETTERS. TRIPLE-SPACE THE COPY IN ORDER TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR THE ANNOUNCER TO READ. BE SURE TO LIST IF THE SPOT IS A 60-, 30-, OR 10-SECOND SPOT IN THE TOP LEFT-HAND CORNER OF THE COPY. LIST THE DATES (MONTH AND DAY THROUGH MONTH AND DAY) YOU WOULD LIKE IT TO RUN. READ YOUR COPY OUT LOUD AND TIME YOURSELF TO ENSURE YOU ARE WITHIN THE APPROPRIATE TIME LIMITS.

Source: The Able Trust, (n.d.).