

Step 13

Promote service



Scheduled desludging by law must be carried out to all septic tanks. With or without promotion, scheduled desludging will be demanded by buildings. Nevertheless, the promotion of scheduled desludging is still important. By knowing its reasons and benefits, the people will better support scheduled desludging. It is recommended that the scheduled desludging service should have a unique brand and building owners must know their rights and obligations related to scheduled desludging. Various ways of promotion need to be applied to reach diverse customer groups.

13.1 PREPARE PROMOTION

In this step, we already know the specification of scheduled desludging service to be provided by the municipality, who and where the service targets are, and how much the tariffs will be imposed to house and building owners. In accordance with the four Ps marketing mix principle, the final principle to implement is the promotion. Although it is a mandatory action, we have to promote the scheduled desludging service to the owners of buildings that use septic tanks. Six steps may be needed to prepare the promotion of the service (see [Figure 13.1](#)). These generic steps can be modified according to the conditions and readiness of the municipality or the service provider.

Scheduled desludging is different from the existing on-demand desludging service. Its characteristics are mandatory, periodic, scheduled, professional, and inexpensive. This is the main characteristic of scheduled desludging that needs to be informed to the target group.

13.2 UNDERSTAND THE TARGET

The target group(s) of the promotion program is obvious, that is, the owners or residents of buildings that use septic tanks. If we want to be more specific on the target, we can choose households as the main target. Not just all types of buildings, but only households. A market research should be conducted to find out the level of knowledge, attitude, and habits or practices of households, especially in managing their wastewater.

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Preparing Scheduled Desludging

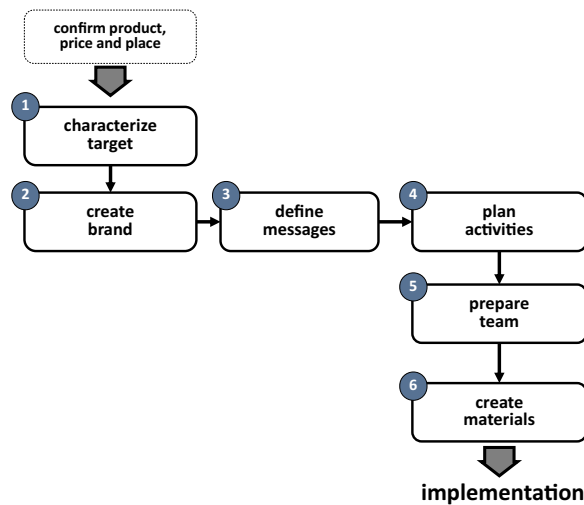


Figure 13.1 Six generic steps to prepare promotion of scheduled desludging service in a city.

Research is also conducted to estimate the response of households to the upcoming scheduled desludging scheme (see the following table).

Character of the households will determine the messages to be conveyed in the promotion program and how they are conveyed. Some information about households needs to be obtained and studied before then concluded as the collective level of knowledge, attitude, and practices related to (a) use of septic tank, (b) desludging of septic tank, and (c) information exchange. Household surveys may also collect data on the average age, level of education, religion, and economic conditions of the homeowners. The results of the research can provide an initial indication of household interests in scheduled desludging service. If it turns out that the majority of households are not yet interested in scheduled desludging service, the promotion program needs to prepare and deliver information about the existence and benefit of the service.

Information for developing a promotion plan.

	Information	Use
1	The level of household knowledge on regular desludging	Determine goals and promotional messages
2	Interest of household utilizing scheduled desludging service	Determine goals and promotional messages
3	Age and religion of homeowner	Determine promotion approaches and messages
4	Home ownership status	Determine promotion approaches and messages
5	Social activities in residential areas	Determine how to promote
6	Information sources	Determine how to promote
7	Access to social media	Determine how to promote

If the information is still inadequate, special interviews can be conducted with community leaders in the target area. Village or community leaders or administrators, teachers, youth group leaders, and religious leaders can usually provide good information. They recognize the character and habits of the surrounding households, as well as knowing what efforts have been made to improve awareness on sanitation in the area.

In addition to households, promotion should also be done for secondary target groups which are expected to influence the perception of the households. Some examples of secondary target groups are community leaders, religious leaders, village officials, neighborhood officials, mass media, and representatives of government agencies.

13.3 GIVE A UNIQUE BRAND

Scheduled desludging service must have a unique identity. The use of relevant and attractive names, logos, and taglines will make scheduled desludging more recognizable to the public. All scheduled desludging logos and other identities must remain relevant to the type of service provided and represent the identity of the city. The goals of the branding will be achieved if the brand name, logo, tagline, and color continue to be used in all objects and activities used by the scheduled desludging operation (Figure 13.2).

A good brand name should be easy to pronounce, identified and memorized, and may as well give an idea about product's qualities and benefits. Avoid using a brand name that use the words of 'feces', 'desludging,' and 'wastewater' directly. Additionally, a logo also should be introduced to help customers recognize the scheduled desludging service. Logos are easier to remember than brand names because they display identity visually. For example, it will be easier if we use illustrations of healthy and good environmental conditions.

To create awareness about scheduled desludging scheme, it is important to apply the brand consistently. This includes its application in various promotional channels such as advertisements, word of mouth



Figure 13.2 The desludging unit and its crew members are the face of the scheduled desludging scheme. If it looks modern and clean, people will have more trust in the service. The public will immediately understand that scheduled desludging provides a different service than the on-demand service.

publicity, social media involvement, sponsorships, and events. Strong brand awareness can be considered as a means through which customers become acquainted and accustomed to scheduled suctioning. Brand guidelines that function to maintain brand consistency are useful for establishing rules for creating a unified identity when connecting several elements in a brand such as colors, logos, and typography.

To create awareness on scheduled desludging scheme, it is important to apply the brand consistently. It includes use of various renowned channels of promotion such as advertising, word of mouth publicity, social media engagement, sponsorship, launching events, etc. Strong brand awareness can be regarded as means through which costumers become acquainted and familiar with scheduled desludging. Brand application guidelines will be very useful to maintain consistency in the application of elements of service identity in various media, such as colors, logos, and typography.

13.4 MESSAGES ACCORDING TO TARGETS

Scheduled desludging promotion must be designed to effectively and efficiently deliver awareness and knowledge-raising messages related to septage management to households. Packaging information must be tailored to the characteristics of the households, that is, level of education, perception, economic status, and preferred communication channels. The households should know its mandatory nature, form and scope of service, desludging period, differences with on-demand service, service benefits and processes. The features of the scheduled desludging fleet also need to be informed to the public, especially their modern, clean and professional look. The messages that need to be conveyed include:

- Reasons for the need of periodic desludging.
- Periodic desludging is required by law.
- All septic tank users must accept and cooperate with scheduled desludging service.
- Rate of service fee and payment procedure.
- Identity of service provider.
- Homeowners rights and obligations.
- Punishment for violating the scheduled desludging provision.

In addition to the messages above, we also need to include a variety of important information to change people's perceptions that are less precise about septic tanks and septage. For example, perceptions that there are no problems with the groundwater quality in their neighbourhood, a true septic tank is a tank that is never full and does not need to be drained.

13.5 USE ANY POSSIBLE MEANS

As with the promotion of other products, scheduled desludging promotion requires a set of above-the-line and below-the-line activities. Above-the-line activities such as advertising on radio, television and local newspapers are needed to introduce and echo the scheduled desludging service to wider communities. While the below-the-line activity is needed to explain the procedure and encourage the target groups directly to accept scheduled desludging operation (Figure 13.3).

Promotion activities, both above the line and below the line, which are worthy of being used to promote scheduled desludging include:

- Installation of banners in strategic locations that are visited or passed by people see (Figure 13.2).
- Installation of posters at public offices and exhibitions.
- Distribution of leaflets at promotional events or sent by post (see Figure 13.4).
- Sticker attachment at motorized vehicles and buildings.



Figure 13.3 Promotional activities are generally costly. It would be better to focus on promotional activities only in designated service areas. For example, through the installation of banners at the village office where scheduled desludging will begin.



Figure 13.4 Examples of leaflets used by PDAM Surakarta to introduce scheduled desludging to their customers. Use attractive visual appearance and simple language in the leaflet.

- Public service announcements on local newspapers, radio, and television.
- Talk shows on radio or television presenting government and service provider officers to discuss the scheduled desludging with the audiences or listeners. Village gathering where government and service provider officers introduce and discuss the scheduled desludging service with representatives of homeowners.
- Citizen meetings; both at special events and at community gathering events.

Promotion requires more than one type of media. Another media that we should consider using is the digital media, both social media and instant messaging applications. Digital promotion offers convenience, speed and flexibility in delivering messages. If there are disadvantages, digital promotion can only reach households that have internet access and use the same media applications.

The packaging of promotional message must be made according to the characteristics of each application. Packaging messages through photos and videos is more conveniently delivered through Instagram which is basically a visual platform. Public announcements with long narratives are inappropriate for Instagram. We better use emails for that. A short narrative (<160 characters) is better to be delivered via Twitter. The combination of these packages can be delivered via Facebook. Instant messenger applications such as WhatsApp and Line can contain long narratives accompanied by short photos and videos. Service providers can use the hashtag feature on Twitter and Instagram to attract the attention of more users of the application.

13.6 INVOLVE OTHER PARTIES

The municipalities need to be involved in scheduled desludging promotion. After all, the scheduled desludging service is a response to the obligation to periodic desludging by the municipalities. The participation of government officials will also add credibility to scheduled desludging in the eyes of the households. Cooperation with other parties should also be considered. We can collaborate with local mass media to intensify above the line promotion, including cooperation in advertising, advertorial, coverage, or interactive programs on scheduled desludging topic.

As for below the line activity, we can involve a local partner. They are the ones who know the condition of the people in the area. They will also be more easily accepted by the community. Examples are community groups, women groups, builders/small contractors, and desludgers.