

MARKETING



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In its broadest sense, the role of marketing the public library is to present the library and its services effectively to the community. “Effective presentation” encompasses everything from stationery, signage, flyers, displays and programming, to good customer service and proper board and council relations.

Marketing must be understood as a total system of activities working together to communicate the message that the public library is a dynamic and vital part of the community.

A **market** is all the people who use or could use a product or service. For example, the public library’s market is the entire community.

WHAT IS MARKETING?

For a public library, **marketing** encompasses all the activities concerned with the promotion of the library itself, or the planning, promotion and delivery of specific library services.

Marketing is more than just good publicity. The foundation of successful marketing is good service. No amount of good publicity will encourage use of a library which provides poor service.

Why market?

The library must compete with other local interests for public funding. When a library is recognized as a dynamic and important community resource, it will be easier to obtain public funding to maintain existing services or to expand into new service areas.

The library offers a vital service to its community. It is important that the community be aware of the many programmes and services available from its library. In order to achieve this the library must be marketed properly -- and in order to market the library properly, a marketing plan is a very good idea. The steps in such a plan are outlined on the next page.



THE MARKETING PLAN

1. **Define objectives**
What is to be accomplished.
2. **Determine the target audience**
Particular community group to be attracted to the library.
3. **The marketing mix**
 - Products
Choose what will be done to achieve the objectives (e.g., programmes, open houses, displays, etc.)
 - Price
 - Place/distribution
 - Promotion
4. **Develop an implementation plan**
The various tasks are listed and scheduled with budget amounts determined and personnel assigned. Evaluation criteria are also developed.
5. **Implement**
6. **Evaluate**



OBJECTIVES

Setting objectives is actually part of the process of planning. In order to arrive at objectives, certain parts of the planning process must be undertaken. The planning process is described in greater detail in the *Sourcebook* entitled *Administration 5: Planning for library service*.

The planning process ensures that the library board and staff understand why the library is there and what can be achieved. The mission of the library and the services offered by the library should be quite clear. An assessment of the community's needs is an integral part of this process. It is important to be able to demonstrate that there is a willingness to be able to respond to the needs of the community.

Planning allows the library staff and board to determine 'why', 'who' and 'what'.

- To whom do the library wish to send a message?
(e.g. existing patrons)
- Why is the library trying to reach a particular audience?
(e.g. better informing existing patrons)
- What is the message?
(e.g. make existing patrons aware of a new service now being offered)

A word of caution

In the private sector, a company will market a product to generate higher profits for the company. In the public sector, profit is not a consideration. Instead marketing is usually undertaken to promote increased usage of the library or of a particular service. Success will result in increased demand for library services which means more money is needed to run the library. A public library, already in the public sector, must have resources in place to pay for extra demand. It is always best to pace the marketing plan to what can be easily managed. In other words, develop the marketing plan to a level where you can be sure you can deliver. Marketing is a very worthwhile undertaking, and can sometimes be undertaken for very little money!



Effective marketing is measured by the degree to which the target audience receives, comprehends and acts upon that message. The intended audience will determine the type of marketing used. Target audience groups include the following:

TARGET AUDIENCE

Regular library users

Despite efforts to serve everyone, most public libraries serve certain “true believers” -- those who use the library regularly for a variety of purposes. These regular patrons should be a prime target for promotional activities. They need to know, and deserve to know, about new materials, equipment, services and programmes. They may need to be encouraged to use different parts of the library. When the patron looking for a job, comes into the library to use the photocopier, he/she might not realize that the library has material on job searches and résumé writing. The person who only comes in to look at the paperback racks may not know about the library’s telephone reference or interlibrary loan services.

Special groups

This category might include senior citizens, people with various handicaps, homebound people, people in the business community, preschool children, school-age children, young adults and parents. In other communities, there may be university or college students, people from a particular ethnic group, or people who are functionally illiterate. The list could be endless, but the important thing is to consider how to market the product to the target group.

Non-users

In small communities, it can be fairly easy to identify the people who do not use the library. It is easy to tell whether a promotional activity aimed at a group of non-users is actually working, simply because they may, or may not have seen been in the library.

Media and decision makers

The media group would include people from a community newspaper or the radio and television media. The decision makers are members of the local council or others who may handle grants to organizations in the community.



Market segmentation

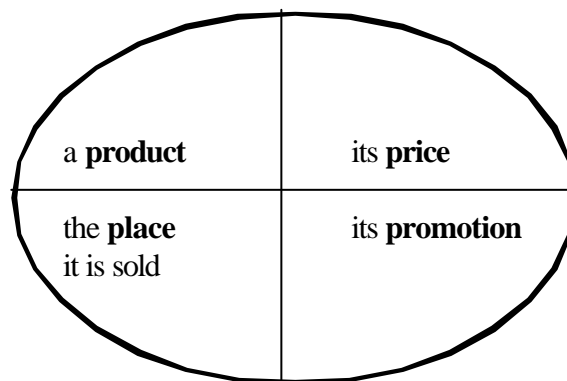
Although the public library is mandated to serve the entire community, different segments of the community are served in different ways. In many public libraries, materials and programmes for young children, teens and adults have been separated for so long that most cannot remember when the arrangement was different. That is actually a form of target marketing. When a promotion is designed to appeal to a specific segment of the community, the action is called **market segmentation**.

The hardest task is often determining which kind of publicity would be most effective for the target audience. In approaching certain target audiences, for example, one type of publicity may not be enough. A programme for retirement planning might be promoted by telephoning local organizations as well as advertising in the local newspaper.

Consider what type of marketing would be most appropriate to reach the targeted audience, for example, newspaper, cable television, flyers, or by direct contact with a specific group in the community. By focusing on a target group, available resources, both time and money, can be used more efficiently.

MARKETING MIX

Marketing has been described and explained in many different ways by different authors. The first thing that every marketing student learns is the “four p’s”. These essential elements of a marketing campaign are:





Product is the foundation on which the other elements of the marketing mix rely. In the consumer field, the product is a very tangible item but in the library field, the idea of having a product seems rather strange. There are a variety of different products which may be employed to help achieve any given objective. The term 'products' can refer to 'the library as a whole' or it can refer to individual services within the library.

Products can be categorized as follows:

- services (information, referral, etc.)
- library materials (books, videos, cassettes, etc.) which may be displayed within or outside the library
- programmes (on-going activities such as story hours, literacy tutoring)
- special events (one-time activities such as a lecture, workshop, performance, reception or open house, etc.)
- exhibits and displays such as artistic works or crafts

The elements of the marketing mix are applicable to all the objectives of the library. If one of the objectives is to increase circulation of young adult materials by 5% over six months, there are several products that will help.

For instance:

- the materials themselves, promoted by a display in the library
- a speaker on young adult literature
- a dramatization of particular appeal to young adults
- a writer-in-residence for young adult materials

For many of the objectives, a number of products may already be in place. For instance, in the young adult example, young adult materials are likely already in the library. In thinking about the objectives, the products presently in place should be assessed to see how they could be further developed, and then determine what other products may be developed and used.



The next step is to decide what changes and/or initiatives should be undertaken. For instance, in the young adult example, more young adult materials could be purchased, the young adult materials could be placed in a separate collection in the library or perhaps, a young adult section could be established on the library bulletin board. Consider whether the time and resources are available to achieve all of these initiatives.

It may be necessary to set priorities and in doing do, consider the following elements:

1. Target audience

Will the chosen mix of products have an impact on the target audience? If the plan is to draw non-users as well as attracting regular users, which of the products will best achieve both intentions?

2. Resources

What resources such as funds, personnel and expertise, are available? Are there funds available to cover expenses? Are there outside agencies willing to donate what is needed or can a grant be obtained? Does the library, or the community, have the personnel and expertise to lead, manage, and plan?

If the necessary resources are not available immediately, consider postponing certain initiatives until they are. Remember to include them in the plans and budget for next year.

3. Approval

Is it necessary to gain approval from a supervisor and/or the board to proceed? If so, how much groundwork will be necessary?

PRICE

In the marketing context, **price equals cost**, that is, the cost required to produce or provide a product. Two areas where the library incurs cost are:

- the cost of the marketing plan itself, and
- the cost of providing additional or expanded services.

Costs can be **direct** such as the cost of personnel, equipment, materials, and supplies, or **indirect** such as general operating expenses. In the profit sector, all costs are calculated and a price or fee is set. In this case, the costs include a profit margin. In the non-profit sector, in which the library rests, the budget is the known quantity and all possible products must compete for a share of those finite dollars -- unless the library undertakes special fundraising for this purpose.



Section 23 of the *Public Libraries Act, Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1990, Chapter P.44*, states that, with a few exceptions, library services to the public are to be provided at no additional cost to the user. In this way, a library must absorb the cost of any existing, additional or expanded services within the library budget.

Accordingly, the exceptions are that fees may be imposed for certain services such as for photocopying, for computer searches, and for admission to programmes offered by the library. Fees may also be levied if the person wishing to use the library does not reside in the area. A decision must be made as to whether these services should be offered on a cost-recovery basis, subsidized from the general library budget or a profit-making venture.

Pricing considerations affect the development, distribution and promotion of a particular product. Considerations to pricing and cost include:

- Most marketing efforts, whether the development of a marketing plan or the expansion of a particular service, have some **direct costs**. Staff time is involved in every product or service. For certain product implementations, for example, more staff may be needed or existing staff may require additional training. Does the library have the money and the staff to handle the particular service, particularly if the user cannot be charged an additional fee and the service must be provided from the operating budget?
- Once an estimate of cost is calculated, it must be weighed against the anticipated **demand** for the product. The price of a product must be balanced with the amount that an audience is willing to pay. Payments may be in the form of money as, for example, in the price for an on-line computer search. Payment may also take the form of time and energy. In this case, price would refer to the amount of time it takes to attend an outreach programme at the library. If the audience perceives that the cost to them exceeds the value of the product, they will not use it.

Price and other marketing elements

The other three components of the 4 P's must be considered with the pricing component. Their effect on the pricing component would, of course, depend on the marketing mix selected. The first P -- *product* -- often requires a number of direct costs such as those costs entailed in the production or purchasing activities. Another P -- *place* -- incurs such costs as preparing a convenient, safe and comfortable place for the product to be distributed. The last P -- *promotion* -- money is spent for advertising, printing, postage, and related costs.



PLACE

The **place** component of the marketing mix is the channel that links the product to the consumer. In some instances, the word 'distribution' is used instead of place. In the library context, there are two elements to the place component. Place can refer to:

- the distribution of promotional material to the potential user, or
- the physical location, or placement, of a particular product or service.

Distribution of promotional material

Distribution is the channel that links the product and the consumer. A product which is located in one site and a consumer who is at a different location must come together if an interaction is to occur. The best promotional message will fail if it is not where people will see or hear it.

Small communities have a number of effective outlets for promotion such as a store, church or community centre. Different people use different media, shop in different stores and attend different functions. People tend to pay attention to the same thing in the same place for a relatively limited time. The location of a poster, or availability of a bookmark, should be changed so that different people will see it for the first time. For some target audiences, a newsletter or oral presentation might be a better method of distributing the message about the library or a new service in the library.

Placement of products or services

As part of the overall planning process, the placement of the library and its services is important. For the convenience of the user, the number and location of library outlets can be important. In most small communities, the location of the library is already established and is unlikely to change -- but for the convenience of the user, should there be additional outlets for library service? For instance, an outreach service to shut-ins could be established whereby library materials are taken directly to the user. With the advent of microcomputers and better telecommunications, should a service of dial-in access from home computers to the library's automated catalogue be established?

Within the library itself, the placement of features within the library is important. An illogical arrangement of the collection, inadequate signage, and poor lighting can result in frustration for the user. A frustrated user may never return to use the product again -- whether it be the library itself or a particular service offered by the library.



Promotion encompasses all activities that bring about awareness that the products exist and that inform the target audience about the benefits of using the products.

PROMOTION

For example, if the product is the public library and the targeted audience is the municipal council, the council can be kept informed through board minutes, presentations to council and personal contact. They can be persuaded of the value of the library through the professionalism of the staff and board, appropriate lobbying, good public relations and leadership in the community.

In a one-person, part-time library with limited funds for buying bestsellers, all this talk of planning, evaluating and marketing may seem rather far-fetched. In an isolated community, many of the promotional resources mentioned are simply nonexistent.

It may seem poor stewardship to spend money and time on marketing and promotion when it is so desperately needed to select, buy and catalogue books, but the alternative might be watching a good (and expensive) book sit on the shelves because people do not know that the library has it. Keep in mind that the general objective of promotion is to remind, inform and persuade the target market to use the product.

The promotional mix

For every product to be promoted, the correct promotional mix must be chosen. Promotional efforts must be scaled to the significance and complexity of the objective and the particular product. It would be a mistake to try to obtain maximum coverage for every undertaking. A low key event, for example, does not merit a full-scale promotional effort. In deciding on a promotional mix, consider the following:

- **Direct and indirect communication**

Communication channels, like distribution channels, are used to reach the target audience. They carry information and not products. Direct methods of communication are usually one-to-one or one-to-small-group encounters such as personal visits, telephone calls and direct mail items. These methods are generally used effectively for small target audiences. Indirect methods are defined as one-to-many and frequently use the media to reach larger audiences.



- **Size and characteristics of the audience**
Marketing, including promotion, must be geared to the target audience. Is the intended audience small and homogenous enough to be reached via direct communication? Is the audience large and diverse and therefore appropriately reached via mass media, such as radio, cable television and print? Is the target audience predominantly library users or non-users, or both?
- **Type of product and/or theme**
If the product is likely to be of interest to a small number of people, promotional efforts should be limited to more direct forms of communication. If it is of interest to the whole community, then the use of mass media might be more appropriate.
- **Special attractions**
Have special attractions been included as part of a programme or event? Examples of these include a well-known guest, participation by another community organization, or celebration of a bigger event such as a community anniversary. In these situations, the event will assume much more significance for the community and the media, and will likely attract more interest.
- **Assets and tools available**
The types of available resources will determine the scale of promotional efforts which can realistically be undertaken. Depending on the promotional mix selected, sufficient time must be allocated to prepare the publicity, contact people, distribute flyers, generate mailings and speak at community meetings.
- **The “three notice” rule**
Most audiences will respond to a message only after they have encountered it three times. Therefore, 3 different techniques can be used to inform the audience and persuade them to participate in whatever product is being provided.

Within this **promotional mix**, there are three major means of promotion available to the library:

- personal communication
- good library environment
- published word



“Personal communication” occurs every time the patron comes in contact with a library staff member and during any activity outside the library where staff or board members are representing the library.

Personal contact is the most effective way of delivering a message. It is the most credible, and allows the use of body language to clarify and reinforce what has been said. It also allows for questions. The next best one-to-one method of personal communication is by telephone. It has the same advantages as personal contact, although it is not as effective because body language cannot be used.

The topic of personal communication will be discussed under the headings, “Community relations” and “Customer service”.

Community relations

A good chance to promote the library through one-to-one personal communication is through good community relations. The phrase “community relations” refers to the way the library, the community and other organizations are connected. Good community relations involves:

1. Working with the municipality

The library staff should maintain good communications with the municipal staff, such as the municipal clerk. This is one way of ensuring their interest in library services. It also helps make the library staff more aware of municipal affairs so planning and budget requests can be tailored to the municipal situation.

The library board has an important role in maintaining good municipal relations as well. Trustees should be aware of the political climate in the community, develop relationships with the councillors and keep the library in the forefront of the councillors’ minds. Should particular trustees be a council representative, their role is even greater in bringing the message of the library to the council.

In addition to informal contact, there are a number of ways to develop good relations with council including holding a lunch or tea for councillors in which a presentation on the library is made; presenting all councillors with a library card; making sure the councillors on the library board are given good orientation sessions to the library; or distributing the library annual report and board minutes to council and municipal staff.



2. Working with other community organizations

Wherever possible, staff and trustees should become involved in other community organizations, such as service clubs and social service agencies. Participation in these organizations promotes an environment of cooperation and integrates the library into the community's social service, recreational and cultural structure. This kind of involvement also provides the library with a better sense of the community's needs and services. Of particular importance is a good rapport with the local media including the newspaper, radio and cable television stations.

On a personal basis, a library representative could give a talk to an organization or club. The advantages of this method are that the speaker lends credibility to the message and he/she is able to answer questions. The disadvantage is the message cannot be tailored to each person in the audience. Also, individuals in the audience are unlikely to voice concerns as freely as they would in a one-to-one conversation.

3. Working with other resources

The library is part of a large network. This network includes the Ontario Library Service, provincial and federal governments, local businesses and other libraries. These groups are resources and their personnel are colleagues. It is important to make contact with them, build relationships and work together. Do not hesitate to consult with others when other expertise could be of some help.

Some practical suggestions for maintaining a good working relationship with these resources are attending meetings and workshops; becoming involved in their activities; and communicate any concerns or appreciations for services, funding, assistance, etc.

Customer service

Every contact with a patron is an opportunity to promote the library. These opportunities frequently occur at the reference and circulation desks. All library staff must concentrate their efforts on a single key element: **service**. The service could be in person or on the telephone. Without good service, all marketing efforts are wasted. If every patron tells ten other people about poor service at the library, and in a particularly bad week there are 25 unhappy people, soon 250 potential patrons will have a negative impression of the library. The patron's satisfaction with the service received -- more than any product, is what keeps them coming back.



Another means of promotion is through the provision of a good library environment. In this context, the phrase “library environment” refers to the concept of designing the library building with consideration for the people who use it. It also implies concern for the patron’s comfort, psychologically, as well as physically. The building should have a welcoming feeling and the staff attitude must be pleasant. Good service and a well-designed, visually-pleasing building go hand in hand.

To enter a building that looks forbidding and then to be greeted by an unsmiling face or by an attitude that implies the patron is somehow intruding, will result in disaster. The library must be a visually-pleasing place where people will enjoy spending time, or at least not mind spending time. If the layout is so imposing that it is hard to find a book or even an individual who can provide assistance, patrons are not going to spend much time in the building.

There are a number of considerations for both the inside and outside of the library.

Outside of the library

- Is it obvious where the library is?
- Are there directional signs around the community?
- Is the library visibly identified with a sign?
- Are the library hours clearly posted?
- Does the library look open when it is open?
- Is the entranceway bright?
- Does the library entrance door open easily, without brute force?

Inside the library

- Is the layout of the library visible and easy to follow?
- Is each area of the library clearly marked so patrons know where to go for magazines, indexes, interlibrary loan, children’s room, etc.?
- Can the card catalogue or online catalogue terminals be seen from the entrance?
- Are there any reading areas with tables or chairs available?
- Is the first impression of the inside of the library a pleasant one?
- Is the interior well-lit with natural and artificial light?



Furniture and wall areas should be kept uncluttered. Pictures and posters not on bulletin boards should be framed whenever possible. Notices should only be posted on bulletin boards. Racks for brochures and handouts help in reducing clutter. In general, more is not necessarily better. A few well-placed pieces, such as pictures, posters and mobiles, present a more attractive image.

Take advantage of the natural features of the library building. If possible, arrange shelving and furniture so they give a sense of openness and do not block natural light. Higher shelving units should be placed near outside walls. Library materials should be arranged in logically and neatly on the shelves. An overcrowded retail store is not very appealing for the customer and in the same way, overcrowded and untidy library shelves do not make the library's collection very appealing to the patron.

There are two items which particularly affect the **physical appearance** inside the library: the signage and the use of displays.

Signs in the library

Signs serve a number of functions within the library. They can identify places and things (for example, the children's area or the washroom if there is one!). They can be used to give instructions, state policies, or orient new library patrons.

When a sign is created, there is a fine line between function and attractiveness. The message on the sign should be simple and clear, but at the same time, it should be pleasant to look at. Too many signs, on the other hand, create a very cluttered look and are not as effective. When faced with dozens of different signs, the patron may feel intimidated and confused. The best signs are those which fit comfortably into the library environment, but that stand out enough to get the message across.

Displays and exhibits

Good, creative displays in the front window of the library can draw people into the library. Exhibits or displays which promote the library outside of the library, for example at a fall fair or in store windows can also be effective in promoting the library. Once inside, the library patron can be encouraged, instructed or entertained by displays on walls, bulletin boards and table tops. These displays could be of library materials or perhaps exhibits of other materials such as arts and crafts in the library.



Displays of library materials

Displays of library material can be used to promote specific library services such as reference and interlibrary loan, specific library materials such as bestsellers, classics or new cassettes, or a display on a particular topic such as how-to manuals, travel accounts, interior design, or humour. These displays aid the patron in selecting material and improve the library environment.

Most new materials have very attractive book jackets which can be used as the focus of a display. Book jackets are among the most attractive items in the library. Publishers have gone to great expense to design covers that will promote books. Full advantage should be taken of the sales value of the book itself. This can be achieved by:

- using open space at the end or on top of shelves to display front covers
- keeping jackets clean and replacing them when necessary to ensure their attractiveness, especially when used in a display
- purchasing shelving which permits displays of front covers

Special exhibits

Local artisans and collectors sometimes want to stage an exhibit in a library. In other cases, the library staff may solicit exhibits of local interest to be placed in the library. People may think that they do not have enough space to house exhibits in the library, but this may not necessarily be the case. Many very attractive exhibits require very little space. For example, some libraries use the top of shelving units, or wall space, or they suspend exhibits from the ceiling.

Special exhibits can make the library especially attractive and may even attract non-users to the library. Such exhibits also provide an opportunity for the library to offer a community service by supporting the development of local artisans and interests.

It is wise to have a board-approved policy regarding exhibits which includes information about:

- security for exhibits
- set-up procedures
- duration of the exhibits
- content and quality of exhibits
- insurance
- the sale of items



Providing a bulletin board in the library

Bulletin boards may be used as a notice board for the community or library as a vehicle for the promotion of the library. As a community notice board, it represents a service offered by the library. As a library notice board, it promotes a service of the library. Regardless of the function of the boards, certain guidelines should be followed:

- Put a take-down date on everything that goes up, especially on notice boards, and check the dates regularly. This will keep all the information up-to-date, and patrons will get used to reading it on a regular basis. If things are left too long people think it is the same old thing and will not bother to stop and look.
- Change the background covering on the board periodically to keep the board looking fresh and clean. All coverings tend to get faded and dusty after a time. This will also serve to draw attention to the board just because it looks different.
- Captions are necessary to make the materials meaningful. One or two brief words are usually sufficient to identify the various sections. For example, “What’s new”, “Municipal affairs”, “Coming events” or “About town”.

It is important to have a written policy governing the use of the bulletin boards. It should include the types of notices accepted (e.g., can items for sale be posted?), instructions to submit them to the library staff first, and state that the right to refuse to post items is reserved by the library.

PUBLISHED WORD

The third major means of promotion in the library is the published word. This includes posters, bookmarks, newsletters, a library column in the newspaper, press releases, bibliographies on specific subjects, cable television and even radio announcements.

Library publications are often simple items such as one-page pathfinders with information on a particular topic or bookmarks. To communicate effectively in whatever format, the message sent must be clear. There should be a plan for the publication of printed material which give specific information on the type of publications to be done, who they are intended for and who is responsible for them. In this way, the various publications will fit together.



A library logo

A good place to begin is to design a logo for the library, as it will give a distinctive image to the library. The logo should be used on all signs, stationery, forms and publicity to do with the library. If you do not have your own logo, or the resources to have one made, consider using the Ontario Public Library Symbol. This symbol was designed for the Ministry of Culture and Communications and is available for use by any public library. Contact the Ontario Library Service for more information.

Whether or not a logo is being used, the name, address and telephone number of the library should appear on every publication.

Posters

Posters can make the library seem friendlier by adding colour and interest. In the library, posters may be used to inform, educate, amuse and inspire.

It is tempting to say that a poster is just a more elaborate kind of sign. In fact, posters and signs differ in appearance and in function. Unlike a sign, which is used to communicate information simply and clearly, a poster usually presents ideas or facts in an interesting or thought-provoking manner. While most signs consist of plain text, posters often feature illustrations and decorative typefaces.

Signs are usually either permanent or long-term, whereas a poster is meant to be temporary. If a poster is tied to a season, it must be taken down after the appropriate time has passed. Even “timeless” posters lose their appeal after a short period of time and should be taken down (although, if properly stored, they can be reused at the later date!) Posters can be made of relatively lightweight and perishable materials. For example, felt-tip pens and construction paper, which are unsuitable for permanent signs because they fade after long exposure to light, are ideal for posters.

If posters are used as part of a larger display, be sure that the poster fits with the overall design. The best conceived display will be weakened by a poorly-lettered poster or a poster which does not **seem** to complement the rest of the items. Posters should be designed so that they can be easily seen when placed on the bulletin boards or other spaces. Commercial posters are available and should be purchased as necessary, after all a poster presents an image of the library and should look as professional as possible.



Brochures

Brochures are used frequently in libraries to inform regular users and potential users of the library about the library hours, special services or programmes, and even to provide a sketch of the library floor plan. Brochures can be used to give specific information about a new computer in the library or about new acquisitions. The preparation of a brochure must start with a determination and understanding of its purpose. A brochure deserves careful thought, good graphics and quality printing.

Bookmarks

Bookmarks with all sorts of messages are standard library handouts. A bookmark can be used to call attention to a specific service such as delivery to shut-ins or can be a gentle reminder about such things as a loan period, library hours or fines.

Scary stuff!

Halloween books at the Trillium Public Library

Albala, Leila. *Easy Halloween Costumes*.

Barth, Edna. *Witches, Pumpkins and Grinning Ghosts: The Story of the Halloween Symbols*.

Corwin, Judith Hoffman. *Halloween Fun*.

Dobrin, Arnold. *Make a Witch, Make a Goblin: A Book of Halloween Crafts*.

Gates, Frieda. *Easy-to-Make Monster Masks and Disguises*.

Glovach, Linda. *Little Witch's Halloween Book*.

Supraner, Robyn. *Happy Halloween! Things to Make and Do*.

Whether handed out as a convenience to the reader or as a reminder or announcement, they are easily associated with the library and are, therefore, useful promotional items. Those which simply promote the library could be distributed outside the library to those who might not be aware of the services of the library. Often funding to cover the cost of printing bookmarks can be obtained from business or service clubs in the community.

Newsletters

Newsletters are the voice of the library. Producing a newsletter for the community is a method of providing information about the library and promoting the library in the community. In large libraries, there may be a variety of in-house published newsletters, some for staff and some for patrons.

Unfortunately, newsletters cost money to create which may put them beyond the range of many small libraries. However, with the increase in the number of microcomputers in libraries across Ontario and the availability of desktop publishing capabilities, this argument may no longer be true since the costs of producing a newsletter have been reduced.

There are some things which should be noted in newsletter design. Newsletters designed for the community must be informative, attractive and avoid library jargon. Great detail about the workings of the library should be avoided unless a change will have a direct effect on the patron.



Any number of story ideas could be used. Some ideas are:

- getting to know the staff
- meetings and programmes - when they are, who will speak, what issues
- descriptions or reviews of new books
- new services
- a column from the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
- letters and suggestions from patrons
- articles from a roving reporter
- policy changes
- building plans
- how-to articles
- special services or equipment available
- book sales

The design of the newsletter is another important element. As is the case with any promotional material, the newsletter should have a professional look. The textual format, for example, can be varied with a piece written in the form of a conversation or questions and answer. Short ‘fillers’ that are made up or contributed from the staff help to break up blocks of text and catch the reader’s eye.

Annual reports

An annual report is an account of what has happened in the library over the past year. The annual report is a key corporate document, used to identify change and to report on growth. It is an opportunity to define your service to the public, and to project a positive image of the library in the community.

Annual reports can serve three different audiences:

- the municipal, band or county council
- the library board
- the public (includes patrons, non-patrons, businesses, service clubs, etc.)

The content and design of the annual report should be tailored to the needs of the audience. For example, the report prepared for the public will usually be a shorter and more concise version of the report prepared for the library board and council.

Financial information should be conveyed using tables, charts or graphs. Text should highlight library activities, emphasizing new services or any changes in services or hours. It is easier if the materials for the report are gathered throughout the year. Sift through this collection and use only the most interesting. The report should be well organized and concise.



The annual report can be printed as a bookmark, postcard, newsletter or brochure. The method chosen is determined by the target audience. It is also essential that the annual report has a professional look to it.

A kit on writing annual reports, produced by the Small Libraries Team of the Southern Ontario Library Service, will be available from the Ontario Library Service.

Book lists and bibliographies

A favourite library publication is the booklist or bibliography of suggested readings on a certain subject. The purpose of a current list is simply to have on hand the answer to the question a patron may ask “Do you have any information on...?” In addition, a good bibliography should encourage individuals to go beyond just browsing the shelves when searching for information. They can be used to draw attention to an unusual subject, a new subject or an old favourite.

Although the topics will vary from library to library, lists of materials on cooking, travel, gardening, taxes and the various fields of business, science and technology could be included. The list of cookbooks could be broken down to include sections on specialty items, foods of different countries, and on freezing and preserving. In addition, lists on special subjects could be created based on current interests and events. The list could cover books currently available, any magazines received at the library containing relevant articles, reference materials, and any non book material such as videos.

Keep in mind that any lists created for the library should bear the library’s logo (if one is available) and the name of the library. If there is room, some information about the library could be included on the book list/bibliography. Occasionally the local newspaper might mention the availability of a new bibliography. If a list is being produced in connection with a particular local event such as the opening of a new business or local scout week, the list could be mentioned as part of the write-up of the event in the local paper.

Miscellaneous printed materials

Many library publications are designed to meet a current interest or demand and are not always considered promotional material. Other library publications could be directories of community services and organizations, a community calendar of local events or compilation of local history materials. There are a growing number and variety of possibilities for printed materials.



Good publicity is getting factual, newsworthy and interesting information to the local **media**. Depending on the community, the community newspaper, radio station or cable television station may be used as the main vehicle for promotion. Examples of publicity in the media include a library column, media releases, radio spots, public service announcements and talk shows.

The library column

An excellent technique for ongoing promotion of the library is a regular library column in the community newspaper. The principles of good writing and general rules of organization apply to this type of writing. The column could include general information about the library, programme or event details to complement other promotional activities, new materials lists with annotations and book reviews.

Book review

Most newspaper and trade publications publish reviews. This provides an opportunity to promote the library while at the same time publicizing a new book acquired by the library. All reviews start with the name of the book, the author, the publishing company and the number of pages. The review itself should summarize the essence of the book. It should contain the viewpoint and purpose of the book, should comment on its outstanding qualities, and availability at the library.

Annotated new materials list

An annotation is a brief paragraph describing the content of a book or other materials. Most annotations are only 50 to 75 words long, and are intended to persuade the reader to read the book. Therefore, they do not contain any critical analysis. Rather, they are made up of statements, frequently highly descriptive, including adjectives such as 'brilliant', 'witty', 'adventurous', 'thrilling', 'authoritative', etc.

An annotation deals with the whole book rather than its parts, does not list or describe the characters, and does not necessarily outline the plot. The reader just needs to be told the type of book, the subject matter, the book's atmosphere and the author's main theme.

The purpose of annotations is to attract readers, and to guide them to interesting material worth their time, so first clearly identifying the audience will make the annotations more relevant. The selection of titles and the tone of the annotations should be suited to the target audience.



Media release

A media release is the timely account of a current event which is of interest to a large number of people. The media release is a vital tool, whether communicating with the narrow audience of specialized publications or with the general audience of larger, wide-circulation newspapers.

When deciding whether a media release should be written, examine whether the event or piece of information will affect a large number of people who read the publication, whether it has special significance locally, or whether it has special human interest appeal. These considerations are called “angles”, one or two of which will make the media release more likely to be published. For instance, events that affect many people in the community are a change in library hours or acquisition of new collections. Information of interest to the community might also include the appointment of a new CEO, congratulating reading or writing contest winners and local library participation in a national or provincial event such as Reading or Education Week.

The trick to media releases is to get them published! Most newspapers are interested in finding out about what activities and movements there are in the community. As long as the information is newsworthy, newspaper people are usually more than willing to help you. Community newspapers, in particular, are constantly looking for information and are the prime targets for news releases.

Regular and personal contact with the editor of the local newspaper may help to get a media release published. A follow-up telephone call to the editor regarding a media release provides an opportunity for the editor to clarify any questions raised by the release and increases the likelihood that the item will be published.

Media items are **organized** differently from other types of writing because of the reading habits of newspaper readers. The intent of a news release is to ensure that the reader absorbs the information at a glance and decides whether or not to read on. Media releases are written so that the most important and most interesting elements appear first, with the less important information written afterwards. A sample media release is included at the back of this *Sourcebook* (Sample 1 : Media release).

A media release is usually submitted to a weekly community newspaper about 10 days before the newspaper’s publication date. Submissions to radio or community television outlets, described on the next page, are usually made 6 to 8 weeks in advance of airing. It is always best to check with the particular media outlet on the time frame for submission.



Radio/Cable television spots

Radio and the community television outlet of cable television may be another outlet for a promotional effort. Historically, radio and community television stations have always supported the causes of non-profit organizations as part of their community involvement. The operating license of all radio and television stations requires that they devote some portion of programming time to public service.

At some time during the day, the targeted audience will likely tune in to the radio. Peak listening hours are from 7 to 9 a.m., and again from 4 to 7 p.m., when people are going to or coming home from work.

Each radio station specializes in different types of programming and this specialization provides an indication of who its listeners are -- and provides an opportunity to tailor a promotional effort according to the respective audience. For example, a radio station that specializes in news and financial reports appeals to business people and professionals, while a "Top 40" music station appeals to teenagers. A programme aimed at teenagers is better publicized on a rock station than on CBC.

Public service announcements

The public service announcement (PSA) is an announcement that serves the interests of the public and is transmitted by radio or television. PSAs are written like advertisements, but unlike advertisements, they are free. Stations generally prefer announcements that have local impact over those which are national in nature. For example, local stations will have little interest in an announcement that October 19-25 is Ontario Public Library Week. Instead, announce that the local library will host a lecture by a noted historian, as part of Public Library Week.

Every PSA should be written with the audience in mind. Listeners are normally engaged in other activities, such as driving, cooking or gardening, and generally remember only short and simple words. They cannot go back and review ideas once the announcer has finished reading them. PSAs should be written with an enticing introduction. Once the listener is paying attention, deliver the specific message or announcement. At the end of the PSA, urge the audience to act immediately, perhaps to call for more information, to attend a function or to register for new services.

Although announcements can range from 15 seconds to one minute reading time, stations prefer shorter messages. A 15 second message has about 37 words whereas a one minute message has 250 words. A sample PSA is included at the back of this *Sourcebook* (Sample 2 : Public service announcement).



Generic PSAs for public libraries

The Ministry of Culture and Communications (now the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation) produced four radio PSAs for public libraries, each conveying a different seasonal message. The PSAs are 30 seconds long, with original music, lyrics and voiceover, and each has an eight-second “tail” for a local announcer to mention the library’s name. These generic PSAs can be obtained from the Southern Ontario Library Service, London office.

Talk shows

Another excellent opportunity to promote the library and its activities and services is through participation in a talk show. Unlike the PSA, the talk show provides an opportunity to discuss in more depth the issue or the event that being promoted.

There are two formats of talk shows: the type involving interviews with several organizations, two or three of them in a half-hour show; or the type in which the library representative is the only interviewee, with the listeners participating in a phone-in at the end.

DESIGN AND WRITING PRINCIPLES

Some people seem to have a natural talent for design. Their posters, displays and printed materials are created with a minimum of fuss and time. Most people, however, find design a bit intimidating. There are a number of resources on the principles and elements of design which can help individuals to improve the attractiveness and effectiveness of both the visual and printed materials of the library. The EXCEL course entitled *Library marketing* may be worth considering if more detail on marketing, and on design is needed. The EXCEL course entitled *Communication skills* covers writing principles very well.

Professional-looking designs can be created by using simple and commercially available pictures, letters and three-dimensional objects and by applying the design principles of balance, emphasis and simplicity, variety and unity.

Visual displays and printed materials are designed to carry out a function or to serve a purpose. The principle of **simplicity**, for example, is that a design should accomplish its purpose as directly as possible, eliminating any unnecessary parts. The idea of simplicity does not mean that every display should consist of plain block letters on white cardboard. That type of display would be quite boring and would certainly not add to the visual appeal of the library. Instead one illustration might be added but not two illustrations which would only clutter the display.



Lettering

Lettering is an important part of every display and printed item. Some displays, such as signs, consist almost entirely of lettering. There are a variety of devices such as templates, lettering sheets or computers which can be used.

Legibility is important to good design, but is not the only factor. The style, size and colour of the lettering used in any message display must be appropriate to the purpose and the theme, and must reinforce the message and mood established by the words, pictures and subject of the total design. There are hundreds of different styles of lettering. Styles of type used in printing are known as **typefaces**, or more commonly in computer desktop publishing programs, as **fonts**.

In selecting type styles, consider the following guidelines:

- Choose type that is easy to read, either serif (letters with “tails”) or sans serif (letters without “tails”). The text of this *Sourcebook* is written primarily in a serif type called Times New Roman. *Upright type is usually easier to read than slanted type (italic)*. This is important when dealing with people involved in a literacy programme or for whom English is not their first language.
- Titles made of all-capital letters are difficult to read and occupy too much space. It is best to use a combination of UPPER CASE (CAPITAL LETTERS) and lower case (small letters).
- Stick to two or three basic typefaces and one or two special faces. Decide on a “corporate typeface” (a typeface to be used consistently, so that the printed materials will appear related in a uniform, recognizable style).
- For a poster or printed page, the typefaces should come from the same “family”, perhaps in different versions such as bold or italic.
- Typographical errors are embarrassing, especially for an educational institution. Proofread everything and then proofread again just before printing. If possible, have someone else read the piece carefully. But remember that typos are a fact of life. All that can be done is try to minimize them.



Writing principles

Legible and attractive lettering is a very important part of many types of promotion, although good copy writing can be just as critical to a promotion. All public relations experts advise that the most important skill required in the task of communicating is the ability to write well. It is only in communicating messages clearly and quickly that the goals planned for the library will be realized. In other words, a wonderfully innovative and useful product for library patrons could have been designed, but if the message is unclear or ineffective, they may be unable or unwilling to participate.

Although different promotional materials, such as news releases or brochures, require different styles and slants, all types of writing exhibit the same basic characteristics. Good writing is organized, concise and to the point, short with simple sentences and familiar words and also accurate with respect to names, dates, places and facts.

Visual aids

Visual aids, in the form of photographs, cartoons, drawings or charts break up the monotony of the text. Illustrations can serve a variety of other purposes. They add visual interest to an otherwise straightforward display. A sign about overdue fines, for example, can seem much less threatening if it shows a cartoon figure on a skateboard racing to return a book to the library. The illustration shown here is taken from *Cliplines*, a service described on the next page.

Illustrations set the tone for a display. Drawings can be humorous or serious depending on the tone of the brochure or the particular display. If a black and white photograph of an oil-coated bird is used in a display of the library materials, the image would seem quite grave. If the display is accompanied instead by drawings of people picking up garbage, the display takes on a tone of energy and optimism.

In library publications, photographs of people are more interesting than objects, but each face in the picture should be at least as big as a dime. When presenting statistical material, charts and graphs are more interesting to the reader than the actual numbers.



Resource files

It is important for the image of the library that all promotional items be as attractive and professional-looking as possible, but it can be difficult for staff with no artistic or design training to produce quality materials. It is also impossible with the limited resources in a small library to employ a person as a graphic designer or editor.

It is often helpful to develop a resource file. Sources for a resource file include:

1. Eye-catching advertising, headlines, sayings, or quotations that have appeared in magazines, newspapers or other publications. These advertisements can assist in developing themes and concepts for the library's promotional materials.
2. Provincial and national advertising campaigns, such as Ontario Public Library Week, County Libraries, Children's Book Festival. Kits of posters, bookmarks and clip-art are often available for these campaigns.
3. Commercial sources of promotional items available from library suppliers.
4. "Clip-art" or "Reproduction art" refers to a collection of line drawings, usually in black and white, which can be used as illustrations in publications, advertisements and displays. Originally clip-art was intended to be clipped from a printed page but more recently, clip-art is photocopied from a printed page or reproduced from a computer program. Clip-art is available from a variety of sources including:
 - o The Southern Ontario Library Service Marketing Department through a service called *Cliplines*. Published four times a year, each issue is produced around a theme such as reference or fundraising. The annual subscription rate ranges from about \$20. per year for printed copy to \$40. for electronic copy.
 - o art companies
 - o provincial and national campaigns such as Ontario Public Library Week
 - o copyright-free materials and including old line engravings, lines, boxes, g e o - metric shapes, standard backgrounds
 - o magazines and journals and including words, phrases, borders, pictures but beware of copyright restrictions
 - o computer clip-art programs (described on the next page)
 - o materials previously produced by the library



Summer reading programme

The summer reading programme is a good example of using promotional materials produced by another organization to help promote the local library. To help library staff across Ontario plan summer reading programmes, a package of resource material has been produced by the Southern Ontario Library Service. Each programme revolves around a particular theme with supporting promotional materials and ideas. The programme for 1992, for instance, was based on the theme "Readers are good sports" and included posters, buttons, colouring sheets, certificates, bookmarks, reproduction kits and clipper sheets.

To serve the needs of all libraries, some of the summer reading programme products such as the poster, colouring sheet, button and certificate are bilingual. Order forms are distributed to all libraries and materials are available for a charge, from the London office of the Southern Ontario Library Service.

Computer resources

Computer desktop publishing software can be used in library marketing. Simply defined, desktop publishing is the process of laying out and printing text and graphics using a desktop computer and printer.

Using a microcomputer and a good printer, letters, newsletters, signs and other printed materials can be produced to look just as good as a professionally-printed work. Different styles and sizes of typeface are available. A page can be set into several columns. Large bold headlines can be added and charts, graphs and illustrations can be integrated into the text.

Clip-art has also made the transition to computers. It is a lot easier to pull a ready-made illustration out of a computer file than to create one from scratch. With this electronic form of clip-art, the picture can be modified somewhat to individual needs.

There is a wide variety of computer clip-art available. It is often helpful to check with other users to see which clip-art packages contain good quality type and images. A good choice for libraries is *Cliplines*, a series of reproduction art produced by the SOLS Marketing Department.

In the question of the propriety of using clip-art without copyright permission, as a rule, clip-art can be used for any purpose except to repackage it as clip-art. Thus, the pictures can be printed and used as part of a newsletter or magazine, but the original files -- or any variations on them -- cannot be given to someone else as files.



The final stages of the marketing plan are implementation and evaluation. Implementation requires an assessment of the techniques to be used to promote the product and a schedule listing tools and timelines. Evaluation compares the results with the objective and asks the questions “Did it work?” “Why?” or “Why not?” Small library funds are usually too scarce to waste on ineffective marketing and promotion. The marketing plan must include some way to evaluate the results.

Implementation

Implementation of an effective marketing plan for the public library can only be achieved through careful planning. The first step in implementation is to rank the objectives of the library in priority order. While all of the objectives may be very important, the resources available (in terms of time and budget) will impose limits.

The next step is to work through the objectives one by one, listing present and potential products of the library that will help to achieve each objective. Then:

- rearrange that list in order of priority for the next year
- list known dates that relate to the products, e.g., the library’s anniversary relates to the date of the open house which will celebrate it; dates of board meetings relate to obtaining approval for certain undertakings; school vacations will affect products for certain target audiences
- decide on tentative implementation dates for all of the products
- note these on an annual schedule, beginning with the highest priority product.

The marketing mix, introduced on page 6 of this *Sourcebook*, is an optimal combination of the four main elements of a marketing campaign -- product, price, place and promotion - which are designed to appeal to a target audience. Since there are many options for each of the four *P*’s, the number of possible marketing mix strategies and implementation plans are staggering. Sample mixes are printed at the back of this *Sourcebook* (Sample 3: Mixes).



Evaluation

The marketing process is complete only after an evaluation of the product. In most cases, all that is involved is reviewing the objectives and noting whether they were met or not. If it achieved the objectives set, consider what steps were particularly useful.

Some results are easy to measure. For example, if the primary objective was to attract a certain number of non-traditional clients to the launch of a new service, attendance will be the primary indicator. An evaluation form, completed by participants, is an essential tool for evaluating events and programmes. A sample evaluation form is included at the back of this *Sourcebook* (Sample 4: Evaluation form).

These resource materials are available from the Ontario Library Service.

RESOURCES

ALA Video - *Marketing: A Planned Approach for the Public Library*, 1989. (24 minutes)

This video shows how to apply the principles of marketing to a library. It describes a planning process for achieving a successful marketing strategy that can help match community needs to library strengths, and eventually increase library use.

ALA Video - *The Library Show: Merchandise it!*, 1985. (19 minutes)

Ideas and advice about effective display and merchandising techniques for the library's collection are offered. Aimed at staff who have responsibilities for designing and implementing collection displays.

Blake, Barbara Radke and Barbara L. Stein. *Creating Newsletters, Brochures and Pamphlets: A How-to-do-it Manual for Librarians*. New York: Neal-Schuman, 1992.

Grunenwald, Joseph P. *Developing a Marketing Program for Libraries*. Clarion State College, 1989.

Kies, Cosette. *Marketing and Public Relations for Libraries*. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1987.

Leerburger, B. A. *Promoting and Marketing the Library*. Boston: G.K. Hall, 1989.

Liebold, Louise Condak. *Fireworks, Brass Bands, and Elephants: Promotional Events with Flair for Libraries and Other Nonprofit Organizations*. Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press, 1986.

Roberts, Anne F. *Public Relations for Librarians*. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1989.

Tuggle, Ann. *Grand Schemes and Nitty Gritty Details: Library PR That Works*. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1987.

Walters, Suzanne. *Marketing: A How-to-do-it Manual for Librarians*. New York: Neal-Schuman, 1992.



Samples

1. Media release
2. Public service announcement
3. Mixes
4. Evaluation form