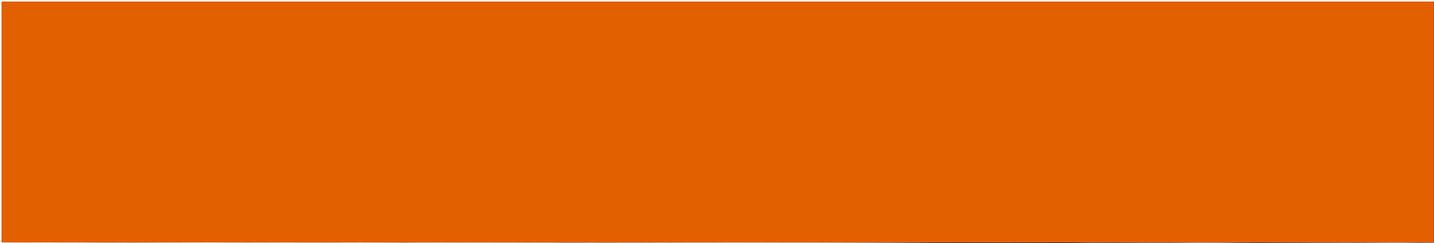




Marketing



It All Starts With Planning

Regardless of how much time you have to deliver your message, to accomplish your stated goals, consider developing a calendar to help you stay organized. Also, planning will help you visualize all the various parts that you have that is related to the message that you are delivering.

To begin, start with the event or release date and work backwards, figuring out how much time you need to give yourself for each task. In this section, the focus is on approaching the media. You will also need to develop an internal calendar for the event itself.

Some of the items that may be included are broadcast and print outlet deadlines, as they work on various deadlines and timelines. For example, monthly magazines have a longer lead time than daily papers and broadcast outlets.

Your timeline several months out might begin by specifying what needs to be accomplished in a particular week, but as it gets closer to your event or activity, the timing might be down to the hour.

Try to be specific in listing tasks to be completed to help staff plan their time so that you have enough time to make phone calls and write releases or other items. Also, remember that the actual event or release isn't the last thing on your calendar! Follow up during the days and week after the event, to gather news clips and thank reporters. Finally, remember to tell yourself to be flexible as everything is subject to change... sometimes daily.

-ALA Comm. Handbook

Using Existing Resources:

How a Limited Budget Can Be a Help, Not a Hindrance

Your biggest resource is your library users. Children can be effective media spokespeople; parents know the value of the library to them and to their children. Seniors often rely on the library for reading materials or Internet access and use it as a community center. The tips below may help you to maximize your resources:

TRY TO GET TO KNOW YOUR LIBRARY USERS. For example, if there is an unemployed person who comes to use the Internet at the library to find a job, take note of that, as he or she may be able to provide a moving testimonial in the future. Noticing all of the different reasons that people come to the library will broaden your base of support and reinforce the necessity of your library for the members of your community. It will also highlight important, concrete stories you can tell to the media, funders, elected officials, and opinion leaders. Keeping a file of these individuals can prove invaluable.

TAKE SPECIAL NOTE OF OPINION LEADERS IN YOUR COMMUNITY WHO USE YOUR LIBRARY.

Perhaps the president of a local PTA is a frequent user. Or maybe one of the members of your Board of Trustees is also on the Board of Directors at the local YMCA. This person is likely to have a large network of contacts that he or she can influence to support the library, either through giving time, money, or simply writing a letter to an elected official.

Making use of these supporters and potential supporters is inexpensive and it is the most effective way to reach your other target audiences.

DON'T FORGET YOUR LIBRARY TRUSTEES AND FRIENDS. Library trustees generally have political and community connections that can benefit the library, and Friends of the library are valuable not only as voices, but also as eyes and ears for library staff. Take time in your trustee meetings to discuss these connections in relationship to specific events or advocacy activities and encourage your trustees to act on them. Discussing their commitments in front of peers can be an effective way to hold them to their promises.

ASK "VOLUNTEERS" HOW BEST TO GET IN TOUCH WITH THEM, for example, via e-mail or telephone. Remember to keep your volunteers informed about important events, issues they should know about, and/or how they can help; you want these people to be as "in the know" as possible to enable them to maintain their connection to the library and spread accurate information.

Making the most of the resources at your fingertips often means that you or another staff member at your library must spend a significant amount of time talking to library users and identifying those that are best positioned to reach out to the community. However, cultivating these supporters will be worth the effort, and the network you build can be used for years to come.

Tips for Library Marketing

BASIC TIPS

- Everyone has a library story. Spend time learning about the stories people associate with your library. Use this as a way to “break the ice” with visitors, guests at events, donors and community leaders.
- Use storytelling to paint a vivid picture of all that your library provides and what it might provide in the future. Consider telling stories about real people and situations rather than statistics. For example, tell a story about an elderly couple who use the library to surf the Internet, or a local small business owner who worked with a reference librarian to research and develop a business plan.
- Library staff are great storytellers and should be involved in marketing and PR activities when appropriate.
- Maximize your library's communication tools and resources by conveying consistent and repeated messages in news releases and media relations, on your website, in advertising, direct mail and print materials.

MESSAGE TIPS

Develop key messages to communicate about your library. Some examples of messages that resonate include:

- Libraries are a democracy's best-kept promise. They provide “information for all.”
- The library is an access point for information, both as a building and as an online resource. The library is an important part of our information age.
- Libraries provide educational, literacy and senior programs. Libraries are community and cultural centers.
- Books, books, books! People love books and they want to know that their library invests in books. Talk about them.

MESSAGE TIPS, CONT.

- The library is a forum for an exchange of ideas delivered through a diverse array of speakers, exhibits and programs that spark exploration and dialogue.
- Libraries serve people from early childhood through their senior years. They are an important resource in early childhood development. They support people through school, during their search for a job, through parenting, careers and retirement.
- Libraries are a source of lifelong learning, social interaction and entertainment.

GRASSROOTS OUTREACH TIPS

- Seek the support of authors for readings, presentations and endorsements. Most authors have a library story to tell and tend to be very generous to libraries with their time and support.
- Many key influencers and business and community leaders have not used the library in a while. Invite them to come for a visit and demonstrate to them the library's impact on the community. Take advantage of their lack of familiarity to show them some of your services, such as research and reference assistance.
- Develop partnerships with cultural/ethnic communities and communities with special interests. Such partnerships build strong marketing and outreach opportunities for programs and collections.
- Develop partnerships with cultural groups, public broadcasting and arts organizations to help build strong new audiences. They can also provide an excellent opportunity to share or trade mailing lists for fundraising and outreach efforts.

GRASSROOTS OUTREACH TIPS, CONT.

- Plan events related to special interests (rare books, book groups, summer reading program kickoff, etc.). Such events can become media stories and opportunities for sponsor involvement. They can also help a library build its mailing list.

MEDIA TIPS

- Write an op-ed piece for your local news media positioning the library as an expert on important issues. Early childhood development, adult literacy, access to health information and meeting the needs of new communities are a few topics that are news worthy and can effectively be address by librarians.
- Position library staff as local experts for the media to interview on topics ranging from business research to early childhood development and other specialized subjects.
- “Pitch” news on a quarterly basis to secure feature stories or community news coverage above and beyond regular calendar listings. Your chances for feature coverage increase if you pitch reporters stories that are about an impact the library is making on people's lives.
- Proactively pitch to radio and TV stations-not just newspapers. Pitch stories that have strong audio and visual components to increase placement.
- Build partnerships with the media and local businesses. Newspapers, radio and television stations, and outdoor media (billboards, bus shelters, etc.) can contribute valuable promotional space or time if they are offered benefits as a partner. Similarly, local businesses can help promote the library in creative ways-for example with discounts and premiums for library cardholders.

TIPS FOR INTEGRATING MARKETING AND FUNDRAISING

- Timing is everything. Coordinate your fundraising communications and appeals with general library communication such as cardholder newsletters, program marketing, branch materials and Web content. This maximizes resources and builds support and awareness for fundraising campaigns, while raising general awareness of your library.
- Media sponsorships are a good match for library funding campaigns. They help “sell” your project in the public phase of capital campaigns. Media partners can run ad campaigns coordinated with direct mail and Web-based fundraising.
- Fundraising campaigns are an opportunity to uncover library lovers and seek external advocates who can help make your library's core case for support. Profile business leaders, government officials, and community leaders as supporters and champions.

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Elements of a Marketing Plan

Your library has a lot to offer, but if no one knows about them, they may as well not exist.

I. INTRODUCTION AND SITUATION ANALYSIS

This section of your plan essentially maps out the situation you're in when you begin your efforts. It should reflect the things that are challenging for your library as well as the things that are working very well. The point is to capture a snapshot of the present day, and use that as a baseline for identifying where you want to go next, and how your marketing plan will help you get there. In some cases, you may have a strategic plan that can be used as a baseline for the marketing planning. If you do not have one, the marketing planning will likely raise questions about your library's overall plans, not just marketing. This can be very helpful, and also sometimes frustrating. Stay focused, and remember that marketing cannot solve your organizational development problems, or determine your long-term programmatic plans, but it will raise those questions. Sometimes, this forces you to step back a bit. Don't be discouraged. Effective marketing is mission-driven. It is better to be asking these questions now, than to have implemented a marketing plan that doesn't meet the library's long-term goals. If you are part of a school district, college or university looking at the broader goals of the district, college or university, is often very helpful at the beginning of the marketing effort to ensure that you are including strategies and goals that support the bigger organizational mission in addition to the needs of your specific library. With the big picture in mind, your plan will help build the library's value with another important audience as well.

A. OVERVIEW OF CURRENT OPERATING CLIMATE

- Assets, challenges, opportunities, threats
- Needs/opportunities and assessment of the basis on which to define your key needs and opportunities.
- Determine what additional information is needed. Stop here; gather data, return to plan.
- Ask: What is your program/service mix, what do you have to offer, what is your focus, are there successes/failures in other areas that can impact your success?
- What do you know as a result of the information you have gathered?
- What inferences or assumptions will you make as you go forward?
- Make sure you do the analysis piece, don't just recite what you know.
- What does all this information mean?

B. ORGANIZATIONAL MISSION

Effective marketing is mission-driven and supports the fulfillment of the organization's purpose.

- Mission Statement: Note it in your plan and keep it in mind throughout your work.
- Brand Definition: (Note: if you are in the midst of creating a branding plan, you should still capture what you know about your brand now. This will help inform your work going forward.)
- Who are you?
- What makes you unique?
- What tone, personality, and image do you convey?
- Ask yourself: How do I know this? What information do I have (see section A) that will support this. You need to be sure that you're not just "making it up."

II. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

All effective plans begin with clear identification of goals. These drive audience identification, segmentation and prioritization as well as the strategies you will use to reach them. The goals sections should address the end results you seek. What is your vision for your library and its programs? What are you trying to accomplish through your marketing outreach? Are your goals long-term (over a few years) or short-term (next few months)? Make sure you clearly define your goals.

- If you are successful, what will be the results?
(Think in terms of a concrete, affirmative statement of the end result(s), (not the process)
e.g. Library X will have sufficient resources to expand the collection, or Library X will be regarded as a valued resource by faculty, administrators and students.
- Goals must be consistent with organizational objectives.
- Pick no more than five.
- Within each goal, define measurable objectives. How will you know you have succeeded?
- Get specific about the smaller, more tangible and easier to measure items that will help show you've achieved your goals.

III. AUDIENCE IDENTIFICATION, SEGMENTATION & PRIORITIZATION

Your target audiences will be defined in large part by the goals you set. Start by identifying people you currently reach who can help you achieve your goals, then expand beyond that group to the next layers out. Prioritize based on those with greatest ability to impact your goals. Don't forget those on the "inside" as they are both an audience and a messenger.

- Identify groups and subgroups.

- Determine what you know about your audience's knowledge of you, their behavior, what opportunities there are to reach them, what they need that you provide.
- Ask: Who are they, what do they know, what do they care about, what do they need to know to do what we are asking them to do?

IV. KEY MESSAGES

Based on your goals, determine how you will talk about your library/program. What makes you unique or different? What does your audience need to know? Ask: What? So what? Now what? Use your answers to these questions to form your messages. Think of these answers as themes that you can adapt to different audiences.

- Choose no more than three, with supporting points.
- Ask: What is your argument, what key things do you want people to believe, adopt, accept and act upon? Are these effectively AND concisely conveyed?
- Once you have defined the key three message themes, you can determine specific customized messages for audience groups/subgroups.

V. STRATEGIES

Marketing strategies are broad, yet focused, **approaches** to achieving your goals. If your goal is to increase awareness of a program or service, a strategy might be to "attract attention of the media," another may be to "engage internal stakeholders." Start shaping strategies by thinking about what you are already doing, then decide what is missing. Keep in mind that your strategies are about **how** you will achieve goals, they are not the **tools** you will use. For example, a poster is a tool, while "reaching audiences in key locations" is a strategy.

- How will we reach our goals? What will we do?
- Test your strategies by asking “why?” The answer should mirror one or more of your objectives.
- Stop and ask what you need to do to ensure your strategies will work?
- (Informal check-ins with other staff, focus groups, discussion with advisory board or patron groups.)

VI. TOOLS AND TACTICS

Once you have determined your strategies, you can begin to think about the tools and tactics you’ll need to implement them. Tools are “stuff” like posters, flyers, displays, etc.

Tactics are activities/behaviors/events.

- Ask: How will we do it?
- Test yourself: If you have a tool or tactic that isn’t supporting one of your strategies, the tool isn’t relevant.
- People tend to produce more tools than they need, or the wrong tools because they haven’t thought through strategies yet.

VII. BUDGET

Ultimately, your plan will be shaped by the limits of your financial and human resources. That said, don’t begin by thinking about what you can afford. Instead, determine what is needed to achieve success, then assess cost and prioritize the implementation of strategies based on the resources you either have, or can generate through partnerships or sponsorships and the strategies that give you the most bang for your buck. You will want to spend the largest part of your budget on the strategies and tools with the longest-term benefit. Make sure you have included:

- Total cost: in both staff time and hard costs.
- Identification the gap between what you have and

what you need. This provides a good baseline for determining if there are partnership or sponsorship dollars available to pursue.

- Prioritization: Too often people cut the heart of their marketing program because they fail to prioritize.
 - Prioritizing requires you to go back, look at goals, and key audiences and ensure that the strategies, tools and tactics you decide on reach those most likely to take the action you want taken.
 - As you make choices on your budget, think in terms of three categories:
 1. Must do or the plan won’t work.
 2. Major value added, but if we can’t do it the program still works.
 3. Nice, but not necessary.

VIII. TIMELINE/WORKPLAN

Once you have established your budget, set a realistic timeline for implementing your plan. This should serve as a workplan, detailing who has responsibility for what, and by when tasks are needed to be accomplished. Your work plan will allow you or the project manager to stay on top of deadlines, track progress and also serves as a final checkpoint to ensure that you have the human resources needed to do everything you’ve identified. If your plan is well-structured, detailed, resourceful and realistic, it will be easier to involve others in your work, and to engage volunteers in implementation as well.

- By month, what needs to happen?
- Who will do it?
- Be sure to allow enough time.

IX. EVALUATION

A critical final piece in the planning process is ensuring that you are measuring your effectiveness. Set clear measurements in your goals and objectives and make sure that someone is responsible for keeping track as defined in your plan. The evaluation piece is critical to your being able to show that resources spent are worth the investment, as well as to demonstrate to sponsors or partners the success that their investment helped create. Keep it simple, but concrete.

- How will you know your plan worked?
- What steps have you built into the process to ensure you meet your goals?

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