

Chapter 10

Marketing, Promotion, and Collaboration

Today's library users are no longer satisfied with the status quo, traditional library. The library clientele's bar of expectations for public library services and programs has surged so high that today's libraries are challenged and forced to promote and market their services at levels that were never before conceived. With the emergence of large bookstores, coffee cafés, the Internet, downloadable devices, and widening access to information, libraries are being placed in a competitive environment; therefore, in order to compete, survive, and thrive, libraries must determine what their library patrons want and need. The library patron must be the center of every program or service that the library provides. The library staff must be orientated to all of the library services and programs. Of imperative importance, the community must be aware of what the library is providing, and library staff should always make sure their library patrons leave the library satisfied—since it is highly likely that a library user who is not satisfied will not return.

A public that is aware of all the services and collections offered by its library and that views its library as a positive, fundamental, and indispensable part of life—this is the ideal achieved through an effective public relations and marketing program.

Applicable Core Standards—Please see Core Standards 1, 7, 13, 14, 17, 22, and 23 in Chapter 1.

Marketing Standards

1. The library board develops and adopts a marketing plan that supports the library's long-range and strategic plan.
2. The library board and administration participates in three or more cooperative activities with other community organizations, businesses, and institutions, such as Chamber of Commerce and service organizations.
3. The library's services and programs are regularly promoted in the community by using three or more publicity methods such as flyers, brochures, library Web site, posters, banners, displays, presentations and speeches, and newspaper ads.
4. The library specifically invites local, state, and federal officials to visit the library, providing them a firsthand view of the library's services.
5. The library's Web site is updated at least monthly to reflect current and future programs, board minutes, library policies, and new material.
6. The board, administration, and staff assess the library's appearance at least once a year, using this information to revise the library's image in the community.
7. The board, administration, and appropriate staff visit other libraries at least once a year, learning what services and programs other libraries offer their patrons.
8. The operating budget includes funds for public relations and marketing.
9. The library considers persons with special needs when developing and delivering information about the library's collections and services.
10. The library develops strategies to reach those groups that do not use the library.
11. One member of the staff coordinates the library's marketing efforts, but all staff receives customer service and marketing training.

12. When reviewing and setting library policies, the board evaluates how the policies affect persons within the jurisdictional population.
13. The library includes public relations and customer service as part of the orientation of all new staff and board members.
14. The library regularly evaluates patron and community awareness of the library's programs and services through focus groups, surveys (in-house and Web-based), interviews, etc.
15. The library administration ensures all board and staff members receive an orientation of the library covering the library's history, funding sources, long-range plan, and services.
16. The library builds on public relations and marketing efforts developed by the library system, state and national organizations, the state library, and the community.

Marketing Checklist

- ___ The library has a marketing plan that supports the library's long-range, strategic plan.
- ___ The library board and administration participates in three or more cooperative activities with other community organizations.
- ___ The library's services and programs were promoted in the community. Check the applicable publicity methods.
 - flyers
 - brochures
 - Web site
 - posters
 - banners
 - displays
 - podcasting
 - presentations
 - speeches
 - newspaper ads
 - other
- ___ The library invited local, state, and federal officials to visit the library.
- ___ The library's Web site was updated at least monthly.
- ___ The board, administration, and staff conducted a library walk-through.
- ___ The board, administration, and appropriate staff visited other libraries.
- ___ The budget includes funds for public relations and marketing activities.
- ___ The library's promotional methods and services are ADA compliant.
- ___ A designated staff member coordinates the library's marketing efforts.
- ___ The library's staff received customer service and marketing training.
- ___ The library's orientation for staff and trustees includes the library's public relations, customer service philosophy, library history, funding sources, and long-range plan.
- ___ The library surveyed patrons and the community to judge awareness of the library's programs and services.
- ___ The library's statistics are effectively used to compare the library's progress in reaching its community.

Bibliography

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- Matthews, Joseph R. *Measuring for Results: The Dimensions of Public Library Effectiveness*. Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2003.
- Underhill, Paco. *Why We Buy: The Science of Shopping*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999.

Web sites

Library Success: A Best Practices Wiki.

<http://www.libsuccess.org>

The "M" Word—Marketing Libraries: a blog designed to bring the wonderful world of marketing to libraries. <http://themwordblog.blogspot.com/>

Marketing the Library—Web-based Training for Public Libraries, Ohio Library Foundation, 2003.

<http://www.olc.org/marketing>