MARKETING THE SCHOOL LIBRARY

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Marketing the School Library

1. Why Market the School Library?
What does the school community need to know about you?

1.1 What's a library?

Does everyone who could benefit from the library know about your school library?

- You may have new services and resources to offer that will benefit new users or keep current users coming back.
- A few users may not understand the services libraries have always had.

1.2 Have you heard this before?

- I didn't know you had DVD's!
- You mean I can ask for a book in advance?
- Do you have magazines?
- Can I read the latest Newspaper?
- Oh, I really don't want to bother you -- I'll just look around for a while.

1.3 Who uses the library? Who doesn't?

Do you know what percentage of the population in your school does not use the library?

Marketing may be directed at those who don't use the library, to show them the value of the library.

Marketing could mean survival!

Libraries cost money and marketing informs the school community of the value of the library and the necessity of continuing to support the library.

Marketing is anything libraries do to let the school community know who they are and what they do! Concentrate your promotion efforts where they will achieve the best results!
Marketing is a means of presenting the benefits of the library to all segments of your market, users and non-users.

In a marketing plan you should consider:

1. Demand
2. Competition
3. You determine what the school community needs to know in order to decide that the library is a service worthy of continued support.
4. The school library tradition is to offer needed services in the best way possible and the tradition of service doesn't change -- but the methods do.

Marketing lets the school community know that the library continues to be an outstanding source of information in a changing world.

Look for statistics on library usage. What are the numbers, how many people are using the library?

- What are the trends are percentages going up or down?
- What statistics are maintained by your library?

2. Marketing Defined

**Definitions** There are several definitions of marketing and more than one way to describe the process.

**Example one:** "The process of planning and executing conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives."

Example two: "Marketing is the wide range of activities involved in making sure that you're continuing to meet the needs of your customers and getting value in return. Marketing is usually focused on one product or service. Thus, a marketing plan for one product might be very different than that for another product. Marketing activities include "inbound marketing," such as market research to find out, for example, what groups of potential customers exist, what their needs are, which of those needs you can meet, how you should meet them, etc. Inbound marketing also includes analyzing the competition, positioning your new product or service (finding your market niche), and pricing your products and services. "Outbound marketing" includes promoting a product through continued advertising, promotions, public relations and sales."

[Free Management Library]

Example three: "A social and managerial process by which individual groups obtain what they need and want through creating, offering, and exchanging products of value with others."


- Find at least three definitions of marketing. They won't all be the same, but all libraries aren't the same, and one will work best for you.

The key is "process."

Planning and research are a key part of the process. Effective marketing requires quality research in order to assess what the library has to offer. What the users want, and how to match the two. The process includes several steps before publicity and promotion begin.

What is the process?

1. Know your library -- who are you, what is your mission and vision?
2. Find out about your users -- who are they and what do they want?
3. Create products and services that users want.
4. Develop a plan of action with promotion strategies to market selected products to targeted users with appropriate methods.
5. Be sure you're doing it right -- establish measurable goals and evaluate how well you've done.
6. Start over!

Marketing is the process of planning, pricing, promoting, and distributing goods and services to create "exchanges" that satisfy the library and the customer. Marketing is ongoing and dynamic because customer needs and library products change. The marketing process determines the decisions and activities involved in continuing to meet the needs of customers.
Products in libraries are:

What you do for your school, the tangible goods and services the library offers. For example:

- Provide resources and encouragement for lifelong learning.
- Provide a place for all ages to gather and learn.
- Offer young adults, and children's programming.
- Develop and circulate collections of print and multi-media materials.
- Provide local, regional, provincial, and national access to resources.
- Provide reference and research resources, services, and collections.
- Offer customer account handling, genealogy information, and access to eBooks?
- Provide access to online local information resources and databases, and guidance in selection of Web resources.
- Offer training in use of online and print resources to contribute to information literacy.
- Promote information, social, and cultural literacy.
- Work with schools to support curriculum.
- Introduce children to reading.
- Work with literacy programs.
- Provide information for educators.
- Maintain archives of the school’s historical resources.
- Provide meeting areas.

Library products are services, resources, programming, events, or instruction, for example, that are offered to the school community.
3. Steps of the Marketing Process

The process of marketing is:

- The process starts with the mission, but sometimes knowing the customer better may lead you to reconsider the library's mission.
- Assessing internal capabilities helps create a focus for market research into customer needs, but the research results may show a need to go back and change what the library is capable of delivering.
- The marketing plan may need to be adjusted after each step.
- Whatever the results, following the steps of the process will result in a stronger marketing plan.

### 3.1 What are the steps?

1. Begin the marketing process by examining your library's mission and vision statement.

2. Assess library capabilities with a marketing audit, an internal assessment.

3. Find out what products (services) your users want.

4. Develop goals and objectives based on your mission and the results of your internal audit into what customers want.

5. To meet goals, select strategies to promote your products that will work best, be affordable, and reach your customers. Include the Internet in your plan. Look at what others are doing.

6. Create a plan of action that describes all the steps needed to carry out the strategies for meeting goals. Outline the specific tasks, timelines, and assignment of responsibilities. Consider budget restraints.

7. Evaluate how well you have done. Evaluation may indicate that some goals can't be reached or can't be measured, some methods of promotion don't work as expected, or what's really needed is an entirely new plan!

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Good marketing plans are the result of a process that includes self-analysis, market research of your customers, establishing goals, using strategies based on your research, and evaluation.
4. Market Research
Assessing users Needs.

Know your users!

4.1 What do your users want from you?

4.2 Which services or resources do you have but need to promote?

4.3 Which services or resources do you need to acquire or create?

Market research takes many forms (e.g. surveys, focus groups). Results help you select a target user group (market segment) and choose a specific product to promote or a problem on which to focus? How do your customers "perceive" the library?

Market research helps you see the library through the eyes of your users. It is a way to quantify, to actually measure what your users want -- or find out what keeps some community members from using your services.

You want to know what is or will be your users' response to the library. Market research is not an internal assessment -- instead you're looking at users.

Internal vs. External

Marketing audits assess internal capabilities, but marketing research is external, gathering information about the needs and wants of users or potential users. Market research identifies possible opportunities, but also finds the problems and challenges, or external barriers to successful marketing of the library to the school community.

Methods depend on the product, but also on staff and budget resources. Formal market research methods may include print surveys, focus groups, user surveys, etc. Do market research sensitively.

—if you ask people what they want, they tend to expect you to give it to them!
5. Marketing Plan

5.1 Writing the Plan

The marketing audit provides information about your products and services, and the library's strengths and limitations. Market research lets you know what users and potential users need. After the audit and research, the next step is to use the information gathered to establish goals and create a marketing plan.

The plan spells out in a specific, detailed, step by step way how you will change what you have determined needs to be changed.

5.2 The Goals

The marketing plan includes marketing goals and objectives.

- The goals are based on your mission and the results of your internal audit and external research into what customers want.
- Goals and objectives should be specific and measurable
- One objective e.g. would be to get all of the attendees to sign up for a library card.

5.3 Strategies

The plan specifies marketing strategies, the promotional methods chosen to suit the target audience.

- Strategies in the plan depend on the user group and/or the service being offered.

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Market research focuses on the customer. Before preparing a marketing plan, find out what your customers want and how they decide on which products and services they will use. Use the information you’ve gathered to develop a plan that targets specific groups or emphasizes a service the research indicates that users want.
The "marketing mix" that you need to consider consists of:

The "4P's" of marketing (i.e. the marketing mix):

1. **Product** - library services available to clients. Evaluate all library services, programs, events, collections, etc. that are available and value of these products to customers.

2. **Price of Service** - direct and indirect costs to produce and deliver the product, or actual fees if any.

3. **Place** - delivery and distribution of the products and services. What is the method of delivery and distribution of the products and services?

4. **Promotion** - methods to promote products. What methods are available to you for promoting your products?
   - Methods include public relations, advertising, direct mail, telemarketing, Internet, monthly book review column in your local paper, visual displays, press releases. Methods are based on assessment of users and the nature of the product.

5.4 Plan of Action

A plan of action (outline of specific tasks) is developed to describe how the strategies will be carried out.

- Each goal will have a detailed timeline of daily tasks and responsibilities. Consider any budget restraints.

5.5 Evaluation

The plan specifies how to measure how well goals and objectives were met.

- If your measure of evaluation is customer satisfaction, you will need a method, an evaluation survey form for example.

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For market planning, consider a mix of team members to provide a broad viewpoint. Consider staff, users, non-users, board members, local businesses, vendors, supporters, media representatives, and others, to represent the specific demographics of your community. Look for expertise, willingness, and motivation.
5.6 Marketing Plan

5.6.1 Typical contents of a marketing plan

1. Overview
   A. Executive Summary: brief description of the major points of the plan.
   B. Planning Team: brief description of what each team member contributes.

2. Situation (environmental) Analysis, SWOT
   A. Internal Strengths and Weaknesses: summary of the information from your audit about the library's capabilities.
   B. External Opportunities and Threats: summary of the information from your audit about the community & political situation, and your competition.

3. Market Research
   A. Summarise the results of your direct research with customers, and how that influences the goals you choose.

4. Goals and Objectives
   A. These are your desired Outcomes. Specify what you expect your results to be. These should be measurable. Each goal will have a few objectives.

5. Marketing Strategies
   A. Target Market Selection: either a specific target market or a specific product, such as event, program, new service, existing service, etc.
   B. Marketing Mix: description of the Product, it's features, Price, Promotion activities and Place.

6. Action Plan
   A. An outline of each specific step or task that will need to be done to reach your goal. Include person responsible, timeline, budget. Note any tasks which can hold up the project or prevent others from accomplishing their own tasks.

7. Implementation, Controls, and Evaluation
   A. Measures of performance: what are the metrics, statistics, or method of measurement that you will use?
   B. Monitoring and evaluating performance: how exactly will you measure if your goal was reached? How will you collect the data and analyse it?

8. Financial Projections and Budget
   A. Description of Costs.
   B. Estimates of funding that you expect to receive.
5.6.2 Marketing Plan: Worksheet

1. Executive Summary or brief overview of the plan. How does your plan fit into the library mission and vision?

2. Information about the planning group. Consider staff, users, non-users, supporters.

3. Internal Strengths and weaknesses, and the environmental analysis. These are the strengths and weaknesses from the SWOT.

4. Challenges and barriers section identifies possible barriers and ways to overcome them. These are the "threats and opportunities" from the SWOT.

5. Market Research summary provides analysis of customer needs. Who will be your targeted market segment?

6. What is the survey method you have selected? How will you do it?

7. Goals and Objectives section defines the goals and specific measurable objectives. For example, if your goal is to bring in more Gr 4 learners to an event, an objective might be to state the percentage attending who will be Gr 4 learners.
8. **Marketing strategy** section outlines the approach that will be used to achieve the plan’s objectives. Discussion includes the marketing mix: product, place, price, promotion.

9. **The action plan** details programs and promotions designed to meet the objectives, with timelines and assignment of tasks. Describe every step you need to take, who will do it, and when.

10. **Evaluation section** provides measures of assessment and feedback. How will you measure whether your goals have been achieved?

11. **Budget section** details any financial constraints or profits.

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Setting measurable goals and including specific methods of evaluation in your plan will make it easier to determine if your goals have been met.
6. Public Relations: How do you want the library to be seen?

6.1 Communicating, influencing, building relationships

Marketing is customer oriented and has a primary purpose of selling a product. Public Relations concentrate more on selling the library as a whole, and careful planning is required.

Public relations involve promoting the library as a whole, developing an identity and image, and communicating library goals and mission to the school community. For marketing, public relations, or advertising the ultimate goal is the same -- let the school community know what you have to offer.

6.2 Advertising  Public relations more often relies on free publicity instead.

6.3 Public Relations and library image (PR) PR helps establish the library’s image and position within the school community. In these ways:

- Libraries are great places for kids.
- Libraries bridge the "information divide."
- Libraries protect our right to know.
- Libraries connect people with ideas, information and each other.
- Libraries are for everyone.
- Libraries are a shared community resource.
- Libraries support lifelong learning.
- Libraries support productivity.
- Libraries are school community information centres.
- Libraries foster school identity.
- Libraries are a source of pride.
- Libraries are a "port of entry." to learn more about their new school.
- Libraries support a school community of readers.
- Libraries provide global reach and local touch.

These are the concepts that good public relations can communicate, establishing a clear corporate identity or image, and disseminating a clear message about library mission and vision.

Maintaining a positive image is critical for the library and for marketing library products. Branding and positioning are two effective methods. Branding is an association of ideas, associating the library with a name, logo, or slogan, for example.
7. Hands on Marketing ideas

7.1 Library Supporters:
Friends, Advocacy, Legislative Issues, and Fundraising

7.1.1 Friends of the Library Community members who know and support what you do and who are willing to share that knowledge with others are a tremendous resource for library public relations.

Does your library have an active Friends of the Library organization? A Friends group can be a major factor in successful marketing of the library:

7.1.2 Advocacy and Legislative Issues

Marketing requires communicating not only with users of your library, but with those who can change how libraries function. The library needs supporters, and especially needs supporters who are willing to speak out on behalf of the library -- library advocates.

7.1.3 Fundraising

Libraries also need funds! The need for fundraising often drives marketing initiatives. When the need for funds is critical, the need for following a thorough marketing process and devising an outstanding market plan is also critical. Involving Friends groups and aggressive advocacy are key elements of executing a successful fundraising campaign.

Libraries often need help from community supporters such as Friends groups, for marketing, for fundraising, and for advocacy. Libraries must stay informed of legislative issues that impact libraries and be prepared to speak up.
7.2 Slogans: Get creative @ your library

The following library slogans were the result of a brainstorming session with school librarians attending a strategic marketing and planning retreat.

Every learner succeeds @ your library

It’s all @ your library

Get a fresh start-it’s all @ your library

Books, technology and help-it’s all @ your library

Get it done-it’s all @ your library

Be a leader @ your library

Make the difference @ your library

Your future starts @ your library

Go 4 it @ your library

Get an "A" @ your library

Find yourself @ your library

Get results @ your library

Find a partner @ your library

Keep updated @ your library

Get smart @ your library

Learn @ your library

Get connected @ your library

Get involved @ your library

Find it all @ your library

Books galore@ your library

Be the best @ your library
7.3 Create-a-book

Let the learners create their own books and place them in the library or read it to other learners.

7.4 Networking with:

- Other school libraries
- Libraries in town/village
- People that have an influence
- Your local community leaders
- Interest groups
- Reading groups
- Local library forum
- ELITS

7.5 Other ideas:

- Bookmarks
- Book day / Book evening
- Reading theme for year (communicate it with: educators and parents)
- Weekly announcements during assembly regarding the library
- Exhibitions
- Promote new books
- Start reading a book and stop, learners read the rest
- Displays
- Writing a Press Release
- The Interview
- Story Ideas
6. **Summary**

Steps to develop a marketing plan include:

1. Begin the marketing process by examining your library's mission and vision.

2. Assess library capabilities with a marketing audit, and an internal assessment.

3. Find out what products (services) your users want, and how they perceive the library, through market research.

4. Develop goals and objectives based on your mission and the results of your internal audit and external research into what customers want.

5. To meet goals, select strategies to promote your products that will work best, be affordable, and reach your customers.

6. Create a plan of action that describes all the steps needed to carry out the strategies for meeting goals. Outline the specific tasks, timelines, and assignment of responsibilities. Consider budget restraints.

7. Evaluate how well you have done.

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**Overview of the marketing process and the need for marketing**

1. Briefly describe the steps in the marketing process.

2. For each step, describe why it would be easy or difficult for your library to accomplish (lack of staff expertise, money, etc.)

3. What do you think would be the most critical service for your library to market right now! Why?
7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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