

Library Marketing Plan Workbook

Why Marketing?

Information professionals must understand that it is essential to actively market their services. Library marketing is critical for any information professional in order to spread the word about their library. It doesn't matter what library type, it doesn't matter how large or small the library is -- you need to call attention to your library, your services, your worth to your community, your administration, your staff, and your users!

It is important to understand the organization's mission to produce effective marketing material that builds the library's brand and image, drives traffic to your web site, and differentiates your library from its competitors. That's why in this highly competitive industry marketing plays a very important role.

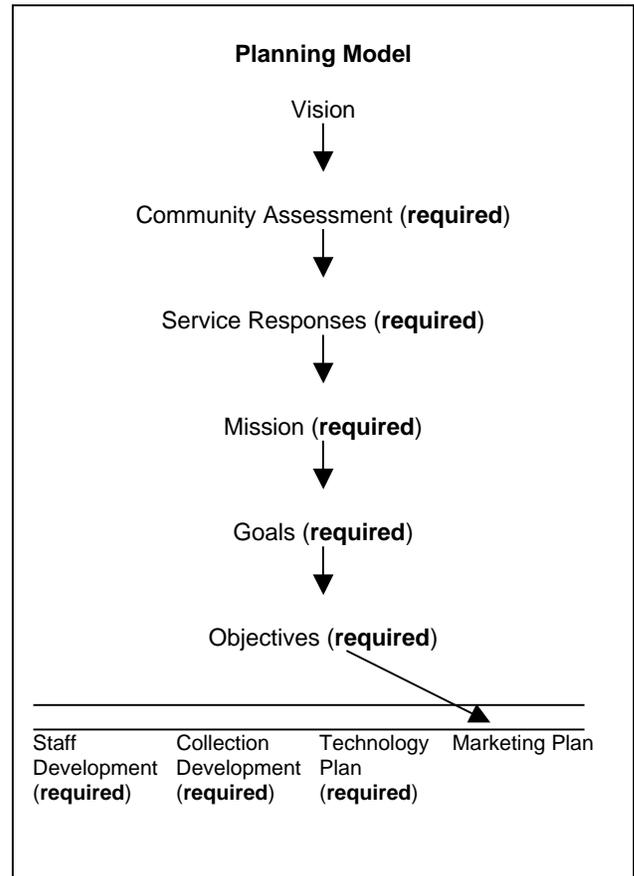
The crux of marketing is to find out your customer's real needs and desires and then to create and "sell" a product or service which fulfills that need and desire. It is a proactive NOT a reactive function.

We've developed a fairly uncomplicated description of the marketing process and have included a template to help you write that marketing plan. It can be used as a stand-alone document or if you wish to write a more formal plan, the information can be taken from the template and incorporated into a report format.

The Basic Steps of the Marketing Plan

The marketing plan is the *written* document that will help you develop and execute strategies to communicate your library's mission. You don't have to write an encyclopedia to create an effective marketing plan. You don't need a sophisticated writing style a fancy plan. Armed with the information of what customers really think, you can begin to make the changes to become truly customer focused.

Step 1 – Understand your community and what it wants (not what it needs). You will be seeking the answers to a whole series of questions, not only concerning your customer's



real requirements but also their opinions of the service that you currently provide to them, and you really need it to be straight from the hip with no punches pulled. You could ask them yourself or perhaps send out a survey form, or ask an informal group of library customer's face-to-face questions. Another source of opinions is to ask non-users...they are in a good position to judge you against other competitors (bookstores, the Internet, etc.). Keep in mind other questions you'll need to uncover the answers to:

- Are there segments in my community that are being underserved?
- Does my community want or value my unique competitive offering?
- Is there too much competition in the segment of my market to be competitive?

Step 2 – Understand your customer. Until you know who your customers are, what they want, and what motivates them, you can't prepare an effective marketing plan. Don't confuse "wants" with "needs." To really get to know your customers, ask yourself questions such as:

- How does my potential customer get "information products and/or services" (in a store, on the web)?
- What kinds of habits does my customer have?
- What are my target customer's primary motivations for seeking out information?

Step 3 – Pick a niche. If you say that your target customer is "everybody" then nobody will be your customer. Today the information marketplace is filled with competition. Carve out a specific niche based on your community's needs and dominate that niche. You could be a library that specializes in career/job resources, or specializes in terrific adult or children's programming. Make sure it's a niche you can communicate with easily, and make sure you dominate that niche before you consider moving to a second niche.

Step 4 – Develop your Marketing Message

Your marketing message not only tells your audience what you do, but persuades them that you're the best at what you do. Two types of marketing messages should be developed. One message should be short and to the point – think of it as your "audio logo." It's your response to someone who asks you, "So, what do you do?"

The second type is a more complete marketing message that will be included in all your marketing materials and promotions. To make your message compelling and persuasive, it should include the following elements:

- An explanation of your target prospect's problem
- An explanation about why you are the only "business" that can solve your prospect's problem.
- An explanation of the benefits people will receive from using your solution.
- Examples and testimonials from customers you have helped with similar problems.
- Your unconditional guarantee.

Step 5 – Determine your Marketing Medium(s)

Your marketing medium is the communication vehicle you use to deliver your marketing message. It is important to choose a marketing medium that gives you the highest return on your marketing dollar. This means you want to choose the medium that delivers your marketing message to the most niche prospects at the lowest possible cost.

Here are some tools you have at your disposal to get your message out:

- Newspaper ads
- Posters
- Contests
- Card decks
- Seminars
- Television ads
- Signs
- Radio ads
- Banners
- Articles
- Classified ads
- Newsletters
- Charity events
- Networking
- Billboards
- Magazine ads
- Special events
- Sales letters
- Flyers
- Email
- Postcards
- Doorhangers
- Media releases
- Fax broadcasts
- Brochures
- Gift certificates
- Word-of-mouth
- Website
- Sign picketing
- Business cards
- Catalogs
- Public speaking
- Window display

Step 6 – Set Marketing Goals

Goals are critical to your success. Remember, a “wish” is a goal that hasn’t been written down. If you haven’t written your goals, you’re still wishing for success. When creating goals, ensure that your goals are SMART:

1. **Sensible**
2. **Measurable**
3. **Achievable**
4. **Realistic**
5. **Time specific**

Once you’ve set your goals, implement processes to internalize them with all team members such as reviewing them in staff meetings, displaying thermometer posters, awarding prizes, etc.

Step 7 – Develop the Marketing Budget

Determine how much money is available, detail the financial aspects, and show how implementation of your plan will be profitable to the library.

The Template

The marketing worksheet template is designed to get you quickly to the core of the marketing issue. You can be as detailed as needed but in any case remember that your marketing plan is always a work in progress. It may be current, but it is never “done.”

The marketing plan template is available at the end of this document. A Microsoft Word version of the template is available at:

http://www.stlib.state.nm.us/files/Marketing_Plan_Template.doc

Marketing Plan

TARGET AUDIENCES	NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY THAT WE CAN FULFILL

VISION AND MISSION

What is your mission? What do you hope to accomplish?

Program	Mission/Vision	Desired Outcomes

Strategies/Goals/Objectives

Goals	Objectives	Outcome (how much of what by when)	Key Strategies

Strategic Marketing Action

Goal	Action needed to achieve goal	Promotion Techniques	Promotional resources needed, delivery method, etc.	Technologies to be put into place