Library marketing is the creative process of designing, communicating and promoting, delivering, and exchanging goods and services that have value for patrons and other constituencies.

**General Marketing**

Webreck-Alman, Susan. *Crash Course in Marketing for Libraries*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2007. Available through Access Pennsylvania Database. Overview available on publisher’s website. Alman, formerly with the University of Pittsburgh School of Information Sciences’ Director of Distance Education and Outreach, has written a text especially geared to smaller libraries.


Information Today publishes *MLS: Marketing Library Services*. The table of contents of the current issue always has a free article or two available online without a subscription requirement. This periodical provides “how-to information on developing integrated marketing strategies, creating powerful marketing materials, organizing special traffic-generation programs,” and more. Should you have access to urls for specific articles, you can then retrieve them. For example, Kathy Dempsey emphasizes the benefits and necessity of marketing the library during tough economic times. “Five Ways You Can Save Money by Marketing,” *MLS Marketing Library Services*, May-June 2009, v. 23, no. 3.

The State Library of Iowa provides helpful information on advocating, marketing, lobbying and building relationships. Be sure to check out many of the sites.

This outstanding source, “Marketing & Advocacy Resources Bibliography,” prepared by the FLICC/FEDLINK Marketing and Advocacy Sub-Committee has citations for best practices, benchmarks, guidelines, toolkits, performance measures, branding, market research, advocacy, strategic planning, return on investment, e-marketing, blogs, podcastings, RSS, and wikis.
OCLC regularly provides reports and graphics that can be useful to public libraries. For example, see their document, “How Libraries Stack Up” which provides statistics and quick facts with slick graphical design elements about the economic, social and cultural impact of libraries. It also briefly discusses the value of library services in the context of community needs.

The Washington State Library’s Marketing Tool contains a lexicon, matrix, and other tools that will help your public library deliver its messages.

The American Marketing Association website is primarily geared for its members and marketing professionals. Their Resource Library, however, has a variety of topics that might be of interest to library directors. Their dictionary (glossary) provides a wealth of marketing terminology and definitions.

Public Library Marketing Plans

Port Townsend Public Library, WA


The Washington State Library has compiled communications and outreach plans of public libraries within the State.


Other Marketing Plans

The Federal Depository Libraries’ Marketing Plan provides a good blueprint that can be emulated.

The Milner Library Illinois State University Marketing Plan is an example of an academic library marketing plan that includes a lot of details that might be helpful for your library’s plan.

Marketing Campaigns
Using a Gates Foundation grant, OCLC has developed a public awareness campaign to promote public libraries. It uses the word “geek” as a verb and is being trialed in a few states. Note the lively graphics and terminology. An update was presented at the 2010 Public Library Association Conference; streaming video of the presentation and discussion are available.

Library Journal tapped Alison Circle, Marketing Director of the Columbus Metropolitan Library, to blog on its website. She uses flash video, sharp narrative and offers creative ideas, some based on her experiences in Columbus. See “Marketing Trends to Watch,” and “A New Style of Library” which describes the recently rebranded library, “Anythink” in Adams County, Colorado.

As part of “@ your library, the Campaign for America's Libraries,” the Association of College and Research Libraries and the American Library Association have partnered to create a new, national marketing effort to heighten awareness and support of academic and research libraries. Included here is information about the campaign; a toolkit that includes creative strategies, practical ideas, case studies and profiles, customizable press materials, resource lists, and more; additional marketing resources; and downloadable graphics. Much of this campaign can be used by public libraries. You can download the “@ your library Toolkit for Academic and Research Libraries.”

These documents from the 3M Library Systems and Association of College and Research Libraries provide “a tool set and a process to help ... create a marketing plan and promotional campaign for {your} library. Completing the marketing process and creating a promotional plan are key steps in responding to change and planning to make change. It is up to the leaders of libraries to direct these efforts.” Much of this material can be used by public libraries.

“Strategic Marketing for Academic and Research Libraries Participant Manual”
“Strategic Marketing for Academic and Research Libraries Facilitator Guide”
Several of the group exercises can be used for other purposes as well.
“Strategic Marketing Facilitation Slides”
“Train-the-Trainer Facilitation Slides”

Use of Technology in Marketing Including Social Networking


Stephen Abram’s presentation at ALA Annual’s PR Forum, June 27, 2010, Next Practices in Communication @ Your Library, offers ideas on using technology to gather information and promote your library’s services and collections and the role of social networking in library marketing and communications.
M+R Strategic Services’ [Nonprofits Social Media Benchmark Study](#) focused on Facebook and Twitter because they’ve emerged as the favorites among most nonprofits for building relationships with supporters. The report compared use of email blasts to social media and discovered that organizations in the “study saw both faster growth and higher churn of their social media audiences than is typical with email lists.”

“Not a Site, but a Concept: Tapping the Power of Social Networking,” this Wharton School Publishing posting describes how to use the social networking phenomenon to your library’s advantage.

After helping with the launch of Northern California's Q and A Café, Linda Wallace and Peggy Barber developed “[10 Tips for Marketing Virtual Reference Services](#)”.

Lori Reed’s “[Marketing Library Services Using Web 2.0](#),” August 6, 2009 webinar for Northeast Florida Library Information Network uses upbeat, lively examples to provide the basis for moving away from traditional library marketing.

Hadro, Josh, “[Is Your Library Up on Yelp?](#) Library Journal, February 1, 2011. If your library isn’t listed, perhaps it should be.

Alison Circle, Marketing Director of the Columbus Metropolitan Library, describes “[Marketing Trends to Watch](#)” on her Library Journal blog.

Cells phones can be used to market library services. For example, the Orlando Public Library of the Orange County Library System, FL “[Guide by Cell@OCLS](#)” is a self-paced cell phone tour of the library.

Joe Murphy, Coordinator of Instruction and Technology at Yale University, provides insightful information on the use of mobile devices. Many of his [articles](#) are available electronically. He presented at the [ALA PR11 Forum at the American Library Association Conference, June 26, 2011: “Going Mobile @ Your Library: How Libraries Can Serve Mobile Phone Users.”](#)

Considering a video to promote your library or explain a service or issue? Here’s help. Slides from a presentation to the Florida Library Association Annual Conference, May 2009 cover the topics of addressing the rationale, how to do it, where to mount it and more. Brown, Mary C. and Mary Weatherholt. “[Hey! I Saw You on That Library Video.](#)”

Marshall Shore’s webinar for Infopeople, “Off The Shelf: Looking Beyond Libraries for Innovation and Inspiration” provides creative, cost-effective ways to improve library service. Note the accompanying slides and his resource list. Infopeople webinars are supported by the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act, administered in California by the State Librarian. Shore describes himself as an Information Curator™.

Customer Focus


Another helpful marketing blog is Nancy Dowd’s “The ‘M’ Word—Marketing Libraries,” which is “designed to bring the wonderful world of marketing to librarians.” She is the Director of Marketing for the New Jersey State Library. She stresses the need to get stories and ideas from the people using the library.

When a Nielsen survey press release leads off with this: “PERSONAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONSUMER OPINIONS POSTED ONLINE ARE THE MOST TRUSTED FORMS OF ADVERTISING GLOBALLY,” what’s the implications for public libraries?

LibrariUS initiative, a partnership of the American Library Association’s Office for Library Advocacy, the Public Library Association and the American Public Media’s (APM) Public Insight Network, aims to gain a greater understanding of libraries and the communities they support. “Through an interactive website, the LibrariUS initiative collects details from people using the library. Its intention is to inspire news content and, more importantly, generate a fresh and meaningful conversation about libraries and communities in the 21st century.”

De Rosa, Cathy. “Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources: A Report to the OCLC Membership.” Dublin, Ohio: OCLC Online Computer Library Center, 2005. Although the conclusions may or may not be surprising, the process involved in gathering the information informs the study. Perceptions of Libraries, 2010: Context and Community “is a follow-up to the 2005 Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources. The new report provides updated information and new insights into information consumers and their online information habits, preferences and perceptions. Particular attention was paid to how the current economic downturn has affected information-seeking behaviors and how those changes are reflected in the use and perception of libraries.” It was published in 2011.
The creative director/president of Metropolitan Group, a leading social marketing, PR/communication and resource development firm, Eric Friedenwald-Fishman spoke at the July 2009 PR Forum at the American Library Association Conference, Increasing Relevance, Relationships and Results.


To learn more about the people who live in the neighborhoods that your library services, try PRIZM Lifestyle Segmentation. Enter a zip code and click away. You’ll learn about the neighborhood's top five segments, along with some descriptive detail about each segment's lifestyle traits. Once you confirm this information, consider how you will use this data.

**Branding**

Alison Circle, Marketing Director of the Columbus Metropolitan Library, describes "Library Branding 101” on her *Library Journal* blog. She refers to Doucett, Elizabeth. *Creating Your Library Brand: Communicating Your Relevance and Value to Your Patrons*. Chicago, IL: American Library Association, 2008. Available through Access Pennsylvania Database. An overview, the table of contents and an excerpt are available through the ALA Store. Descriptions of the Lucius Beebe Memorial Library, MA branding project as well as those from Ipswich Public Library, MA and Harris County Public Library, TX are web extras related to Doucett’s book *Creating Your Library Brand: Communicating Your Relevance and Value to Your Patrons*.

Ohio of a robust plan to combat the diminution in libraries' market share. The plan trumpeted the indisputable value of libraries and library staff.” See the sidebar for resources on p. 35.


Jean Ayres’ slide presentation, “Branding Your Library” uses excellent content from marketing texts and relates concepts to public libraries.

Dempsey, Beth. “Target Your Brand: Build an Identity That Works in the Age of a Superstore.” Library Journal 129, no.13 (August 2004): 32-35. This frequently cited article is one of the seminal articles on library branding.


Niche Marketing

Patricia Duck and Randi Koeske presented "Marketing the Millennials: What They Expect From Their Library Experience" at the 2005 ACRL Conference. Although they both were employed by the University of Pittsburgh at the time, their methodology and results are broader than just the academic milieu.

The American Library Association’s Association of Library Services to Children has developed "Kids!@your library® Campaign Tool Kit." This excellent site provides a sample communication plan and other documents, ideas for PR, programs and promotional materials, resources, quotes, and much more.
Here is an example of taking what you have and turning it easily into something very special to market your library’s services. “State Library Offers Free Perks for State Workers.”

Girvin Strategic Branding and Design prepared the marketing handbook for the virtual reference project in Washington, “King County Library System & University of Washington Virtual Reference Services: Marketing Guides,” with funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Topics include taglines, logos, marketing messages, and onsite promotion.

Training

The Houston Area Library System provides online training for marketing public libraries. “Plan.Target.Market.123.”

“Marketing the Library,” is a training program developed by the Ohio Library Council with partial funding from the State Library of Ohio and support from LSTA. Modules for public librarians cover the steps of the marketing process as well as resource links, promotional ideas, and marketing plans. You may be challenged by the exercises and quizzes.

Production

“Print Design Production Guidelines” will be helpful in designing promotional pieces.

Library directors should have enough of a sense of design to be able to critique collateral pieces and the library’s online presence. Grantastic Designs Inc. provides graphic and online design tips.

Gale Cengage Learning “Power to the User: Market Your Library” provides useful tips. See especially the section on direct mail.

Lexis Nexis® InfoPro “Professional and Personal Development” covers daily library promotion. For example, they offer templates for bookmarks.

Carnegie Mellon University offers free self-paced online courses, one of which is “Visual Communication Design.”

WebJunction Courses

WebJunction Pennsylvania provides a large selection of free online workshops and training courses available to library employees, library board members, and trustees in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This service is supported by a grant
from the Office of Commonwealth Libraries. Log on to your account for access to courses such as:

- Developing Motivating Messages (LibraryU)
- Keep It Simple: Developing a Marketing Plan for Your Library (LibraryU)
- Marketing Essentials: Planning and People
- Marketing Essentials: Introduction to Marketing
- Merchandising That Works (LibraryU)
- Understanding the Risks of Using Internet Media and Electronic Communications
- Publisher 2007: Creating Customized Publications with Publisher 2007
- Publisher 2007: Extending Publisher 2007 Beyond Publications