

Discover the Power of Word-of-Mouth Marketing

**A workshop for the
Alaska Library Association
presented by
Peggy Barber
Library Communication Strategies**

**Saturday, February 25, 2006
8:30- 10:00am**

***“Getting people to talk often, favorably,
to the right people in the right way
about your product is far and away
the most important thing that
you can do as a marketer.”***

**—George Silverman, *The Secrets of Word-of-Mouth Marketing*
AMACOM, 2001**

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**Contact Us: Peggy Barber and Linda Wallace, Library Communication Strategies
1830 N. Fremont St. Chicago, IL 60614 Tel: 773-989-4514
librarycomm@librarycomm.com www.librarycomm.com**

Agenda

Goal: *Learn how to build a buzz!*

Welcome/Introduction

Goals

What is marketing?

What is word-of mouth marketing?

-Why it's important

-Why it works

-Who should do it

-Key elements

What's your message?

Exercise

Delivering the message

-Skills & Techniques

-Scenarios

Wrap Up

-Questions/concerns

-Evaluation

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Context

Marketing is that function of the organization that can keep in constant touch with the organization's consumers, read their needs, develop products that meet these needs, and build a program of communications to express the organization's purposes.

—Philip Kotler/SidneyLevy, "Broadening the Concept of Marketing," *Journal of Marketing*, January, 1969

Building a Marketing Communication Plan

Use this outline as a map for developing your plan.

- 1. Introduction** (Briefly explain *why* you are proposing this plan. Identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats -*SWOT*. Include relevant research, observations.)
- 2. Communication goals** (The dream--big picture. No more than 3.)
- 3. Objectives** (3-5 doable, measurable outcomes.)
- 4. Positioning statement** (Briefly describe what you would like the library's image to be in the hearts and minds of others. What makes you unique? Example: *"The library is the best first stop for expert help in connecting children and youth to learning and discovery."* State Library of North Carolina campaign)
- 5. Key message** (What is the most important thing you want people to know/do? In 10 words or less. Example: *Your library is the very best place to start.*)
- 6. Key audiences** (External and Internal. Be specific. No more than 5.)
- 7. Communication strategies** (How will you deliver the message? E.g. media, publications, displays, presentations, word of mouth. Identify tactics/action steps and budget needed for each item.)
- 8. Evaluation measures** (How will you know what worked and what didn't? Refer back to your objectives.)

Harnessing the Power of Word-of-Mouth Marketing

The very best way to get the word out is to tell people. Really. If every staff, Friends and board member told 10 people about this incredible resource, and those 10 people told 10 more people, and those 10 people told . . . For word-of-mouth-marketing to work, it must be **organized, conscious and consistent**.

Key elements

- A clear, memorable and consistent message
- A good product/GREAT customer relations
- A prepared and committed sales force
- People who are willing to testify
- A plan

Sample message

Did you know you can use the library in your pajamas? We're open 24/7online.

Tips

1. **Don't just pass out bookmarks.** Encourage frontline staff to deliver the message when engaged with customers.
2. **Feed the grapevine.** If someone indicates they are pleased with the service they received, ask them to "Please tell your friends."
3. **Send a message with your message.** Add a signature line to your e-mail correspondence with the library message.
4. **Collect testimonials.** If you hear a compliment or "success story," share it with the sales team so they can share it with others. Invite testimonials from community leaders and satisfied library users.
5. **Start at home.** Enlist the whole library family as part of your marketing and sales team. Make sure all staff, trustees and Friends know the message, why it is important and the key role they play.
6. **Seek out experts.** Reach out to realtors, newspaper columnists, business leaders and other referral sources to help deliver your message.
7. **Wear the message.** T-shirts, buttons and other "props" are conversation starters and can help make your point.
8. **Keep current.** Make a point of reading library updates so you can be a knowledgeable spokesperson.
9. **Be alert** for new and creative ways of delivering the message.
10. **Have fun!** Be enthusiastic. Encourage your "sales force" to be enthusiastic.

Crafting the Message

The Golden Rule of Message Writing:
Make it easy to say and remember.

- **Think** what is the most important thing you want people to know.
- **Appeal** to their hearts as well as their minds.
- **Keep it simple.** No more than 15 words.
- **Say it**, then write it.
- **Test it** on other people.
- Use the **active voice** for more power.
- **Personalize.** Use “We: or “You” whenever possible.
- **Limit yourself** to three supporting points.
- **Use statistics** but use them sparingly. A few good ones are all you need, e.g. “More people use our library than attend ----- games.”
- **Turn testimonials into stories.** People love and remember stories. Keep them short with a clear and catchy beginning and end.

Turning Mission into Message

Note how fewer words, a clear focus, active tense and personalization help to communicate a more welcoming, dynamic message.

Before

The mission of the ----- Library is to bring people and information together in a cost-effective manner so that citizens may enrich their own lives. The library encourages and fosters reading at all age levels, whether for recreation or information, supports education and lifelong learning, and helps the public obtain information.

After

The ----- Library brings people and information together.

- We encourage reading at all age levels
- We support education and lifelong learning.
- We help people find the information they need.

Before

The mission of the ----- Library is to help the people of our community to achieve their full potential.

After

We help people lead better lives.

Sample Message Sheet I

Key message

Our community deserves a better library.

Talking points

- The library is the heart of our community, a place for lifelong learning, culture and enjoyment.
- Library use is growing. Our building needs to grow too.
- With more space, we could offer more—more programs, meeting rooms, art exhibits, a teen corner and café.

Statistics

Since we moved to our new building three years ago, the number of cardholders has grown 700 percent. The number of visitors is up 300 percent.

Story

More and more people are discovering our library. Just the other day I helped a man look up some information he needed for his job. His wife had told him he should come. He was amazed at what he found and couldn't believe he didn't have to drive 40 miles to the Big City Library! We hear this almost every day.

Sample Message Sheet II

Key message

Make sure everyone in your family has the smartest card—a library card.

Talking points

- Why buy when you can borrow? Your library is a goldmine of great stuff for the whole family.
- The library helps children do better in school.
- The library is open 24/7. Check us out online at . . .

Facts

- Last year our library users checked out an average of ?? with an estimated value of ??.
- More children participated in the library's summer reading program than played Little League Baseball.

Story

One mother told me that the library is about the only place her whole family goes together. She said, "We love family nights. And we can always find something to read. It's the one place we can afford and we all enjoy. I don't know what we would do without it."

Delivering the Message

Your mission:

- Educate.
- Inform
- Sell.

Responsibilities:

- Know the key message.
- Deliver it at every opportunity.
- Stay in control.
- Be positive—no matter what.
- Talk about librarians—not just “the library.”
- Listen and feedback.

Tips . . .

- Be alert for opportunities to deliver the library’s key message on the job and off.
- Keep it brief. Too much information can overwhelm your listener.
- Use stories and testimonials to reinforce your key points.
- Be prepared to answer the standard "Who-What-When-Where-Why and How" questions as well as the tough ones.
- Think before you speak. What is the most important point you need to make?
- Keep an open face and body. Remember to smile.
- Deliver the message in a way that makes people *feel* -- not just think -- that the library is important.
- Practice. Practice. Practice.

A Word-of-Mouth Checklist for Libraries

- Do you have a clear, consistent and compelling message—one that can be said at the checkout desk or in a grocery store line?
- Do the people at the checkout desk know and deliver the message?
- Do you use testimonials/success stories?
- Do you use outside experts to deliver your message?
- Do staff collect and feedback what they hear—good and bad?
- Do you have a prepared and enthusiastic sales force?
- Does your library give superlative customer service?
- Is conscious word-of-mouth part of your promotion strategies?

—Adapted from *The Secrets of Word-of-Mouth Marketing*,
George Silverman, AMACOM, Copyright 2001

Really Good Resources

How to Harness the Awesome Power of Word-of-mouth Marketing, George Silverman, Direct Marketing Magazine, Direct Marketing Magazine (Nov. 1997): <http://www.mnav.com/H2HarnWOM.htm>

An excellent introduction to WOM and the basis for Silverman's book (see below).

Libraries, Mission & Marketing: Writing Mission Statements That Work, Linda K. Wallace, American Library Association, 2004.

How many of your staff can say your library's mission statement? That's what we thought. This book is dedicated to the proposition that your mission statement is your library's ultimate message. It should say what you mean and you should do what you say. Lots of sample statements.

The Secrets of Word-of-Mouth Marketing, George Silverman, American Management Association, 2001.

Silverman says traditional advertising doesn't have the impact it once did, and makes a great case for an organized, strategic approach to word of mouth. This is good news and a practical strategy for libraries, since we couldn't afford traditional advertising anyway.

Word of Mouth: The World's Best Known Marketing Secret, Ivan Misner, 2002, *Entrepreneur* (July 1, 2002):

www.entrepreneur.com/article/0,4621,301179,00.html Still not convinced that WOM is the way to go? Read this piece by the author of "Masters of Networking."