

759_01: Library Marketing Plan

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For the final assignment I have chosen to do a marketing plan. My plan will focus on a new program in a public library. This library is based on my public library in Lake Villa, but will be generic in its scope so as to fit any public library that would like to implement a plan such as this.

Philip Kotler is quoted in our text book as saying “Marketing is the homework that a company does to figure out what the company should make” (Moran 109). While a library is obviously not the same as a company, many factors that are true to a company marketing plan are also true to a library’s.

The text also states: “It must be understood that marketing is not just publicity or promotion, product creation, public relations, or even pricing and distribution. Rather, each of those is but one component of the overall marketing process to be developed through this detailed internal marketing audit and assessment” (Moran 111).

Summary: Public Library X wants to fill a community need by establishing a short course in internet basics as applicable to children. Library X currently serves a large family & child base, and by expanding the services and programs offered to this segment of their audience, it is hoped to not only keep this demographic engaged and using the library materials, but that new programs can draw in new users that are also within this demographic but who do not currently participate in library usage. Finally, by engaging a young audience and proving the value of a

library's materials and services to this audience, those library users will continue to be library users throughout their lifetimes.

The focus of this program will be on grade school students in grades one through three. The idea is that internet usage, while not necessarily new to these students, might not be as easily navigated, or as age appropriate, as it has the potential to be. Further, the sessions will focus on ways that internet usage can be beneficial as it relates to school and homework. If part of the library's mission statement is to be an area of learning and teaching to its community, then a program like this fits its mission statement quite directly.

A small team will be recruited to implement this internet usage program. Within current library staff, a member of the children's department will be necessary to suggest age appropriate sites, as well as supplementary materials relating to age-appropriate internet sites and learning. Also, a member of the I.T. department will be needed to ensure all computers are working properly at the time of each session and to answer any technical questions. In an ideal situation, a teacher from a local school can be consulted as to specific ways the internet can be used as it relates to current curriculum. Each session will be conducted by the children's librarian that is part of this team, with additional children's and youth librarians available as necessary. The "course", as we will call it, will be a one-time class, or session, but will be presented once a month for a year, meaning that identical classes will be conducted twelve times. Each session will be approximately one hour on a Saturday afternoon. A child is welcome to attend the class more than once (as space allows), but no new information will be presented. The computer lab currently houses fifteen computers, and also features an overhead projector which the instructor can use to show items from his or her own computer. While only fifteen students can be present

at any one session, their parents can also sit in to assist. It is not necessary to have a library card in order to attend the session.

In order to ensure a successful program, it is important to conduct a SWOT analysis as it relates to the library, the proposed program, and its mission statement. If part of the mission statement revolves around being a force of learning and teaching within its community, then the library is obligated to conduct programs such as this one to fulfill its stated responsibilities.

STRENGTHS:

- Library X has a strong children's department staff and strong support from the community.
- The library has a great working relationship with the local grade school
- Library X has a full time I.T. employee, and a multi-computer teaching center/lab

WEAKNESSES

- Library X has never attempted a technology based children's program
- The children's department is already short staffed
- None of the children's librarians have conducted a program like this before
- A survey of available related materials has not yet been conducted
- Library X does not have a full time marketing employee or graphic artist

OPPORTUNITIES

- A program like this has not been attempted, but need seems high
- A greater working relationship between school and library can be forged
- The possibility of growing the library user base is high

THREATS

- Having to pay extra personnel during sessions
- Stretching an already over worked department too thin
- Having technology unavailable to general library population during session time

Goals: The overall goal of the program is to teach young library patrons how to navigate the internet in a safe, family friendly way, and to be able to use internet resources as they apply to school learning and homework. A secondary objective is to teach these same users how to properly navigate the library's own website, how to find and use local library materials via this website, and how to conduct inter-library loans of materials when they are not available locally.

Market research: To get a sense of the yearning for a program like this, it would be necessary to conduct market research, even if only on a small scale. There are several ways this could be accomplished:

- Surveys/questionnaires among adult patrons with children in the children's department of Library X
- Online surveys/questionnaires on the library's website
- Informal polling by children's librarians of patrons
- Informal polling of grade specific teachers in the local grade schools

Marketing strategy: The strategy for marketing and promoting this new program will be done in several ways.

- A promotional design will be created establishing fonts, photo, and overall look of all materials that will follow

- Using the above design, informational/promotional pieces will begin appearing on the library's website
- Information can also be frequently updated using the library's Facebook and Twitter accounts
- "Articles" and ads will begin appearing in the library's newsletter which is mailed to those holding a library card
- Promotional posters will be displayed in the library
- Signups for sessions will be clearly marked at the children's desk
- Flyers can be distributed to the appropriate classes in the schools
- Press releases about the program can be distributed to the local media

Plan of action: The core group of leaders as outlined above will meet as well as Library X's head librarian to disseminate specific responsibilities. Additionally, unless an existing employee of the library possesses the proper skills, a freelance graphic artist will need to be hired to develop the graphic portion of the marketing materials. One member of the group will be designated as the lead and will ensure all tasks are completed by specific pre-determined deadlines. The lead will also be responsible for reserving the class space each month, making sure all materials are available, that all technology is in working order the day of class, and will also have the authority to direct other team members in order to complete all tasks.

Evaluation: There are several ways in which to measure the success of this program. The most easily measured determination is by the number of "students" each month, and if that number remains constant throughout the twelve month time frame. If fifteen spots are available each month, the goal is to have 180 participants within the year-long program. Informal post class surveys can be conducted of parents as well to determine areas of weakness or greatest

benefit. It can also be determined of the attending students how many are new to the library, and if any of those that are new sign up for library cards after the class. Part of the goal of the program is, after all, to recruit new library patrons.

Budget: Most of the expense of the program will be on promotion, both in creation of promotional pieces by a freelance graphic artist (if no library employees can be tasked with this responsibility), and in the printing costs of said pieces. Most of the distribution will be either in the regularly mailed library newsletter, which will not be an additional cost, or on the library's website, which will not be an additional cost either. Printing of flyers and distributing them via the local grade schools will be a cost, as will the printing of posters to display in the library. While printing 8.5" x 11" sized materials can be accomplished at the library, there is still the cost of paper and print inks. Also, larger format printing cannot normally be done locally in the library. It may be of a greater savings to contract with an outside printer that can discount based on the number of pieces being printed. Another potential cost could be paying for additional hours of employees involved in the program, or even hiring additional employees when necessary. The last might not be feasible or necessary because of the smaller sizes of each class.

All of the above costs should be included as part of the normal operating budget of the children's library. Because the sessions occur only once a month for a year, it should not be necessary to think of them as being a separate expense of its own accord, or as if it were its own department.

It is my belief that a program such as this can be successful in a number of measureable ways, as outlined above. More than that, though, as stated earlier, if we are able to make the library a positive and learning experience for children, they will forever look at the library as

such, and be lifelong supporters of public libraries. This is a force of goodness that can never be fully measured.

Works Cited

Moran, Barbara B., Robert D. Stueart, and Claudia J. Morner. *Library and Information Center Management*. 8th ed. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2013. Print.