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TITLE: Bring It All Together with Strategic Marketing

Learn how the best mix of branding, communications, PR, media relations and advertising can all tie together to enhance the image and visibility of your resources and services--with exciting results!

"Why?"

When was the last time you asked yourself how your library's services are perceived on campus or at your institution?

When was the last time you actively promoted your services or offerings?

If not recently, or if not at all, then you are missing an opportunity - to reeducate your students, faculty, researchers, administrators and others about the value your library and librarians brings to your institution.

The biggest mistake we can make is just assuming our services, programs, and collections speak for themselves. In this complex information environment where people have so many choices, we have a responsibility to:

- ▶ Communicate our offerings and the expertise our libraries and librarian offer
- ▶ Promote the awareness of libraries and what they contribute to people's lives
- ▶ Increase the visibility and support of our libraries
- ▶ And above all to remain relevant to the people who depend on us.

Branding and marketing if done thoughtfully and strategically will result in:

- Greater use by your customers
- Better decisions being made about what to provide at your library
- Better partnerships with faculty and administrators
- Maintenance of a central position of the library in your institution
- It will also result in more informed and supportive key stakeholders, donors, etc.

You must be proactive.

You must be creative.

You must be willing to take some risks.

Let's start with Branding

Before you can market, you must identify and know your brand.

Branding is not a new concept. It was first used in the early 50's by the advertising industry to describe a complete set of messages being delivered from a business to its customers.

Today it has been broadened to describe not only the image organizations create to inform their target audience and differentiate them from the competition—but also the process by which this image is created.

To really understand what a brand is and before we can talk about a branding process - there are

two simple words to define:

IDENTITY AND IMAGE.

Identity is what you say about yourself.

Image is what your audience perceives. That image is not in your control, but you certainly influence it.

BRANDING is about creating as much overlap as possible between the two.

So what is a Brand?

A “brand” is more than a catchy name, colorful logo or clever ad.

A brand includes all the associations a user makes with an organization, a product or a service.

Successful brands do more than offer tangible benefits - they appeal at a deeper level, and evoke an emotional response that endures beyond the initial contact.

Successful brands express, at every opportunity, the value of service.

Branding is focused on making this emotional connection and communicating a value, so that relationships are created with the users.

A strong brand makes a promise to the user and consistently delivers on that promise.

Again it does this through consistent communications via all “touchpoints” - the logo, print materials, advertising, the web site, public relations activities, advertising, communication with staff...all the way to the person who answers the phone.

When this consistency happens - whether through a chat with a librarian, a visit to a website or reading a flyer about a program or service - brand awareness increases. Loyalty increases. Trust in the organization, product or service increases. The brand flourishes.

So what all of this is really saying, is that branding is just as much about **mindshare** as marketshare.

An important point about Branding: it is a long-term commitment.

Branding is not just an exercise you go through to come up with a great new logo or “look”- it is something, just like any other business asset, that requires care and attention.

Why Brand First?

One key reason: Branding provides the foundation for developing a cohesive marketing strategy.

The process of branding involves figuring out:

- who you want to speak to
- what you have to say
- and what you have to do to look, feel and sound like you mean it.

To remain relevant to our customers we must examine our brands so we know **what** we are marketing before we start.

We need to know **who** uses our brand and why.

We need to know **whom we compete with** and what value our brand offers against the competition.

And we need to know **what our brand stands for** and why people should believe in it, trust it and use it.

If you know the answers to these questions, your marketing will be more on target, much more powerful, meaningful and customer-focused.

What are the Benefits of Branding?

Building a brand requires alignment among those responsible for delivering the service and will offer for those who are committed to the effort:

An effective use of resources - every marketing effort and dollar is leveraged to build and reinforce the same message.

Internal clarity - A well-defined brand will provide a sense of purpose and strategic direction. It will provide a shared understanding of its direction and will give your organization the criteria it needs to make good decisions.

A distinct identity - Branding will help get the message through the clutter of other brands, to your desired audiences.

And a brand will provide an effective education tool - it will help you communicate what the library is about, set user expectations and will help spread the word.

“We don’t offer a product, we offer a brand...”

Think about it - we don’t buy shampoo, we buy Herbal Essence. We don’t buy coffee - we buy Starbucks or Folgers. We don’t buy ice cream - we buy Dreyers or Ben & Jerry’s.

We buy or use a particular product because it meets a particular need, it stands for something we value, and over time our loyalty to it has grown.

A couple other companies that exemplify strong brands...

Coca Cola
Nordstrom
Microsoft

Say their names or glimpse their logos and people know right away what they stand for.

The real thing in soft drinks. Customer service. Software innovation.

Branding unites identity with image - what a company says about itself with how the public perceives it.

These brands form an emotional resonance, an intuitive, gut-level instinct within a consumer of what the essence of the brand means.

A library is like a well-known store brand. The library stands for something to our customers, and has a personality that conveys a message.

And just like other brands, the market that libraries compete in offers consumers many alternatives: bookstores, the Internet and even other libraries.

Is your brand better than the competition's?

Different might be a better word.

If you prefer Dove soap to Dial, it's because you might like the moisturizing effect, or the fragrance. If so, Dove is a better brand for your particular needs, because it is different than any other soap on the market. It offers you something you can't buy elsewhere.

The value librarians' offer varies from being experienced, knowledgeable information specialists - to providing the right information when it's needed - to analyzing search results and offering just-in-time delivery. Our competitors may offer some of the same services, but none can match our expertise and few other information specialists know the science, the marketplace, the history and where to find information as well as librarians do. We know our brand is better than any bookstore or even the Internet...but do your customers?

So Where Do You Start?

Assessment

One of the most important first steps of the process is to make an assessment of your current situation and to learn how your users, customers or community views and perceives you.

At KCLS, we knew that our community libraries, reference service, materials, online databases, and programs provided outstanding tools for study, research, entertainment, and lifelong learning.

Yet when we checked our patron count against the latest demographic studies, we learned that only about half of the eligible residents were active cardholders, despite all efforts to inform the public about KCLS.

So in the late fall of 1999 we commissioned a survey with a research firm to assess the current perception, value and usage of KCLS.

The results showed several interesting facts:

- 74% of eligible residents (at the time) had a KCLS library card.
- Though KCLS enjoys a high level of recognition as a system of community libraries, even our regular patrons had little knowledge of KCLS resources other than books.
- Half of survey respondents cited Internet access as a KCLS service, yet only 25% reported visiting our Web site from home or office.
- Active KCLS patrons are more likely to be college-educated, upper-income "baby boomers" with children at home. We inferred from this that families with less education and lower incomes had the least awareness of the resources available to them free of charge.

- We also discovered that while there was high name recognition and knowledge of KCLS as a system of local community libraries, 4 out of 5 people thought we are part of King County government (which we are not.)

We also assessed our logo and graphic identity and how it was used.

A brand identity is anchored by the way the name is visually represented. This way of treating the name is often referred to as the Brandmark or the logo (which may or may not include an icon).

A “Brandmark” or “logo” is the typographic treatment (the font, size and other characteristics) and may or may not include a graphic or symbol used in combination

An “icon” refers to the graphic or symbol used in conjunction with your logo.

For KCLS, a review of our logo and graphic identity, in use for many years, showed a standard blue, white and black color scheme for everyday materials, and an assortment of individual graphic themes for special programs. Our public presentation, while not “*bad*”, was outdated and inconsistent, and neither reflected the exciting resources we offer, nor reinforced the concept of KCLS as a comprehensive, world-class library system.

Our logo was used on most official products: business cards, letterheads, signage, etc. We also used the logo design in standard layout for individual printed items, though each special event and major program had a unique ‘look’, theme, color, logo placement and overall ‘flavor’ which changed completely from year to year.

While there was a thread of visual unity, it was often lost in other production values. One of the most significant results of this was that the identity of the King County Library System was lost, and each individual event or program was seen as a separate entity with no particular connection to the whole library system.

The third assessment we made was whether we, internally, had a clear picture of our organization’s positioning.

Positioning defines how you want to be thought of in the mind of your target audiences.

The best way to a clear understanding of your organization’s positioning is through defining your organization’s personality or spirit.

A defined personality establishes the feel, the essence of how you want your consumers to understand you, relate to you and want to do business with you.

The personality is also the emotional centerpoint from which all creative thinking and design radiates.

For KCLS, while we had a clear strategic direction - the driving sense of purpose for the organization - we had not articulated and clearly captured our positioning - again an essential part of projecting a consistent identity and creating a cohesive, consistent image.

Following the assessment period, the key steps to getting the “brand” rolling were:

❶ Staff Involvement

Being a public agency with a very collegial culture where input and feedback is highly valued - we knew the involvement and buy-in from all interests within our organization would be critical to the success of this effort - from the Board, to librarians, to public service directors, communication managers, and other internal staff. We pulled together a team of about 20 key individuals from across the System that represented a variety of interests.

Staff ownership to this sort of process is so critical because staff are the ones with direct contact with your target audiences. Since have the most interaction with your library users, their involvement and feedback can greatly enhance (or detract) from your efforts.

A couple key questions we kept in mind as we went through the process were:

- ▶ Do staff and other relevant parties understand what the effort is and what we are trying to deliver?
- ▶ Are the goals/objectives clear and achievable?
- ▶ Does staff understand their role and how they can contribute?
- ▶ And do they have an opportunity to provide feedback on a regular basis?

The second key step was to:

❷ Define our goals and objectives

As with any significant endeavor, one of the most important initial tasks to ensuring success is to define goals and objectives. Defining goals and objectives provides a clear vision for your efforts and a way to benchmark the success of your plan.

At KCLS we established a primary goal to heighten awareness of KCLS resources and their value, and set the following objectives to achieve by year-end:

- Create a powerful corporate identity to seamlessly encompass the visual presentation of KCLS across all media (print materials, web pages, advertising, video, public service announcements, signage, etc.);
- Modernize the appearance of our promotional materials and focus the content of our strategic marketing messages;
- Conduct a bold, high-visibility marketing campaign to showcase our resources and bring broader awareness to the community of our organization;
- And enlist the broadest possible community support to reinforce the importance and value of the products we offer to the community.

To improve community-wide visibility and use of our resources, and reach an audience of potential new library patrons, we knew we also needed a dynamic public relations campaign that offered a tangible benefit for everyone in the community [*to be addressed later in the presentation*].

The third step was to go through what we called our Brand Quest.

③ Brand quest

This was a process to define our strategic path and promise to our marketplace and to ultimately be able to define the KCLS brand.

It was a highly collaborative process that involved discussing and exploring all aspects of the business landscape, including our long-term vision, specific goals and objectives for future development, **who to target, what our brand means, the value it offers, and how to capture its essence and ways to give it life.**

I won't go into all the aspects of the Brand Quest, but will talk briefly about 3 of them:

1 - Target Audiences

Smart competitors know it is unrealistic to expect every shopper to buy or be loyal to their brand. **It is virtually impossible to be everything to everybody.**

You are better off knowing the consumers who prefer your brand, and tailoring your branding and marketing efforts to them.

Who are your major consumers? Is it grad students working on their thesis, faculty, administration, researchers, or incoming freshman?
Who needs to hear your message?

This requires prioritizing your key audiences and deciding how and when you will reach out to them.

The best place to start is by **identifying your universe**

With an academic library, there may be a very large number of users or patrons. It is important to first identify the potential universe - who they are, what they are interested in, and how they use your services.

Next find ways to generally describe the groups. At the public library we tend to use age-related descriptions (teens, children, seniors, adults) - but you might be more likely to use other groupings - students, faculty, researchers, etc.

Identifying this universe provides you with an unconstrained view of your marketing potential. It will also help you narrow your focus so that eventually your marketing efforts can be targeted.

In this process, consider using as diverse a group of staff members as possible. The deeper the understanding of likely users, the better your plan can be tailored for maximum appeal.

Here are a couple questions to help you define your universe:

Who are your patrons and how are they defined?

How do they access the information they seek?

How do they seek assistance within the library?

After you identify your universe, you need to prioritize the groups.

The universe of all likely users should be narrowed down to a few target or primary audiences.

Primary Target audiences consist of the groups that you most want to reach, actively want to pursue and around which the brand will be developed.

Selecting a primary target audience does not mean you can't market to the others - it just means they are the group that are the primary focus for brand development and marketing.

Secondary audiences relate to the other audiences that you may wish to market to, but again just not as the focus for brand development. For example at KCLS we often market to non-English speakers through a specific set of messages and campaigns for a short duration.

Once your target audiences are selected, it is helpful to profile them using demographic and psycho graphic characteristics. Demographic refers to information such as gender, age, and geography while "psycho graphic" refers to lifestyle characteristics and informative descriptions such as web-savvy, self-directed, etc.

Using this type of characterization will help increase the understanding of your users so that you can better manage the brand with relevant and meaningful communications.

These characteristics will be instrumental when considering marketing messages, promotions, and other activities.

Example of target audience: Undergraduate Students

Target	Demographics	Psychographics
Undergrad student	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Between ages of 18-20▪ Includes distance learners▪ Ethnically diverse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Very comfortable using computers, technology and internet▪ Expect quick answers and information▪ Have diverse interests▪ Self-motivated

Remember: It is impossible to create a brand that appeals to all people. Prioritizing the target audiences you have identified will help develop a strong brand identity.

At KCLS our primary target audience is adults between the ages of 35-55, with secondary targets of school age children K-6, teens and also readers of all ages.

2 - What your brand means

Another important part of the Brand Quest was to define what our brand means and the value it offers. This was where we explored the KCLS personality.

Again the purpose of this was to make sure we had a clear definition of how we wanted to be thought of in the minds of our audience.

Arriving at the "personality" of KCLS was a simple, yet involved process. We asked 3 key questions to key stakeholders, staff, and Board members through a variety of communication channels:

These questions were:

- 1 - *How do we want to be perceived?*
- 2 - *If our brand were a person, what adjectives would describe us - or in other words, what are our personality attributes?*
- 3 - and finally what is the one thing we want to be known for.

As we asked these questions, as you can imagine - we heard all sorts of responses, but we also discovered there was a lot of consensus as to how we want to be perceived.

To the first question of "*how do we want to be perceived*", we heard everything from:

- We want to be seen as a contemporary, comprehensive library system
- To an exciting, dynamic and friendly place
- To a place where people are inspired and see us as an essential for necessary part of their lives.

In asking the 2nd question of "*what are our personality attributes*", we discovered people thought we were:

- Resourceful
- Comfortable
- Exciting
- Responsive
- Intelligent
- And innovative.

And finally to third question of "*what is the one thing we want to be known for*" we heard:

- Our Customer service
- As the center of each community
- Our Quality
- Our Expertise

The answers to all these questions were discussed and explored - and overall we discovered there was a lot of commonality in the way we viewed ourselves, what we thought our key personality attributes are, and what we should be best known for.

The final positioning statement we arrived at was:

CUSTOMIZE THE RESOURCES

To communities in King County, King County Library System is the public agency that provides free, open and equal access to information resources in a way that is both relevant and essential to the quality of individual user's lives.

This statement speaks to customizing our services and information in a way that is relevant to the individual user - and speaks strongly of "choice" and a high level of "customer service."

It's important to note that the language of the positioning statement is intended for internal purposes only-and never as an external message.

Let me mention a word about taglines:

People often wonder how to develop a tagline for their brand. A lot of organizations just try to come up with something "catchy."

A tagline should be the external representation of the positioning statement, but written in a user-friendly manner. A tagline can quickly help build user awareness.

For KCLS our positioning statement evolved into our tagline:
Turn to us. The choices will surprise you.

All of this information and work of defining our positioning and personality was then condensed into a Creative Brief that laid the foundation for our articulated **Identity**.

3 - Giving it Life

The 3rd part of the Brand Quest that I want to talk about was really the fun part. This involved taking our personality and turning it into something tangible. It meant finding ways to graphically represent the attributes of our personality. This is where we explored our form, style, **logo**, **imagery**, and voice (or **messaging**).

I will speak specifically to the logo, imagery and messaging development:

1 - Logo

First a couple comments or consideration about creating a logo or landmark:

Considerations:

Remember your Personality - A logo should map back to the image or personality you want to convey. An effective logo will have a strong look and feel and will say a great deal about your brand's personality.

Visual appeal - A logo should be pleasing to the eye and resonate with the target audience. The color palette should speak to the brand's personality and should be just as effective in Black & White as in color, as well as varying sizes for applicability across different media. You should consider various formats, size applications and how it might be used in other co-branding scenarios.

Finally, will you benefit more from a specific or an abstract icon?

Betty Crocker's spoon icon is a good example of a literal interpretation for a brand.

An abstract icon, like Nike, uses an unrelated concept to attract attention and increase awareness. Brands with abstract icons can be harder to establish, but just as effective.

On the other hand, brands with specific icons can offer instant association but can be difficult to execute for other aspects of the business.

Another consideration is to make sure the font conveys the right message and that the logo is different from your competitors.

Creating a logo requires a commitment. Just like advertising, it must be seen many times before it makes an impression and becomes recognizable.

So picking up where we left off with our efforts at KCLS, creating our logo started with turning the

work from the Brand Quest into a creative brief. A creative brief is a written tool that aids designers in their creative development and helps to translate the Brand into its visual representation.

From our creative brief, we explored 12 different design directions.

I did not bring all 12 to show you, but here are 6 of the 12 we looked at.

We basically went through a weeding process of the ones that we felt were not what we were looking for.

It was a real learning process because it required looking at the designs simply as concepts or directions and to really focus on what the images and design portrayed.

We then narrowed the 6 concepts down to 3...

And then to our final choice...

Once we had our final design direction, subtle revisions were made to it and at that point we began exploring color options.

Our final choice was made based on this rationale:

- It is very distinctive, innovative.
- It seemed to be a mark that was very gestural - people see different things based on their perception of the image.
- The slightly canted K and square is a little surprising and unexpected
- The reverse-out on the word system seemed to place more emphasis on the library system vs. King County.
- And most importantly, we felt it was a mark that would be memorable, easily recognizable to KCLS and would stand out in the “sea” of logos in the marketplace.

The 2nd part of bringing our brand to life was through Imagery.

In this part of the process, we developed a set of creative tools that work in tandem with the Brandmark or logo. This included design elements, photography, color options, typography, and style.

From this work we created a “branding board” that gave us the elements and direction for further creative development.

This branding board and the images and elements you see, are presented in distinct combinations and layout that represent the energy, the expansiveness, the surprise and the core traits and tagline of KCLS.

A branding board is not intended to be a straightjacket - but rather a resource for design and to help set the tone for any design or creative tools.

The 3rd part of bringing our brand to life was by developing our Messaging or “voice”

A couple considerations about messaging:

- ▶ The way in which a library talks about its services and resources greatly influences how the

library is perceived. Creating messages helps ensure that communications are always consistent and that the story, when told, is always the same.

- ▶ Messages are meant as a tool to help convey your main benefits regardless of the medium.
- ▶ They can be used as guidelines for Web content, marketing materials, advertising and even staff communications.
- ▶ Messages should be meaningful to target audiences. The tone and language used should be age appropriate and the content compelling.
- ▶ If your audiences are different from one another, you will want to create marketing messages specific to each group.
- ▶ It is also important to note that the management of messages requires constant internal advocacy and monitoring to assure a seamless expression in everything from collateral to advertising, proposals to press releases, and everything in between.

So at KCLS we developed our core marketing messages, targeted towards our target audiences of: adults, kids, teens and readers.

Again, the purpose of creating the messages was to assure content consistency in all marketing communication and mediums.

These are just some of the marketing messages we developed...

So, at this point the implementation began - the first thing we did was to begin applying all of this branding to our in-house marketing materials.

We define our in-house marketing materials as all promotional products produced in-house that bear the KCLS brandmark, marketing messages and visual identity elements that are used to inform the public about KCLS. It includes all of our print materials, KCLS truck signs, KCLS website, and signage/banners.

While it was a tremendous amount of work - it was also very exciting to begin to see the transformation of everything begin.

With an in-house print shop we were able to tackle many things at once.

Here is just a small sampling of what our marketing materials USED to look like....there was a lot of inconsistent use of our logo, clip art, design elements, very little photography used, and generally outdated looking.

To how they now look with all of the brand standards consistently applied.

The logo is prominently and consistently displayed, all materials are within a prescribed color palette, there is a consistent use of design elements, and overall these materials portray the energy and vibrancy of the King County Library System.

We also paid particular attention to our external newsletters.

We went through a refocusing process for each, to not only define the purpose of each, but to redesign them as more reader-friendly with clearly differentiated areas of information, a consistent use of messages, photos, sub headers, etc.

We also undertook the redesign of all exterior signs. Previously our exterior library signs ran the gamut from rotting wood - to metal - to ones so small you couldn't even read them. Some had the old logo on them and others only had the local community library name.

There was absolutely no consistency or branding of the local library name with the KCLS.

With the new design, we used the full range of our color palette depending on what color worked best with existing roof types, setting, foliage, and type of construction.

Again with this design, the brandmark is consistently and prominently displayed along with the local library name.

Before I go into the implementation of the campaign we developed to roll our branding out to the public through, let's shift gears and talk more specifically about the basics of marketing and considerations for creating a strategic marketing plan...

I'll save the really exciting results for the end!

Strategic Marketing Plan Development

Developing a marketing plan can be challenging, but it also presents an opportunity to flex your creative muscles and demonstrate what you know and believe about your organization's value and benefit to your target audiences.

It is a chance to put into action the decisions you have made about your goals and objectives, target audiences and the kind of brand you are going to build. If you do it even half right - your efforts will be highly rewarded.

Let's start first with a couple definitions:

Marketing:

Marketing can be defined with 2 simple words - **DEMAND CREATION**.

Marketing Strategy:

A marketing **strategy** is nothing more than a disciplined approach that focuses your "demand creation" efforts.

Let's define what a marketing plan is and what it should encompass:

- ▶ A marketing plan lays the roadmap for communications with your target audience and serves as both justification for your expenditures and a benchmark for your results.
- ▶ It allows you to clearly state your brand promise, how you plan to communicate the promise efficiently and effectively, and it serves as a gauge to assess whether your organization is living up to that promise.
- ▶ A marketing plan begins with a summary of your goals and objectives, target audience, and includes identifying the services, programs or resources that offer the most potential for

reaching your target audience.

- ▶ Consider any and all situations in which a user may come into contact with you or may actively seek out your library or services. Are they likely to read a newspaper article about advances at the local library? Will they notice your service on the library's Web page? Would they see your information at the bottom of an email communication with the library or on an email announcement? Are there teacher's unions, student unions, PTA meetings or campus orientations at which users would be receptive to hearing about what you offer? Are they most likely to hear about your resources from a friend?
- ▶ After you have outlined potential avenues for reaching your target audience, create a similar outline of your available resources. These two outlines can be compared and cross-referenced as you prepare your plan. An available resource also means internal staff that are skilled at customer surveys, communications, graphic design or technical development. Or are there existing partners, vendors and alliances that can help promote your brand?
- ▶ Also look for materials or other marketing programs already in place that can be utilized to get your message out. Whether you have finite dollars to spend or a large budget, be creative in determining how marketing dollars can best be leveraged.

Some additional considerations might be:

- To prepare tools that can be used for multiple purposes and materials that will give you the greatest reach. For example, simple single page flyers can be used in a direct mail campaign, scanned and sent as an email PDF, or combined with other materials and given to press to generate coverage, etc.
- Also, be careful not to allocate a significant budget to any one initiative or area unless you know that it produces the results you intend.
- Testing should also be a key component of every marketing plan. Marketing is often a trial-and-error process that requires testing and refinement. Incorporating ways to test and measure ongoing marketing initiatives allows you to observe what is working and not working.

- In general, some marketing plans are inherently more expensive to implement than others and should be carefully considered. For example, mass advertising, like television, is an effective way to raise general awareness but may be harder to measure in terms of your return on investment.

Online marketing formats are cost effective for testing different messages and promotions as they do not require printing and mailing costs, and content can be changed with relative ease.

It is better to first understand where you can be most effective and to consider various methods for reaching the audience before you finalize a budget. Once you know what you need to do to reach your target audience, you can begin to mix complementary initiatives and tailor activities to a budget that is reasonable for your organization.

The final step in the creation of a marketing plan is to develop an implementation schedule that covers a measurable length of time. This may be tied directly to a budget period or to a campaign. The schedule will help you and your team map out tactics and plan your resource needs.

As I have stated several times, the best way to generate brand awareness, loyalty and support is through a mix of marketing, communication, PR, and advertising. While each of these is really a topic in itself, I'll just touch briefly on them:

Marketing Materials and Tools

Marketing materials and tools are the various collateral and tangible items you may need in order to promote your library. They will most likely be used in conjunction with other marketing efforts and can include items such as brochures, flyers, posters, direct mail pieces, newsletters and giveaways.

The key to deciding which tools to create is to select the ones that will best carry your message and have maximum impact. When selecting marketing tools, consider all the ways in which a potential user will come into contact with your service.

The materials you choose should support a consistent, branded message that acknowledges the user's desire for a benefit and provide useful information related to a service or resource.

Identifying user actions by mapping back to demographics, psychographics and your own experiences will help you and your team to identify the tools to which your target audience is most likely to respond.

Here are a few to consider:

- Brochures - Can be used for a variety of purposes and can be handed out in the library, and other school and community events.
- Flyers and posters - These relatively inexpensive materials can be used in a variety of settings, such as schools, community centers, parks, local businesses, and within your own library system. As an extension of an ad or billboard campaign, flyers and posters can be used to raise awareness, and to direct interested parties to your library or website for more information.
- Direct mail/postcards - Direct mail is a very useful tool to reach existing patrons and new users. Direct mail can take the form of a simple letter, an invitation, a postcard or even a special promotion such as a folded poster or other giveaway.

Keep in mind, however, that direct mail is only as good as your mailing list. If your mailing list has been tested and proven, direct mail may go a long way toward raising awareness for your library. However, because direct mail requires testing, constant fine-tuning, a strong mailing list and frequency (similar to advertising, direct mail must be sent regularly to make an impact), direct mail can be a very expensive marketing tool.

- Newsletters - Libraries contain tremendous resources, and have an endless supply of information. Create a unique, informative newsletter as a reminder to use your services, update new features and/or resources.
- Giveaways - Who doesn't like to get something free? An item or group of materials that tastefully represent your brand may help to grab your user's attention, putting your service on their radar as a starting point for brand awareness and continued communications. Giveaways are often appropriate for distribution at events, and as prizes for contests, rewards for submitting information and/or awareness builders handed out to key groups or opinion leaders. A "welcome kit" for college freshman is an example, and could contain a guide to library resources, a business card for a "personal" librarian, testimonials from past freshman and a mouse-pad with the virtual library URL.

Public Relations

The definition of PR is to communicate a favorable image and promote good will. Your audience demographics and psychographics play a key role in determining the need for public relations.

Do library patrons and/or potential users read the newspaper, listen to the radio or talk with community leaders or other Web savvy friends about information resources?

Could they be influenced to try your library if they hear about it from a third party source? If you have determined that your audience can be reached via on- and offline news and entertainment media, investing in public relations is one of the most cost efficient ways to maximize dollars. For every dollar spent on public relations, it is estimated that advertising costs five to seven times as much.

An advantage of PR is that it appears as “news,” which means it is more credible, and therefore more meaningful, than advertising.

News carries with it the implicit third-party endorsement of the news medium that reports it. In other words, your target audience perceives the information about your library to be more objective and positive when it is endorsed by a credible third party source.

The key to a successful PR program is relationships. It takes time to build rapport with editors and prominent figures in your community. The efforts are well worth the time and energy.

Start by identifying the sources to which your target audience turns. This information will help you understand whom you need to target.

Pursuing PR opportunities requires a dedicated resource and a concentrated effort: You need someone who will be responsible for creating a public relations plan, identifying key opinion leaders, writing stories, press releases or other communications and building editorial and community relationships.

Perhaps most critical is the ability and passion to maintain awareness of what interests editors, analysts and community leaders so that all communications with this audience are relevant and productive.

Another avenue for PR is having a presence at community events and through other public outreach:

Libraries are recognized as an important part of any community.

Public outreach at a local level can be an important and effective part of branding your library. Look for opportunities to promote the library and improve community relations by marketing your services through local entities.

For example:

- Would special interest groups like a campus groups or club be interested?
- What school events can the library participate in?
- Does the library already have an outreach program that can be used to promote its services and resources?

This type of an initiative does not require a significant investment, and even minimal involvement can generate a fair amount of word-of-mouth awareness and goodwill.

And don't forget seminars, tradeshow or conference booths:

- Research speaking engagements at key tradeshow or events. Speaking engagements offer the lowest cost investment for you and are highly credible when well attended.
- If you secure a booth for your library, be memorable. Tradeshow, conferences and other events are often crowded and filled with organizations vying for attention. Have a theme, an attractive booth or a compelling giveaways that complements your brand.

Advertising

Many people think of advertising when they think of marketing, and at first glance, it seems like an obvious choice for communicating your message.

Advertising can play a significant role in raising awareness of your organization and service, and is an excellent medium for creating and presenting exactly what you feel represents your brand (as opposed to PR, in which you rarely get to control what the communication looks like or says.)

When focused, advertising can be an effective way to gain exposure. For example, billboards are a great form of advertising for reaching specific communities because they offer repetition (which is necessary for advertising to sink in).

However, advertising can be a very expensive medium. There are generally more associated costs (i.e. buying ad space, creating the design, producing the piece) than with other marketing or public relations efforts. Also, advertising must run consistently over time to raise awareness.

Here are some considerations for your decision to use or not use advertising in your marketing plan:

- **Commitment:** People are bombarded by advertising. In our country, we see something like 30,000 ads per year! Research shows for every three advertisements seen, your prospective target will ignore two. In general, it takes nine exposures to an ad to impact the average viewer. If you can not make a long-term commitment to advertising, don't make the investment. If you decide to run advertising, you should plan to run the same ad in the same media often enough to reach your target audience many times.
- Another consideration is **Strategy:** Before you design an ad, make sure that the creative team has completed and fully understands a "creative brief" or other strategic summary. You should never view graphics and/or messaging before the ad's objectives have been determined.
- **Media Selection:** Choose your media carefully. If you've identified newspapers, radio or magazines, make sure they match up to your knowledge of audience behavior and preferences.
- **Costs:** Consider size versus cost. For example, you do not have to have the largest ad to make an impact. And while you certainly do not want to be overlooked, running a half page ad frequently can have the same impact as a full page, run less consistently... for half as much. Also, generally speaking, a great ad requires the talents of a graphic designer and a professional copywriter. Your ad should be consistent with your brand, attractive and compelling for your target audience.
- Another consideration is **Stamina:** Because your ad will run for a while, you are likely to grow tired of it.

After you grow tired of it, co-workers may also get tired of the ad and begin to lobby for a change. Ignore this!

While you are growing weary of the same graphics and message displayed over and over again, your target audience is likely just beginning to notice you! This is not to say that if your ad has been in the marketplace for a long period of time and is not drawing a response, you should not change it. Simply, give it time.

The final element I want to mention, before I show you how KCLS launched its brand to the public, is about creating a campaign:

A good campaign ties all of your marketing communications and associated initiatives together, and reinforces the brand promise.

A campaign is typically used to achieve a specific goal or objective within a specific amount of time.

New products are often introduced to market with a launch campaign to raise awareness. Also common are campaigns designed to educate audiences, differentiate products and services, or to inform key audiences of changes, upgrades, and/or additional features and benefits.

To develop an effective campaign, you must first know who and how many people you want to reach, how frequently you want to communicate with them and which themes will work best for the type of audience you want to target.

At KCLS, in 2001 we launched a county-wide Library Card campaign that served as the vehicle for implementing our new marketing strategies, launching the KCLS brand and enhancing the public awareness of KCLS:

The objectives of our campaign were to:

- Bring in 50,000 new cardholders to KCLS
- Sign up 32,000 new student cardholders
- Log 10 million hits to the KCLS Website
- Increase outreach to children and teens
- Increase use of electronic resources
- Increase the effectiveness of our public relations

We identified three primary audiences for our initial outreach:

- Existing library patrons, to inform them of the resources they were unaware of;
- School-age children and young adults, because they would derive immediate benefits by using library resources in their academic work; and
- The general public, to change their perceptions of libraries and demonstrate the value of our services and persuade them to sign up and use the resources their taxes support.

The Library Card campaign was not only the vehicle for implementing our new marketing strategies to promote the library system's wealth of resources, but an opportunity to enhance public awareness of KCLS--and change non-users' perceptions and visions of libraries.

The primary strategy was to establish and emphasize the variety, scope, availability, relevance and value of the resources, and the System that makes them available to all.

In partnership with sponsors, supporters, schools and tremendous efforts by library staff, we embarked on a comprehensive campaign to promote our resources and our brand.

Strategic branding laid the foundation for all communication and the brandmark and creative provided the impact needed to get widespread attention.

In particular our library cards.

In keeping with our brand positioning of customization, what had for years been a standard blue & white library card, was changed into 5 different designs - so that patrons could choose their card of choice.

Not only that but we also gave them the option of wallet or key-ring size.

Significant advertising, media relations, promotional products, distribution and outreach were planned.

The campaign was launched with a direct mail delivery to more than 450,000 households in King County.

An outdoor media plan was implemented that included transit, billboards, banners and KCLS vehicle signs.

Print ads were placed in strategic newspapers throughout the county.

Major print media coverage occurred throughout the campaign and our overall print media coverage was up significantly over the same time last year.

We also secured support for public service announcements on national public radio, cable channels and local broadcast channels, KOMO 4 and Q13.

Other promotions and outreach also occurred.

Library staff made visits to every school within the districts we serve and handed out library cards to every child and student.

Endorsement by the County Executive Ron Sims lent higher public visibility. Not only was he the keynote speaker at our kickoff, but was instrumental in helping us reach new audiences by distributing our promotional materials throughout King County offices, highlighting the campaign on the County website and promoting it to 14000 county employees in the workplace.

The County Executive also demonstrated his commitment to the program and his lifelong love of libraries--by visiting schools and walking with children to neighboring KCLS community libraries to activate their new cards.

A promotion with the Seattle Mariners also raised visibility and gave 3 contest winners the chance to be announced and shown on field on the big screen at Safeco field.

We also launched our mobile Techlab-a RV with 8 computer stations with internet access, at NW Bookfest, where hundreds of people signed up online and got a new card.

To also increase visibility, t-shirts for all staff with a choice of library card designs on the front were provided and all staff received ID badges incorporating brand design elements--again in their choice of color, just like the library cards.

The results of the campaign were astounding. We had set what we thought to be lofty goals of 50,000 new patrons, 10 million hits to our website and 20,000 youth with 1st time cards. The impact was much greater:

Not only did we sign up 70,000+ new patrons, 25,000 youth with 1st time cards and increased hits to our website 500% - nearly 122,000 people traded in their old card for a new one, the % of remote online users increased from 46-61%, and circulation increased more than 8% across the System. It was truly exciting to see such tremendous results!

Aside from the results of the library card campaign, and the enhanced awareness and usage of KCLS, the long-term impact of strategic branding and marketing has had a profound and continuous effect on our entire Library System --from how we plan and market our services, to programming, to how we approach with media, to how we design the spaces within our libraries, to how we present our collections and also provide customer service.

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