

Marketing Plan

for the

Port Townsend Public Library

November 2004



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Marketing Plan

The Port Townsend Public Library

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Executive Summary

Public libraries have been facing a number of changes and challenges over the past decade with the advent of the Internet and expanded mega bookstores. Traditionally, research was conducted primarily at the library; now vast information is available with a click on one's personal computer. The value of libraries in their communities has not always been clearly communicated to the public they serve resulting in a general lack of awareness of services and benefits they provide. Consequently, "Libraries aren't considered central to the daily life of many people in society."

In 2004, a Statewide Library Marketing Initiative was adopted to develop and implement a coordinated marketing program for libraries to spread a common message throughout Washington. The goals established for the Initiative were:

1. Raise the visibility and public awareness of libraries of all kinds
2. Promote the use of libraries and information for all citizens
3. Facilitate coordination among libraries in terms of marketing public relations
4. Develop mechanisms for a coordinated "library" theme while maintaining unique identities for individual libraries
5. Develop tools for library staff across the state for use in their own libraries
6. Create a coordinated marketing approach for statewide library initiatives

These six goals mesh closely with those identified for Port Townsend's Public Library. As a result, the marketing plan for PTPL dovetails with the plan developed for the Washington State Library, while addressing issues and needs that are specific to Port Townsend.

Throughout the spring and summer of 2004, a committee of local citizens, with an interest in the future of the library, met frequently to determine a long-range plan for PTPL. In June 2004, a library community survey was conducted with approximately 4,600 surveys distributed and a 12% return. In July 2004, a library visioning conference was held on two different days with about a hundred people participating. The goal of the conference was to determine a "Vision for 2010 and Beyond" for the library. Results from the survey and conference will be integrated into this marketing plan, reflecting the community's hopes and aspirations for its library in the future.



Overview

The Port Townsend Public Library was established in 1898 and moved into the Carnegie building at its present location in 1913. A 4,500 sq. foot addition was completed in 1990 that addressed the library's critical need for more space to accommodate increase usage, growing collections especially in diverse formats, technology, and programs.

In the 1970s and continuing into the 1980s, Port Townsend and Jefferson County both experienced rapid growth in population. During this period, Port Townsend Public Library's service was upgraded and a professional librarian hired as director, and Jefferson County Rural Library District was established to serve the unincorporated areas. Population growth in Port Townsend slowed in the mid-1990s, but per capita circulation has continued to be higher than in other areas, including rural Jefferson County. Total circulation and circulation per capita increased over 40% between 1996 and 2003.

Today's need to raise public awareness of the library and its programs has resulted in the development of a marketing plan to build upon the growth enjoyed over the past eight years.

Marketing Goals for the Port Townsend Public Library (PTPL)

1. To create a bold image of the library with a more visible connection to the community (i.e. "What can the library do for you?")
2. To increase use of the library in Port Townsend, either with physical visits or on-line visits
3. To build and increase awareness of PTPL services and programs (i.e. on-line database, homework help, public programs for all audiences, etc.)
4. To target people who have not traditionally used the library

Core Strategy

Develop a brand identity that can be carried through all promotional materials
Identify and determine most effective way to reach the target audience
Create public relations plan for improving communications

Industry and Competitive Analysis

There's an general perception that people have all but forgotten their local libraries as they've looked to the Internet for information, been lured into comfortable bookstores with huge inventories or been awed by the vast selection available from e-commerce companies like www.amazon.com. But savvy librarians countrywide have sought new ways to address that perception about the public's patronage by reinventing themselves. The question is then asked, "What can a local library offer its patrons that's unique to itself and yet gives an experience to the public that makes them want to come back time and again?"

The library industry is taking a good, hard look at that question. Traditional views of the library have been that of a stodgy, quiet place to find information, do research, read periodicals or check out books that probably haven't been on the bestseller list for awhile. These days, however, that stereotype is far from true. Extensive library databases can be accessed through a local library's Web site, including newspapers from across the country, as well as health references and business resources, to name a few. Books can be searched by title, author or subject and ordered online. Bestsellers can be requested or brought in from another library.

In fact, the U.S. Department of Education found visits to the nation's public libraries increased more than 17% between 1996 and 2001.

What follows below are several surveys reflecting the viewpoint of patrons nationally, in Washington State and in Port Townsend.

@ your library: Attitudes Toward Public Libraries Survey

In 2002, the American Library Association conducted a telephone survey that polled a national random sample of Americans based upon their attitudes toward public libraries. Here are a few interesting statistics from that survey:

- 62% Have a library card (compared to 80% in Washington State)
- 37% Do not have a library card
- 1% Didn't know

When the library was used in the past year, these are the services used (multiple responses were accepted):

- 67% Take out books
- 47% Use reference materials
- 47% Consult the librarian
- 31% Read newspapers or magazines
- 26% Connect to the Internet
- 25% Take out CDs, videos or computer software
- 14% Hear a speaker, attend a special program or see a movie
- 7% Attend a class or workshop

Ten statements in support of libraries were tested to determine how convincing they were. Listed below are five of them:

Libraries are unique. In person or online, you can access nearly anything on the Web or in print for free as well as gaining personal service and assistance in finding it:

88% Convincing
7% Not convincing

With yourself as your teacher and your librarian as a coach, libraries are a place of lifelong learning.

88% Convincing
8% Not convincing

Libraries bring you the world. Miles are meaningless. With today's library technology, information from around the world is just a few clicks away.

85% Convincing
10% Not convincing

Libraries are changing and dynamic places. In a typical library, children can be listening to a storyteller, first-time computer users can be learning to navigate the Web, retirees can discuss the latest bestseller and students can search for information for their term papers.

91% Convincing
5% Not convincing

Librarians are the ultimate search engines. Librarians are trained experts in finding the right information, wherever it is—in books, in archives or on the Web.

84% Convincing
12% Not convincing

66% (two-thirds) of Americans have used the public library at least once in the past year in person, by telephone or by computer.

Washington State Library Community Survey

In July 2004, 465 library community members participated in an online survey. Here are a few key statistics from library users across the state.

Please indicate the three most important attributes for libraries to convey:

41% Knowledgeable
38% Accessible
34% Affordable

What perceptions should we seek to change about libraries? (Limit answer to three)

- 70% Irrelevant—the Internet is better for finding information
- 43% Nothing to offer me (general lack of knowledge about libraries)
- 41% Stuffy, stodgy, uninviting places

What are the biggest challenges for libraries in the near future? (Limit answer to two)

- 70% Funding
- 42% Communicating a clear message about the value of all libraries
- 29% Increasing positive public awareness about libraries
- 21% Keeping up-to-date with technology
- 20% Differentiating library services from bookstores (Barnes Noble, Web resources)
- 19% Developing new library users

Based on your experience, rate the following in terms of creating or maintaining a positive perception of libraries in the community you serve. Rate them on a scale of one to five, with **one being not effective** and **five being very effective**.

Word of mouth	4.17
Positive articles in newspapers	4.15
School outreach	4.08
Web site	3.73
Community event sponsorship	3.47
TV advertising	3.26
Radio advertising	3.06
Print advertising	3.03
Endorsements	2.96
Outdoor advertising	2.79

What is the major problem facing libraries that should be addressed in a statewide marketing campaign? (Pick one)

General lack of knowledge about library services and resources	43%
Differentiating library services and resources from the information available on the Internet and through bookstores	25%
Public does not see libraries as relevant	20%
Negative perception about libraries	6%
Other	6%

How can a marketing campaign best help to promote libraries? (Pick one)

Build awareness for the resources and service available at libraries	46%
Develop a value message that applies to all types of libraries, not just public libraries	20%
Provide libraries with skills/materials to market/promote themselves	14%
Encourage residents of Washington State to support all libraries	10%
Encourage residents to use libraries	9%
Other	2%

The Port Townsend Public Library Community Survey

In June 2004, 4,600 surveys were distributed and 582 were completed—a 12% return. Below are a few key points of information gained:

PTPL Use:

- 63% Use the library at least once a week
- 26% Use it monthly

Jefferson County Library Use:

- 7% Use the Jefferson County Library at least once a week
- 26% Use it monthly

Collections Use:

- 93% Check out books for adults
- 77% Check out videos, CDs, books-on-tape, DVDs
- 66% Use reference materials
- 38% Check out children's books

Library's Web Site:

- 34% Access Web site, with 86% doing so to use the Library Catalog

What Patrons Like Best:

- #1 Librarians: seen as kind, knowledgeable, helpful and friendly
- #2 Location/atmosphere: accessible, convenient, welcoming, comfortable
- #3-tie a) Excellent book collections
- b) Beautiful, historic buildings and gardens

The One Thing Patrons Would Most Like to Change:

- #1 Increase the hours open daily and be open on Sundays
- #2 Increase the collections with more books and new books
- #3 Make more space by expanding/enlarging the library
- #4 More CDs, DVDs, videos and books-on-tape

With the above information gained nationwide, statewide, and in Port Townsend's survey about what patrons would like to change, it's seen that the primary competition for libraries exists with the Internet and the large bookstore chains. So the core strategy for libraries, nationally, regionally, and in Port Townsend, is to differentiate library resources and services from the competition. The direction is to bring the library to life for the community and communicate its relevance more effectively.



Target Audience

In the *Attitudes Toward Public Libraries Survey*, conducted by the ALA, the nation's library users were:

Gender

45% male
55% female

Age

14% 18-24
19% 25-34
23% 35-44
17% 45-54
8% 55-64
13% 65+

Education

5% less than high school
25% high school graduate
27% some college
25% college graduate
15% postgraduate work
3% professional/technical school

Household Income

16% less than \$25,000
25% between \$25,000 - \$49,999
14% between \$50,000 - \$74,999
14% between \$75,000 - \$99,000
8% \$100,000 or more



In the survey conducted with the Port Townsend community in June 2004, demographics of PTPL users were:

Age

5% Under 5
8% 5-12
8% 13-19
20% 20-44
41% 45-64
18% 65+

Education

7% high school graduate
41% college/vocational cert
52% college graduate

Household Income

20% less than \$25,000
41% between \$25,000 - \$49,999
33% between \$50,000 - \$100,000
6% over \$100,000

91% of the respondents to the Port Townsend survey live within the city limits and 96% have library cards. From the statistics shown above, it's clear that the primary patrons of the library are well educated, with the majority of 41% ranging in age from 45-64 and making between \$25-49,000. The secondary category of patrons are in a close 3-way tie in the 20-44 (20%) and 65+ (18%) age ranges, with children and young adults at 21%. The secondary income category shows 33% make between \$50-100,000.

Not surprisingly, Port Townsend's target audience is a little older and better educated than the national average, with income levels relatively comparable.



Marketing Elements

Four specific marketing goals were addressed at the beginning of this document. **The core themes are to increase awareness of services and use of the library as well as establishing a dynamic image to brand all library communications with the public.** What follows is a discussion of the various marketing elements available to the PTPL with general recommendations.

An overarching strategy to create excitement in the community about programs, events and activities is paramount to all marketing endeavors. These events and programs provide the vehicle to carry the brand forward and invite community participation. The development of themes springing forth from the library's branding can provide useful ways of implementing the strategy and will be discussed in more depth further into this plan.

Public Relations

This is an important area of marketing that has been used to some extent already by the library, but has much room for expansion. It requires the least expenditure of financial resources and very effectively gets the message to PTPL's target audience.

Keeping a positive, consistent relationship with the press and media, by feeding them quality, newsworthy information, is key to the success of public relations. When good press coverage is given to the library about its special events, promotions, programs and community-oriented activities, it's worth its weight in gold!

Patrons, both current and prospective, often read articles before they see or read advertisements, flyers or mailings. Consistent mention of the library to its targeted audience helps to drive them through the door or online to the library's Web site.

Distributing a well-written, professional press release, focused on a newsworthy event or issue, is the first and most important step in a PR strategy. Press releases get the word out to the media efficiently and effectively. Time releases to match the needs of the media you're targeting, i.e. don't send a release two months out and expect the newspaper, radio, etc. to remember to run it again a week prior to the event OR don't send a release after the media's publicized deadlines.

In addition to sending press releases, it can often be useful to pitch article ideas to newspapers, magazines or publications that PTPL's target audience may read. These articles can often go into more depth than a press release and if one of the publication's writers covers it, there's a better chance of getting published. Human interest stories offer a good hook to pitch an article, i.e. how the library's literacy program helped a person develop their reading skills so they could ultimately acquire a driver's license.

Public relations for the library may not only be an external function, as discussed above, but an internal one as well. It's important that patrons continually feel good about their experience, not only when looking for books, information, etc. but about the library as a whole, including its programs, workshops, special events, etc. These provide an added

value. Consequently, newsletters to current and potential patrons can become a vital part of the “internal” public relations that is ongoing. The quarterly newsletter published by the Friends of the Library is an excellent vehicle for this.

With a focus on creating positive perceptions about the PTPL, it will ultimately drive action by current and prospective library patrons. In order to achieve maximum results, the public relations strategy should cover the following elements:

Media Relations

Develop a template for press releases, media list and training in implementation

Establish requirements for photographs to be used for print

Identify target media, i.e. newspapers, radio, magazines, etc.

Ideas for story development and media pitches

Look for publicity opportunities:

--within the scope of a specific promotion, special event, etc.

--something newsworthy, i.e. a staff member won an award

Special Events and Promotions

Develop events and promotions for a calendar year tied to library’s branding

Identify monthly or quarterly campaign themes for promotions and events to:

--Tie in guest speakers

--Host workshops

--Create programs and activities geared to target audience

- Children’s story hour

- Useful information for retirees

- Reading groups

Partner with other organizations as much as possible for cross-promotion

Newsletters and Direct Communications

Establish a calendar for consistent, timely newsletters (quarterly, monthly, Friends newsletter, etc.)

Develop mailing list, including an e-mail mailing list

Incorporate branding/logo into all communications

Create incentives that will drive patrons into the library

Community Relations and Customer Service

Develop a “Welcome” packet of information for new library card recipients for each target audience

Re-design existing collateral materials for communicating services

Initiate Visitor Information Center “FAM” tours for VIC volunteers

--Develop a temporary library card for visitors

--Include library information in VIC

Establish customer service policies, procedures and protocol for staff

--Communicate a spirit of helpfulness

--Follow the rules, but yet be willing to bend a little

--Engage people

--Listen to the patrons’ needs

- Develop a telephone plan for customer-oriented answering
 - Orientation on how telephone system works
 - Determine who answers first, before going to voice mail
 - Online computer sign ups
- Track number of new library card recipients vs. Year-To-Date last year
- Track patron use vs. YTD last year

Special events, programs and activities often get good press coverage. They provide a newsworthy “hook” and grab the media’s attention. Guest speakers and educational workshops or special children’s programs are all potential ideas for reaching the targeted audience through public relations.

Web Site

Enough can’t be said about the power of the Internet as an educational, information and communications tool. An engaging Web site provides an important means for communicating information to current library patrons, as well as prospective patrons.

The Web site is an integral component for links to additional online resources and databases. It provides the library catalog, information resources and subject links. Increasingly patrons learn to rely upon www.ptlibrary.info for references and answers to questions they have.

The “Ask a Librarian” collaboration between the Jefferson County Library, PTPL, Peninsula College Library and the North Olympic Library System provides an excellent broad resource for residents across the North Olympic Peninsula. An easy link from the City of Port Townsend’s Web site, including the PTPL’s new branding/logo will also be helpful for prospective patrons.



With all that said, www.ptlibrary.info can be even more effective as a communications tool. It can be updated to focus on each marketing theme or campaign as it arises, with information about the special events, lectures, workshops, activities, etc. that will be occurring at the library featured on the home page.

Frequent updates of the home page and information about upcoming events encourage more usage of the Web site. Press releases, newsletter articles, flyers in a PDF format and meeting minutes from the Friends of the PTPL and/or PTPL Foundation meetings can all be posted to allow patrons broader access to library activities.

A recommendation is to update the library's home page and add additional pages to include the above information. The library's unique attributes—equal access to a wealth of resources with no transaction cost, services of highly qualified, friendly and personal, information-savvy staff and the combination of complementary online and physical locations—serve individuals and the local community in unique and compelling ways.

An overall strategy for more effective use of the Web site should include:

Update the library's home page utilizing new branding

Links to:

--Upcoming events

--Press releases

--Newsletter

--Information from Friends, Foundation, etc.

Regular and consistent updates to keep Web site current

Track Web site hits: Is usage increasing?

Collateral Materials: Rack Cards, Brochures, Flyers

Collateral materials support the brand awareness campaign and enhance publicity efforts. They consist of printed materials used for promotional purposes and may include: information given to new library card recipients, rack cards about the library and its services, bookmarks (such as the one currently in use promoting "Ask a Librarian") and flyers about special events, workshops, activities, etc. Every printed piece should reflect the library's branding by using the logo and tag line.

Rack cards are used very effectively throughout the region as well as within Port Townsend and are especially useful for reaching visitors. They also provide an excellent vehicle for long-term information. To gain maximum benefit from rack cards, they should be well designed and printed in color. Unfortunately, that can be expensive. An alternative is to print them on colored card stock with black ink. Rack cards are best used where space is tight for promotion, such as in Bed and Breakfast Inns or at the Visitor Information Center.

A brochure about the library's services could be used in lieu of a rack card, however again the expense of producing a brochure can be greater than a rack card. The advantage of a brochure is that it can be a multiple fold piece and contain for information.

Flyers are best used to provide publicity for special events, lectures, workshops or activities. They can be inexpensive to produce and effective if placed around town or in areas where the library's target audience frequents.

In order for collateral materials to be most effective:

Determine what materials are needed and for what purpose

- Welcome packets for new library card recipients
- Overall library promotion (rack card vs. brochure...or both)
- Communication of services if different from above
- Flyers needed for themed events

Evaluate costs to get best return on investment

Assess target areas for distribution

Create template for flyers, making production easier and consistent

Signage

Internal signage is an important part of marketing to patrons once they're inside the library. Signage should:

- Provide clear directions
- Identify collections
- Show where computer sign up are located
- Inform patrons about upcoming programs and events

Collaborative Partnerships

A wide variety of people, businesses and organizations work closely with the library. Partnerships enhance the library and its activities, offering a mutual benefit to both parties.

As one of the long-range goals determined during the Visioning Conference in July 2004, it was stated:

The library will strengthen its role as a community resource through the development of programs and services and the creation of community and professional partnerships.



These collaborative partnerships include local schools, non-profit organizations, both small businesses and larger corporations and governmental relationships within the City, County and State.

Partnerships can assist the library with additional volunteer support, may underwrite expenses and can increase awareness of programs and services.

Recommendations for more effective collaborative partnerships include:

- Contact above mentioned organizations to explore ideas in cross-promotion
- Develop collateral materials to enhance and support mutual marketing
- Track effectiveness
- Develop an “outreach package” that could include a traveling tabletop display
 - Participate with a table or booth at local festivals, fairs, etc.

Advertising

Advertising is most effective when the message is delivered consistently and regularly. To do this successfully requires a financial investment. Various media, from print to television to radio, can be used. Each has its own merits and targeted audience.

Washington State Libraries will be running a substantial advertising campaign from Fall 2004 through Summer 2005. With limited funds available to the PTPL, it would be ideal to let the WSL campaign increase awareness for the PTPL.

In Port Townsend, the most widely used media for advertising is the newspapers: the Jefferson County Leader and Peninsula Daily News. Determining which to use and designing an effective ad that reaches the library’s target audience is at the core of an advertising strategy. The objective is to increase reach with minimal cost.

Before proceeding too far, determine:

- What funds are available to use for advertising?
- What’s the best use for those funds?
- Are there other options to consider?
- Had advertising effectiveness been tracked in the past?
 - Were patrons asked how they heard about a program?
 - Was the percentage of response at least 3%?
 - Did patrons talk about the advertising?

If it’s been decided that there are funds available for advertising throughout the year, then as with the public relations plan, it’s ideal to determine the advertising plan to coincide with the campaign themes. Ads should complement and be consistent with the publicity efforts, both the content of press releases and in collateral materials used. Branding should maintain that consistency as well. With answers to the above questions, along with previous advertising history, an intelligent and comprehensive advertising plan can be created and implemented.

A New Brand Identity for the Port Townsend Public Library

In the Brand Awareness and Marketing Program developed for the Washington State Library, the objective was stated as:

A cohesive brand for all libraries in Washington State with the strategy, creative and messaging to project a positive and consistent identity that will influence the way in which the public perceives libraries.

A brand facilitates loyalty, repeat patronage, positive word-of-mouth and allegiance. It's the image an organization presents to their "customers" and includes everything from their name to their logo to their "unique selling point" (tag line).

A brand also aids in the event of a crisis, such as funding challenges, or political/public perception. It acts as a foundation from which the library builds and evolves in terms of its services and offerings. It also provides stronger employee buy-in and cohesion.

A brand builds momentum the longer and more consistently it's used. A few examples of good branding are: Nike's "Just Do It!" with their "swoosh" logo or Harley-Davidson's "Ride to Live. Live to Ride." Those brands are simple and to-the-point. Everyone knows them and recognizes them, even if they aren't customers of the company.

A brand is part of the experience someone has with the library. It's part of the customer service they experience from library staff, it's the programs and special events they attend, it's how easily they can access information off the Web site and that brand experience inspires loyalty to return time and again.

Branding is integral and vital to the effectiveness of any business or organization. Image is everything, but more importantly, as stated above, it's the experience patrons have. Their perception melds with the library's branding to determine their image of the PTPL.

Cultivate patron relationships. This should be paramount with each staff member. Every patron becomes a brand ambassador on the library's behalf. They tell their friends and neighbors about all the great benefits they experience by having, and using, a library card. At social gatherings, they'll talk about the pleasant and kind librarians, the unbelievable service they receive, how a staff member found information for them or showed them how to access that for themselves on the Internet. They'll begin to "preach the gospel" about the library.

A few ideas considered for branding that were considered during the Visioning Conference included:

For the Love of Learning
See What the Library Can Do for You!
Libraries Bring You the World

The Jefferson County Library's brand includes an image of a mountain with the tag line: *Expanding Horizons*. It's on their Web site home page and used in their promotional materials.

The new brand created for the Washington State Libraries in their recently adopted branding and advertising campaign is:

***Washington State Libraries:
Discover. Explore. Experience.***

It's simple, to the point and effective. It's also included in all the advertising, publicity and collateral material being distributed across Washington State.

After much deliberation and discussion throughout the visioning and strategic planning process, a complementary brand is recommended for adoption:

***The Port Townsend Public Library:
Opening Minds. Opening Lives.***

This is also a simple, to the point message, inviting and inspiring both current and prospective patrons to come and explore the PTPL and let their lives be changed.

Ideally, this branding should permeate and "spill" into all library functions and activities. A logo should be developed to revolve around the message and the look integrated by the library's staff, Advisory Board of Trustees, Foundation and Friends of the Library into letterhead, newsletters, posters/flyers, brochures, Web site, booklets, development materials and all additional print items distributed to the public. Visual branding should also include internal signage.

Goals for an integrated brand marketing and awareness campaign for the Port Townsend Public Library mesh closely with those identified for Washington State Libraries:

- Increase public knowledge of the wealth of services available
- Increase public visits to the library either physically or electronically
- Increase knowledge of library services among people who have not traditionally used libraries
- Increase use of library services among people who have not traditionally used libraries

These goals mirror the four marketing goals identified and addressed at the beginning of this plan.

Collateral materials used by the library, such as brochures, rack cards, flyers, etc., need to deflect the misperception that libraries are out-of-touch, stodgy, uninviting places with limited access due to reduced hours and little to offer than cannot be found online or through bookstores.

The new brand should demonstrate that individuals want to get to know their library as a pleasant, knowledgeable, informative and inviting place to use and visit. It stands alone in its ability to serve the needs of its residents by providing equal access to a broad scope of information, services and resources without a transaction fee and with the help of uniquely qualified personnel. The Port Townsend Public Library wants to be known as being connected to the community. The recommended branding accomplishes that objective.

In order to launch a brand marketing and awareness campaign effectively for the PTPL, the following needs to be implemented:

- Adoption of the brand
- Create a logo to reflect the brand's message
- Integrate brand and logo into all visual materials, i.e. brochures, rack cards, Web site, flyers, etc.
- Integrate brand and logo into themes established for the year