

The Libraries of Washington State  
Public Relations Plan  
Revised, November 2004

## OBJECTIVE

After a successful launch of both the advertising and public outreach aspects of the marketing program, this plan outlines the specific public relations tactics that will be undertaken for the balance of the campaign.

The focus will be on creating positive perceptions about libraries and ultimately driving action by current and prospective library patrons. Supporting tactics will generate awareness and build brand esteem for the Washington State Libraries across the general public.

## GOALS

*The goals of the public relations campaign are:*

- Leverage the advertising campaign and dollars through primarily earned media.
- Increase public knowledge of the wealth of services available through libraries.
- Increase public visits to library either physically or electronically.
- Increase knowledge and use of library services among people who have not traditionally used libraries.

## STRATEGY

In order to achieve maximum results and leverage the positive attributes of the libraries of Washington State, the public relations strategy will fall primarily under the following key areas:

- *Media Relations:* Media outreach efforts will primarily focus on specific media pitches of interesting stories that will resonate across a wide range of media. Templates, key media messages, and how-to's for local media relations and community events will also be included in the marketing toolkit for use by library staff.
- *Public Service Campaign:* As a non-profit entity, the Washington State Libraries are in a unique position to engage media partners and additional spokespeople across the state to create high-quality public service announcements to air on both television and radio. We will secure the additional spokespersons, media partners and produce and place these spots.

- *Media Events:* A critical component to building favorable opinions regarding our libraries across Washington State would include special events either with local radio stations and promotional partners or those already planned.

## TARGET AUDIENCE

Public relations initiatives will target the same audiences as the overall marketing campaign, including:

- Households with school age children (Adults 25-49 with at least one child in the house)
- Library staff
- Influencers, such as policy, funding and community decision makers

## TACTICAL PLAN

### *Public Service Campaign and Spokespeople*

As with any public relations campaign, specifically if the goal is a shift in public opinion, establishing credibility through a third party can often generate immediate results. One of the key ways to use these spokespeople is through a focused public service campaign. Spokespersons will be used to deliver "the message" through this campaign and we will seek a media "partner" in each market and produce high-quality public service announcements for both television and radio focusing on the positive aspects "the new library of the Century." Spokespeople can also be used for news story pitches. Those already secured include:

- Patti Payne, local broadcast personality
- Susan Hutchison, local broadcast personality
- J.A. Jance, local author, who was instrumental in the kickoff
- Secretary of State Sam Reed, administering this program and also instrumental in the kickoff

Suggestions have also been made by the marketing subcommittee including Bill Gates, Sr. We will continue to pursue him and others as well in order to finalize a set of appropriate spokespeople for use with the PSA campaign, etc.

### *Media Relations*

This tactic is the cornerstone of the public relations program and will primarily include targeted media pitches of interesting stories that will resonate across a wide range of media statewide. We will take the lead on pitching these stories in markets across the state including those that didn't have benefit of the advertising campaign. However, this tactic in particular will require the help of the marketing subcommittee to uncover the interesting stories that exist across all our libraries. Please be thinking of great people to feature in stories or interesting tidbits that exist inside your library.

In addition, we will create and/or refine the press kit used for the kickoff including a backgrounder, fact sheet, press releases, key media messages, thought starters and

how-to's for local media relations and community events, writing and distribution of press releases, additional story development ideas for when the campaign is over, etc.

#### Possible Story Topics

- The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Library and/or Librarian
- Online Membership Services, Online Media Indexes
- "ALL ACCESS" - Cross-Cultural Efforts, Socio-Economic Efforts
- Men vs. Women - differences in library perspective and usage
- "Entertainment" vs. "Educational" - explore the role of the library in times of diminished free time
- Libraries as Safe Places
- "Quiet" vs. "Exploring" - contrast the perceptions of libraries vs. the dynamic places they are today
- Literacy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
- Multi-Cultural Needs Served at Community Libraries
- A special librarian
- High-tech aspects of the new Seattle Library
- A homeless teen who found a new life checking out books

#### *Media Training*

We'll work to incorporate a media training session for librarians into the Marketing Workshops that are currently being scheduled. This will ensure that the marketing subcommittee and others who are trained understand more thoroughly what makes a great news story and will be ready to help uncover those and then act as a spokesperson if necessary.

#### *Media Events*

One of the most effective strategies for both engaging an audience and generating editorial is hosting a promotional and/or media event, primarily in local media markets. We will work with local radio stations to look for opportunities to host live remote broadcasts from outside a local library and other creative ideas for publicity. Another potential program is to develop a "story time" to broadcast on a number of local radio stations. We will also look for publicity opportunities for those events already planned such as the upcoming Governor's Reading Challenge that will take place on December 8<sup>th</sup> in Olympia. In addition we will pursue the feasibility of a statewide Library Week, to be proclaimed in the State of Washington.

#### *Internal Communications*

Without the support of our library "brand champions," or librarians themselves, the effectiveness of a solid PR campaign can be diminished. By providing a library toolkit on the campaign website, librarians can customize templates for special events, news releases, announcements, library hours and a local boilerplate.

## TIMELINE

### August

- Internal brand work
- Identify spokespersons
- Preparation for roll-out begins
- Draft PR plan
- Identify prospective promotional partnerships
- Prep for rollout event
- Explore topics for editorial campaign

### September

- Final preparations for kick off event
- PR plan refinement
- Secure spokespersons for kick off event
- Finalize kickoff event
- Continue exploring topics for editorial campaign

### October

- Kick off event for Library campaign
- Finalize topics for editorial campaign
- Begin to solicit and secure media and community partners
- Begin preparations for Washington State Library Month - Proclamations from Governor and Mayors throughout Washington State (Seattle, Tacoma, Spokane, Everett) - Local Events w/Kids, Main Event in Olympia w/Governor Locke

### November

- Elections
- Refine events and PR calendar for winter and spring
- Build story/editorial calendar
- Finalize PR component for marketing workshops and toolkit

### December

- Holidays
- Governor's Reading Challenge Winner announced

### January 2005

- Story pitching
- Event management
- Media training

## February

- Preparation for Spring editorial campaign
- Story pitching

## March

- Spring editorial campaign
- Story pitching

#### April

- National Library Week - Partnership with Communities In Schools of Washington
- Spring Editorial Campaign

#### May

- Spring Editorial Campaign

#### June

- PR Outreach with possible baseball tie-in
- Story pitching continues

#### July

- PR Outreach with possible Baseball Tie In
- Story pitching continues

#### August

- Campaign wraps

#### September

- Evaluation and Summary