

MARKETING TOOLKIT  
How to Prepare

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### GET PREPARED

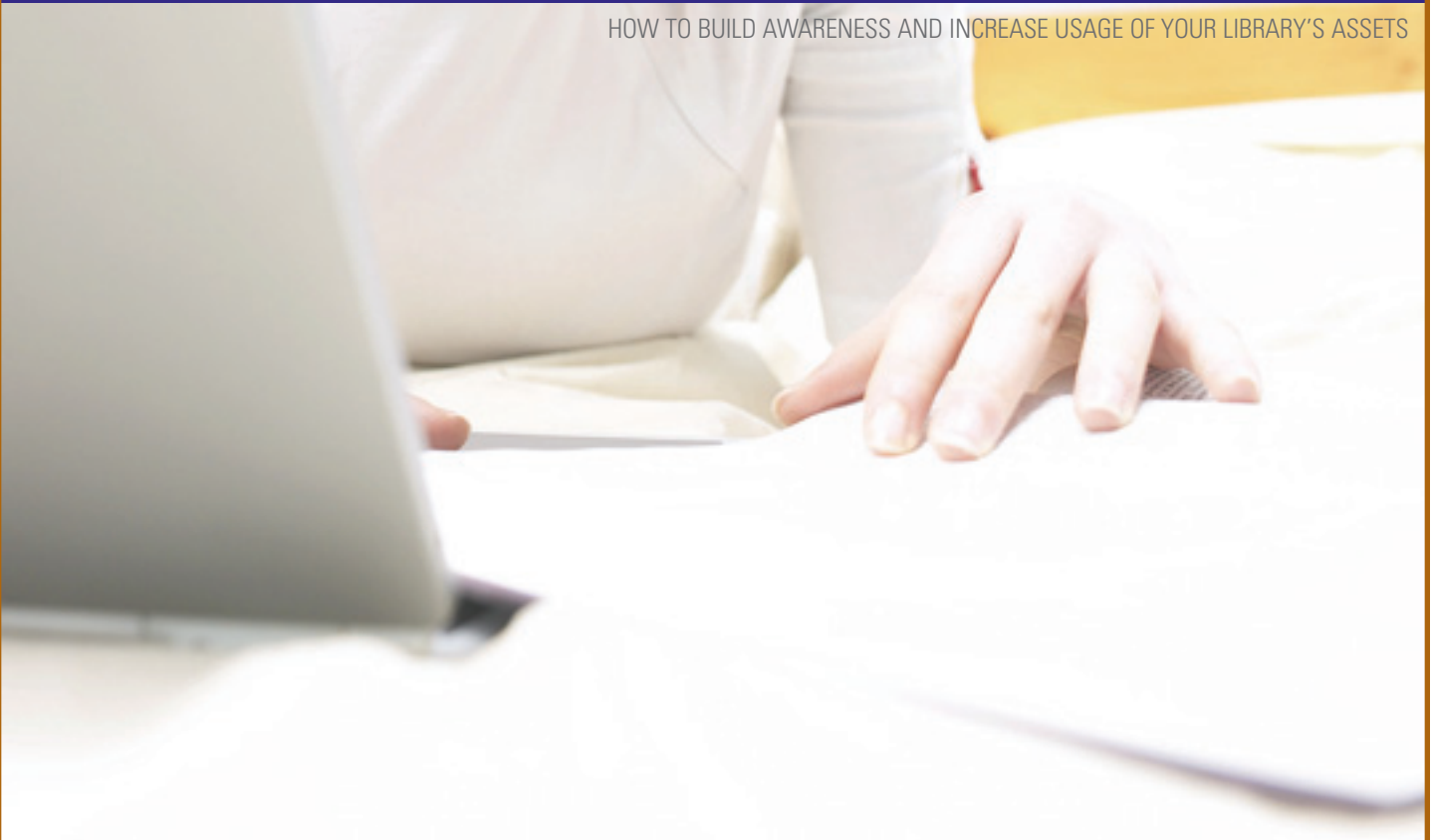
Be in the Know  
Define Your Goals & Track Results  
Speak Their Language  
Keep Your Eyes Open

### GET THE WORD OUT

Go Where Your Customer Goes  
Network, Network, Network  
Make Friends in High Places  
Use the Resources Around You  
Don't Give Up!

## MARKETING YOUR SCHOOL'S INFORMATION RESOURCES

HOW TO BUILD AWARENESS AND INCREASE USAGE OF YOUR LIBRARY'S ASSETS



## HOW OFTEN ARE USERS NOT FINDING THE INFORMATION THEY NEED, WHEN YOU KNOW IT'S AVAILABLE VIA THE MEDIA CENTER?

How often do...

- Students rely on dubious information from Web search engines, when your media center offers authoritative content designed just for them?
- Teachers spend time scouring the Web for good instructional content, when your online tools have complete, correlated resources readily available?
- Parents struggle helping kids with homework after school, even paying for access to databases, when your online gateway is free, 24 hours a day?

Not everyone knows about everything your media center has to offer. It's time to show them what they're missing! What student wouldn't like to get better grades; what teacher wouldn't like to have more time; what parent wouldn't like to feel more confident helping his or her child?

This guide gives you the tools to put the power of marketing to work for your library. "Get Prepared" provides you the basics to planning successful marketing programs. "Get the Word Out" gives you strategies for making those programs a reality.

The order is important: don't spread the word until you're sure you're ready for prime time!

## GET PREPARED

### STEP 1. BE IN THE KNOW

It's a simple, but often overlooked first step. You can't successfully market a product if you don't understand its purpose and intended audience. What classes use the library the most? What resources do users request most? When would you use one resource rather than another? What roadblocks do they have in getting information? The answers to these questions are your marketing building blocks.

Of course, people are already using your resources. But many may not be. Your task is to show them that your library can help, in ways that matter to them personally.

#### IN YOUR MARKETING TOOLKIT...

- **Look over our sample informational fliers.**
- **Take a minute to read the templates and absorb the language.** Each is meant to inform different users about resources in a library. They describe features (the "facts") tied to a benefit (the "so what"). For example: Copy pictures into PowerPoint (the feature) to make a more memorable statement (the benefit).
- **Think about how you might change the fliers to reflect your media center's own resources and user needs.**

Start by building a list of the user groups in your school, and identify their major needs. Each group has a set of needs that can be met by your resources. If you don't know what they want, find out. Talk with your patrons. Ask them about their needs, their successes and frustrations, the library's resources, and any changes that might help them use it more.

With this information you can begin pairing these needs with your resources to create powerful statements that express benefits to the user. So, students worried about good grades in science might become, "You'll look like an Einstein when you use eLibrary Science to complete reports."

Then, be sure to use your new messaging consistently and clearly in all your outreach and discussion for maximum impact.

#### IDEA!

**Try this!** Create a forum for people to share ideas and tips about your resources, and save them in an online reference folder so new staff and users can get up and running faster. Conduct an online survey or an in-person focus group about your library's resources—you'll quickly learn what people know/don't know, want/don't want.

Or, borrow a trick from bookstores, where titles flagged as "staff picks" always sell more. Have a teacher or student choose their favorite resource, explain why it's great in a brief note, and add a signature (or picture too) for the personal touch. Post that on your website, or feature in a staff email, and watch usage go up. Try to get "reviews" regularly to increase interest, and your pool of features and benefits! The important thing is to always be asking for feedback.

### STEP 2. SPEAK THEIR LANGUAGE

Libraries are rife with jargon and systems that can confuse users. You must "translate" for your patrons so they can navigate with ease. Start with the basics: do your users search "databases" or do they visit websites? If they don't use the word "databases," don't describe them that way. Don't know which word they use? Ask. Talk with your patrons, show them your site and tools, and ask if they understand the labels. If they aren't sure where to go or what to do next you have a problem. Take it a step further and ask if there's a better way to label and organize things on your website. Next, look at the resources' labels. Is there simply a list of resources, such as "ProQuest Platinum" or "SIRS Researcher"? Unless your users work in the information industry, they won't know what those mean. If you do use a product name, add a description of it in words you users will understand.

#### IN YOUR MARKETING TOOLKIT...

- **Don't reinvent the wheel:** A range of brief ProQuest database descriptions have been provided for use on your library's website. These friendly and inviting descriptions explain the contents and uses of many of the resources available through your library's gateway.

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### STEP 3: DEFINE YOUR GOALS & TRACK RESULTS

Now you have the all the components that are the basis for crafting a message to your markets. The next step is to define the goals of your marketing program. You'll need to consider,

- What you want to accomplish
- How can you accomplish it
- The best way to accomplish it
- Measurements of success

For example, a campaign to promote usage of a science database might look like this:

- Ensure science fair students use the database to support their project
- Work with science teachers to make the use of the database a requirement
- Create special science fair terminals in your library, the computer lab, and the classroom pre-loaded with resources that support the project
- Compare usage at the science fair-only workstations

Or, a campaign to increase home access might look like this:

- Promote your library website where remote access is available
- Inform parents about resources available to their children
- Work with the PTO to set aside time for you to speak at their next meeting; send every parent a library FAQ, and informational flier using a mailing list from the school office
- Compare month-over-month remote usage on your site and databases

Taking the time to carefully define each of these goals creates strong, well thought-out programs. It helps you better focus on the goals and needs most important to you and your market. And it helps you better plan the time, resources, and people necessary for reaching that goal.

#### IDEA!

**You're not alone in the need to market your services.** Engage your peers at other schools. Or, talk with different groups in your school to get ideas on programs that might work. School offices, coaches, drama and music departments, student councils, PTOs, clubs—all of them have done some level of marketing. Ask them for tips on what worked/what didn't; how they defined their goals; how much time it took; who or what can help the most; etc.

### STEP 4: KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN

You've taken the first steps in marketing your library! But it doesn't end there. At the very least, plan to review your goals and materials once a year to ensure your messaging is on target. What changes or enhancements occurred to your services over the summer? What new initiatives or classes have been implemented? How many new or returning staff members are in your school? How has new technology changed information needs? All of these are new opportunities for you to meet new needs or refine existing ones.

Now it's time to go get 'em! If you followed steps 1 through 4, you're ready to put these ideas into action. Read on for how to "Get the word out."



# GET THE WORD OUT

**1 STEP 1. GO WHERE YOUR CUSTOMER GOES** You have a built-in audience that comes in every day to the library, and every encounter is an opportunity to teach visitors about your online resources. Seize those moments! Create brief, easy-to-read brochures that advertise your services. Place them at the circulation/ reference desk and send one home with everyone checking out a book. If possible, keep a stack near the workstations and other high-traffic areas in your library.

But don't stop there—think of all the people who have yet to come into your library! You need to take your message out to where it can be heard. Posters or banners in the hallways, cafeteria and study halls are a great way to message to the masses. Don't be shy about leaving brochures for teachers in the teacher lounge, at planning sessions, or in their mailboxes. Try mailing a brochure to every incoming freshman and new student's home.

## IN YOUR MARKETING TOOLKIT...

- **A Library Brochure...Done!** See a sample brochure in the marketing toolkit.
- **Student Fliers...Done!** See a sample flier in the marketing toolkit.
- Download both documents to customize and print your own versions!

These ideas are the tip of the iceberg. Create these marketing tools and consider every encounter with users an opportunity to teach them about all the good things their library can provide.

## IDEA!

**Marketing is all around you;** it's even already in your school and library. All of those emails, mailers, and catalogs that you get (and toss) from vendors? They're full of ideas about how to message to and reach an audience. It's okay—we're more than happy for you to take and use our concepts for your library marketing! Check out other things that grab your attention in personal life, too. If it caught your eye, it's probably catching others, too.

**2 STEP 2. NETWORK, NETWORK, NETWORK** Imagine that perfect day, when every teacher knows about your library's electronic riches and every student uses your library because it's better than Google. It's not impossible if you build a network of advocates to help spread the word. In "Get Prepared: Step 1," you made a list of your library's major market segments (user groups). You looked at their needs; now look at who influences them.

These groups might have influencers that include specific people or groups within your school. For example, winning over department chairs with information "goody bags" might be the best way to influence other teachers' use of online resources. Helping out the football captain with his last-minute homework could pay dividends when he mentions your library to his friends!

Introducing these groups to your library is a great way to get THEM to spread the positive word to the people you want to reach. When, where, and how can you reach them? Teachers, parents, and school groups might be accessible through meetings, where you can demonstrate the library and its contents. You must be prepared to take your show on the road.



### STEP 3. MAKE FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES

Think of this as your own personal PR campaign. You need to market yourself in all directions. It's one of the best things you can do to gain incredible advocates for your library. Unfortunately some principals, superintendents, technology directors, and other school administrators may not be familiar with all the positive benefits of school libraries. In some cases, they may only view them as cost centers that are expendable as more content becomes freely available online!

You know the real story, and it's up to you to ensure that story gets told. You can use many of the strategies and tactics already presented in this kit to help with this task. First, find out what motivates each administrator. Is it financial goals; is it technological innovation; is it teacher improvement? Once you know that you can craft messaging, testimonials, and hard facts that show how your library supports those goals. Then use the tactics in Step 1 and Step 2 of this section to start reaching out to your targeted administrators. And if you already know library-friendly administrators, be sure to ask whether they would be willing to open some doors for you.

#### IDEA!

You might find it useful to create a **Library Annual Report for school administrators**. This can be anything from a PowerPoint to a four-color brochure. But, like annual reports published by businesses it should highlight the mission and core goals of your library, showcase key beneficial projects within your library, and illustrate various metrics and testimonials that relate the value of your library back to administrators. Plus, it is good business practice for you, since each year's update will show areas of strength and possible weakness where further improvements could be made (and pitched to administrators as a new project worth financing!).

### STEP 4. USE THE RESOURCES AROUND YOU

If you're already panicking about how you'll possibly be able to do all this—remember that there are already resources all around you. Your school or library probably already has a website. These are great places to get the word out since it's a portal users will visit regularly. Perhaps your school has a MySpace account where you could open your own library page. It's likely there are a variety of teachers and students email/listserv accounts that allow for broadcast messaging. Your school may even have its own radio and TV systems. And, of course there are always the old-standbys: the school newspaper and daily PA announcements. Ask students and teachers what they use the most to help set your priorities.

#### IN YOUR MARKETING TOOLKIT...

- **Product Notices...Done!** Add your library's pertinent information and go!
- **Web Banner Ads...Done!** A variety of sizes to fit any site.
- **Why the Library Video...Done!** Link to it from your website.
- **Press Release...Done!** A template press release is available. Fill in your library's pertinent information and adjust as needed. Then, go get the coverage!

Don't forget your local newspaper when reaching out to parents. Most papers have assigned reporters who cover the school beat. You can use a press release to make a pitch to the reporter. Before you send the release, be sure to contact your school or district public relations department to make sure it's okay your library speaks directly with the press. If you are at a larger district you may need to make your pitch to the district publicist. Then, identify a library spokesperson who is comfortable talking with the press AND has the expertise to provide a rich interview.

Email is the preferred method of press release delivery for most reporters. The most effective method? Email with a phone call to follow up. When you call, pitch your story again just as if you never sent the email. Remember: schools and libraries are beloved institutions—be proud and confident when you call. If you get the story, congratulations! If you don't get it, don't give up. No matter the outcome, cultivate a relationship with the reporter. Stay in touch by sending news from the library and be sure to follow his or her career. A great place to meet them in person is at local school board meetings. You'll find that every time you pitch a story, it gets easier.

### STEP 5: DON'T GIVE UP!

Effective marketing is an ongoing commitment that gets easier over time. Think of it as part of your library's daily operations. Just as you set a course for the development of your online collections, marketing these resources requires goals and planning, too.

Samples from your Marketing Toolkit >>





## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

### HAVE QUESTIONS? SUCCESSES OR LESSONS LEARNED YOU WANT TO REPORT ON?

We want to hear from you. Send your feedback, questions, and ideas to [virtuallibraryhowto@il.proquest.com](mailto:virtuallibraryhowto@il.proquest.com). We'll share what we hear and continue to learn from each other!

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