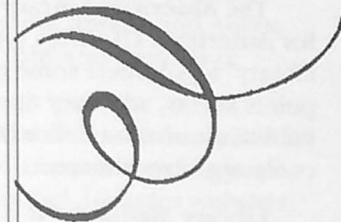


PUBLIC RELATIONS PRIMER: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Want to get the word out about your library, but have no idea where to start? Don't have time to re-invent the wheel? This listing of websites, books, and journal articles will provide you with the best resources for information on public relations, marketing, outreach, and promotion. As you read through some of these resources, you may come up with so many great ideas that you can't possibly do them all. As Marylaine Block said in *The Secret of Library Marketing: Make Yourself Indispensable* in American Libraries, September 2001,

"You may be reading this and saying, In what possible universe will I have time to do all this stuff and still serve the people who are already coming to us? And you're right; there's a limit to how far we can stretch. Librarians can't do all the things I'm recommending. But if we don't do some of them, we will continue to be invisible. If we don't want to settle for being good at what we do but want to be known to be good at what we do, we have to put marketing time and money into reaching out to the people who make things happen in our community."¹

This bibliography will focus on basic information and creative ideas that can be quickly used to generate enthusiasm about your library. Most of the resources are general and can apply to all kinds of libraries, with a final section divided by type of library.

GENERAL: BOOKS

If you're getting started in public relations, or even if you've been doing it for awhile but feel the need for a refresher, you'll want to get one of these books to give you the big picture. They're all useful and will give you lots of great ideas about what you can do to promote your library.

Karp, Rashelle S. *Powerful Public Relations: a How-To Guide for Libraries.* Chicago and London: American Library Association, 2002.

Various chapters in this 2nd edition are timely and useful: Chandler Jackson's *Web-Based Public Relations*

is one example. Most important, though, is the final chapter, *Public Relations Lessons: Selected Annotated Bibliography*, by Andrea L. Miller. Miller has selected material written by marketing and PR professionals from 1991 forward and noted how these apply to the library world. While we know that we are borrowing heavily from other professions in many of our administrative and management techniques and philosophies, this is the only place that I've seen such a great collection of relevant readings from outside the field collected in one place.

Roberts, Anne F. and Susan Griswold Blandy. *Public Relations for Librarians.* Englewood, Colorado: Libraries Unlimited, 1989.

Although a bit dated, this book is still useful and has some different content that's worth examining. In particular, the chapter on *People and Publics* focuses on pinpointing your strengths and weaknesses and moving forward with promotion in a judicious manner. Most chapters in this book include notes, suggested activities, and suggested readings, which make it a very practical guide.

Wolfe, Lisa A. *Library Public Relations, Promotions, and Communications: a How-To-Do-It Manual.* New York, London: Neal-Schuman, 1997.

Wolfe's manual on how to develop a public relations program is a help for any type of library. She includes a thorough grounding in the basics of public relations: definition of terms, planning, funding, and staffing. She moves on to include chapters on specific steps to take in order to tell your library's story, including media coverage, using technology, and creating and maintaining an appropriate library environment. Many sample forms are included. Most important, though, throughout the book Wolfe's writing style includes a public relations sensibility that helps you to learn how to keep public relations at the forefront of everything you do as a librarian.

GENERAL: WEBSITES (AND A LISTSERV)

Websites are great because they're free and you can

bookmark them and then check them periodically when you need some new ideas.

The **American Library Association's Campaign for America's Libraries** (you've seen the "@ your Library" logo) offers some great quotations, talking points sheets, advocacy tips and other helps from the Public Information Office of ALA. Access: <https://cs.ala.org/@yourlibrary/>

Library Media & PR is a site sponsored by Stephanie Stokes as a service to the library profession. The site has clipart, a "little black book" of addresses and links related to PR, a toolbox with lots of links to clipart and font download sites, and a bulletin board for public relations issues. Access: <http://ssdesign.com/librarypr/>

A weekly publication of OCLC, the **OCLC NetFirst Calendar Planner**, is an excellent resource for advance publicity and programming planning. For example, Issue 205, dated May 20, 2002, notes relevant web resources for holidays, events, and activities for the week of August 12, 2002. That week highlights the birth anniversary of Annie Oakley (8/13) and Pakistan Independence Day (8/14). You can either browse the site periodically or sign up to receive the information via email on a weekly basis. Access: <http://www.oclc.org/oclc/menu/netcalendar.htm>

Some state library associations have developed websites that serve to keep their members up-to-date and supplied with lots of public relations ideas. Here are some of the best.

The **Colorado Library Marketing Council (CLMC)** website is a cooperative venture of five library associations in Colorado and other sponsors that focuses on the promotion of libraries and information professionals. The Marketing Resources section is a goldmine of links and listings of other resources that can get you started in your various marketing activities. Access: <http://www.clmc.org/>

The **Michigan Electronic Library** includes a section on Public Relations and Promotion. While the entire Michigan Electronic Library's site is useful and well-organized, pay particular attention to the links on the Public Relations and Promotion page. The site is sponsored by the Library of Michigan. Access: <http://mel.lib.mi.us/libraries/LIBS-promotion.html>

The **Wisconsin Library Association's Public Relations Committee** designed this website "in an effort to improve Public Relations efforts of libraries in Wisconsin." Access: www.wla.lib.wi.us/committees/pr

Having PR ideas come to your inbox is a great way to go. **PR Talk** is an ALA-sponsored electronic discussion list for idea-sharing and updates on ALA promo-

tional activities and library PR issues. To subscribe, send a message to: listproc@ala.org. Leave the subject blank. In the body of the message, type: subscribe PRTalk your first and last name.

GENERAL: ARTICLES (AND A NEWSLETTER)

Block, Marylaine. "The Secret of Library Marketing: Make Yourself Indispensable." *American Libraries* 32(2001): 48-50.

Block reports that relationship-building and becoming the "go-to" people for information is crucial in marketing your library and its services. Filled with great ideas, Block ends with this note:

Library salesmanship:

- √ Takes an entire staff - and board of trustees.
- √ Is the ultimate knowledge-management experience.
- √ Never ends.

Goldberg, Beverly. "How to Become the Go-To Source." *American Libraries* 32(2001): 50.

This is more of a "go-to" source. This piece interviews four librarians on how they make an impact in their communities. The underlying focus is on relationship-building.

When you need a reminder about why you need to do PR, this is the article to read:

Majka, David. "The Conqueror Bookworm." *American Libraries* 32(2001): 60-63.

Majka comments on the increase in "digital illiterati," who "exhibit a complete misunderstanding or indifference to the distinction between subscription and free online information as well as a chilling aversion to reading books." He also calls this new information consumer the "inforamus." Beyond his amusing terminology, though, his point about marketing our libraries in a competitive manner is real and true.

If you can afford a relevant subscription, this would be a likely choice. If not, just check out the website.

MLS: Marketing Library Services is a newsletter devoted to library marketing ideas. Delivered six times yearly for \$77.95, **MLS** content includes feature stories, conference reports, useful how-to articles, programming ideas, and other useful marketing trend information. The website often includes some full-text content. Access: <http://www.infotoday.com/mls/mls.htm>

ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

Germain, Carol Anne. "99 Ways to Get Those Feet in the Door." *College & Research Libraries News* 61 (2000): 93-96.

A brief article on getting started in public relations with, you guessed it, 99 ideas for events and activities that will draw people to your library.

Kirchner, Terry. "Advocacy 101 for Academic Librarians." *College & Research Libraries News* 60 (1999): 844-47.

This article stresses the need for academic librarians to actively promote their library to the campus community. Discusses principles of advocacy, marketing plans, relationship-building and the importance of campus visibility.

Russo, Michele C. and Nancy Wootton Colborn. "Something for (Almost) Nothing: Public Relations on a Shoestring in an Academic Library." *Library Administration and Management* 16 (3) (Summer 2002): 138-145.

This article acknowledges the common problems of lack of time and staffing and lack of money yet still gives you plenty of ideas for promoting your library to faculty, students, and the community outside of academia.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Net Notions for Librarians gives examples of ways that the public library website can be used for promotion and public relations. Innovative ideas include online book reviews, virtual poetry, thematic book lists, and electronic storytelling. *Access: <http://ds.dial.pipex.com/harden/netnotes.html>*

SCHOOL LIBRARIES

Baule, Steven M. and Laura Blair Bertani. "Marketing 101 for your Library Media Program: How to Gain Support from you Board and Administration." *Book Report* 19(2000): 47-50.

A great mixture of big-picture perspective and practical advice, this article obviously speaks mainly to those in school library media centers. However, linking planning with marketing and advice to remember "the main topic of the conversation is student learning" can apply to other kinds of libraries as well.

Cavitt, Deborah. "38 Steps to a Well-Rounded PR Program." *Library Talk* 11 (1998): 1-2.

Specifically focused on elementary school libraries, this is a practical list of ideas that can be implemented with various constituencies: administrators and teachers, students, and the community. Short and sweet.

Flowers, Helen. *Public Relations for School Library Media Programs: 500 Ways to Influence People and Win Friends for Your School Library Media Center*. New York: Neal-Schuman, 1998.

This book focuses specifically on PR for school librarians. While one of the other, more general books included here may cover some of the same basic material (developing a public relations plan, determin-

ing the message, etc.) this book effectively focuses on reaching the audiences that are unique to the school environment. There are over 500 creative, practical ideas for event planning, handout design, and public speaking. Includes a bibliography and samples of publicity pieces.

AASL Resource Guides for School Library Media Program Development is an annotated webliography for school library media personnel. Includes websites, books and articles. *Access: <http://www.ala.org/aasl/resources/pr.html>*

SPECIAL LIBRARIES

Besant, Larry X. and Deborah Sharp. "Upsize This! Libraries Need Relationship Marketing." *Information Outlook* 4 (2000): 17-22.

Focuses on building the relationship between the customer and the library and on customer retention and long-term relationships. The authors explain how six different markets (customers, internal, suppliers & alliance, referral, recruitment and influence) can be utilized to bring relationship marketing from concept to reality.

Dworkin, Kristine D. "Library Marketing: Eight Ways to Get Unconventionally Creative." *Online* 25 (2001): 52-54.

Focuses on the Hewlett-Packard Labs Research Library and methods of attracting corporate users to its library. Ideas include coffee and tea parties with pizzazz and the use of magnets. Librarians also get out of the library to let people know what's available for their use.

NOTES

¹ Marylaine Block. "The Secret of Library Marketing: Make Yourself Indispensable," *American Libraries* 32(2001): 48-50.

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