

A Crash Course in Communications for Library Supporters

With Kathy Dempsey of Libraries Are Essential

**Vermont Department of Libraries
2020 Trustees and Friends Conference**

Hi, I'm Kathy Dempsey! (and I love VT libraries!)



Joslin Memorial Library,
Waitsfield, 2013

I Understand Rural Living



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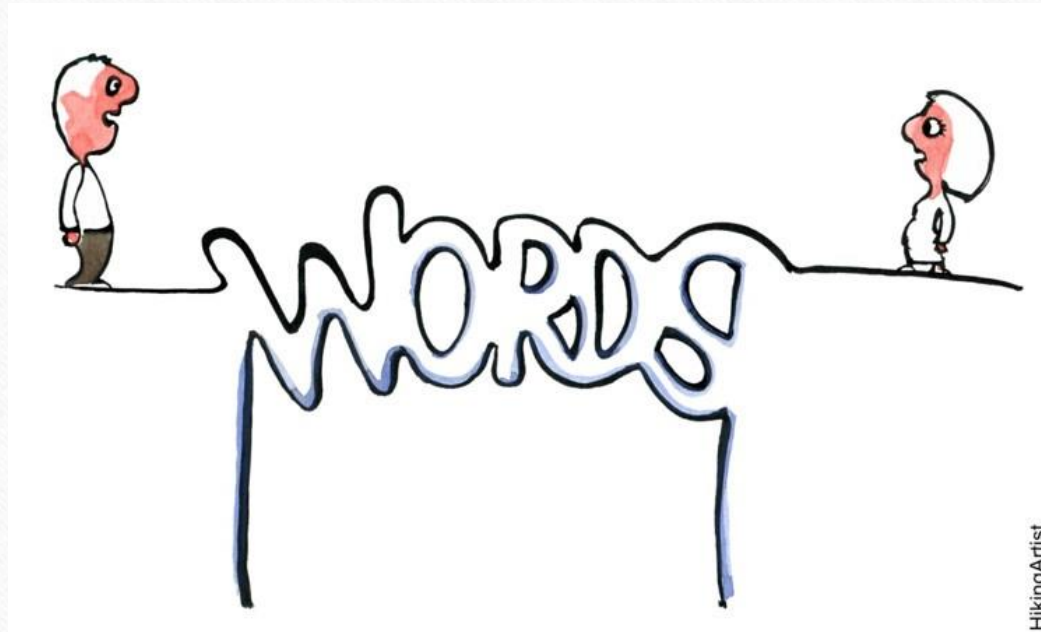
Let's Talk About Communications



Sarah Partridge Community
Library, East Middlebury,
2012

Let's Talk About Communications

- Written
- Verbal
- Visual
- Social
- Professional
- Personal



Communication Affects Everything

- Reputation
- Funding
- Awareness
- Usage



- Partnerships
- Inclusion
- Recruitment



What 'Marketing' Really Means

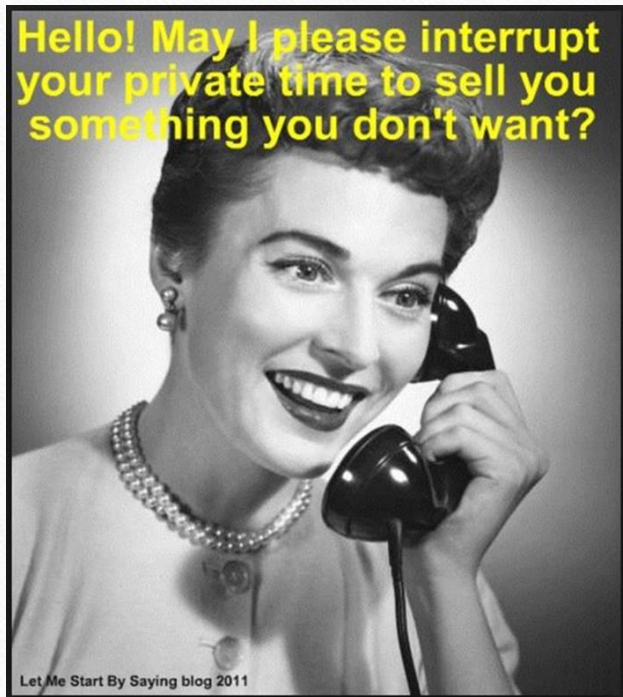
Marketing:

Taking steps to move goods from producers to consumers. It's determining what people want, telling them you have it, evaluating consumer satisfaction, and then periodically updating that whole process.

Marketing Communication:

The means used by organizations to convey messages about the products and services they offer, either directly or indirectly to the customers, intending to persuade them to use or purchase.

What 'Marketing' Really Means



- True marketing is about service, not sales.
- It's about conversation and connection.
- It's about discovering what people need, then helping them meet those needs.
- It's about *explaining the value of your offerings*, to encourage discovery & usage.

What 'Marketing' Really Means

- Sally needed a new job, but didn't know how to start looking.
 - Sally chatted online with a librarian to ask for books on finding jobs.
 - The librarian shared book titles with Sally, and also told her about the library's classes on writing resumes and help with completing job applications online.
 - A few weeks later, Sally was called for 4 job interviews. Sally was happy and hopeful.
- Major trends in marketing now are "content marketing" and "storytelling."
 - Without ever saying "You should go and use the library," you can make that point using a story about what libraries can do for people.

Marketing Communications ...

- Since you're affiliated with a library, you're already doing MarCom, even if you didn't realize it.
- The way you talk about it (publicly and privately) is important.
- Your words have an affect on the way others view the library.



What ‘Target Audience’ Means

- Libraries serve different types of people who communicate differently.
- Each different group of like-minded people is a “target audience.”
- Each “target audience” has its own language.
- Segment audiences by age (senior citizens, working adults, young adults, teens, etc.)
- Segment audiences by work (farm & field, tourist industry, home-schoolers, legislators, etc.)
- Segment audiences by interests (cooking, business, artisans, etc.)

What 'Brand Touchpoint' Means

Brand:

A logo, image, wordmark, color palate, typeface, or visual representation; also, people's experiences with, and opinions about, a "brand"

Brand Touchpoint:

"... the interactions and exposures that a consumer can have with a brand. Brand touchpoints are very broadly defined and include both deliberate communications from a firm/brand and communications and interactions that the consumer will have with the brand as part of their everyday life."

www.marketingstudyguide.com/examples-brand-touchpoints

YOU Are a Brand Touchpoint!

- Since you're affiliated with a library, each of you is already a brand touchpoint.
- True of course when representing the library officially
- Also true on your personal time (to those who know your affiliation)



Stowe Free
Library, Helen
Day Memorial
Building, Stowe,
2016

Brand Touchpoints in Real Life



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The Public's Perception Is Reality

 1/8/2011

 First to Review

Huge, modern facility.

And a total babe works there.

4 people voted for this review

 Useful 2

 Funny 3

 Cool 2

  7/7/2015

Beautiful Modern facility, absolutely terrible staff. As an employee of a library how do you not know how to whisper? Gossiping and laughing like a crazy person? Cmon now. Employees sit at the desk and do not answer the phone (which is extremely loud and echoes) but instead continue to scroll on their Facebook. People come in talking on their phone and nobody says a word to them. To make matters worse, the architecture of the building creates an echo so basically it's not a library it's a zoo filled with chaos and kids running around screaming and crying Do yourself a favor, if you're trying to study, just go to the nearest starbucks, it'll probably be quieter.

Robyn H. and 5 others voted for this review

 Useful 4

 Funny 1

 Cool 1

The Public's Perception Is Reality

Example of a positive interaction:

★★★★★ 11/15/2019

I can't say enough of the personnel at The WestEnd Branch. Everyone of the Staff is kind, thoughtful and most helpful. I am grateful, that we have The WestEnd Public Library, so close to home. My hope is that the city of Boston continues to recognize this branch as a vital source, to obtain information and assistance in our community.



Useful



Funny



Cool



Comment from Helen B. of Boston Public Library - West End Branch

Business Owner

11/15/2019 · Thanks so much for your kind words. The Staff of the West End Branch Library.

[Read more](#)

How to Be a Positive Touchpoint

- Be open, helpful, & pleasant.
- Be a positive role model.
- Be a good listener.
- Show your love for your library.
- Always remember what you represent, even in your personal life & posts.



Ruth Kneale, science librarian extraordinaire

Now You Know ...

- Why communication is so important
- Definitions of Marketing and Marketing Communications
- That you're already doing MarCom
- Definition of Target Audience
- Definitions of Brand and Brand Touchpoint
- That you're already a Brand Touchpoint
- The public's perception is reality
- How to be a positive touchpoint



The Power of Good Communication



Ilsley Public Library, Middlebury, 2016



Lawrence Memorial Library, Bristol

The Power of Good Communication

- Keeps up library's good reputation
- Helps sustain stable funding
- Increases awareness and usage
- Increases respect for the librarians' expertise
- Increases respect of institution
- Strengthens the library's position in the community; worthy partner
- Helps ensure inclusion in community projects & activities
- Helps recruit new members for Friends, Foundations, Boards
- Proves the library's value
- Supports literacy skills
- Fights old stereotypes
- Increases user satisfaction



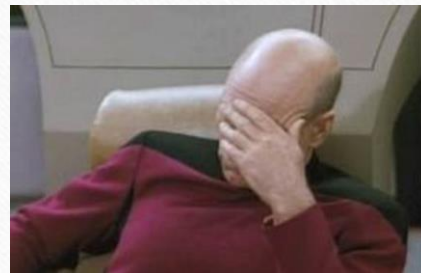
The Power of Good Communication

CHALLENGE:

Most people have no idea how many diverse services & materials are available at your library!



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RESPONSE:

Coordinated marketing communications!

Why spend \$100,000 on collections and materials, but not have an organized way to tell everyone what you've purchased for them?

Coordinated MarCom: Teamwork!



- Meet with your library's leaders and learn what their main goals are (increasing circ, raising \$\$, finding partners, repairing building, etc.).
- Each goal needs clear MarCom messages. You can help the leaders set the language for the target audiences you're most familiar with.

Coordinated MarCom: Teamwork!



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- Create memorable messages in each target audience's language (lyrics).
- Think of each target's message as specialized song.
- You want to be like a harmonizing choir, not a cacophony.*
(*loud, confused, and usually inharmonious sound)

Coordinated MarCom: Teamwork!

Many Supporters; One Song; One Director

- Library staffers
- Friends members
- Trustees
- Foundation members
- Community influencers



Library Director

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Coordinated MarCom: Teamwork!

MarCom Steps:

- Each library goal gets customized messages (song) in the target audience's language (appropriate lyrics).
- Everyone harmonizes and follows the director.
- Spread the messages across the community using one unified voice.



Coordinated MarCom: Teamwork!

- “Marketing Communications” is about enthusiastically sharing the goodness of your library.
- As official library supporters, this is part of your “job” (along with things like fundraising, recruitment, policymaking, etc.).



Bookstore employees are instructed to “upsell,” to make suggestions that lead to extra sales. Library workers are not.

(photo of WonderBooks store in Maryland)

Coordinated MarCom: Your Special Role

Tough economy

Shortages

Government Funding???

DEBT



Coordinated MarCom: Your Special Role



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- Since you aren't a library / gov't. employee, you can say things and take actions that the library staffers cannot.
- This puts you on the front lines for "Vote Yes" campaigns and some legislative advocacy.
- <https://libraries.vermont.gov/services/public-libraries/trustees>

Your Special Role: Legislative Advocacy

- EveryLibrary can help!
- Contact the PAC for pro-bono assistance before your libraries face any votes on funding (the earlier, the better).



<https://www.everylibrary.org/about-everylibrary>

“EveryLibrary is the first and only national political action committee for libraries. We are a **gold-rated non-profit organization** that helps public, school, and college libraries secure new funding through tax and advisory referendum, bonds elections, negotiations with school boards, and advocacy at municipal, state, and federal levels. Our primary goal is to ensure stable funding and access to libraries for generations to come.”

Your Special Role: Amplify Messages



Ways to amplify library messages:

- Share social media posts, blog posts, news, web info, etc.
- Talk up the library with peers, organizational leaders, reporters.
- Help send letters & put up posters.
- Undertake dedicated fundraising.

Coordinated MarCom: Targets

- Town, city, county officials
- State & federal officials
- Local leaders (Rotary, church, Chamber of Commerce, etc.)
- Local influencers (bloggers, artisans, parents, farmers, etc.)
- Political opponents

Other Stakeholders:

- Police, Fire, Emergency managers
- Reporters, editors, media people
- Homeschoolers
- Potential donors
- Leaders of other library groups

Coordinated MarCom: Partners

Groups that can help you share your printed messages:

- Meals on Wheels / Food pantries
- Grocery stores / Co-ops / Restaurants
- Utility companies
- Post offices
- Health dept. / Medical offices



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Main Communication Tools

- Friends/Board/Foundation website (for info seekers)
- Email & Newsletter (for members & supporters)
- Social media (Facebook for older; Twitter / Insta for younger)
- Print materials (flyers, direct mail, posters, cards, etc.)
- Phone calls / Door knocking (to build voter / donor support)
- TV / Radio / Newspapers / Podcasts (know their target audiences)
- Influencers / Local leaders (others look to their actions)

A Word on Donor Communications

- *Don't* tell them *what* the library *has* – tell them the outcomes / results of having a good library. (And what could happen *without* a library!)
- Match the audience with the message by discussing the right topic with the right language.

WIIFM?

What's in it for me?

A Word on Donor Communications

Ineffective message:

- “The local library held 46 programs last year, proving that it’s important to our community.”

Effective message for personal donors:

- “The local library held nearly 50 classes last year to help people of all ages advance their skills so they could [get better jobs, get better grades].”

Effective message for corporate donors:

- “The local library held nearly 50 classes last year, helping laid-off people retrain for new jobs and supporting local workforce development.”

A Word on Donor Communications

*Some people will be moved by data;
some will be moved by visuals or videos;
some will be moved by stories.*

Now You Know ...

- Many reasons why communication is important to your library's well-being and survival
- Why coordinated communication is the most effective
- How to team up with your library's leaders to create effective messages, so you're all harmonizing on the same song
- That you have a special role in political advocacy
- How to help amplify messages
- That you have many target audiences to cover, partners to join, and tools to use
- How to make donor communications more effective



Final Communication Advice



Warren Public Library, Warren, 2008



Waterbury Public Library, Waterbury, 2013

Use Social Media Wisely

Remember:
Always
follow the
Library
Director's
instructions



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- Share posts from the library to your own personal friends & networks.
- Help maintain the library's brand / good reputation.
- Engage on positive comments from other people, and let the library's social media person handle any negative comments (unless you've collaborated on a response plan).

Use Social Media Wisely

Tell people how simple it is to get a library card online!



The image is a composite of two parts. On the left is a yellow library card for Sayville Library. The card features a circular logo with a green building icon and the text "an exceptional library" at the top and "for an exceptional community" at the bottom. The text "Sayville Library" is written across the bottom of the logo. To the right of the logo, the card lists the address "88 Greene Avenue Sayville, NY 11782" and the phone number "(61) 589-4440". At the bottom of the card, the website "http://sayvillelibrary.org" and the email "connect@sayvillelibrary.org" are provided. Below the card, the text "don't have a library card? no problem." is written in a large, bold, black font. On the right is a screenshot of a Facebook post from "Sayville Library" dated "March 17". The post text reads: "Don't have a library card? Or maybe you have misplaced yours? No problem. Sign up for a temporary card number that will give you access to all the library's online resources for up to 90 days. Click here to get access now: <https://search.livebrary.com/selfreg> Once you have your temporary card number, you will be able to download FREE books from <https://livebrary.overdrive.com/> and take a FREE online class using lynda.com or browse a magazine using Flipster. Visit the library's website www.sayvillelibrary.org for more online experiences." The post shows 21 likes, 3 comments, and 24 shares. At the bottom of the post, there are buttons for "Like", "Comment", and "Share", and a text input field for "Write a comment..." with icons for emojis, photos, GIFs, and stickers.

Use Social Media Wisely



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YOUR LIBRARY AT HOME



Since closing to the public, as a result of COVID-19, we've adapted to continue to bring world-class services and programs to you.

SINCE MARCH 13,

PROGRAMS 150+



a full lineup of live-streamed programs, from Storytimes to STEAM experiments to yoga sessions to book discussions

8,000 NEW USERS

new patrons have used our digital collection, including our newly launched OverDrive



20K ATTENDEES

thousands of KDL patrons of all ages have tuned into our live-streamed programs



DATABASE USAGE ↑ 68%



our database usage, from Ancestry to Mango Language, has increased by 68%

BRINGING THE LIBRARY TO YOU

Take a stroll through KDL - your library at home - by visiting kdl.org/virtual.

MarCom to Achieve Service Goals

MarCom helps you achieve your service goals when you:

- Coordinate campaigns for each goal
 - Match the message to the audience
 - Spread the messages in concert with librarians & other supporters
 - Work with respected partners
- Consider word-of-mouth marketing campaigns, which are time-intensive, but free of cost.



Final Communication Advice

- Use MarCom to help position the library as a worthy partner in learning, community activities, and economic development.
- Reach the people that the librarians can't necessarily reach themselves.
- Be a positive brand touchpoint.



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Key Takeaways

- **Realize:** Communicating your library's value is vital to the health of all libraries.
- **Realize:** You're a brand touchpoint; everything that you do matters.
- **Realize:** MarCom isn't an "extra duty"—supporting the work of your library is simply part of the everyday support role.
- **Remember:** MarCom is about enthusiastically sharing all the goodness of your library so everyone can benefit from it.
- **Remember:** Speak in one voice.
- **Relax:** You're not alone; you have a director and you're part of a team.



Contact Me Anytime

(I'm not going anywhere!)

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