6. Marketing and Public Relations

How Do You:

A. Use Key Concepts?
B. Work with the Media?
C. Write a News Release?
D. Create a Newsletter?
E. Create a Brochure?
F. Begin an Agency Website?
G. Find Some Examples of Marketing Pieces?
H. Create a Logo and an Identity?

A. Key Concepts

Marketing and public relations are an important part of Wisconsin Literacy's vision "**to strengthen Wisconsin's workforce, families and communities through literacy.**" To support this vision, the benefits of being a "literate" state and the drawbacks of illiteracy must be in the public eye. Literacy organizations can bring their work to the attention of the public through all forms of the media, much like any business. The results may be **increased donations, more volunteers** and **more learners**, but, most of all, **awareness of the issues of literacy** may bring more segments of the community into the struggle and eventually create an educated populace that participates in civic life to its fullest.

Marketing and public relations include advertising and promoting your organization, as well as informing the public about upcoming events. While there are differences in the definitions of the concepts of advertising, promotion, publicity, public relations and sales, the terms are often used interchangeably.

> To support our vision, the benefits of being a "literate" state must be in the public eye.

To help explain these differences, this story comes from *Reader's Digest*, a quote found in "Promoting Issues and Ideas" by M. Booth and Associates, Inc. "... if the circus is coming to town and you paint a sign saying 'Circus Coming to the Fairground Saturday,' that's **advertising**. If you put the sign on the back of an elephant and walk it into town, that's **promotion**. If the elephant walks through the mayor's flower bed, that's **publicity**. And if you get the mayor to laugh about it, that's **public relations**." If the town's citizens go the circus, you show them the many entertainment booths, explain how much fun they'll have spending money at the booths, answer their questions and, ultimately, they spend a lot at the circus, that's **sales**.

Here are the basic definitions for each of these terms:

Advertising: One-way communication of your message/product; comprises the actual pieces that have been created (banners, fliers, bookmarks, etc.)

Promotion: The dissemination of the intended message/product to the public; includes letters to the editor, public service announcements, radio or TV spots, news articles, your organization's website/newsletter and word-of-mouth

Publicity: The stimulation of interest in your message/product through a news item

Public Relations: Events, communications or press coverage that are created to increase an organization's goodwill in the community

Sales: The value of the goods/services that are sold

Literacy organizations need to use all of these concepts to do marketing and public relations. You not only need to get the elephant walking through town to let people know of your services, you also need to get funders to buy the need for your services.

Many ideas can be done cost effectively if you can get volunteers to provide their expertise or get printers or publishers to donate their services. Such in-kind donations are often easier to obtain than financial contributions.

B. Working with the Media

How can my literacy organization work with the media?

- **Whose job is it?** Identify who in the agency/board owns this duty. For example, one nonprofit agency has a Marketing Committee of the Board of Directors. This board committee is responsible for interfacing with the media. Another agency has an Outreach Coordinator who works with the community, but also is responsible for all communications with the media.

- **Media Contacts.** Have a list of media contacts at your fingertips. If you don't have one, build one. In most communities, the local chamber of commerce will have a listing for print and broadcast media. Know your local paper and consider fostering a good relationship with the education editor or other applicable editors. Radio and television stations can be a source of publicity, too. Don't be afraid to call and ask for the names and numbers, as well as e-mails, of the key people who can get your story out there. Periodically update your lists by making a few phone calls or checking their websites.

  > Don't be afraid to ask for the names and numbers of key media contacts.

- **News Releases.** When sending news releases, send them twice: once in advance and then, just before the event. Use e-mail or FAX, rather than U.S. mail. Most media prefer e-mails since they can simply cut and paste. Make sure the subject line of your e-mail has a "hook." Otherwise, the media contact may never open your e-mail.

- **Don't assume anything.** With any communication with the media, don't assume the media has any knowledge of literacy issues. Provide the context in a succinct manner.

- **Check the date with the media first.** In scheduling an event, it is better to choose the date for the event after consulting the media on their availability. This may seem backward, but it is better to be willing to set a date with the media in mind.

- **Strike when the story is hot.** Get the story out while it is fresh and new. Try to show how your story plays into breaking news or trends.

- **Media coverage brings volunteer tutors.** Many organizations send news releases to newspapers whenever there is a tutor training because that is the main source of volunteers. There usually is a pretty good response. A lot of people never even think about the opportunity until they read about it in the paper. News releases sometimes bring in tutors who work for the paper, so that could provide an extra contact at the paper.

- **Don't forget radio stations.** They are required by law to make public service announcements (PSAs). Send them your tutor trainings, program announcements and other "calendar" items, as well as stories. PSAs should be sent about one month to six weeks in advance to assure time to air your information.

- **Find an APR Representative in your area.** Accredited in Public Relations (APR) is a voluntary certification program for industry professionals. It is considered the mark of distinction for those who demonstrate commitment to the profession and to its ethical practice. Those who earn the APR certification demonstrate a broad knowledge, strategic perspective and sound professional judgment of modern public relations. In order to maintain their accreditation, they are required to volunteer their public relations expertise to organizations. You can Google "Accredited in Public Relations" to find a contact near you.

Sources:

Barbara Felix, Executive Director, Literacy Services of Wisconsin

Tom Heinen, Reporter, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Lou Ann Novak, APR, Senior Staff Consultant – External Communications, Verizon

Judy Stone, Coordinator, Walworth County Literacy Council

C. News Releases

How do you write an eye-catching news release?

Pay attention to the content of your news release. "Content" refers to the news story you are telling. Keep the following points in mind when writing your news release:

- **Is your news "newsworthy?"** The purpose of a news release is to inform the world of your news item. A good release answers all of the "W" questions (Who, What, Where, When, Why and hoW), providing the media with useful information about your organization, service or event. There is a difference between a news release/public service announcement and a story. A news release will often be about an upcoming tutor training, recruitment event or volunteer recognition. These are pretty straight-forward and will often be used verbatim from a release. A story has a broader appeal, with the purpose of educating or encouraging change. Although you may submit the story written from your perspective, it may be better to "pitch" the story to an editor or reporter. For instance, you may have a learner with a particularly interesting background or life story. You can save yourself some work by calling the education editor to see if they are interested in the story. They will most likely assign a reporter to cover it and do most of the leg work.

- **Start strong.** Your headline and first paragraph should tell the story. The rest of your news release should provide the detail. You have a matter of seconds to grab your readers' attention. Do not blow it with a weak opening.

- **Write for the media.** On occasion, media outlets, especially online media, will pick up a news release and run it in their publications with little or no modification. More commonly, journalists will use the news release as a springboard for a larger feature story. In either case, try to develop a story as you would like to have it told. Even if the news is not reprinted verbatim, it may provide an acceptable amount of exposure.

- **Not everything is news.** Your excitement about something does not necessarily mean that it is a newsworthy story. Think about your audience. **Will someone else find your story interesting?** Answer the question, "**Why should anyone care?**" and make sure your announcement has some news

values such as timeliness, uniqueness or something truly unusual. Focus on the aspects of your news item that truly set you apart from everyone else.

- **Stick to the facts.** Tell the truth. Avoid fluff, embellishments and exaggerations. If you feel that your news release contains embellishments, perhaps it would be a good idea to set it aside until you have more exciting news to share. Journalists are naturally skeptical. If your story sounds too good to be true, you are probably hurting your own credibility.

- **Pick an angle.** Try to make the news release timely. Tie your news to current events or social issues, if possible. Make sure that your story has a good news "hook."

- **Use active, not passive, voice.** Verbs in the active voice bring your press release to life. Rather than writing "has entered into a partnership" use "partnered" instead. Do not be afraid to use strong verbs, as well. For example, "The committee exhibited severe hostility over the incident." reads better if changed to "The incident enraged the committee." Avoid jargon. You may know what ABE and ELL means, but your readers may not.

> Active verbs bring your news release to life.

- **Economics of words.** Use only enough words to tell your story. Avoid using unnecessary adjectives, flowery language or redundant expressions such as "added bonus" or "first time ever." If you can tell a story with fewer words, do it. Wordiness distracts from your story. Keep it concise. Make each word count.

- **Avoid the hype.** The exclamation point (!) is your enemy. There is no better way to destroy credibility than to include a bunch of hype. If you must use an exclamation point, use one. Never do this!!!!!!!!!!!!!

- **E-mail "subject line."** Make sure the subject line for your emailed news release has a "hook." Reporters are inundated with e-mails. The key to making reporters notice your e-mail is its interesting, timely and noteworthy subject line. Once you establish a relationship with reporters and editors, they should recognize your e-mails and phone calls. They might even begin coming to you as their "source" for literacy issues.

- **About your organization.** Your news release should end with a short paragraph that describes your organization, its mission, its services and a short history. You can simply keep an electronic copy on your computer and cut and paste it into your release. If you are filing a joint news release, include similar statements for the other organizations.

Sources:

PRWeb PRESS RELEASE NEWSWIRE:
www.prweb.com/pressreleasetips.php#content#content

Barbara Felix, Executive Director, Literacy Services of Wisconsin

Tom Heinen, Reporter, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Resource:

An example of a template for a standard news release is located on the following page.

Headline Announces News in Title Case, Ideally Under 80 Characters

The summary paragraph is a little longer synopsis of the news, elaborating on the news in the headline in one to four sentences. The summary uses sentence case, with standard capitalization and punctuation.

City, State (PRWEB) Month 1, 2007 -- The lead sentence contains the most important information in 25 words or less. Grab your reader's attention here by simply stating the news you have to announce. Do not assume that your reader has read your headline or summary paragraph; the lead should stand on its own.

A news release, like a news story, keeps sentences and paragraphs short, about three or four lines per paragraph. The first couple of paragraphs should answer the who, what, when, where, why and how questions. The news media may take information from a news release to craft a news or feature article or may use information in the release word-for-word, but a news release is not, itself, an article or a reprint.

The standard press release is 300 to 800 words and written in a word processing program that checks spelling and grammar. This template is 519 words.

The ideal headline is 80 characters long. Use title case in the headline only, capitalizing every word except for prepositions and articles of three characters or less.

The rest of the news release expounds on the information provided in the lead paragraph. It includes quotes from key staff, customers or subject matter experts. It contains more details about the news you have to tell, which can be about something unique or controversial or about a prominent person, place or thing.

Typical topics for a news release include announcements of new services or of a strategic partnership, the receipt of an award, the launch of a new website. The tone is neutral and objective, not full of hype. Avoid directly addressing your target audience. Do not use "I," "we" and "you" outside of a direct quotation.

About XYZ Company:

Include a short organization backgrounder, or "boilerplate," about the agency or the person who is newsworthy before you list the contact person's name and phone number.

Contact:

Mary Smith, director of public relations
XYZ Organization
555-555-5555
http://www.prweb.com

Adapted from PRWeb, PRESS RELEASE NEWSWIRE

D. Newsletters

What goes into an interesting newsletter?

- **Know your audience** – Determine if your audience includes members, donors, volunteers, students, community at large, etc. Seldom can one newsletter speak to all these audiences, but using a carefully constructed layout may help get more "mileage" out of a newsletter.

- **Know your purpose** – Is it to inform, recruit, share ideas, or any combination of these purposes?

- **Know what is "going on" in your group** – Keep an ongoing list of what is happening in your organization. Ask others to write articles and take photos at events and at the agency.

- **Choose your software** – If you can't afford to purchase additional graphic design software, you can use MS Publisher, MS Word (the least flexible for moving things around and inserting; formatting can also be difficult) or MS PowerPoint.

- **Find good proofreaders** – Have at least two people proofread in order to catch all spelling and grammar errors.

- **Start small** – Begin with a four-page newsletter. The cost of mailing will probably determine your decision whether to grow the newsletter or not. Look into bulk mailing when the time comes. There is a minimum number needed to qualify, but even sending several copies to one address, such as the library or specific contacts within the same media outlet, may help you make your minimum. Call your local post office for specifics.

  Begin with a four-page newsletter.

- **Go electronic** – Consider an online or e-mailed newsletter. However, realize some members really prefer receiving the hard copy to read at leisure. "Online" also leaves out those without computers, and there still are some readers who lack computer access.

- **Layout** – Although you may use a newsletter program on your computer, you will still face challenges in your layout. Put your most important stories on the front page. A good strategy is to have your front-page article(s) "jump" (continue) to an inner page to entice the reader to open the newsletter and hopefully see more interesting articles. Always "bunch" your white space. Rather than some empty space after each article, push each

page into a nice, clean layout with a "bunch" of white space at the end of the page. It looks more professional and makes reading easier.

🔹 **Pictures** – Use as many photos as possible, make them as big as possible, and include names of as many people as possible. Be careful, though. Do not simply copy pictures when you are duplicating your newsletter. You must scan a photo in order to reproduce it properly. Some copiers have this capability. Or, ask your printer to scan your photos before printing your newsletter.

> Use as many photos as possible.

🔹 **Professional Help** – If no one in your organization is adept at formatting a newsletter, it may be well worth your money to pay a professional to put together what you write.

Sources:

Pat Piazza, Co-editor and Layout/Design Artist of *Stella Highlights*, Milwaukee Achiever Literary Services' newsletter

Mary Moze and Kathy Mulvey, Co-editors of *The Exchange*, Greater Milwaukee Literacy Coalition's newsletter

Resources:

"Create a Newsletter Using Publisher." Microsoft Corporation 2006. www.microsoft.com/malaysia/smallbusiness/products/howto/create newsletter.mspx

Fanson, Barbara A. Producing a First-Class Newsletter: A guide to planning, writing ,editing, designing, photography, production, and printing. Self-Counsel Press, (a division of) International Self-Counsel Press Ltd. Canada and U.S.A.

Gregory, H. How to Make NEWSLETTERS, BROCHURES, & OTHER GOOD STUFF Without a Computer System. Pinstripe Publishing. 1987.

Williams, Patricia A. Creating and Producing the Perfect Newsletter. Scott Foresman and Company. 1990.

E. Brochures

How do I create a brochure for my organization?

A well planned, full-color brochure as part of a promotional campaign is a great way to introduce yourself to the public.

If a tight budget makes a full color brochure impossible, careful use of one color and black can still make a strong statement. Never print photos in anything but black. If your organization has a logo in color, your choice of color should be your logo color. Never compromise your logo. (*See Section H on identity use.*)

Since cost is a big item for most nonprofits, you may want to buy Publisher as part of your Microsoft Office package and create it yourself. Local printers often will make an in-kind donation for the printing cost, or you may prefer to use your own copy machine.

For example, when the Greater Milwaukee Literacy Coalition needed to update their brochure, they hired a graphic designer to work with the Public Relations Committee on the layout. The designer suggested using a printer that would give a discount. Design cost was $495 and printing was $609 for 2,000 brochures.

Suggestions from a graphic designer:

- On the cover, use a large, related image and a simple, direct title. **People take 3-5 seconds to make the decision** if the brochure is worthy of pursuing further. Don't try to sell or educate right away. Just let people know clearly by the picture and title what is in the brochure.
- Keep text short and to the point. Bullet points work well. They summarize and help people digest more information quickly without being overwhelmed by paragraphs of text. Use larger point size text (12 point preferred), good spacing and "chunking up" of information. The reader can scan what they believe to pertain to them quickly and easily, skipping what they aren't interested in.
- Make the phone number/e-mail and call-to-action visible, bold and usually in the lower right corner. As a nonprofit literacy provider, you want people to either call, donate or take some action. If you have a website, be sure to include that as well. *"To find out how to volunteer as a tutor, call xxx-xxx-xxxx." "Make a difference today! Call xxx-xxx-xxxx."*
- Keep the look simple and avoid clutter. Include an image or two. If you want to save money on printing, don't bleed photos to the edge. Instead, keep a 1/4" white border.

F. Websites

How do I create a website?

There are a number of online companies eager to help you create your own website. There will be three costs: the **design cost**, the **domain cost** (which entitles you to the address that you choose, provided another person or company doesn't already have it) and the **host cost**.

Your **domain name** is your address on the World Wide Web. It is your online identity. It reflects your purpose and your personality. Anyone in the world with Internet access can type your domain name into their Web browser and visit your website.

The annual cost of a domain name is about $20 with Datarealm Internet Services. Their website is www.serve.com. Another provider, GoDaddy.com, offers new domain names for $8.95 per year or lower.

> Your domain name is your address on the Internet.

The same company advertises on their website that transferring a .com domain name is only $6.95 per year. So, if you are not satisfied with the service you receive or price you pay, you can transfer your domain name to another provider.

Your Web **host** provides individuals and organizations with the systems to store information, images, video or other content accessible to users of the Web. Linux is one of these systems and "is an open-source operating system with a reputation for stability and speed. Linux supports a wide range of software, applications, languages and databases." (*Definition taken from GoDaddy.com website.*) The annual cost for your Web host can cost as much as $200 a month or as little as $89 a year.

Web **design** can be a very expensive investment if you hire a professional Web designer. Cost for a professional designer ranges from roughly $1,000 to $5,000 for design, writing and development.

An option to get around this is to work with students at your local technical college or university. It is a win for the students, as well, because they get experience and have the opportunity to get their name out in the community.

Websites can also be designed and edited through both free software and purchased commercial software. You do not need to be able to write in HTML to work on a website. Much of the software now available uses WYSIWYG or "What You See Is What You Get" and offers a program that lets you view your layout on

the screen as you work, looking pretty much the way it will display on a Web browser. Often, this includes the ability to drag and drop layout elements into position.

A free website editor that comes highly recommended is Nvu 1.0 You can download this editor at www.nvu.com.

Commercially available website editors can range in cost from $30 to $800. Your choice will depend on the features that you want and how comfortable you are working with website design. Some of these include:

- Adobe Dreamweaver
- Microsoft FrontPage
- Contribute
- NetObjects Fusion 9
- GoLive CS2
- Coffee Cup

Once done, a website will need regular updating. Web maintenance is a secondary expense, but just as important as the original creation. No website is effective when it is not current. Many organizations find that keeping control of editing of the website in-house is more efficient and less frustrating.

A very helpful website for evaluating Web services is www.epinions.com. Customers post their evaluations of different companies on this site. It is time well spent to read the customers' comments regarding the price and the services.
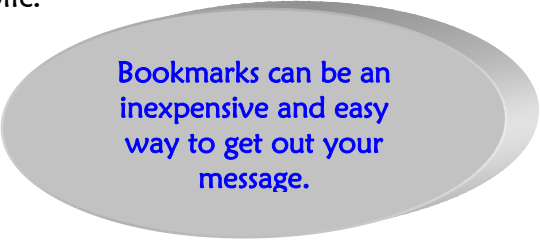
G. Marketing Pieces

What are some other useful marketing pieces for literacy organizations?

<u>Bookmarks</u>

Many literacy organizations have chosen a bookmark as a very inexpensive and convenient way to get their message out to the public.

Bookmarks can also be created on your computer and printed in your office. Laminating can be done inexpensively, as well. It is worth comparing costs for doing things yourself versus sending them to a commercial printer.

Bookmarks can be an inexpensive and easy way to get out your message.

When Literacy Network held its first fall tutor recruitment campaign, one of the methods of promoting this need for tutors was bookmarks. On the front, the bookmark said, "Make a difference. Be a tutor." Beneath that mandate was the address, phone number and website information. Bookmarks were placed in the service area of every local library.

The cost? Free! Literacy Network partnered with the South Central Library System (SCLS) for this promotion, and SCLS picked up the cost. In return, SCLS requested that Literacy Network place the logo of the local library on the back of the bookmark.

<u>Banners</u>

A banner is another way to catch the public's attention. It should not contain too much information because your potential audience will most likely just catch a glimpse of it. At minimum, the banner should have your organization's name, logo (if applicable), phone number and e-mail or Web address.

The portability of banners makes them especially useful for any off-site events. Any time that you are holding a fundraiser or sitting at a booth trying to recruit volunteers, your organization's banner should be up somewhere to catch the attention of those passing by.

Cost does vary based on the size of the banner and the material used (lighter weight banners are cheaper, but they also don't stay down as well).

Bus Placards

A well-designed placard on public buses is an effective way to increase public awareness of literacy issues, recruit volunteer tutors, direct potential students to agencies near their home or increase a financial commitment to literacy on the part of businesses in the area.

For example, in Milwaukee, the cost of bus ads (on the tail ends of the buses) was $3,800, which covered three months. The ads were on five buses, which traveled various bus lines. Although the Milwaukee County Transit Co. was initially contacted, the actual ads were "farmed out" to an advertising agency.

As in other communities, Milwaukee public buses wind their way throughout the city and county and are visible to a large part of the population. In recent years, the outside of the Milwaukee County buses are used to advertise commercial products and services, as well as community services and events.

Marquee Signs

Marquee signs give another opportunity to attract the attention of people passing by. While your organization may not have its own marquee, you could partner with a business that has a marquee in order to promote your organization and/or event.

Before entering into an agreement with a company with a marquee, see if you can find out information like traffic patterns (how many people will see the marquee?) and who their target market is (does it fit with the market you are trying to reach?). Once you are at the point where you want to make an agreement with a company, make sure that you and the company are clear on what the sign is supposed to say, the dates your message will be put up and taken down and, if it is an electronic marquee, the frequency with which your message will be up on the screen.

H. Logos and Identities

Developing a logo can be a tedious process. It can also be an expensive process if you hire an agency to help you. Occasionally, a college art or marketing class might "adopt" your agency and help you develop a logo.

Give it a great deal of thought and make sure you are completely happy with it. It should represent your organization well. You will probably live with it for a long time.

Think carefully about your choice of logo; you will live with it for a long time.

When choosing your logo, think about the following:

- Does it tell at a glance who you are and what you do?
- Does anyone else have a similar logo that may be mistaken with yours?
- If you work primarily with adults, is it too cartoonish?
- What is the first thing that strikes you when you look at it?
- What do others think of it? Get as much feedback as you can before making a decision.

Once you have your logo, respect it. Make sure you know which Pantone color was used to create it. Pantone numbers are numbers assigned to a huge spectrum of colors used by printers. When you know which Pantone number you use, your ink color will always be exactly the same each time your logo is printed. (Note: Web designers are not able to use Pantone colors because appearance of online images depends on the monitor quality of each Web user. All that even the best Web designers can do is approximate.)

Do not compromise your logo by changing its color each season. You are building your identity and you want people to automatically think of your organization when they see your logo. Think about the "Big G" in General Mills cereals. It's always red and appears the same on every box of Cheerios, Frosted Flakes and the rest.

Don't use your logo as a bullet point, page marker or in any other way that diminishes its importance. Be sure it is placed in the same location on your newsletter, brochures and other marketing pieces. No one should have to hunt for your identity.

These same rules apply if you are using someone else's logo (i.e., United Way or Wisconsin Literacy). Follow their guidelines exactly. When in doubt, ask for their guidelines.