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Libraries Prosper with Passion, Purpose, & Persuasion!

A PLA Toolkit for Success

Susan Hildreth

Member, PLA @ Your Library Task Force
California State Librarian

Gary Shaffer

Member, PLA @ Your Library Task Force
Director of Marketing, Sacramento Public Library



PLA's @ Your Library Task Force

- Jan Sanders
PLA President
- Clara Bohrer
PLA Past-President
- Luis Herrera
PLA Past-President
- Susan Hildreth
PLA Past-President
- Peggy Barber
- Kerry Bierman
- Kathy Coster
- Pam Jaskot
- Sallie Johnson
- Kathleen Reif
- Peter Persic
- Gary Shaffer
- Linda Wallace
- Bonnie Young



Our Partner: Metropolitan Group

- Strategic communication and fundraising
- 18+ years serving libraries (all sizes and types)
 - marketing, public relations, advocacy
 - fundraising
 - bond, levy, and district campaigns
 - training
 - strategic planning
 - outreach to new and diverse audiences

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PUBLIC LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
www.pla.org

Talking Points:

- Public libraries are partners for vibrant and educated communities.
- Public libraries are essential for a free people.
- Public libraries are places of opportunity.

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Phase One of the Task Force's Objectives Was:

Marketing

Poster available through ALA Graphics

The Smartest Card
Get it. Use it.
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Why buy when you can borrow?
Your public library is a goldmine of books, magazines, movies, CDs and other great stuff.

Free@your library.
Most public libraries provide computers—and classes—for kids to use, mom and dad too.

Make learning fun.
Check out reading clubs, storyhours, movies and other free programs for kids and families.

Need homework help?
Encourage your child to ask a pro—your librarian.

Keep kids reading.
The more kids read, the better they do in school. Your library has something for every age and interest.

Look, Listen & Enjoy.
Borrow films and music for the whole family.

It's never too late!
Use the library 24/7 online.

Bring the whole family!
How many places can you all enjoy together? For free!!

If you don't see it, ask!
The library may be able to get it for you.

Remember, learning begins at home.
See your library's parenting collection for tips on how you can be your child's first and best teacher.

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Phase Two: Advocacy!

- Move beyond testimonials by “influential others”
- Phase One gave us the “sizzle”





Our Call-to-Action...

“Libraries have been around ever since Aristotle.....

it is up to **librarians** to market themselves,
so they don't disappear!”

- Business leader in focus group



Advocacy Based on Research!

November 2005 hired Metropolitan Group to:

- Develop a toolkit that is **adaptable by local library staff to showcase the value of libraries**, based on **demonstrated impact**, research, and stories.
- Provide technical assistance on engaging the library family at all levels, so the toolkit is used effectively.



Gates Grant:

- \$7.7 million to PLA
- Support toolkit training for targeted states
- Training available at major library events

Upcoming opportunities:

- PLA Conference, March 25-26, Minneapolis, two-day training, open to 200 participants at no cost, courtesy of the Gates Foundation
- PLA National Conference -- PLA will be presenting a 75 minute program about the toolkit and how to use it
- ALA Annual Conference -- PLA will be presenting an overview program about the toolkit
- PLA Spring Symposium 2009



It's All About YOU Taking Action!

- No better messenger than our own....
Who can be more passionate than our own staff, trustees, friends, and customers?



Fundamental Assumptions

- Libraries have an exceptional story to tell.
- Libraries need to advocate for themselves.
- Libraries must learn to tell the story from the customer's perspective.
- There is much confusion about different kinds of communication efforts.



Commonly Confused Communication Terms

- **Public Relations:** building mutually beneficial relationships over the long term
- **Marketing:** causing transactions to occur that satisfy human needs/wants in exchange for something of value
- **Advocacy:** advancing a cause or proposal using argument



Uses for Advocacy Strategies

Best used by libraries for specific proposals, including:

- Funding
- Policy questions (*e.g., Internet usage*)
- Advancing issues (*e.g., literacy, freedom of speech/press/information, privacy rights, etc.*)



What Makes Advocacy Effective?

- Advocacy is effective only if it puts the library services in the context of the community's needs.



Developing Advocacy Tools

- Design of the toolkit
- The 'Passion, Purpose, People, and Persuasion' equation



Design of the Toolkit

- Simplicity
- Guides you while you go
- Templates and fact sheets can be customized and easily reproduced
- Useful for all size libraries by all types of staff
- Advocacy resources give information and evidence of demonstrable impact of library services



The 4 P's Are Essential to Advocacy

Passion

- Establishing credibility and commitment to meeting audience needs

Purpose

- Setting goals by defining problems, causes, and solutions

People

- Identifying and analyzing audiences

Persuasion

- Developing messages
- Selecting strategies and tools

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**Use Values-Based
Message Themes
to Connect to
Community Needs**



Toolkit Advocacy Message Themes

- Link the library to the things the community **already** values most, **because these values stay consistent over time.**



Why Is This the “Right” Thing?

- Centered on the audience’s needs
- Reflects back to them how the library relates to what they already value
- Makes the connection **for** them



Themes that Work for “Everyone”

- Everyone wants a vital, stable, livable community.
- Nearly everyone cares about at least **one** of these things:
 - Education
 - Health
 - Community
 - Business/economic viability
 - Getting a good return on their investment

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Putting Toolkit Elements to Work Now





What is the Right Time to Begin Your Advocacy Efforts?

When opportunity knocks. . .

- The mythical “elevator” speech
- Cocktail chatter and business banter (networking events)
- Backyard barbecues (family or neighborhood activities)



How do I Know What Others Value?

- Be the first to ask questions!



Get Personal

- Use themes to talk about the library's programs, services, and resources.
- Give concrete examples, based on your audience.
- Remember, your message is all about **them**. . . not you.



Make the Connection to Libraries!

Libraries are:

- at the center of a vital, stable, livable community.
- an essential resource for educating our children and for the lifelong learning of everyone in our community.
- a valuable resource to our business community and supports the vitality and economic health of our community.
- an excellent return on community investment and help people live healthier lives.

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The Toolkit in Practice

2 Examples of Message Themes



Education + Library

- Our library is an essential resource for educating our children and for the lifelong learning of everyone in our community.
- We are actively working to support the education and lifelong learning needs of our community through:
 - book clubs, story time, and other literacy programs
 - homework help, homework centers, and homework collections
 - classes on learning to use the Internet/email, researching your family tree, interlibrary loan, tax assistance, readers' advisory, and literacy
 - subscription databases



Use Data to Back Up Your Claim

(Show the need for your services)

- Students who are poorly prepared for school cost the nation as much as \$16 billion annually.
- National Governors Association
- While our economy is becoming more information based, the basic literacy level of adults is falling.
- National Assessment of Adult Literacy



Business + Library

- Our library is a **valuable resource to our business community** and supports the vitality and economic health of our community.
- As our economy transitions from industry to information-based, **strong public libraries help attract “knowledge workers”** and are often cited as a reason why small businesses choose to locate in a particular community.
- We **provide local business with cost-effective access to** information and programs and classes ranging from literacy to computer skills, business database use and other **tools that prepare workers to play productive roles.**



Use Data to Back Up Your Claim

(Show the benefits you bring to others)

- Using the library saves businesses between \$500 and \$5,000 annually in expenses

SirsiDynix

- Stephen Abram,

- 78% of business customers indicated that information obtained from the public library contributed to the success of their business.

Library &

Seattle

Development

- The Seattle Public

Foundation and City of

Office of Economic



Think Fast...5 Minutes

- Why do you work for/support the library?
- What is needed in your community that you believe the library can provide? (think in terms of the core themes)
- What are the most powerful examples of your library's impact you can think of?

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Practice

Turn to Your Neighbor

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On sale at
www.alastore.ala.org
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