

5-YEAR MLA MARKETING PLAN FOR MARKETING COMMITTEE

The Maryland Library Association (MLA) was founded in 1923 to promote library service in the state. Currently MLA provides leadership for those who value libraries by providing opportunities for professional development and communication, and by advocating for principles and issues related to librarianship and library service.

MLA MARKETING COMMITTEE MISSION

The Marketing Committee defines and conveys the image of the Maryland Library Association by promoting the activities and accomplishments of MLA and by providing marketing resources to MLA members and the library community.

MLA Marketing Committee audiences include library staff, library trustees, Friends of libraries, the general public, state and local officials, students, and other library organizations.

Goals: Key goals of this Marketing Plan are based on the marketing responsibilities outlined in the MLA Strategic Plan 2006-2011 and the Plan Time Line in cooperation with the Membership Committee and in conjunction with the Executive Board. It consists of three main sub plans.

1. Increase revenue by obtaining additional members and retaining current members.
2. Publicize the value of libraries.
3. Attract potential librarians to library careers.

PLAN TO INCREASE MEMBERSHIP

Objective: To communicate the benefits of MLA services to potential and existing members, thereby increasing revenues that primarily come from membership dues, attendance at the MLA conference and attendance at MLA programs.

TARGETS

Possible additional members

Action: Identify and prioritize potential groups from most likely to least likely, acknowledging the difference between who has been sold, who still needs selling and who can never be sold, thereby concentrating efforts where they will achieve the best results.

- This includes all library staff, as well as professional librarians, of all types of libraries, especially those without a specialized organization, such as all clerical staff, technical services staff, public relations staff, accounting staff, maintenance staff, business and office staff.
- Include community stakeholders in MLA membership, such as library boards and civic group members.
- Expand the contact with emerging leadership groups, such as library schools, the Library Associates Training Institute (LATI) and Leading from Any Position.

Existing Members

- Keep informed, publicize events, encourage participation, recruit members for committees, Peer-to-Peer promotion.

STRATEGIES

Benefits of belonging to MLA

Action: Compilation and publication of benefits with emphasis to be placed on CEUs for recertification using talking points on list by former Membership Committee Chair.

Means of accessing MLA Services

Action: Consider current and possible access points – location of training, programs, conference, and other means of access. Consider alternatives for meeting locations, joint meetings with other library organizations. Explore these with the other library organizations.

Develop increased offerings for Paraprofessionals

Action: Coordinate with MLA Division/Committees for production of programs that can be provided to library support people online or in other ways that make programs readily accessible.

Implementation commentary for consideration

Strengths: In drawing up this Marketing Plan, the Marketing Committee had the benefit of Strategic Plan guidelines for reference and planning. We are blessed with a savvy organization that already demonstrates an awareness of marketing tools and practices many of them.

Weaknesses: A two-year delay in finalizing plan could hinder completion of some components. Overlapping projects of Membership and Marketing make responsibilities hazy.

Opportunities: The plan paves the way toward trying out new things and providing a list of concrete objectives and activities that will draw additional members to the committee and give it new energy.

Threats: Like many organizations, MLA faces the challenge of enlisting the energies of a workforce already heavily committed combined with an unstable economy and money constraints where financial support is not readily obtained. This ambitious plan depends to some extent on the availability of both. Many members lack the time and money needed for travel to meetings. Hazy delineation of the connection between Membership and Marketing can lead to the wasteful reinvention of wheels.

PROMOTION

Means to communicate MLA benefits and access to them for member recruitment and retention.

- Review membership renewal letters.
- Review talking points for printing and distribution in possible bookmark format.
- Create insert for “Be a Librarian” brochure on things you can be and do as a librarian.
- Continue to keep membership informed via Crab, Happenings and Web site to inform membership of events, projects for the coming year, and issues in MD libraries.
- Assign contact person to keep Marketing Web page up-to-date with names of members and a list of projects for the coming year.
- Continue supplying MLA membership flier in packets for new hires in local library systems or in new employee orientation packets.
- Continue recruitment of members via membership form and library directors.

- Explore possibility of developing a WOMM – Word of Mouth Marketing – campaign by appointing a longstanding subcommittee.
- Investigate a membership incentive for Library Associate Training Institute (LATI) grads such a reduced rate or a free membership.
- Update appearance of membership packets and letters.
- Consider ways to Promote PR Toolkit (Webmaster/Crab/Happenings/MAPLA).
- Kudos via Crab, Happenings, news releases, DLDS (e.g., award recognition in Crab).
- Solicit ideas for production of two news releases annually and information for national journals.
- Investigate and create article for publication in bi-monthly *Maryland* magazine on libraries in Maryland.
- Increase information in library system newsletters by increasing number of advance copies of Happenings being sent by identifying those in addition to 10 currently receiving copies.
- Promote and contribute to existing library bloggers and other methods of online communications. Identify them for inclusion for example in Crab, Web page, Sun blog, Happenings, Job Development at state.
- Take part in exhibits and displays such as Staff Days. Help staff booths, in promotional campaigns of other organizations (sister organizations, DLDS, CML, MASL). Book Festival, UMD Day and other events.
- Investigate Baltimore County Public Library’s LVN librarian training tapes and others for addition to MLA library and circulation.
- Explore obtaining annual sponsorship of an outstanding speaker for conference.
- Promote profession to young people considering careers, career changes and others as target audiences are identified. Send mailing/speakers to groups identified. Study efforts of other associations; CLA student chapter for high school students; NJ “ask me why I love my job” initiative.

MONITORING

Success of strategies measured by membership gains, retention rate or losses during each MLA fiscal year. During life of plan increase membership by 2 percent each year. Increase academic library staff membership by 15 percent. Track number of stories published, joint promotional campaigns, contacts and presentations made.

PLAN TO MARKET LIBRARIES TO THE GENERAL POPULATION

Objective: For Maryland libraries to stay in business, the general population must constantly be told about available services, old and new, that reflect the current educational, social, technical and business climate. Local libraries take the primary lead in this. Therefore, this plan is intended to supplement local marketing activities. (*DLDS and Legis.*)

TARGETS

Groups to be reached on statewide basis

Action: Identify and prioritize statewide market by groups such as state legislature, local governments, senior citizens, parents, young adults, etc.

STRATEGIES

Benefits of using libraries

Work with local libraries PR staff to identify what services, events, etc., would be of interest and should be promoted to each target population on a statewide basis.

Action: Meet with selected libraries to identify services, events, etc. to promote statewide.

Means of accessing promotion of benefits and benefits themselves

Action: Work with local libraries to identify best access points for MLA to disseminate information to each target group, including physical locations for fliers and ads, or remote access such as Web pages of news items for each target market on the MLA Web site.

Action: Work with local libraries to identify access points to library services that need to be promoted – e.g., statewide library card.

Costs to use and promote services

Action: Determine easiest way for the target population to access information about benefits, and at least cost for MLA to provide.

PROMOTION

Some suggested methods to reach target population with benefits of using libraries.

- Choose one or two target audiences/campaigns annually to participate in (Senior Expo, State Fair, Book Fair, Afro, Children's)
- Place article in bi-monthly *Maryland Life* magazine

MONITORING

Success of strategies measured by increased use of promoted services (from spot surveys); hits on MLA Web pages.

PLAN TO ATTRACT PEOPLE TO PURSUE LIBRARY CAREERS

Objective: To maintain robust library service in Maryland, a supply of well-qualified library staff members at all levels is needed. Benefits and incentives to pursue library careers need to be emphasized especially to young people starting their career paths.

TARGETS

Potential library staff

Action: Identify and prioritize target groups – College graduates who might consider a professional or associate library career, high school or college graduates who might consider technical, clerical, or maintenance work.

STRATEGIES

Types of positions available in various types of libraries and benefits of library work

Action: Work with all library organizations and types of libraries and library schools to compile lists and identify positions for which there are the greatest needs. **Action:** Identify education and recognition benefits of library work – e.g., Leadership Institute, scholarships from various organizations like MLA and CML, awards, etc.

Job opportunities in various types of libraries throughout the state

Action: Identify work search opportunities, e.g., Job Line.

Education and or other requirements for library careers

Action: Identify or develop a list of education requirements for various positions, and identify scholarships from various organizations.

PROMOTION

Some suggested initial strategies to inform potential staff of the benefits that library careers offer.

- Distribute copies of DLDS brochure *Being a Librarian* at various events.
- Acquire pertinent LVN training tapes from the Baltimore County Public Library.
- Participate in “career days” at schools and colleges using brochure.
- Create a page on the MLA Web site with tips and scripts for staff to use when attending career day events. for this information.
- Article in *Maryland Life*.

MONITORING

Success of strategies measured by increased enrollment in library schools and increases in qualified applicants for jobs at local libraries (from spot surveys).

APPENDIX:

Talking Points

Online Training Resources