



Build Word-of-Mouth Marketing

Adapted from a webinar (*The Power of Word-of-Mouth Marketing*, April 27, 2011)
for

The Nebraska Library Commission

Presented by Peggy Barber,

Library Communication Strategies

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“Getting people to talk often, favorably,
to the right people, in the right way
about your product is far and away
the most important thing that
you can do as a marketer.”

George Silverman, *The Secrets of Word-of-Mouth
Marketing*, AMACOM, 2011

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Marketing Is...

"...that function of the organization that can keep in constant touch with the organization's consumers, read their needs, develop products that meet these needs, and build a program of communications to express the organization's purposes."

Philip Kotler/Sidney Levy, "Broadening the Concept of Marketing," *Journal of Marketing*, January, 1969

- Organized, focused, consistent.
- About people—not stuff. As tempting as it is to focus on all the Makerspace "stuff," instead focus communication on what library customers do with the stuff and how it changes their lives.
- All about them—not us. Don't lead with what the library will do. Lead your communication pieces with what library customers can do/learn/make and how it can change their lives.
- About listening, not just telling.
- A team sport. Everyone has a role to play. Give everyone credit.

Key Elements

- Research
- Plan
- Communicate
- Evaluate

Word-of-Mouth-Marketing Checklist

____ Do you have a clear, consistent and compelling message—one that can be said at the library checkout desk or in a grocery store line?

____ Do the people at the checkout desk know and deliver the message?

____ Do you collect and use testimonials/success stories?

____ Do you use outside experts to deliver your message?

____ Do staff collect feedback and share what they hear—good and bad?

____ Do you have a prepared and enthusiastic sales force?

____ Does your library give superlative customer service?

____ Do you make sure that conscious word-of-mouth marketing is part of your communication strategy? Find as many ways as possible for you and your staff to say, "Tell your friends!"

The Power of Word-of-Mouth Marketing

The very best way to get the word out is to tell people. Really. If every staff, Friends, and board member told 10 people about this incredible resource, and those 10 people told 10 more people, and those 10 people told . . .

What It Takes

- A good product and GREAT customer relations
- A plan
- A clear, conscious, and consistent message
- A prepared and committed sales force
- People who are willing to testify

Sample Message

“Did you know you can use the Makerspace in the library to test out your idea for a business? Check out what people in our community are making, building, and learning at [Name of library].”

Why People Talk

They like to...

- Share their discoveries.
- Be helpful and connect with others.
- Feel important/useful/smart/proud/good.
- Talk!

Tips for Success

- **Give people something to talk about.** Surprise and delight them with over-the-top service. The Library Innovation Studio Makerspace is a perfect opportunity to surprise and delight.
- **Don't just pass out bookmarks.** Look for opportunities to deliver the message in-person, both on and off the job.
- **Feed the grapevine.** Tell 10 people and ask those 10 people to tell their friends. Remember to use the magic words: *“Please tell your friends.”*

- **Be especially nice to new users.** It's easier to get people to talk about something new. You may meet lots of new library customers when you host the Library Innovation Studio. Take advantage of that.
- **Send a message with your message.** Add a signature line to your e-mail correspondence with the library message.
- **Collect and share stories/testimonials.** Invite testimonials from community, faculty and student leaders, as well as satisfied library users. Ask permission to quote them in publicity materials or ensure them that you will protect their privacy, if they prefer not to be identified.
- **Enlist the whole library family.** Make sure *all* staff (not just professionals or full-time), trustees, volunteers, and Friends—know the message, understand why it is important, and can deliver it with confidence.
- **Wear the message.** T-shirts, buttons, and other “props” are conversation starters and help make your point. Make “Tell Your Friends!” buttons with the Makerspace button-maker and ask people to wear them.
- **Put on a passion show!** Remember, it's not just what you say but how you say it. Have fun!

Inspiring & Motivating Employees

- Develop communication and customer service policies with clearly defined goals and guidelines. Keep them simple!
- Have a clear positioning statement for the library—one that all staff members understand and own.
- Model the behavior that you wish to inspire.
- Inspire staff to make presentations and provide programs for the groups and organizations they support. Reward and encourage their efforts—even baby steps.
- Provide ongoing training and tools to support them (message sheets, buttons, etc.).
- Celebrate your successes. Have a party! The Library Innovation Studio Open House, classes, and Maker Showcase can be an opportunity for celebration. Turn them into fun events for the community with food and games and prizes.

Going Viral (Email & Social Media)

- Include information on how to unsubscribe to email lists.
- Be relevant and respectful. Don't send anything you wouldn't want to receive.
- Choose the right time, the right audience, and the right media.
- Use social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, etc.) to reach specific target audiences and to demonstrate what people like them are learning and doing in the library.
- Identify:
 - What's in it for them?
 - What's in it for the partners that can help reach them?
 - What's in it for the library?
- Be brief and clear. Keep your communications up-to-date and responsive—respond to every message, like, or share that you get.
- Be clear about why you are sharing. What are the benefits to the customer?
- Incorporate stories and testimonials.
- Make it visual. Incorporate SHORT video and photos of actual library customers making items in the Makerspace. Make sure to photograph/video people in action, having fun—NOT empty space, silent machines, or people sitting and staring at a book.
- Use trending topics. If trending topics have anything to do with learning and making, piggyback on them to tell the story of the Makerspace in the library.
- Extend the in-person events at the library Makerspace (Open House, classes, and Maker Showcase, etc.) by posting on social media **before** and **after** the event.
- Tag people in photos and text.
- Ask your fans to "Like" and "Share" your social media posts.
- Schedule communication efforts on a calendar for the Makerspace hosting period.

Sample Message Sheet

(This is **just a sample**—work with your team to create your own)

Key Message

“Did you know you can use the Makerspace in the library to test out your idea for a business? Check out what people in our community are making, building, and learning at [Name of library].”

Talking Points

- A young student can explore electronics, using a kit to make a Lego® robot.
- A senior citizen can build a prototype birdhouse and use computer software to automate the process so that all the family members across the country get one for the holidays.
- A young family with an idea for starting a local business can solve manufacturing, packaging, and marketing problems.
- A youth group can make embroidered textiles to raise money for a school trip.
- [Our library] is connecting our community members with information and breaking down barriers to knowledge and experimentation. Many people in our area would have no way to access this type of Makerspace equipment to “tinker,” explore careers, and develop their own entrepreneurial enterprises. In the few weeks that [NAME of library] has hosted the Library Innovation Studio, more than [insert number] people used the equipment.
- This opportunity for [Our Town] to see the benefits of a Makerspace “up close and personal” and to receive training from the experts from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln’s Nebraska Innovation Studio and Nebraska Extension educators gives a boost to Nebraska’s **strong entrepreneurial and problem-solving** culture.
- This equipment is available in our library through the Library Innovation Studios project, hosted by Nebraska rural public libraries to support community engagement and participatory learning experiences by providing access to technological and innovative learning tools not readily accessible locally.
- **Local partnerships** are the key to the unfolding future of economic development in rural communities. The Nebraska Library Commission, along with partners University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), Nebraska Innovation Studio, Nebraska Extension, and Regional Library Systems, are collaborating with local public libraries on the *Library Innovation Studios: Transforming Rural Communities* project. The project is made possible in part by a National Leadership Grant of \$530,732 awarded to the Nebraska Library Commission by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS grant #LG-95-17-0046-17).

Statistics

- Nebraska library educational programs are growing rapidly in popularity, with 32,854 programs hosted by public libraries and program attendance increasing 17% in two years.*
*2015-2016 Nebraska Public Library Survey
- Since experts* say the incorporation of **hands-on experiences** leads to higher levels of engagement and learning, [Name of library] is committed to provide programs to foster Science Technology Engineering Arts and Math (STEAM) learning that give children and adults opportunities to explore, collaborate, invent, and create with their hands and minds—preparing for a **lifetime of learning**.

*These are the “experts” quoted above—in case anyone asks:

*Carly Kontra, Daniel J. Lyons, Susan M. Fischer, Sian L. Beilock. "Physical Experience Enhances Science Learning." *Psychological Science* 26 (2015)737–749. Accessed January 14, 2017.

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0956797615569355>

*Scott Freemana,1, Sarah L. Eddy, Miles McDonougha, Michelle K. Smithb, Nnadozie Okoroafora, Hannah Jordta, and Mary Pat Wenderotha. "Active learning increases student performance in science, engineering, and mathematics." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science of the United States* 111:23 (2014) 8410-8415.

Accessed January 14, 2017. <http://www.pnas.org/content/111/23/8410.full.pdf>

- As evidenced by research* completed by the University of Nebraska, rural residents rate their community favorably, with 74% saying it is friendly, 62% trusting, and 65% supportive. This high rating by residents reinforces the fact that rural Nebraska was built on ingenuity, self-reliance, and strong community. The Makerspace in [Name of library] will help preserve these prized traits by introducing residents in small towns to the latest tools for innovation, collaboration, and fabrication.

*Retrieved from

<http://d140q24ubocq3n.cloudfront.net/wpcontent/blogs.dir/11/files/2016/12/hwy2.jpg>

Stories/Examples

(Use a story like this one from your own library Makerspace.)

Koosha Mooghen Dastgerdi immigrated to the United States from Iran in 2014 for two reasons. The first: "My wife. About five years ago she was coming back to visit her family in Iran. I saw her and I fell in love with her. It's a long story," Dastgerdi said. The second reason was to follow a dream. Before coming to the U.S., Koosha worked as a furniture maker in Iran. In his small shop, he would design and craft his own works and sell them to local outlets. But he often ran into problems because of his Bahá'í faith, an unpopular religious minority in Iran. He was unable to attend college and finding a landlord who would rent space to him for his business became increasingly difficult. When he came to the U.S., he knew he would essentially have to start over, and that was scary. But that's when he heard about something called a Makerspace. He now designs and creates furniture at the Innovation Studio on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus. "I found this place and I can make what I was making in Iran and it gives me the opportunity to make what I love," Dastgerdi said.*

* "Makerspaces: A Growing Nebraska Trend," by Ben Bohall, Producer/Reporter, NET News, May 4, 2017. Retrieved from <http://netnebraska.org/article/news/1075677/makerspaces-growing-nebraska-trend>

Equipment List

Library Innovation Studio equipment in [Our Library] for a hosting period of eighteen to twenty weeks, includes components from the following categories:

- **Digital fabrication** (3D printer, laser cutter, vinyl cutter, CNC router);
- **Electronics** (prototype kits, microcontrollers, robotics);
- **Textiles** (heat press, embroidery/sewing machine);
- **Digital media creation** (filmmaking/digital photography);
- **Music technology**; and
- **Specialized software, button maker, laminator and basic hand tools.**

Resources

Print

Building a Buzz: Libraries & Word-of-Mouth Marketing, Peggy Barber and Linda Wallace, ALA Editions, 2010. This book is a practical guide to using WOMM that will help you turn your library customers into a major marketing force.

Buzz Marketing: Get People to Talk About Your Stuff, Mark Hughes, Portfolio, 2008. A good overview, with lots of great examples.

The Secrets of Word-of-Mouth Marketing, George Silverman, AMACOM, 2011. Silverman says traditional advertising doesn't have the impact it once did, and he makes a great case for an organized, strategic approach to Word-of-Mouth Marketing. This is good news for libraries since we can't usually afford advertising anyway.

Word-of-Mouth Marketing: How Smart Companies Get People Talking, Andy Sernovitz, PressBox Publishing, 2015. Another good, basic introduction to WOMM by the CEO of the Word-of-Mouth Marketing Association.

Online

“Contagious Marketing: How Libraries Can Get More Word-of-Mouth Buzz,” by Peggy Barber, is an article (American Libraries, February 10, 2014. Retrieved from:

<https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2014/02/10/contagious-marketing/>) in which she adapts to library service Jonah Berger's STEPPS principles for making communication contagious from his book *Contagious: Why Things Catch On* (Simon & Schuster, 2013). Barber says:

“Most of these STEPPS should be easy for libraries, but librarians must make them happen.

Take these principles and ask yourself the following questions (and add some of your own):

Social currency: How can libraries make people feel they have access to cool things before others do?

Triggers: What will prompt people to think of libraries?

Emotion: How can you deepen people's emotional connection to library services?

Public visibility: How can people recognize that others are library users or supporters?

Practical value: What useful information do libraries provide? How can that be packaged so that people absolutely must tell their friends?

Stories: How can you inspire people to share their library stories?”

Harness the Awesome Power of Word-of-Mouth Marketing: www.mnav.com/H2HarnWOM.htm/. An excellent introduction to WOMM by Robert Silverman and the basis for his book (above). *Direct Marketing Magazine* (Nov.1997)

Word of Mouth Marketing Association: <http://womma.org/>.

Word-of-Mouth Marketing has its own association. You'll find some great online resources, including WOMM 101.