

Yankton Community Library Marketing and Communications Plan

Updated by the Yankton Community Library Board of Trustees on June 12, 2024

Introduction

The Yankton Community Library (YCL) seeks to raise awareness of the critical role YCL serves through upholding the public's freedom of access to information by providing a dynamic collection in a variety of formats and technologies, and responding to the needs of the community through timely services and programs in Yankton through a strategically planned and executed marketing effort. This marketing and communications plan will serve as a guide to the Library staff for communicating the tenets of our strategic plan to a variety of community stakeholders.

While the Library has been steadfast in its marketing efforts for a number of years, we know that marketing and communication of library services and programs will continue to have significant implications as we continue to outgrow our current space. Raising the profile of the organization among key decision makers will be crucial to the success of any eventual funding opportunities.

Objectives

- Further emphasize the Library's "brand identity" with a logo and slogan (Books are just the beginning) to raise awareness, generate enthusiasm, and create visibility for the library's programs and services.
- Communicate the importance of the Library as a critical component of continued growth and quality of life in Yankton and in supporting the city's mission to provide exemplary experiences, services & spaces that create opportunities for everyone to learn, engage and thrive.
- Generate enthusiasm about opportunities to serve on volunteer Library groups such as the Board of Trustees, Library Foundation, and the Friends of the Library.
- Gather input about the marketing efforts and their effectiveness from YCL stakeholders and patrons.

Target Audiences

We intend to reach a wide variety of community stakeholders with this plan by targeting the following audiences:

- Citizens of Yankton and Yankton County
- Other City of Yankton departments
- Community Organizations
- Professional Organizations
- Government and elected officials
- Educators and education administrators
- Community business leaders
- Library staff members

- Potential and current library donors and volunteers
- Community members that do not currently use the library

Strategies and Tactics

Utilize a network of media contacts to spread the message about YCL's varied programs and services.

- Share information about library programs and new services with local newspapers, radio stations, community leaders and organizations, local school districts, and city staff.
- Communicate activities to organizations with vested interests in Yankton's quality of life such as Yankton Thrive.
- Regular appearances at Yankton City Commission, Yankton County Commission and Yankton School Board meetings to share library updates and information.
- Share marketing materials and information with specific locations to target specific audiences (i.e. local Moms of Preschoolers group and pediatricians' offices about story time information)

Participate in grassroots outreach to market the Library through existing and new community partnerships.

- Hold quarterly outreach events in places with high visibility such as school open houses and conferences, The Center, downtown businesses, and more.
- Approach community organizations such as PEO groups, Interchange, Rotary, and more about the opportunity to speak to their groups about what the modern Yankton Community Library looks like.
- Seek out opportunities within the community for the Library to raise awareness, generate enthusiasm, and create visibility. (i.e. Riverboat Days, Market at the Meridian)
- Partnering with local organizations to provide events such as story times, cultural activities, and arts events to reach new potential library users and other community members.

Continue to enhance and build upon the social media successes of the Library while continually evaluating new and existing platforms.

- Create a cohesive identity for all of the Library's social media platforms by using consistent branding.
- Make sure information and direction to the Library's website are clear and easy to find on each of the Library's social media platforms.
- Publicize each program and new service from the Library on each platform in the way that has the highest reach for the lowest staff investment, for example, Facebook events.
- Build the number of local followers on our social media accounts by posting interesting, multimedia content.
- Regularly monitor all platforms and answer comments and questions consistently with Library values in mind.
- Continually analyze which platforms are not providing us with a return on staff investment.
- Evaluate emerging platforms to see how they fit the library's marketing mission.

Utilize printed materials to put reminders and visuals in the hands of patrons at the point of contact.

- Create printed materials for each Library program. These materials may include, but are not limited to: calendars, posters, bookmarks, handouts, and postcards.
- Make printed materials available at the Library and, when possible, local schools, businesses, and organizations.

Utilize electronic media to publicize Library events to those we are not reaching within our four walls.

- Publicize Library events through electronic channels which may include, but are not limited to: the Library website and calendar, local community online calendars, the City Commission's bi-weekly memo, and the Library's online catalog.

Utilize volunteer groups such as the Library Board of Trustees, Library Foundation, and Friends of the Library to communicate Library events and programs through word of mouth.

- The Library understands that the most persuasive marketing efforts are still word of mouth from trusted family and friends. As such, we will strive to keep our volunteer groups updated on Library activities in order to utilize their community reach as word of mouth marketers.

Roles and Responsibilities

As the Library has limited staff and does not have a dedicated communications or public relations team, the lead staff member on each project will be responsible for carrying out the above strategies and tactics. To encourage a unified message, the Library Director will be responsible for approving all marketing and communications materials, as well as being the primary spokesperson for the Library within the community. The Library staff and the Library Board of Trustees will be secondary spokespersons.

Evaluation

The Library will use information gathered from the survey done during the feasibility study conducted in 2024 in order to gather feedback about marketing and communications efforts that may or may not be working. Additionally, we will provide short surveys following programs and activities that include questions about how participants heard about the events in order to better direct our efforts in the future. An increase in the number of library patrons, program attendees, positive social media mentions, and positive community talk about the Library can all be seen as measures of marketing and communications success.