



Idaho
Commission
for Libraries

Best Practices Section 5: Marketing and Advocacy

Checklist

Last modified: 20200221

The word *marketing* is defined as the process or technique of promoting, selling, and distributing a product or service. A marketing plan is a sequential series of actions to be undertaken by a library to attract the interest of potential patrons in a library program or service and to persuade them to attend a program or make use of a service. Marketing plans are used primarily by special and public libraries and are especially beneficial to those using the BISAC model.

Advocacy is the act or process of supporting the library. This model of concerted action taken in support of libraries is often for the purpose of securing adequate funding for library operations and capital improvements, which may include lobbying legislators and government officials, organizing voter rallies, securing media coverage.

The most effective advocacy campaigns are often based on an action plan. Thomas J. Hennen, Jr., recommends “10 Rules for Local Advocacy” in the article Stand Up for Libraries in the June/July 2005 issue of *American Libraries*. The American Library Association (ALA) maintains an Issues & Advocacy website. The Advocacy Institute offers workshops at ALA annual and midwinter conferences to help train participants in advocacy skills and strategies. [This paragraph may fit better in the Toolkit.]

Best Practices for Public Libraries in Idaho is a tool developed by the Idaho Commission for Libraries for the public library community to use in planning, staff and trustee development, orientation, and advocacy.

Together with an advisory group of practicing librarians, ICfL has developed a set of suggested Best Practices which are presented in seven content areas:

1. Collection Development and Maintenance
2. Facilities
3. Governance and Board Service
4. Human Resources
- 5. Marketing and Advocacy**
6. Services and Programming
7. Technology

Each of the seven checklists is supported by a toolkit which further defines or supports the Best Practices statements.

Checklist statements are divided into categories designed to assist the participant:

- Core – Statements in this category are fundamental to public library service in Idaho.
- Enhanced – Statements in this category add value to core library services.
- Stretch – Includes nationally trending library practices.

A good way to approach these tools is to work through each checklist, ticking off the boxes for those Best Practices currently maintained by the library. The remaining unchecked Best Practices present opportunities for local development, planning, and education.

The Idaho Commission for Libraries does not require attainment of levels for eligibility in any ICfL programs or services. The Best Practices are intended to be a tool for continuous improvement, not a library certification program. ICfL encourages public libraries to use the Best Practices in conjunction with ICfL's *Best Practices Improvement Plan*.

The Idaho Commission for Libraries is introducing a companion program for *Best Practices for Public Libraries in Idaho*. The *Best Practices Improvement Plan* will provide financial support, through a grant process, to assist libraries in improving identified areas of Best Practice.

Core Level

- Yes No 5.1. My library's staff regularly promotes the library's collection, programs, and services using a variety of approaches to publicity.
- Yes No 5.2. My library's staff invites elected officials and other stakeholders to library events and programs.
- Yes No 5.3. My library's staff and board members advocate for improved library services at the local level.
- Yes No 5.4. My library's staff members receive information and training about the impact of marketing on the library's image and community relations.
- Yes No 5.5. My library maintains an up-to-date web presence (website and/or social media) with promotional messages, program and resource news, and easy access to print and digital collections.
- Yes No 5.6. My library's staff responds to community feedback in accordance with the guidelines established in the library's Communications Policy.
- Yes No 5.7. My library responds to requests for records in accordance with Idaho's Public Records Act: chapter 1, title 74, Idaho Code.
- Yes No 5.8. My library partners with community organizations.
- Yes No 5.9. My library's communications and marketing materials are made available in languages other than English when appropriate.

Enhanced Level

- Yes No 5.10. My library has a professional, recognizable brand and logo.
- Yes No 5.11. My library's staff participates in statewide campaigns that seek to raise awareness of libraries.
- Yes No 5.12. My library maintains a positive relationship between the library and the Friends of the Library and/or the library foundation which is fostered by a mutually agreed upon Memorandum of Understanding.
- Yes No 5.13. My library's staff cultivates relationships with elected officials at all levels of government.
- Yes No 5.14. My library's individual staff members are embedded in community boards, groups, and organizations.

Yes No 5.15. My library's staff and board members advocate at the state level for improved library services.

Stretch Level

Yes No 5.16. My library has written cooperative agreements with its community partners.

Yes No 5.17. My library has a person on staff who is responsible for marketing and community engagement.

Yes No 5.18. My library's staff creates an active, ongoing communications and/or marketing plan.

Yes No 5.19. My library's staff participates in national campaigns that seek to raise awareness of libraries.

Yes No 5.20. My library's staff and board members advocate at the federal level for improved library services.v