

**DRAFT Communications Plan
Rhode Island Library Association
Awareness Campaign – 2008**

Background/Statement of Need

As representatives from public libraries throughout the state, the Rhode Island Library Association (RILA) Board and membership have long recognized an opportunity for RILA, as the representing organization, to devise and implement a statewide public relations campaign, broad-based in nature, that could assist the membership in achieving a number of shared communications goals while also garnering general public awareness about libraries and their value.

In the face of dramatically changing times for all libraries, as well as an increasingly challenging public funding environment, the RILA Board has determined that public relations has become a necessary priority as one way to assist member libraries, individually and as a body, to continue to deliver on their missions. To this end, the 2008 RILA Board has designated initial funding to implement a public relations campaign/strategy.

Prior to development of this plan for overall awareness, the RILA Public Relations committee canvassed members of the board and the entire membership for general thoughts and specific input through varied discussions and a survey (which received 50% member participation). The resulting draft plan represents initial feedback which pointed to a desire for a general public relations/awareness strategy that may also result in continued favorable public funding for libraries.

In that this plan is devised primarily to generate awareness and there is no established baseline for current awareness, measurement of success in this regard will be limited. However, if we note any increase in library usage or maintained/increased public funding following its implementation, we may be able to attribute these as some measure of success. As with any awareness strategy, continued implementation over the long-term is necessary.

Goal

Develop and implement a multi-faceted, statewide (foundational) public relations/messaging campaign leading to strong public awareness and understanding about the important and valuable services provided by libraries, as well as support for continued stable funding for the state's network of public libraries.

Objectives

- 1) Position public libraries as the ultimate bargain, both for individual users and the broader community, providing services that have an overall positive social and economic impact.
- 2) Generate support for continued stable public funding for the state's network of public libraries.
 - a. Important Position: Convey/show libraries as basic/essential public service providers

Audiences

Primary

General Public
Elected Officials/Community Leaders
Parents
Community Organizations

Secondary

Senior Citizens
Lifelong Learners
Educators
Children
Students

Other

Current Library Users
Avid Readers
A/V Enthusiasts

Key Messages

- 1) **Your local public library is the best bargain around.** (*The Library...all free, all the time.*)
- 2) Libraries are, in essence, one of the most effective uses of your tax dollars.
- 3) Libraries provide free services to everyone in the community, services which often help to level the socio-economic playing field for many users.
- 4) The Library is the ultimate “green” machine. Not only do libraries continue to be socially relevant, but in this age of increasing focus on conservation and recycling of resources, the core essence of the library as an organization devoted to sharing is eminently consistent with today’s increasingly “green” world.
- 5) Libraries provide necessary community gathering places.
- 6) Libraries are not just places with books...they provide important information services and resources, now accessible from anywhere, and at anytime, due to the Internet.
- 7) Through knowledgeable and helpful staff, libraries offer valuable services that go well beyond those available on the Internet to aid people of all ages in information gathering and lifelong learning.

Tactics

1) Position public libraries as the ultimate bargain, both for individual users and the broader community, providing services that have an overall positive social and economic impact.

ACTIVITY	BUDGET	TIMETABLE	RESPONSIBLE	STATUS
<p>Develop a public service messaging campaign featuring the primary messages in support of the main theme...<i>library as the ultimate bargain.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create/adopt a position statement. • Determine campaign theme and specific messages, as well as key slogan/tagline. • Determine opportunities for PSA placement vs. some paid placements/activities. • Consider, if necessary, any graphic/artwork materials. This may require hiring professional or seeking amateur help. • Consider seeking overall “adoption” by a RI PR/Advertising Firm for help with producing a campaign and ad placements. 				
<p>Radio Ad/PSA spots – Procure talent (preferably unpaid/pro bono) and produce series of radio spots delivering primary campaign messages. (May be able to work with a radio station(s) to produce and run a certain number as free PSAs along with a certain number paid spots.)*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek Spanish radio station to work with in addition to mainstream radio(s). • Target specific radio outlet for potential partnership, ie: WRNI. <p><i>*A PSA-only campaign would only be effective if a radio signed on as a campaign sponsor and produced and ran a multitude of ads at no cost. This goes for TV as well, but both radio and TV are unlikely to sponsor an awareness campaign vs. something like an event with promotion support through a certain timeframe. This is why it is recommended to seek a partnership where some ad spots would be paid and some free.</i></p>	<p>Ex) WRNI – 8-week run/10 messages per wk: ~\$450 per wk (\$3,600)</p>			
<p>Outdoor advertising – Produce corresponding messages for outdoor placement (bus cards are likely the best approach for lasting statewide reach). Potential to run year-round in place of PPL’s annual Kings.</p>	<p>Ex) RIPTA bus – Queen side signs 30” x 108”: 10/\$150 ea & 1 free – Placement for 1 month: \$1,500; Production: \$550 TOTAL: \$2,050</p>	<p>2008 -2009</p>	<p>TMason</p>	<p>In process – for King signs</p>

<p>Produce corresponding electronic “ad” or ad series for placement/use by all libraries on their respective Web sites and any electronic pubs.</p>		2009		
<p>Targeted PSA/print ad placement in local papers and parent/senior publications, including online info sources, with corresponding messages. Consider key daily papers also.</p>	<p>RING newspaper group is fairly affordable. Would not recommend ProJo. May even be able to work a deal with certain number of PSAs with certain number paid. Could run a multi-week/ month campaign (in all papers) for under \$3,000.</p>	2009		
<p>Promotional materials – Identify items for production carrying the key campaign messages/slogan. (Items that actually serve a purpose or “hang around” are best. Library bags are a great item, whether long-lasting totes or reusable bags.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This could include “the usual” printed materials (bookmark/posters) for in-library or in-community placement. • Items for sale can also be produced, thereby an opportunity for recouping some expense. 	<p>Ex.) Varied totes/ bags of varied quality are between \$3 - \$5 and can be sold at a small markup, essentially being a NO COST item once artwork is in hand.</p>	Early 2009		

2) Generate support for continued stable funding for the state's network of public libraries.

ACTIVITY	BUDGET	TIMETABLE	RESPONSIBLE	STATUS
<p>Identify messages and activities targeted to community leaders, community groups, schools/educators and local print/online pubs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop template letters and positioning materials for use by library staff to communicate with local officials/ leaders and for submitting to local papers. • Develop list of story ideas for use by local library staff in developing/ producing potential feature stories/ articles and/or leads for submission to local papers/online pubs. (These could feature specific library programs/ services, as well as people.) 				
<p>Develop messaging materials to support individual library efforts to connect with local community officials/leaders/public.</p>				
<p>Develop basic message template for posting and sharing with library patrons as a direct appeal in support of the library to community officials. (Could be a post card or electronic/email.)</p>				
<p>Develop a survey for implementation with general public, as well as library patrons, statewide (to be conducted during a certain timeframe) and statewide results reported publicly.</p>				

Campaign Theme Ideas...

My library...

- ...the best bargain in town.
- ...when I want it for free, I go to my library (where I go when I want it for free.)
- ...the benefits stack up.
- ...I use it, I love it.
- ...where else can I go and not even leave my house?
- What's at my library? Everything I need....
- When I need the right answer fast, I turn to my library.

Did you know...or I didn't know...