THINK OUTSIDE YOUR WALLS

MARKETING YOUR LIBRARY

MICHELE WALKER, NCDNCR PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER
WHY AREN’T THEY COMING TO YOU ALREADY?

• **They don’t know they can.** Believe it or not, some folks have not grown up with the understanding that they are allowed to just stroll into the library and check out a book or use the computer or do any of the many other things they can do there.

• **They aren’t readers.** Sad, but true. But everyone in this room knows that libraries offer more than books to check out. People who don’t frequent their local library may not realize all the other amazing things you offer – DVDs to check out, computers to use, classes to take, and on and on.

• **You’re competing** with TV, the Internet, Amazon, Apple, Target, the mall, etc.

• **They don’t know you’re there.** Really.
SO, HOW DO WE GET THEM IN THE DOOR?
GO TO THEM.
DON’T WAIT FOR THEM TO COME TO YOU.
IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

• Teens
• College Students
• Seniors
• Parents/Grandparents
• Job Seekers
• Researchers
• Bookworms
FIGURE OUT HOW TO REACH THEM

• **Think outside your walls** – hanging flyers and posters inside your building about your amazing programs and services won’t bring in new library customers.

• **Where are they?** They’re probably not already at your library.

• Figure out where your target audience is, and **go there**.

• Use **traditional and social media** to engage your community.
SO WHERE ARE THEY?
WHERE ARE THEY?

- **Local businesses** – Coffee shops, restaurants, grocery stores, yoga studios, doctors offices and other places where people linger or wait in line. They often have bulletin boards and will let you post flyers or posters if you ask. Even better – if the business has a connection to your event. Having a Star Wars themed event for May 4 (Star Wars Day – May the Fourth Be With You)? Ask to post your flyer at the local comic book store. Maybe they’ll even be a sponsor.
WHERE ARE THEY?

- Parks/recreation centers/aquatic centers – Another place where people hang out and spend time. This is a great place to target young families and teens. Your county or city park likely shares your government umbrella. Why not join forces for some cross-promotion?
WHERE ARE THEY?

- **Schools** – The obvious place to go if you’re looking to connect with kids or teenagers. Talk with school principals about offering a homework help seminar to teach the local high school kids about doing research (show them there’s more out there than Wikipedia). **Go to the school** to do this – meet them on their turf first, and while you’re there, show them other ways you can help them/entertain them/make their lives easier or better.

- Ask to speak at a PTA meeting or set up a booth at the school open house event.

- Set up a booth at career day – there may be a future librarian in the crowd.
WHERE ARE THEY?

• **Senior Centers/Retirement Communities** – Hey, these folks probably need stuff to do 😊 Maybe they’d like a book club tailored just for them, or maybe they’d like to know about your selection of large-print books or audiobooks. Don’t just advertise events that you think seniors will be into – they may need somewhere to take the grandkids when they visit. Story time, anyone?
WHERE ARE THEY?

- **Churches** – Yet another place where people congregate (get it?) that has bulletin boards galore, along with nice, helpful people. If you’re a church goer, start with your own church. Put up information about children’s programs in the nursery area. Having a jewelry-making workshop that would appeal to teen girls? There’s probably a bulletin board in their Sunday School room.
WHERE ARE THEY?

- **Anywhere you can set up an informational booth** – Local street fairs, flea markets, job fairs, school events, PTA meetings, etc. Think outside the box. Hand out flyers, bookmarks and library card sign up forms. Tell people about your upcoming events.

- If you do this, try to **have a good hook** – Raffle off a small prize. Take a poll and ask everyone to give you the name of their favorite book/movie/Harry Potter character. Have a used book sale. Just do something fun that will draw attention. Then use the opportunity to talk about your programs and services and entice people to come to the library.
MARKETING TO KIDS & TEENS
MARKETING TO KIDS & TEENS

• **This is tough group, no question.** Kids are inundated with marketing, they’re resistant to much of it, and they’re BUSY – with school, sports, part-time jobs, dating, you name it.

• **They’re also very diverse.** They have different needs and interests, which change with age, so you’ll have to tailor your approach.
MARKETING TO KIDS & TEENS

• **Target the adults in their lives.** Get your message to parents and teachers. Hand out a flyer about a workshop on college applications to a group of teenagers and they’re likely to just toss it. Give it to their parents instead.

• **Set up a focus group of kids.** Go to the source. Run your ideas past a group of kids or teens. Your kids. Their friends. Your neighbors’ kids. Your nieces and nephews. Make it more formal and set up a Teen Board (give it a better name though – “teen board” sounds lame) for your library to help you come up with events and marketing ideas.
MARKETING TO KIDS & TEENS

- **Host events that appeal to them.** Remember Star Wars Day a few slides back? Try to keep up to date on trends and plan events that appeal to this age group. A Jane Austen tea on Dec. 16 (Jane’s birthday) would appeal to a certain segment of teenage girls. Or a Lego event for the younger side of the spectrum.

- **This is where your focus group can help you.** It’s might be too late to host that cool Pokemon Go event you were thinking about. My 12-year-old son says the Pokemon Go craze is pretty much over. Maybe it’s time to move on to something else. Your focus group of kids can tell you what that is.
SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING
SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

- **Why should you use social media?** – Because everyone else is. Studies show 98% of online consumers (ages 16-64) visit a social network at least once a month.

- **Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.** – Where do you start? Pick one and focus on it. Facebook maintains the largest membership of all social media sites, but Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat are all more popular with teens.

- **Post events, yes, but social media should be more than that.** – Social media should be a conversation between you and your users. Use it to share common interests and maybe just have some fun.
INCREASE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA REACH

• **Find out what’s trending.** – Use the latest top trending topics to build a post around. Most social media platforms have a list of trending topics that changes regularly, like the list from Twitter at right.
INCREASE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA REACH

• **Share content from other users** – Retweet, share Facebook posts, share interesting articles, etc. It’s a great way to pick up new followers.
INCREASE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA REACH

- **Ideas for content** – Lists, memes, photos, facts, quotes, events, articles, video, special months/weeks/days.
INCREASE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA REACH

Special months/weeks/days

April

National Poetry Month
4/2 – International Children’s Book Day (Hans Christian Anderson’s Birthday)
4/9-15 – National Library Week
4/13 (Thursday of National Library Week) – Celebrate Teen Literature Day
4/12 – D.E.A.R. Day (Beverly Cleary’s birthday)
4/21 – Poem in Your Pocket Day
4/22-29 Money Smart Week
4/23 – Shakespeare’s birthday
4/23 – World Book Day
4/27 – National Tell a Story Day
4/30 – Children’s Book Day/El Día de los Niños

May

5/1-7 Children’s Book Week
5/2 – Harry Potter Day (May 2 was the day of the Battle of Hogwarts in the Harry Potter series; many also celebrate July 31, which is both Harry’s and J.K. Rowling’s birthdays)
5/4 – Star Wars Day (“May the Fourth be with you.”)
5/6 – Free Comic Book Day (First Saturday in May)
5/9 – Peter Pan Day (James M. Barrie’s birthday)
5/20 – May Day
5/21 – National Readathon Day
5/25 – Towel Day (Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy Day)

June

LGBTBook Month, Audiobook Appreciation Month
6/12 – Anna Frank’s birthday (on which she received her diary)
6/19 – National Garfield the Cat Day (strip is first published, 1978)

July

Read an Almanac Month
7/6-21 (third week of July) – Hemingway Days takes place in the Florida Keys
7/30 – National Paperbac Book Day
7/31 – Harry Potter Day

August

8/9 – Book Lovers’ Day

September

Library Card Sign-Up Month, Be Kind to Writers and Editors Month
9/6 – Read a Book Day
9/8 – International Literacy Day
9/22 – Holding Day
9/22 – Dear Diary Day
Last week of Sept. – Banned Books Week
Wednesday of Banned Books Week – Banned Websites Awareness Day

October

National Book Month (no longer sponsored by the National Book Foundation, but we can celebrate anyway)
10/6 – Mad Hatter Day (because his hat says 10/6)
10/9-15 (week of Columbus Day) – Tom Fool Week
10/16 – Dictionary Day (Noah Webster’s Birthday)
10/16-20 Friends of Libraries Week

November

Picture Book Month, National Family Literary Month, National Novel Writing Month
11/1 = National Family Literacy Day
11/15 – I Love to Write Day
11/18 – High-Five a Librarian Day

December

Read a New Book Month
12/1 – Sherlock Holmes Day
12/16 – Jane Austen’s birthday
INCREASE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA REACH

• **Use pictures or video** – Posts with images are always more engaging.

• **Sources for Public Domain images:**
  - [www.pixabay.com](http://www.pixabay.com)
  - [www.pexels.com](http://www.pexels.com)
  - Google search images, click on Tools and change the usage rights tab to “Labeled for reuse”

• **Website for easy graphic design:**
  - [https://www.canva.com/](https://www.canva.com/)
OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES

• Super Library Marketing blog – https://superlibrarymarketing.com/
• 5 Minute Librarian – http://www.5minlib.com/
• American Library Association – http://www.ala.org/
NOW GET OUT THERE AND
THINK OUTSIDE
YOUR WALLS