

# Outreach Programs in Libraries

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## 1.0 Introduction

(Smallwood, 2010) explains that, it is essential to differentiate between promotions and marketing. Marketing requires an inordinate amount of analysis and planning. The following story is the best way to summarize the difference: If the festival is coming to Mombasa and you paint a sign stating “festival at the Tononoka ground Saturday,” that is advertising. If you put the sign on the back of a camel walking through Mombasa, that’s promotion. If the camel walks through the governors garden, that’s publicity. If the governor laughs about it, that’s public relations. If the residents go to the festival in Mombasa, you show them the booths answer questions, and they spend money at the festival, that’s sales. Lastly, if you planned the whole thing, well now, that is Marketing.

Marketing and outreach are not separable. They are directly related to one another. The more marketing one does, the more results you will have. Outreach follows this same premise. Create a marketing plan for the library, or scrutinize the one you have in place now. Be sure that marketing and outreach goals and objectives are defined.

According to (Pfeil, 2005) Outreach encompasses of every program strives to meet certain goals, reach targeted audiences, and disseminate information. In order to realize these, school library should use materials and programs already created to seemingly lessen the planning process but not reduce the anticipated outcome.

## **2.0 How to implement Outreach programme in school Libraries**

It all starts with an IDEA

**I**-Identify need

**D**-Design programs

**E**-Evaluate service

**A**-Add new programs

### **a) Identify Need**

The need should be defined through market analysis, by looking at your library district's strategic planning goals, and through community input. Think critically, how the library can either enhance an existing program or fill an obvious void in literacy or information program.

Every child who attends school, the status of the school notwithstanding in terms of being public or private, will have homework. To complete their homework, students not only need a quiet place to work but also need like reference books supplies, and maybe just some solid advice.

Libraries never replace schools as the main educational resource, yet we can offer students empowerment when completing their homework assignments. Identifying a special need helps you better articulate and design programs to meet the need.

### **b) Design of the program**

The design phase incorporates planning for security, and using dedicated funds. Having a specific program budget will help you design programs that are affordable. Your staff will ensure programs are designed to be useful. Creating programs that are both affordable and useful is imperative, especially when these programs will be delivered off-site at locations that will change on daily.

When designing your programs, the identified need should be given priority. The need may be too abstract to present on a more direct way or not exciting enough to keep the attention of children. This is therefore calls for creativity in presentations. This call for incorporation of puppets, storytelling and appeal to the children's sense of urgency to get your message across. Programs can be as simple as handing out library cards and explaining responsibility to large-scale production with music and puppets.

*The library can also incorporate use of Puzzles:* not the jigsaw type, but riddles and Rubik's Cubes. Again the idea is to provide an engaging break that refreshes students and gets their brains working in different ways. Host a riddle competition or see who can put a Rubik's Cube back together the quickest. You just need two willing students to compete and the energy should draw others in. You could do one on the hour and offer simple prizes, like use of a study room or table during the rest of finals week. Cost: nothing, the math department probably has these types of puzzles at hand and riddles are easy to find online.

#### **c) Evaluate Service**

With constant evaluation, both internal and external, you will be able to best amend, enhance, or even discontinue certain efforts. Do not hesitate to stop offering program. Discontinuing a program should only be done. However, when all measures point to the program's ineffectiveness. Don't think of this as a failure; think of it as an opportunity to refocus your efforts on successful programs.

#### **d) Add new programs**

Add programs slowly to ensure enough time for evaluations, as programs are added, new goals and objectives will need to be added to the marketing plan. Your marketing plan is a dynamic document and should evolve as often as the identified need changes.

After developing the IDEA, ensure that your outreach staff members have some basic knowledge of outreach.

## **2.0 Conclusion**

Schools, which have the continuous task of educating the nation for the future, have to keep up with both the immediate and imminent changes that seep into society. Education has now shifted from being teacher-centric to student-centric – in other words from directed instruction to active learning and knowledge discovery and construction. Thus, due to the new demands that the current information age places on individuals, schools no longer have the prime objective of helping students to read. Instead, they are expected to inculcate skills that go beyond that basic ability to read. Creative and critical thinking should be inculcated in students. Tried, tested and workable ways of doing things are not attractive or desired anymore. Teachers need to use a variety of information sources in their lessons so as to keep their students interested and their lessons current and informative.

- Remember non-fiction and electronic resources when serving patrons.
- Respect a variety of interests.
- Be ready to pair offerings with the needs of hands-on learners.
- The library has something for everyone! Outreach should offer a special opportunity to let people who wouldn't otherwise use the library know that it does cater for them, too.

- Networking- County government and Kenya National Library Services in Mombasa can be an excellent source of information about potential partners and ongoing outreach projects

## References

Pfeil, A. B. (2005). *Going Places with Youth Outreach: Smart Marketing Strategies for Your Library*. American Library Association. Retrieved from <http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr>

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