

# Communications, Marketing, and Public Relations Task Force

Final Report  
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## **I. Challenge and Scope of the Plan**

This document was created over the 2005-06 academic year to address the complex and intensifying communications needs of the MU Libraries, and to present information, ideas, and strategies for meeting these needs.

The plan is divided into five sections:

- ❖ An **Executive Summary**, highlighting the main points of the report
- ❖ A **Situational Analysis**, with information about the MU Libraries' current state of affairs
- ❖ **Goals and Objectives**, outlining the comprehensive aims of the plan
- ❖ **Strategies and Tactics**, which include specific ideas for implementation
- ❖ **Recommendations** for further development

## **II. Executive Summary**

In light of the MU Libraries' complex and intensifying communications needs, the Communications, Marketing, and Public Relations Task Force reviewed the communications plans of several outstanding academic library systems. The task force reviewed surveys done by some of the branch libraries, looked at LibQual data, and reviewed the recent SWOT analysis. Included in the discussions was a session on identifying the target populations. The group sought assistance from the School of Journalism through their student capstone project mechanism. The students developed a sample marketing plan targeted at undergraduate students. A report to the library staff was given in April at a MU Libraries Forum meeting, and the students provided their report in May.

The task force then created a framework for communications planning for the MU Libraries. This framework sets up a process that aligns with the MU Libraries mission, vision and goals, and allows for a plan that will evolve in tandem with other ongoing MU Libraries planning processes.

The following report includes the results of the described process and is divided into four parts: situational analysis, goals and objectives, strategies and tactics, and recommendations. Please note that the situational analysis includes a list of target audiences to which the communications will be directed.

The taskforce submits the following recommendations:

- I. Create a professional communications officer position;
- II. Create an advisory group to support the communications officer, and assist the position by facilitating planning and implementation; Consider including an MU faculty member from an academic discipline related to communications and marketing;
- III. Develop overarching themes for communications with MU Libraries' existing and potential users;
- IV. Recognize the importance of and implement sound marketing practices, such as identifying segments of the market, developing marketing strategies, etc.;
- V. Incorporate communications in broader library-wide planning; All planning documents should address communications; Communications Officer should be member of Web Advisory Committee;
- VI. Develop evaluation schema and feedback loops to inform the communications initiatives;
- VII. Seek partnerships with other campus units to highlight the MU Libraries;
- VIII. Work with Staff Development Committee to provide ongoing marketing and professional development opportunities for staff;
- IX. Implement aspects of the Capstone Project report in a marketing campaign directed towards students and create additional marketing campaigns directed towards other target audiences, beginning with faculty; and
- X. Review the goals and strategies created by the task force and create a timeline for implementation

## **XI. Situational Analysis**

### **a. Library Goals**

The following statements have been adapted from the Libraries' Vision, Mission, and Values Statements to serve as broad guidelines for communication activities:

- To be recognized as the center of choice for students, faculty and staff seeking timely access to high quality information. The MU Libraries expect to be acknowledged as a preferred gateway to global information resources, as an open and accessible learning environment, and as an active partner and peer in the discovery and pursuit of knowledge.
- To support the instruction, research and service programs of the University by acquiring scholarly resources, developing innovative services, and applying new information technologies to address the needs of our users.
- To serve our users by providing critical resources and services, by promoting user self-sufficiency, by developing learning environments, by continually assessing user needs and by promoting all existing library services fully.
- To provide the best quality service possible, at all times, to all of our users, recognize and celebrate excellence whenever and wherever we encounter it, and work together as a team for the greater good of the Libraries and the University.
- To maintain our collections and facilities for future generations of scholars, make the most efficient use of scarce resources, and plan for the challenges which will confront us in the future.
- Freedom of access to information in all forms, and for all persons is our most cherished principle. We treasure the library ideals of free speech, open inquiry, accessibility, and equality; all of which are upheld by our collections, our services, our policies, and our procedures.

## **b. Target Audiences**

- **Campus at Large**
  - Faculty
  - Staff
  - Graduate and Professional School Students
  - Undergraduate Students
  - Administrators
  - Internal
  
- **Community**
- **Alumni**
- **Corporations**
- **Legislature**

## **c. MU Libraries Marketing and Public Relations Inventory**

- MU Libraries' Gateway, Ellis, and branch libraries' Web pages
- Handouts, brochures, and book marks
- Contact with Media, including Media Relations Guide
- Open houses
- Posters
- Communication between subject librarians and teaching faculty and graduate/professional students, e-mails and letters
- Tours
- Signs and banners
- Exhibits and displays
- Ads in University Concert Series programs and *Mizzou* magazine
- Public service announcements on KBIA, using local celebrities
- Instructional sessions for undergraduate, graduate classes, and faculty
- Library initiated contacts, ex. "I saw this new book/article and thought you might be interested"
- Promotion message in email signature lines (HSL)
- Info for "My Town" supplement of *The Missourian*
- Library Society brochure, scarf, tie, lapel pin, bookends and ink pen
- *Library Connections* newsletter for donors
- Involvement in campus events
  - Student Move-In Day
  - Presentations at College of Engineering meeting each semester
  - NLM products and services are exhibited at meetings of health professionals, and training sessions are given all over the state on MedlinePlus
- Presentation at the School of Medicine Council of Chairs and the School of Nursing Curriculum Committee.

- Librarians worked with Community Connection and National Library of Medicine on a promotional event for the Missouri GoLocal project. This resulted in some spots on local TV evening news and an appearance on the local TV show "Pepper & Friends."
- Presentations are made at the new faculty orientations for the School of Medicine & for MU Libraries.
- Summer, Fall, and Winter Welcome (new students/parents)
- New Faculty Orientation
- Teaching Renewal Conference (MU & other faculty)
- ET@MO Technology Seminar (MU faculty)
- Various events geared towards visiting high school students
- Other campus events geared towards graduate students
- Involvement with Summer Reading Program, including author reception
- Faculty Lecture Series
- Scholarly Communications Conference

**d. SWOT Analysis** – Compiled from a library wide SWOT Analysis completed in April 2005

**Strengths**

- Use of technology for providing service and access (website, e-mail, digital initiatives, databases)
- Use of university publications to increase visibility (*MIZZOU*, concert series)
- Ranked “high” as a research library
  - Largest in the state
  - High quality and broad range of collections and materials
- Good connections with international/national/state organizations and libraries
- Involvement in campus wide committees and activities
- On campus Library School utilized as a resource
- Segments of Library well tailored to department teaching and start-of-art facilities
- Ability to work with diverse users from around the world
- Ongoing commitment to equipment updates and improved access
- Fast Service – timely responses to requests for information and services

**Weaknesses**

- Complex organization hampers communication, cohesiveness, teamwork
- Need for continual outreach to constituents throughout the State
- Need for consistent customer service and message
- Need for more communication to users about Library services as well as funding issues
- Communication with other UM Libraries
- Users don’t play enough of a part in decision making

- Confusing layout (Ellis)
- Specialization prevents branches and units from knowing and understanding more about various services within the library. (researchers may not be referred to appropriate department)
- Faculty not fully aware of services and role librarians provide

### Opportunities

- Outreach on campus
  - Student Success Center
  - Faculty
- Collaboration with other repositories, schools and colleges on campus
- New Electronic Technologies
  - Provides opportunities to improve services and offer new ones
  - Provides opportunities to market the Libraries' collection and services to a larger audience via the internet
  - opportunity to teach users how to evaluate information sources- (i.e. information literacy)
  - Web site reminders that users are using e-resources provided by libraries
  - Provides opportunities to educate users on e-resources, e-tools, information paradigm
- Continue using survey results to evaluate user behavior and improve customer service
- Renovations (Information Commons) and expanded services (Coffee Bar) should be exploited and extended
- Involvement with curriculum planning to ensure the Library can support it (communication with faculty)
- Better communication with all State users that the library is a public resource
- More cooperative ventures with local libraries and other campuses

### Threats

- Attitude that the Internet is making libraries a thing of the past
  - Societal sense of "entitlement" (free, immediate, 24 hour services)
  - perception that the Internet is adequate or free research
- Misrepresentation from the media – inability to comply with their requests in the way they want and past reporting inaccuracies strain relations that should provide a positive PR outlet
- Perception of libraries as a place with "stuff" versus people who can provide a needed service
- Needs of undergraduate students underappreciated or overlooked
- Keeping up with technology. Needs of students sometimes beyond the ability and training of staff.
- Attitude that a library is old fashioned or a glorified computer lab?
- Budget cuts affect staffing, hours of operation, and acquisitions
- Lack of understanding of various functions may effect funding
- Misunderstanding of our funding by donors

## **e. User Surveys**

### **LibQUAL -2003**

Major Findings from the LibQUAL Survey:

- Our patrons are generally pleased with the service they get from librarians and library staff.
- Faculty are less concerned with the library as a place; undergraduates have much higher expectations at all levels (minimum, perceived and desired).
- Undergraduates and graduate students have a greater sense of personal control than faculty when using our electronic resources.
- Faculty and graduate students are not happy with the level of access to information (e.g., electronic journals, print collections, document delivery).

### **Journalism Library ( Fall 2004)**

Major Findings from the Journalism Library Survey:

- 55% of the graduate students surveyed indicated daily use of the Library, while “Two or more times per month” was the most common response among undergraduate students surveyed (37.5%)
- Both graduate and undergraduate students indicated “Computers” as the most commonly used resource in the library
- The graduate students surveyed indicated “Email” as the most used computer service, while undergraduate students indicated “Email” followed by “general Web browsing” as the most used computer resources
- The graduate students surveyed indicated a preference for more 1-2 person study carrels, while the undergraduate students surveyed indicated a preference for more group study rooms
- The graduate students surveyed indicated a preference for extended hours of operation and a larger, readily accessible book/journal collection as the new Library’s most pressing needs, while the undergraduate students surveyed indicated a preference for more lounge seating and group study rooms over the need for more collection space

### **Health Sciences Library (2004)**

Frequency of library services and resources use:

- 82% of medical students surveyed use library resources via website “daily”, while the majority of faculty and nursing students surveyed answered “weekly”
- 65% of medical students surveyed indicated “daily” onsite usage, while nursing students and residents most commonly answered “weekly”
- Faculty and staff most commonly indicated “monthly” onsite usage
- Faculty and medical students report higher daily usage of electronic journals than print journals
  - Faculty daily use: electronic journals (24%) vs. print journals (3%)
  - Medical student daily use: electronic journals (23%) vs. print journals (4%)
- Medical students report higher daily use of electronic books (22%) vs. print books (7%); report same degree of weekly usage (28%)
- High percentage overall do not use electronic books (54%). This could be due to lack of awareness or understanding of what the library defines as being electronic books

Services ranked in order of “excellent” answer percentage:

- Live Reference/Email (50%)
- Interlibrary Loan (49%)
- User Instruction/Workshops (38%)
- OVID databases (38%)
- Information/Reference (37%)
- Circulation/Photocopy (17%)

Services ranked by usage (most used to least used):

- OVID databases (22% Don’t Use)
- Information/ Reference (23% Don’t Use)
- Circulation/Photocopy (26% Don’t Use)
- Interlibrary Loan (46% Don’t Use)
- Live Reference/Email (62% Don’t Use)
- User Instruction/Workshops (65% Don’t Use)

Study space needs:

- The medical students are clearly in favor of more group study space (74% Yes) while most faculty answered “No” (29%) or Not sure (58%).
- Overall 46% were “Not sure” about the group study concept. This concept would have to be explained more clearly, and the ramifications explained more clearly to get support for the idea.
- Comments on the survey reflect a desire for more group study space over individual study space

Overall satisfaction with the Health Sciences Library:

- The majority of faculty (53%) were “Very Satisfied”.
- The majority of medical students (57%) were “Satisfied”, however 31% were “Dissatisfied”.
- All collections were generally rated “Good” overall, although there was a call for more electronic journals in the comments section of the survey.
- Circulation/Photocopy has the lowest overall ratings of all the services. From the comments received, it is suggested that improvements in customer service and the purchase of new photocopiers would improve services greatly.

### **Veterinary Medical Library (2000)**

#### **Survey Summary:**

Survey indicates that the Veterinary Medical Library needs improvements in facility, services, collections, and staffing. Addressing the inadequacies of the physical space would go a long way in improving the library, and would facilitate improvements in other areas. Space needs include small group study areas, better individual study space, stack space, and more efficient staff work space.

## **IV. Goals and Objectives**

**GOAL #1** Communicate to the campus that the MU Libraries is central to the mission of the University of Missouri-Columbia.

**GOAL#2** Connect the Libraries in a new way with campus and community and create a new image for the Libraries.

### **Objectives:**

- Utilize the results from ORTF to be a mechanism for creating unity and as a driver to tell users about how it will be used to increase our capacity for customer service.
- Communicate ORTF outcomes as they relate to customer services.

**GOAL#3:** Communicate to campus and various constituencies that the Libraries has a unique role as the state's flagship scholarly research support center.

### **Objectives:**

- To interact with other campus service units to define our unique group of services.
- To create a slogan, such as "We make complexity simple."
- To help users understand that use of e-resources is using the library and to help the user understand the quality issues related to electronic information.
- Use outreach activities as a strategy to integrate MU Libraries' services with university instruction, research and service to the academic community.

**GOAL #4:** Increase visibility of MU Libraries.

### **Objectives:**

- Deliver a consistent message, assertively and effectively, in coordination with Ellis Library and the branch libraries.
- Use special events, radio and other media (website, publications, etc.) to launch campaign.

- Create and implement a comprehensive media relations process and structure.

**GOAL #5:** Develop a Library Ambassadors group, comprised of students, to serve as a field force in library messages.

**GOAL #6:** Create communications for all staff to aid in the understanding of library-wide efforts.

**GOAL #7:** Provide a starting place for a comprehensive, ongoing communications effort of the MU Libraries to our users.

See University of Minnesota Library's Communication Plan, Part VI.  
<http://staff.lib.umn.edu/communications/communications.phtml>

## **V. Strategies and Tactics**

Strategies and Tactics are included for the following initial target audiences:

- Library Staff
- Faculty/Staff
- Students

Additional Strategies and Tactics will be developed for the following target audiences:

- Alumni
- Community

### **General Strategies, All Audiences**

- Develop a Campus Wide visual identity system
  - Slogan
  - A cohesive visual identity for all library publications
  - Banners
  - Flat panel TV display
  - Screensavers and mouse pads
  - Bookmarks
  - Pencils
- Develop and implement a broad based promotional mechanism for Libraries events
  - News and Events Web Page
  - Library Wide Events calendar
- Develop a consistent set of key messages and themes
  - Media, including regular press releases, PSAs and library generated feature articles
  - Incorporating advertising into university newspapers, television, and radio
- Develop a list of marketing opportunities on campus such as Summer Welcome, New Faculty Orientation, Residential Life Resource Fair, etc

### **Strategies for Target Audiences**

#### Library Staff

- Build an internal marketing culture within the library and develop a milieu of service
  - A Kickoff Event to increase awareness of all staff, “Great Staff, Happy Users”
  - Create a marketing and resource packet for staff and new employees
  - Facilitate discussions for staff on marketing and public relations
  - Featured Department of the Month
  - Staff Training for planning and promotion
- Develop a Libraries-wide visual identity system, including materials as discussed in “General Strategies”

## Students

- Market the Libraries as a positive experience by making it more approachable to the student body
  - Libraries Welcome Kit (bookmarks, pencils, etc.) to be distributed to incoming freshman
  - A more visible general presence on campus for all libraries
  - Sip and Tell Event at the Bookmark Café
  - Comprehensive visual displays, including posters, banners, screensavers, etc.
  
- Raise awareness of all libraries services, increasing student comfort levels with resources
  - Sustained print advertising campaign
  - TV spots for internal media outlets (campus tv, rec center)
  - Librarian Profiles
  - Finals Week Events, including street teams and giveaways

## Faculty

- Increase support for and partnerships with the Libraries
  - Create library newsletter for faculty (E-Memos)
  - Public relations events at the Bookmark Café
  - Partner with faculty in promoting information literacy through coursework
- Create a more welcoming sense of libraries as place
  - Establish a media/technology workroom for faculty
- Enhance understanding of Libraries as vital partners in scholarly communication
  - Continue to provide presentations and scholarly communication workshops for faculty
  - Enhance liaison relationships with faculty
  - Participate in information-related faculty projects.
  - Share information about value-of-information research.

## **VI. Recommendations**

The following are the further recommendations of the Task Force:

- ❖ Create a professional communications officer position;
- ❖ Create an advisory group to support the communications officer, and assist the position by facilitating planning and implementation; Consider including an MU faculty member from an academic discipline related to communications and marketing;
- ❖ Develop overarching themes for communications with MU Libraries' existing and potential users;
- ❖ Recognize the importance of and implement sound marketing practices, such as identifying segments of the market, developing marketing strategies, etc.;
- ❖ Incorporate communications in broader library-wide planning; All planning documents should address communications; Communications Officer should be member of Web Advisory Committee;
- ❖ Develop evaluation schema and feedback loops to inform the communications initiatives;
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- ❖ Work with Staff Development Committee to provide ongoing marketing and professional development opportunities for staff;
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- ❖ Review the goals and strategies created by the task force and create a timeline for implementation

## **VII. Appendix**

A Capstone Campaign, created by students at the Missouri School of Journalism Department of Strategic Communications was commissioned in Spring 2006. The final report of this group, containing marketing research and strategies targeting undergraduates, can be found here:

<http://www.missouri.edu/~dudenhoffer/Plans%20Book.pdf>