

Marketing 101



MARKETING 101

Welcome to 'Marketing 101', one of the training modules from Community Literacy of Ontario's *Social Media Marketing* project.

This project is designed to develop resources to help Ontario's literacy agencies, and others, use social media for marketing.

[Click here](#) to access our resources.

Introduction

For many nonprofit organizations, marketing is an expense they feel they cannot afford – they may even consider it a luxury. However, marketing is essential for literacy agencies, not only to attract and retain learners, other service providers, funders, donors, volunteers and partners, but also to effectively advocate for literacy.

Rather than adding marketing into a budget as an afterthought or a wish list, it should be one of the key expenses we plan for. Marketing can help us become more focused and intentional about things we already do. Marketing is strategic thinking that can target our efforts and help us achieve optimal outcomes for our agencies. Putting marketing first requires strategic thinking and a bit of practice (and sometimes a leap of faith). This module includes ideas, examples and tools to help you to understand marketing, not only as a skill, but as an integral part of everything we do.

Throughout Marketing 101, we are going to focus on marketing in general. More specific information about how to use social media for marketing can be found in the other modules in CLO's [Social Media Marketing project](#).

Marketing: An Outcomes Approach

In adult literacy in Ontario, we have focused on learner outcomes and program outcomes for many years, but how many of us think of marketing in terms of outcomes? As with learning outcomes, we should be setting short and long term goals, milestones, and targets for our marketing efforts too. We need to begin with the end in mind so that marketing becomes a strategic activity rather than a series of unconnected activities.



Identifying Your Audience

Who are we marketing to? What is marketing, *really*?

As literacy educators, our purpose is to motivate the community to understand and advocate on behalf of our services, as well as to attract learners, community members, donors, and volunteers to the services we provide. Our audience extends directly into the community. It's also imperative that we maintain a close connection with our funders and community partners.



Community Members

We hope for community members to **buy into** our services, to **believe in them**, and pass on information about them throughout their communities.

Your community is your 'word of mouth' marketing and could include clients, learners, local community members, volunteers, employers, and service clubs.

Partners & Funders

We need to give community partners and government reasons to **believe** in and **support** our programs.

To support learners we need partnerships with other service providers and we need the financial support of government to operate our agencies.

This target audience could include social services, employment services, donors, government departments, and unions.

Although our marketing strategy incorporates messages to more than just these two groups, these two are the basis of why we offer the programs and services that we do. Community members, in particular adult learners, remain at the heart of our organizations. Marketing to our communities, partners and funders will help us to reach literacy learners and provide them with quality programming.

For literacy organizations, marketing involves creating a **mutually beneficial relationship** with community members, learners, volunteers, other service providers, partners, and funders.



Scheduling Your Marketing Goals

How an organization markets to different stakeholder groups will be linked to your identified marketing goals (which will be clearly outlined in your marketing strategy).

The chart below is an example of a marketing schedule. Once this has been developed, you can move forward with delegating the tasks highlighted in the ‘timeline’ portion of the schedule to specific team members. Including various agency members and supporters in your marketing strategies and schedules allows for a group strategy to develop organically!

Here are some examples of specific marketing goals, methods, and timelines for a specific target group for your organization. Let’s take a deeper look at how to market to your volunteers specifically:

TARGET AUDIENCE: VOLUNTEERS		
Goal	Method	Timeline
Retain current volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure current volunteers feel appreciated and acknowledged (foster an inclusive community of appreciation at every level of your organization) - Encourage current volunteers to share their stories with family, friends and the general public (happy and appreciated volunteers are your best publicity tool to recruit new volunteers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make gestures of appreciation to all volunteers during the month of October - Record testimonials of three volunteers to be used in social media postings (1 per week x 3 weeks) and in a local newspaper (November 3rd)
Increase volunteer commitment by 2-3 people in the next month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highlight the need for volunteers, and how the benefit(s) for the community and the individual are reciprocal - Highlight how one volunteer’s individual efforts make a difference or the impact your volunteers as a whole have on literacy (and use statistics to bring legitimacy to your claim); share on print and social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Post a call for volunteers on CharityVillage.com (free!) (Oct 21st) - Update ‘Volunteer’ information on website (Oct 21st) - Post a call for volunteers on Facebook and Twitter (once per week x 4 weeks) - Publish an interview with a longtime volunteer on your website or blog in mid-November





Focus on the Benefits

What do we offer our target market? How can we articulate the benefits we provide?

Literacy can be a difficult “sell”. Professional marketers advise clients not to sell their product but rather to solve their customers’ problems. We can look at marketing literacy programs the same way; i.e., literacy isn’t a product so much as it is a solution. **The benefits we offer are the solution we should be marketing.** For example, rather than trying to promote an upgrading class, we should be highlighting potential learner achievements and outcomes from that class, because the class itself isn’t the benefit—the skills and learning are.

When constructing a marketing strategy, a good way to determine what to write is to ask yourself, “So what?” Answering that question can help you state the benefits. For example, when marketing your programming to a potential new partner, rather than simply stating, “*We can help your clients upgrade their skills,*” go on to answer the question, “So what?” Then specify that, “*We can help your clients upgrade their skills, which means that they will be more likely to find entry level employment in the next six months.*”

Benefits generally fall into three basic categories: **money, time** and **ego needs**. Keep these in mind when highlighting the benefits you offer. You will be able to use different benefits for different target audiences.

For example, **money** is a powerful motivator for partner agencies, potential learners and government. Learners will want to know that they will gain the skills they need to become more employable and be able to earn an income. Partner agencies and government organizations will want to know that their clients will become more employable and less reliant on their programs and services in the future.

Time is also an important consideration. Include timelines when marketing your organization’s services. Do you offer a six-week course? Will learners meet education milestones within the next six months? Be specific, yet realistic. Back up your claims with facts and testimonials to reassure your audiences.

Ego needs are particularly important when marketing to potential learners and other community stakeholders. People want to know that their involvement with your literacy agency will lead to positive and tangible impacts and benefits.





Value of a Marketing Strategy

The role of a marketing strategy is for your organization to build lasting relationships and loyalty with customers or funders and, in our case, with our 5-tiered target audience: literacy learners, community members, volunteers, community partners and funders. A marketing strategy allows your organization to deliver content strategically, in a variety of **meaningful** ways, to your targeted audiences.

How Do We Build a Marketing Strategy?

Marketing ≠ Advertising

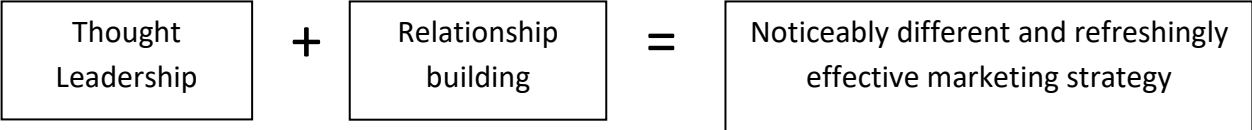


Marketing your organization and developing a comprehensive strategy consists of more than simply advertising and promotions. This is a common mistake for many nonprofit organizations. Many nonprofit organizations may be swept up in creating promotional material and developing advertisements as their organization's entire "marketing strategy". Don't be one of these organizations. Instead, think strategically before acting!





The **thought leadership** and **relationship-building** aspects of a true marketing strategy set some organizations apart from others.



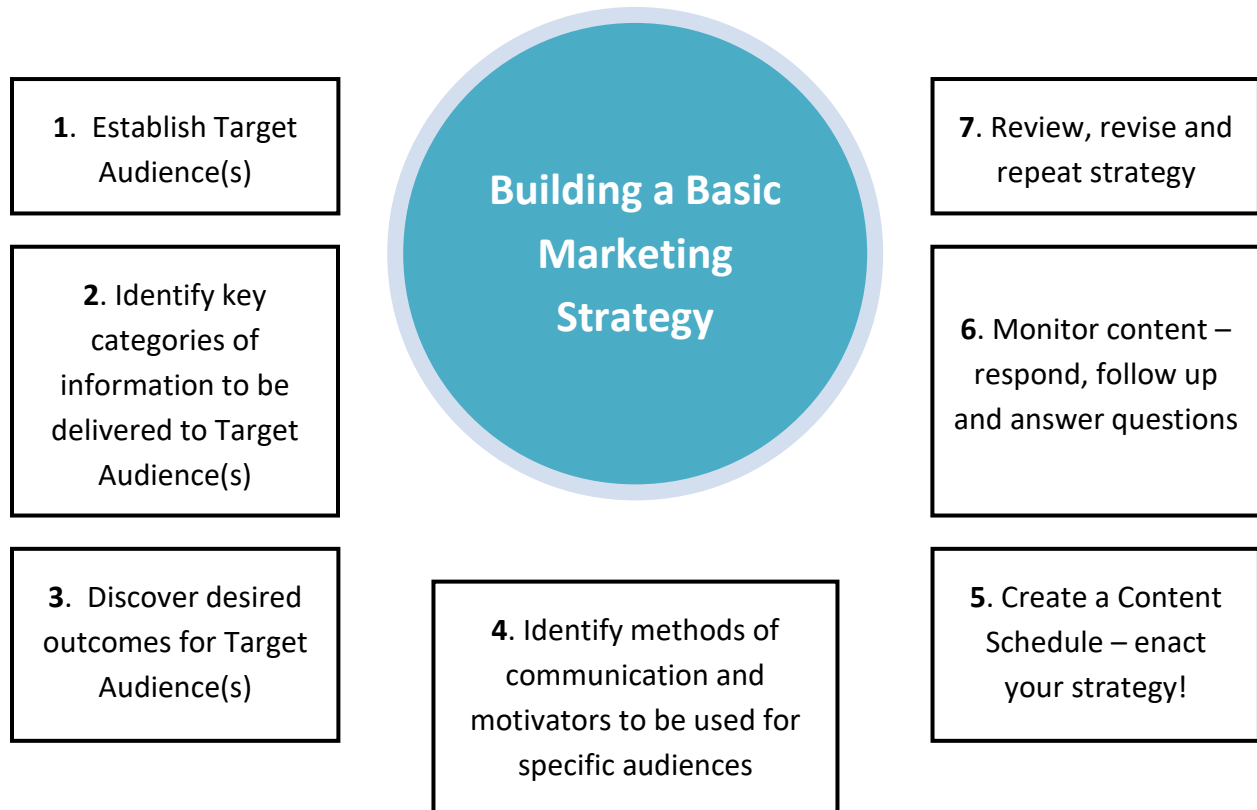
Thought Leadership: This means sharing information about the broader determinants of your cause, related community projects, or general expertise related to your field, and establishing your organization’s position as a thought leader.

<p>Thought Leadership for Community-Based Literacy Agencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change the way the importance of literacy is perceived by the everyday user of social media; how will you influence their view of your cause or industry? • Contribute to the evolution of thinking about community literacy; refer to learners, volunteers and literacy practitioners with integrity and frequently mention of their capabilities and skills and capacity for innovative and community building. • Illustrate and strengthen connections between credible research pieces that connect increased literacy skills to resilience, positive outcomes, and social, emotional, and physical welfare for individuals and community wellbeing.
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Relationship Building: Similar to networking online, relationship building refers to the strategic communications your organization undertakes with its specific target audiences, and the plan to maintain online and real life relationships, partnerships, cross-promotional marketing strategies, etc.

Building meaningful relationships with businesses, community members, and other target audiences begins with a combination of basic connections and strategic communications. The end goal is longstanding, trusting, mutually beneficial relationships.





Your Marketing Strategy could be a few pages long, or could consist of only a few bullet-points. No matter its length or format, it is important to understand that your organization’s marketing strategy will be unique to the values and mission of your organization. Marketing strategies that work do not belong to a “one size fits all” model.





Embed these practices into the development of your organization's marketing strategy:

1. **Keep an ear to the ground:** Don't take the words of learners, community partners, volunteers, employees, donors, or government stakeholders lightly. Include their ideas as part of the development of your marketing strategy, and ensure that time is allocated to hear their suggestions.
2. **Provide opportunity:** Provide a way for those who are involved with your organization to provide valuable feedback or suggestions about the marketing journey you are about to embark on. The more support you have, the better for your plan! (Consider a comment box, a Facebook post, a focus group, or a print or online survey).
3. **Be Specific:** When formatting your marketing strategy and your marketing schedule, develop timelines and list specific goals and outcomes for your target audiences. Allocate tasks and goals to specific people, and list specific completion dates.

Keep in mind the 4 Ps (Product, Price, Place and Promotion) when developing your marketing strategy. Each plays an important role when considering your organization's message.

Product	The programs and services provided by your literacy agency.
Price	Although literacy programming is free for adult learners, their buy-in and the time dedicated to learning acts as the price. For volunteers, partners and other community members, the price is the time and energy they devote to your agency. For donors and government, the price is their financial commitment to your agency.
Place	Agency location and hours of operation/availability.
Promotion	How word gets out about the services you offer via word of mouth, social, digital and print media, community partners, the general public, the government, etc.

TIP: Until your organization has time to develop a social media strategy, do yourself a favour and secure your organization's name on different social media sites! A good first step would be to start a Facebook Page and a Twitter account.



How Do We Identify A Target Audience?

Target Audience

Who do you want to target with your messages?

Learners: Average age? Gender majority? How do they typically hear about our services? Who are we currently serving? Who is missing? What are their needs and goals?

Community members: People in the community who are likely to care about our programs and services. Why do they care about literacy? What are their motivations, needs, and interests?

Other service providers/Government: What do they need and expect from us? What do they know about us and what should they know?


Volunteers/Donors: Why do they volunteer with us or give to literacy? What motivates them? What are their goals for literacy?

Most private sector marketing strategies include tactics or knowledge surrounding how to ‘beat out’ the competition. Nonprofit marketing strategies are different. It’s important that literacy organizations share resources, knowledge, skills and opinions with each other and with other community partners.

A **culture of community** should be developed and fostered amongst literacy organizations and other community partners, rather than a culture of competition. Sustaining a positive organizational culture can begin with fostering interest and understanding in the opinions of your partners, community stakeholders, employees and volunteers, and infusing these opinions and goals into your organization’s marketing strategy and communications.

The only area in which your organization should be competitive with another is in your organization’s **brand representation**.

What Is Brand Representation?

A white speech bubble with a black outline and a tail pointing towards the bottom left. Inside the bubble, the text "But, we're an Organization... not a Brand!" is written in a blue, sans-serif font.

But, we're an
Organization...
not a Brand!

Whether or not you have thought about your organization as a brand, you do, indeed, have a brand!

Your brand can be most simply thought of as **the embodiment of your mission statement and values.**

The way your brand is represented to both internal and external audiences is very important. When thinking of your organization, or seeing your logo, what immediate thoughts come to people's minds?

Brand representation is a very important part of any marketing strategy. It encompasses many aspects of how your organization is marketed to various audiences. Here are a few simple considerations to ensure your brand is positively represented:

- **Brand Perception:** How your brand is perceived or identified by everyone who comes into contact with it (*through visual elements, key phrases, tag lines, or mission statement*)
- **Brand Differences:** How your brand is set apart from others in your geographical area (*What aspects of your programs/services make your organization stand apart? How are the services you offer unique to your organization?*)
- **Brand Value:** How your brand delivers passion for its cause, alongside its goals, and how users interact with your brand (*Your programs and services should have passion and excitement behind them to leverage impact and value.*)
- **Brand Target(s):** Reach the right people with the right messages and stay true to your brand's mission. (*Deliver marketing messages to diverse stakeholders, using a variety of methods, with consistent passion and quality.*)
- **Brand Affinity:** Who is your organization affiliated with? What partnerships can you advertise and how do you align yourself with these partners? (*Cross-promotions and connections with various partners and stakeholders.*)

What Does Effective Marketing Look Like?

Add a Personal Touch – Although you are representing a brand and your agency on various media platforms, you have a dual voice: professional and personal.

Although your followers and listeners chose to pay attention to your organization, they also chose to follow YOU! Show your audience the most basic of things you have in common: your humanity.

The *BIC* advertisement seen here is an excellent example of **Brand Personalization**. Appealing to their audience's childhood and gently tugging at the heartstrings of all, *BIC* has aligned their brand with families everywhere, putting "*A lotta you in every stroke.*"



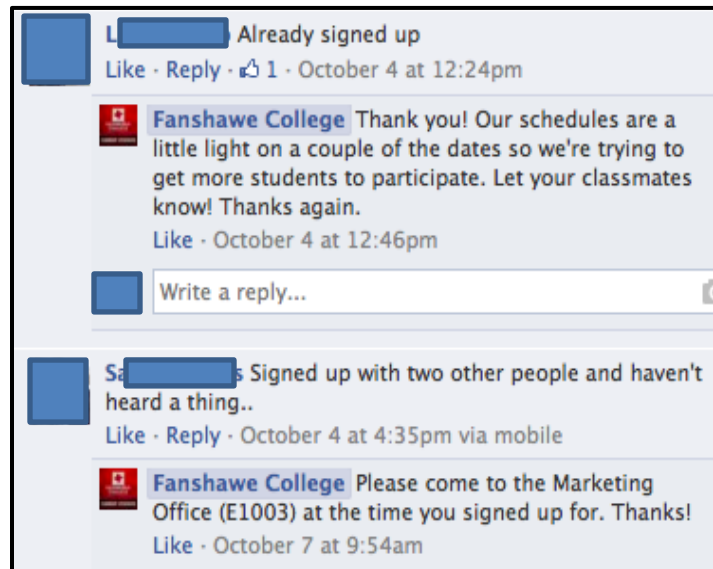
Many great examples of marketing strategy come out of the corporate world. Nonprofits, including literacy organizations, have a great deal to borrow from the corporate world. Many of their best practices can be applied to our own.

Think about adding a personal touch to intertwine the personal side of your agency with the professional. However, your professional goals and messages should never be compromised by the personal touch of your organization.



- **Make Sure it Matters** – When composing a blog post, newspaper ad, Facebook post, Tweet, brochure, or any other means of promotional communication or content, it's important to consider: *Why should my audience read what I am about to post? Will this information interest and benefit my audience?* It's important to be able to identify one clear answer to both of these questions about the content you produce. If its importance is shaky, or you are unable to pinpoint the purpose of receiving this information, re-evaluate your message.
- **Respond and React** – In terms of social media, not only is it important for your accounts to remain active and current, it's important to moderate and manage comments and questions on each of your pages. This is true for traditional media as well; you should always respond to comments in the newspaper, radio, etc. Here are a few tips to get you started:

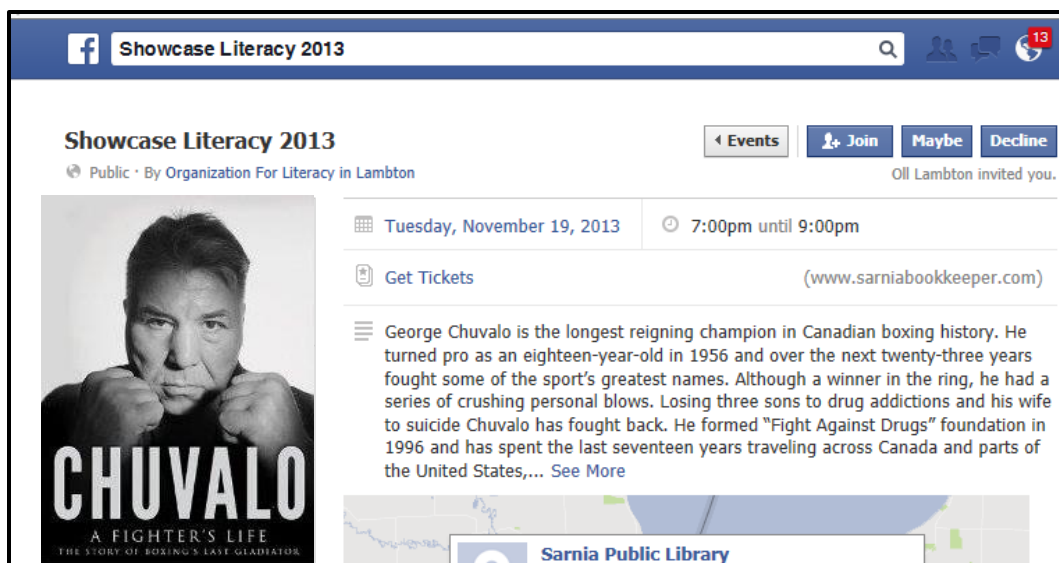
1. **Be Quick:** Post responses and reactions to comments and questions no later than 24 hours after the user's post.
2. **Keep it Public:** Chances are, others are thinking the same thing, so keeping your answers/responses public may answer the questions of others! Transparency is key in brand reputation management.
3. **Be Your Brand:** When responding and commenting, you are the voice of the brand!



- **Get Creative** – Putting a creative spin on an event, campaign, radio spot or blog post will get your followers’ attention! Getting creative with a project may also awaken some excitement among your agency’s audiences: clients, learners, partners, community members, volunteers, employers, donors, and even funders.

Getting creative and being open to new partnerships or collaborative projects will expose your organization to new audiences. Small creative changes can make a big difference in your brand’s representation. The [Organization for Literacy in Lambton](#) (OLL) created an event called “[Showcase Literacy](#)”, which really demonstrates outside-of-the-box thinking! Partnering with a local bookstore, their organization was able to bring in a big name (George Chuvalo, retired Canadian Heavyweight Boxer) to advocate for the importance of literacy.

Through this event, new groups of people were exposed to literacy and heard about the services that the Organization for Literacy in Lambton has to offer. Through this creative event and partnership, OLL has increased their **brand exposure!**



Conclusion

Hopefully your take away from Marketing 101 is a more developed understanding of basic marketing practices and strategies. We will delve into more specific marketing strategies using a variety of social media platforms in CLO’s other [Social Media Marketing modules](#).



Resources to Learn More

- [The Basics for Nonprofit Marketing](#) (via GuideStar)
Lists basic practices for content production and management when developing a marketing strategy for your organization
- [9 Answers to Why, When and How You Should Update Your Brand Logo](#) (via EleventyGroup)
Outlines the importance of visual cues to represent your brand; i.e., why logos matter and where they should be shown; how a logo acts as marketing content
- [Content Marketing Basics](#) (via bMighty²)
Addresses why “content marketing” has been a major buzzword for marketing strategists moving into 2014, and why it’s relevant to individual organizations
- [Mastering the Digital Marketing Basics](#) (via The Guardian)
Defines five popular digital marketing terms and explains why they should entice you to proper digital marketing practices, rather than shy away from them
- [Marketing Ourselves: A resource guide for Ontario’s community literacy agencies](#) (by Karen Farrar for CLO)
Explains current practices and highlights strategies for marketing literacy programs
- [10 Marketing Lessons for All Nonprofits](#) (by Classy Blog)
Gives a helpful overview of important marketing concepts for any nonprofit
- [Social Media Success for Nonprofits](#) (via KYOB)
Explains in detail the relevance of community management, content creation, and social media measurement for nonprofit success on social media platforms





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