

# **Rural Library Program in Romania**

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## **Program 2**

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Marketing Strategies for Small Libraries

### **What is marketing?**

Anything you do to put your product into the hands of your customer. In the case of libraries, marketing can refer to bringing patrons into the door and connecting them with the materials your library has to offer.

#### **Identify Your Audience -- Basic Demographics**

- As with any service, you have to get to know your community
- Who lives in your town or your county or your service area?
- Are there families? Singles? Elderly?
- What is the income level?
- How many schools? How many children?
- Gather basic information about "who are my customers or patrons?"
- Think about where you might find this information. A school district could give you the number of students enrolled and even break it down by grade
- If you have a social services center, or senior center, they could possibly give you the number of elderly in your area
- Use census data from the government to identify not only the number of people in your service area, but also the ethnic breakdown. This could help you when building the collection.

#### **Identify Your Product -- Your Library Materials and Services**

- Your library will consist of a core collection and will build according to the differing information needs of your patrons
- For example: If a major plant or factory closes and another opens in its place, your patrons may need to learn new job skills -- computer skills. Your library can offer computer classes and teach basic skills.
- For example: Your community or county has a lot of college students. Your collection may consist of study guides or preparing for college materials
- If your county or service area has a high unemployment rate, your collection may have many resume or new skills books
- If your area is known for an historic event, your library may house a special collection about the event

#### **Connect Your Product With Your Audience or Customer or Patron**

- Once you identify and build your collection -- based on user needs and other gathered information -- it is time to connect the collection with the customer or patron
- Identify how you would get the information to the patron

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- If the unemployed, is there an employment center that would allow you to display or distribute flyers announcing the materials the library has to help?
- Where locally can you let folks know about computer classes?
- Find out how to get the word to your customers who need the service

### **Library Displays are a Part of Marketing**

- Displaying books "jacket or cover" out is good eye-catching way to bring attention to that area of the collection
- Make sure your book shelves are not so tight that a patron cannot remove a title
- Keep shelves and the library clean and dusted. Keep computer monitors wiped down. Keep glass doors sparkling clean.
- Also consider placing hand sanitizers throughout your library to help prevent the spread of flu virus on keyboards and other library materials
- Set up displays based on subjects such as gardening, cooking, sewing, traveling. Sometimes a patron will come in just to "browse". This is great! It is then that a reader is more likely to discover new ideas
- Make lists of favorite titles of the staff -- people like to know if you have read something good and why you liked it

### **Advertising is a Part of Marketing**

- You might have a wonderful public library with beautiful books and high-speed computers; but if no one knows about it, your efforts are wasted.
- Advertising is the process of communicating with potential customers or patrons in an attempt to persuade them to visit the library and use the services
- "Free" is always a good word to use when attracting users
- Consider advertising with flyers, information distributed to students at the schools, visits to community centers or places where people congregate, newspapers, radio, word-of-mouth

### **"Branding" is a Part of Marketing and is the Latest "Buzz" Word**

- When people see the red and white logo for Coca Cola they automatically think of a soft drink. Think of other brands or logos that are recognizable.
- If your library develops a brand -- such as a book with the name/address of library and maybe a slogan -- and, if that brand is used on all stationary and print materials -- then your patrons will come to recognize that brand or logo as "the library"
- When people see the name of your library, they must immediately know that this is the place to go for free access to balanced and authoritative information.

### **Your Library's Reputation**

- Your library should strive to be the "information" center for your community
- Your library should be known as a place that is clean, friendly and welcoming
- Your library should be known as a place where citizens can access the information they want -- knowing that anything they research or check out is private and confidential
- Your library should be a place where customers know they are getting the best, most accurate, up-to-date and compelling information
- Your library should be a place where children can come and dream about their future -- what they can become when they grow up
- Your library should be a place where citizens can imagine their lives differently -- they can travel to distant lands, learn about other people and cultures, learn new skills, improve their quality of life

### **Your Small Library**

- Does not have room for every book or all information that is published

- Should strive to have only the most compelling information on the shelf -- if a book does not circulation, consider "weeding and withdrawing" it from the collection -- AFTER you have displayed it, brought attention to it, etc.
- Always be looking at your collection with fresh eyes. How do your customers see the library when they first enter? Is it welcoming? Friendly? Bright?

### **Keep an Eye on the Future**

- Be aware of any new industry being built in your area
- As the highways and transportation infrastructure are improved, commerce and trade will move rapidly through the country. This could mean some villages grow to cities, county populations increase and the overall workforce changes
- The children born today will not know about or be able to relate to a communist regime. Your public library has the opportunity to provide information to spark imaginations and help people turn their dreams into reality