Indianapolis Public Library

Marketing Plan

Bethany Akerhielm
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Central Library
40 E. St. Clair St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204
317-275-4100
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Executive Summary

The Indianapolis Public Library is a large, dynamic library system in Indianapolis, Indiana. The system is made up of the Central Library and 22 branches throughout Marion County. High quality programming opportunities are available at branches throughout the county, and digital resources are constantly being expanded and improved. The mission of the Indianapolis Public Library is stated below:

The Indianapolis Public Library is the community’s place to access essential information resources, technology, programs and services; foster reading and learning; and promote the social, economic, recreational and lifelong learning interests of its diverse population.

A high importance has been placed on early literacy efforts, and the service in this marketing campaign is just another small piece to a large puzzle in this area. Grab n’ Go theme bags are marketed to busy families as an easy way to access quality fiction and nonfiction materials for children under the age of 10. Tips and ideas for extension activities are also included in bags. Using a variety of promotion tools, the marketing campaign has been designed to reach busy families and parents, and multiple small outreach events will occur as a way to reach non-library users. Success of this campaign will bring new library users and can help improve the library experience for existing users.
Theoretical Foundation

A variety of promotional techniques will be used for this proposed service. Research has been done in order to learn about the effectiveness of these techniques, as well as how they can be used when promoting early literacy specifically. Research also included approaches for data collection. Here are the main articles that guided the planning for this service:


- Potter stresses the importance of having a clear vision of what the outcome of a promoted service looks like. He also focuses on marketing services to the particular lifestyle of a patron group, ensuring that marketing efforts are ongoing, and the importance of libraries understanding the value they offer their patrons.


- The use of Facebook and Twitter helps library personnel reach out and connect with patrons, but it also allows patrons to easily communicate and connect with library personnel in terms of customer service. Focus also needs to be placed on the reason social media is being used, and who it is being used to reach.


- Peifer and Perez explore the importance of parental involvement in early literacy, as well as efforts to provide quality materials to families and parents. Surveys and interviews were used to reach parents in order to learn about behaviors surrounding early literacy.
Market Audit and Research

Analysis

Vision:
The Indianapolis Public Library will continue to be one of the best library systems in the United States as measured by its responsiveness and relevance to the community’s information and learning needs, the excellent stewardship of its resources and the high-quality service it delivers to the public.

According to U.S. Census Bureau statistics, Indianapolis has a population of 820,442 people. 7.6% of the population is made up of children under the age of five, and 25% is children under the age of 18. The median household income is $42,704, and 18.9% of Indianapolis residents fall below the poverty level. 61.8% of the population is White, 27.5% is Black or African American, and 9.4% is Hispanic.

A 4-star library according to The Library Journal Index of Public Library Service, the Indianapolis Public Library is made up of the Central Library located downtown, and 22 branches throughout Marion County. Two bookmobiles provide library services to daycares and preschools, as well as in general community locations. There are approximately 700 people employed by IndyPL. In 2012, IndyPL saw numerous service statistic increases. Of those increases, there was an 8% increase in patron visits, up to 4.2 million, as well as a 16.4% increase in new borrowers with 36,172 people. The total number of registered borrows is 532,437 and 15.5 million items were circulated in 2012.

IndyPL offers patrons of all ages a variety of programs and events. In 2012, the Summer Reading Program drew over 58,000 participants. Other programs include storytime, job assistance, healthcare information sessions, computer classes, craft workshops, and author visits. Along with regularly scheduled programs, cultural events such as art exhibits and musical performances are also offered throughout the year.

In 2013, IndyPL launched their community-driven strategic planning process, called “Yours to Create.” Over six months, the role of the library in the community for 2015-2020 will be determined through task force studies and steering committees. The July launch of this initiative was a major marketing focus for the library, and as the process develops it will continue to be a main focus. Another main marketing focus has been the partnership of IndyPL with the United Way of Central Indiana for an early literacy initiative called The Early Readers Club.
In terms of competition, IndyPL faces competition with bookstores and online information sources. For programming and events, competitors include The Children’s Museum, the Indianapolis Art Museum, the Indiana State Museum, and Indy Parks and Recreation, though IndyPL provides more free ongoing programs and events than most of these groups.

Environmental Scan

Political/Legal Factors

Ongoing debates within the state about a proposed ban on gay marriage have attracted attention of organizations and businesses in Indianapolis. The outcome of this ban could greatly impact the attractiveness of the state for potential employers. If Indiana is not attractive for new business, library funding and use could decline. Another political factor that has potential to impact patrons is the changes surrounding Medicaid. If Medicaid in Indiana does not expand, patrons who previously received benefits will be greatly impacted. Many of these patrons may have different information needs as a result of this change.

Economic Factors

The unemployment rate remains consistent with the national average, meaning patrons will likely continue to rely on the public libraries for resume assistance, computer use, and job research. The library budget is not likely to increase, which affects hiring and new programs and service availability. Numerous used bookstores throughout town serve as competitors in terms of how Marion county residents access books, as well as e-book purchases.

Social Factors

According to STATS Indiana, the population of 0-4 year olds and 5-9 year olds in Marion County is projected to steadily increase by approximately 4000 children in each group by 2020. Along with this, the Burmese population of Indianapolis is a new group that has been on the rise. 13% of the Burmese population in the US resides in Indiana, with a majority residing in Indianapolis. The Burmese American Community Institute predicts that the number of Burmese refugees to settle in Indianapolis could be as great as 20,000 to 30,000 in coming years. Library branches in areas of town where these populations are high will have the opportunity to provide service to this growing population.

Technological Factors

E-book and music downloads from IndyPL continue to be popular, and the number of materials available for download is increasing as well. Web branch visits increased by 6.8% from 2011 to 2012. All of the branches have pages that
are used to promote programs, events, and services. Twitter and Pinterest are also used, primarily by staff members at the Central Library. Free wireless Internet is available at all branches. Other spots in the community with free wireless Internet include some, but not all, YMCAs, select coffee shops and restaurants, shopping malls, and most area hospitals.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

• IndyPL continues to excel in providing a wide range of unique programming opportunities.
• E-book downloads more than doubled between 2011 and 2012.
• Continued funding for early literacy initiatives is available from a variety of sources, including the Early Readers Club, On the Road to Reading, and a new story theatre at the East 38th Street branch.
• Partnerships with the Indianapolis Colts and Indiana Pacers help reach a wide audience with promotions related to each team.

Weaknesses

• Outreach mobile visits decreased by 12% in 2012.
• According to 2014 Budget Presentation, within a six-month period, only 28% of patrons reported using computers at the library.

Opportunities

• Two new electronic resources will be available for patrons within the next year: Zinio and Tumblebooks.
• Partnership with The United Way of Central Indiana continues to strengthen, opening up doors for programs and services.

Threats

• While the 2014 budget was approved, many employees will not receive raises again. This has been an ongoing issue, causing unrest with employees and the union.
In order to gather information from parents about services they use or would be interested in, a survey would be an effective method to reach busy parents. The survey would be advertised in the library, in schools and daycares, pediatrician’s offices, and community recreation centers in order to reach library and non-library users. Facebook would be another way to spread awareness about the survey. The survey could be taken in paper at the library, or online. Participants in the survey will be entered in a drawing for a free book for their child as well as a $25 gift card for a local grocery store. Hopefully this incentive encourages participation. The survey will be brief, as parents are busy, and most questions will be multiple-choice format. Information and data from the survey will be compiled in order to learn about how much time parents spend at the library and how likely they would be to use the new service. Here are some sample question options for the survey:

• How often do you visit the library?
• How much time, on average, do you spend in the library when you do visit?
• What do you use the public library for? Circle all that apply.
• How likely would you be to use a small collection of children’s books related to one topic that also included ideas for activities at home that could be checked out as one item?
• Here are some examples of themes for the collections: Bugs, Sports, Pets, Things that Go, Food. What other themes would your child be interested in?
• What would make you more likely to visit the library with your child? Circle all that apply.
Market Segmentation

In Marion County, 28.6% of residents are families with children ( STATS Indiana). The parents of these families are the market segment for this service, more specifically the parents of children under the age of 10. This includes users and nonusers of the library. Included in this segment are working parents, single parents, and grandparents or other caregivers. Here are key characteristics of this market segment:

• Parents and families tend to be busy, and need services that are convenient for a variety of schedules.
• Need activities and experiences for their children that are free or inexpensive.
• They want to foster early literacy, but may or may not know the best way to do so.

Service Identification

As an additional facet of the Library’s Ready to Read Initiative, The Indianapolis Public Library would like to add Grab ‘n Go theme bags as a new service for children and families. Each bag would contain a combination of six fiction and nonfiction books and a list of extension activity ideas and resources. This service enables the market segment discussed to easily connect their children to high-quality materials and ideas for extending learning experiences beyond reading. Because the bags are prepackaged, busy families are able to quickly pick out a bag based on the interests of their child and check it out as one item.

This Grab ‘n Go Theme bag service is a Star on the BCG Matrix. While it may be costly up front, families need easy to use, quick ideas for promoting literacy and making learning connections at home. Initial cost will be high because canvas tote bags, books, and labeling materials will need to be purchased. Investing in quality materials for young children and families that are easily accessible helps to ensure that children have the necessary early literacy skills to be prepared to learn to read. Because the population of young children in Marion County will continue to rise, this service is likely to have a high return.
Mission

Indianapolis Public Library Mission:
The Indianapolis Public Library is the community's place to access essential information resources, technology, programs and services; foster reading and learning; and promote the social, economic, recreational and lifelong learning interests of its diverse population.

Goals and Objectives

• Inform library and non-library using parents about Grab n’ Go bag service.
  ○ Use promotional materials in the library and around the community, as well as Facebook, to publicize the service.

• Familiarize parents and families with the new service and what it offers.
  ○ Allow patrons opportunities to explore the bags and ask questions about activity ideas in library branches, at festivals, in doctor’s offices, and in schools and daycares.

• Give Marion County parents resources for developing early literacy skills.
  ○ Use Facebook, the children’s blog, and handouts to share early literacy tips and ideas.

Timeline

November 2013:
• Create marketing plan and promotional materials

December 2013:
• Put together press kit
• Contact daycares, preschools, festival contacts, and pediatrician’s offices about setting up display tables to allow parents to see Grab n’ Go bags at the beginning of 2014. Send promotional materials to these community contacts.
Inform all staff members of new service and the promotion plans. Make materials available on Intranet so all branches are able to promote the service in January.

January 2014:

- Grab n’ Go bags will be available in library branches
- Begin promoting on Facebook, Library homepage, the children’s blog
- Display flyers, posters, bookmarks in all library branches, preschools and daycares, and doctor’s offices
- Library children’s program leaders begin mentioning new service to participants, and have Grab n’ Go bags and informational material available at all programs

February 2014:

- Continue with online and print promotions
- Make no less than one visit per week to different community locations (daycares, preschools, doctor’s offices, festivals) to answer questions and let parents and children explore the Grab n’ Go bags

March 2014:

- Evaluate first two months of service

Roles and Responsibilities

Program Development:

- Print fliers and bookmarks
- Send materials out to all branches and Outreach
- Organize press kits
- Lead evaluation process

All Children’s Staff:

- WOMM promotion of service in branches and at programs
- Assist patrons with questions regarding Grab n’ Go
- Hang fliers and display bookmarks in individual branch children’s departments
- Staff pop-up open houses when necessary (when Outreach staff is unavailable)
• Post to individual branch Facebook page, or send post to Facebook manager of that branch

Outreach Manager/Librarians:
• Contact daycares and preschools to set up pop-up open houses
• Primary staff for pop-up open houses and festivals
• Distribute bookmarks, fliers, and Grab n’ Go bags to daycares, preschools, and doctor’s offices

Budget
The costs for promoting this service are low. Paper will be needed to print flyers and bookmarks, and Facebook, webpage, and blog promotions are free. Printing work will be done through the company that prints all library promotional materials, so Program Development will be responsible for communicating with the printing company. The cost for these materials will come from the Program Development budget.
Communication: The Marketing Mix

Promotion

Grab n’ Go theme bag promotions will be an integrated marketing campaign including print materials in a variety of locations throughout the community, use of social media and library website, and small, informal events held in places throughout the community that busy families spend time. In terms of print materials, posters, flyers, and bookmarks will be displayed in the library. Other places these items will be on display or available include daycares and preschools, pediatrician’s offices, and at any festivals where library representations is arranged. Each branch will be sent a variety of prewritten Facebook posts that they can post to their individual branch’s page. They will be encouraged to share information about the Grab n’ Go bags with other community organizations and schools that they are connected with on Facebook as well. The library website will feature a short press release about the new service, which will include photographs of the contents of one of the bags, as well as a sample of the activity ideas included. Information about Grab n’ Go bags will also be shared by librarians at children’s and family programs. Finally, small, informal events will be planned for the lobbies of daycares and preschools as a way to show parents and children what the bags have to offer and answer any questions they may have about them. This is also a way for us to reach non-library users, and library card applications will be available at these events. A table staffed with one or two library staff members will be set up in a common area such as a lobby at the end of the day when children are being picked up. When these events occur, bookmarks will be sent home with the children with information about the bags. Grab n’ Go bags will also be available in pediatrician’s offices throughout Indianapolis during at least the first two months of the promotion as a way for families to learn about them and explore the contents. Non-library users will also be reached at community festivals where a library booth is set up. Sample bags will be available there for parents and children to explore. QR codes will be used on the print promotion materials, but all of the key information will also be on the materials for people who do not have smart phones or QR readers.
Message

The central message of this campaign is that despite being busy, families can still enjoy books and learning together. The flyers, bookmarks, displays, and Facebook and website posts will raise awareness of this message. Interest and desire will be created by sharing photographs of the bags, book, and activity cards then learning what types of themes parents and children will be most interested in. The message action will take place during the pop-up open houses at preschools and daycares and at festivals when parents and children first have the opportunity to physically explore the bags and their contents. Library staff will be able to answer questions and make connections with patrons while promoting the message.

Branding

The logo design for this service features the name, Grab n’ Go in Futura MD Bold. This font fits in visually with the other fonts used on the IndyPL webpage. The image on the logo is of a child reading a large, colorful book. The blue, orange, and green colors featured on the logo also coordinate with colors used on the webpage.

Public relations

Open meetings will take place at the daycares and preschools where the pop-up open houses occur. Library staff will use these meetings as an opportunity to connect with library and non-library user parents and children and share with them valuable resources the library has to offer.

Library staff will use WOMM during programs for children and families, as well as while assisting patrons.

Facebook will be used regularly throughout the campaign to promote the service. Posts will be made on individual branch Facebook pages. The posts will include the Grab n’ Go logo or a photograph of a bag. Here is a sample post:

Attention parents! Have you heard about our newest service for children under 10? We now offer prepackaged bags of books and activity ideas to extend learning fun beyond the books! The bags are called ‘Grab n’ Go’ and checkout will be a breeze…just one barcode for the entire bag. Quick, easy, and fun…check out the bags or ask a Children’s Department staff member the next time you stop in!
Publicity

Print fliers (Appendix A) will be used for display in branches and community locations. Print fliers (Appendix B) will be used to promote the pop-up open houses in daycares and preschools. Bookmarks (Appendix C) will be available for patrons in branches and handed out in schools to children and parents. The fourth main publicity tool will be displays in branches of Grab n’ Go bags and their contents. Also included in these displays will be samples of activity cards and finished products of sample activities listed such as crafts or projects.

Advertising

Funds are not available for paid advertising for this service, as most promotion will be a grassroots effort to reach the market segment through WOMM and printed promotion materials. Sponsorship will not play a role unless funding for the Grab n’ Go service is supported by a particular organization. If that funding occurs, promotional materials would need to be reworked to include the logo of the sponsoring organization. These details would be discussed with that organization prior to printing. At this time, we do not have an outside sponsor.

Advocacy

The Indianapolis Public Library strives to provide materials, services, and programs to a diverse group of patrons, and knowing who these patrons are and the needs they have is important. We have continued to place importance on promoting early literacy and learning with our young patrons, so this campaign fits in with learning what it is that our patrons need and want, and finding the way to deliver that to them.

Internal Marketing

The service will first be shared at the monthly Children’s Services Meeting, where the details about the service and promotional materials and events will be explained. After that, an email will go out to all staff members informing them of the new service and the upcoming publicity and promotion surrounding Grab n’ Go. All of this will take place before the service starts. Copies of promotional materials and the logo will all be available for any staff member to access through the Intranet, and the prewritten Facebook post ideas will be sent out to each branch staff member who is in charge of that particular Facebook page.
**Evaluation**

The Grab n’ Go marketing campaign will be evaluated by gathering circulation statistics of the bags on a monthly basis. If bags are not circulating after the first two months of service, the plan will be reevaluated and adjusted to better reach patrons. Along with this, feedback on the service and the promotion will be gathered through informal conversational interview between children’s staff and families in branches. For example, a children’s staff member may ask a parent if they have heard of the Grab n’ Go service, and then record the answer on a tally sheet at the children’s services desk. If they say yes, the staff member can continue by asking if they’ve checked one out and what they think of them. This information can be sent to Program Development.

**Reflection**

This marketing campaign was designed with the market segment very much in mind: busy parents. Through working in Outreach, I’ve interacted with busy parents and daycare owners and teachers who want to provide quality experiences for their kids, but are busy and unaware of the available services. Rather than waiting and hoping that these people decide one day to go visit the library, this marketing plan takes a step outside the box and goes where families are: schools, daycares, doctor’s offices, festivals. Especially because this plan markets a service that is billed as fast and easy, it was especially important for me to design the promotion ideas to fit that bill as well.
Resources

“About the Library.” Indianapolis Public Library. N.d. Web.  8 Nov. 2013  http://www.imcpl.org/about/


Feel like you and your kids are always **RUSHING** around?

The Indianapolis Public Library is proud to announce a new service for families with children ages 10 and under:

**Grab n’ Go Theme Bags**

Each bag includes six books centered around one theme and an activity card with easy ways to promote learning and literacy at home!

Themes include:
- ABCs
- COUNTING
- BUGS
- SPORTS
- PETS
- DANCING

Check us out online for more information!

Bags are available at Central Library and ALL branches!!!
Join us for a Pop-Up Open House!

at Little Learner Academy

Feb. 4th & 5th
4:00-6:00 pm

The Indianapolis Public Library is excited to tell busy Little Learner Academy families about our newest service: Grab n’ Go Theme Bags!

We will be visiting the school to give you and your children an opportunity to check out the bags. Library card applications will be available.

ABCs
COUNTING
BUGS
SPORTS
PETS
DANCING

Check us out online for more information!
Love **BUGS**?

Check out Grab n’ Go Theme Bags for six books and easy activity ideas to try at home!

Available at ALL IndyPL branches.

Love **SPORTS**?

Check out Grab n’ Go Theme Bags for six books and easy activity ideas to try at home!

Available at ALL IndyPL branches.

Love **PETS**?

Check out Grab n’ Go Theme Bags for six books and easy activity ideas to try at home!

Available at ALL IndyPL branches.