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Cecil County Public Library
Marketing & Communications Planning

Helping a growing library system strengthen how it communicates with both staff and the community—resulting in clearer messaging, improved coordination, and expanded outreach capacity.

The Opportunity

In 2022, Cecil County Public Library (CCPL) was a six-branch library system serving a community of 100,000 people in Cecil County, Maryland.

They saw the need for a broader marketing and communications plan for CCPL. They had a strong brand and a new website that was redesigned during the pandemic to serve customers during lockdown. They also had strong marketing and communications strategies in place, but wanted to pull these together into a plan while exploring new strategies such as **email marketing segmentation**.

As the community had grown, so had the library system. There was a lot of hiring and change, as employees moved into different positions. In response to this, leadership identified the need for internal communications and an Intranet to engage employees in communications while providing a central "hub" for internal information to help enable better marketing.

The Approach

CAC worked with CCPL to:

- Develop a comprehensive Marketing & Communications plan based on CCPL's priorities.
- Identify **key metrics** for measuring CCPL's marketing and communications efforts and create a **data dashboard**.
- Create a 12-month **Content Calendar** to help staff plan ahead, anticipate needs, and identify the strategies needed to be successful.
- Lead **focus groups** with employees to get feedback and determine best strategies for internal communications.
- Recommend a Site Structure and Content Categories for the new Intranet.
- Create a cadence and formats/strategies for internal communications (Face-to-Face, Email, Intranet, Video).

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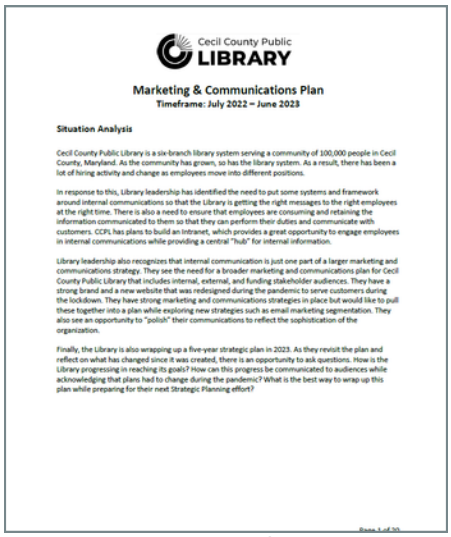
Deliverables & Documents

- **Strategy**: Comprehensive marketing & communications plan aligned with priorities.
- **Systems**: Data dashboard + metrics framework.
- **Execution**: 12-month content calendar + channel strategy.
- **Internal alignment:** Intranet + communication cadence.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Marketing & Communications Plan

Timeframe: July 2022 – June 2023

Situation Analysis

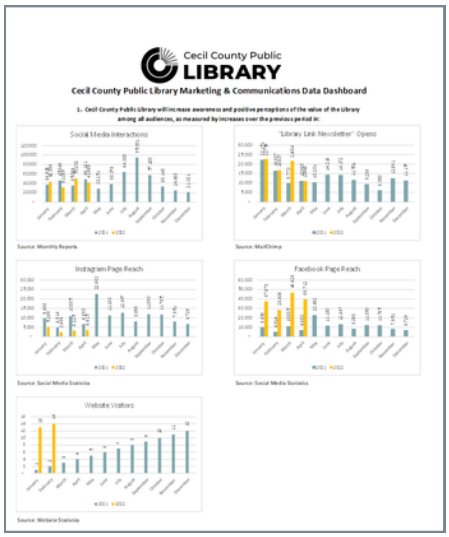
Cecil County Public Library is a six-branch library system serving a community of 100,000 people in Cecil County, Maryland. As the community has grown, so has the library system. As a result, there has been a lot of hiring activity and change as employees move into different positions.

In response to this, Library leadership has identified the need to put some systems and framework around internal communications so that the Library is getting the right messages to the right employees at the right time. There is also a need to ensure that employees are consuming and retaining the information communicated to them so that they can perform their duties and communicate with customers. CCPL has plans to build an Intranet, which provides a great opportunity to engage employees in internal communications while providing a central "hub" for internal information.

Library leadership also recognizes that internal communication is just one part of a larger marketing and communications strategy. They see the need for a broader marketing and communications plan for Cecil County Public Library that includes internal, external, and funding stakeholder audiences. They have a strong brand and a new website that was redesigned during the pandemic to serve customers during the lockdown. They have strong marketing and communications strategies in place but would like to pull these together into a plan while exploring new strategies such as email marketing segmentation. They also see an opportunity to "polish" their communications to reflect the sophistication of the organization.

Finally, the Library is also wrapping up a five-year strategic plan in 2023. As they revisit the plan and reflect on what has changed since it was created, there is an opportunity to ask questions. How is the Library progressing in reaching its goals? How can this progress be communicated to audiences while acknowledging that plans had to change during the pandemic? What is the best way to wrap up this plan while preparing for their next Strategic Planning effort?

Strategic Marketing & Communications Plan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Cecil County Public Library Marketing & Communications Data Dashboard

1. Cecil County Public Library will increase awareness and positive perceptions of the value of the Library among all audiences, as measured by increases over the previous period in:

Social Media Interactions

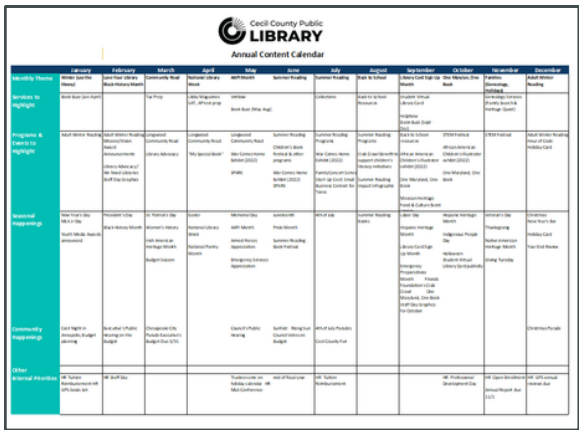
"Library Link Newsletter" Opens

Instagram Page Reach

Facebook Page Reach

Website Visitors

Marketing Data Dashboard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Annual Content Calendar

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Monthly Theme	Winter (see the library)	Love Your Library Black History Month	Community Read	National Library Week	AAPI Month	Summer Reading	Summer Reading	Back to School	Library Card Sign-Up Month	One Maryland, One Book	Families (Genealogy, tutoring)	Adult Winter Reading
Services to highlight	Book Buzz (Jan-April)		Tax Prep	Libby Magazines (all 4 focus prep)	Libby Book Buzz (May-Aug)		Collections	Back to School Resources	Student Virtual Library Card Helpline Book Buzz (Sept-Dec)		Genealogy Services (Family Search & Heritage Quest)	
Programs & Events to highlight	Adult Winter Reading	Adult Winter Reading Mission/Vision Award announcements Library Advocacy / We Need Libraries / Staff Day Graphics	Longwood Community Read Library Advocacy	Longwood Community Read	Longwood Community Read Mar Comics Home Exhibit (2022) SPARK	Summer Reading Children's Book Festival & other programs Mar Comics Home Exhibit (2022) SPARK	Summer Reading Programs Mar Comics Home Exhibit (2022) Family/Low-Cost Series Start-Up Cost Small Business Contest for Teens	Summer Reading Programs Crab Craze/Benefit for Children's Book Festival Literacy initiatives	Back to School Resources Mar Comics Home Exhibit (2022) One Maryland, One Book Mission/Heritage Food & Culture Event	STEM Festival African American Children's Illustrator exhibit (2022) One Maryland, One Book	STEM Festival	Adult Winter Reading Hour of Code Holiday Card
Seasonal Happenings	New Year's Day MLK Jr Day Youth Media Awards announced	President's Day Black History Month	St. Patrick's Day Women's History Month Irish American Heritage Month Budget Season	Easter National Library Week National Poetry Month	Memorial Day AAPI Month Armed Forces Appreciation Emergency Services Appreciation	Juneteenth Pride Month Summer Reading Book Festival	4th of July Summer Reading Starts	Summer Reading Ends	Labor Day Hispanic Heritage Month Library Card Sign Up Month Emergency Preparedness Month Friends Foundation Gala Chef Maryland, One Book Staff Day Graphics for October	Hispanic Heritage Month Indigenous Peoples Day Halloween Student Virtual Library Card/Activity	Veteran's Day Thanksgiving Native American Heritage Month Giving Tuesday	Christmas New Year's Eve Holiday Card Year End Review
Community Happenings	Cecil Night in Annapolis, Budget planning	Executive's Public Hearing on the Budget	Chesapeake City Parade Executive's Budget Due (CTL)		Council's Public Hearing	Summer Reading Kick-Off Council Votes on Budget	4th of July Parades Cecil County Fair					Christmas Parade
Other Internal Priorities	HR: Tuition Reimbursement HR GPS Goals Set	HR: Staff Day			Tuskegeenside on Holiday calendar MLA Conference	HR: end of Fiscal year	HR: Tuition Reimbursement			HR: Professional Development Day	HR: Open Enrollment Annual Report due (1/1)	HR: GPS annual review due

Marketing & Communications Plan Content Calendar


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Marketing & Communications Plan Strategies & Tactics

	Paid	Earned	Social	Owned
Existing	• Flyers • Rack Cards	• News media articles or stories • Peachjar (discontinued) and school system announcements • Individual school pages • School PSAs	• Facebook o Post(s) o Pinned post o Header o About content - hours, location, other info	Website • Website Alert • Website Banners • Events • Other
	• Advertising (print) – 2x week • Seasonal magazines • Special editions • Paid Chamber ads	• Radio (103.7) free PSAs • Chamber free promotion	• Instagram o Post(s) o LinkTree • Targeted business account	• LINK Newsletter – printed and email • Opt-in e-blasts (8,000; 7,000 active) • Friends/Foundation e-blasts
	• Paid Facebook Boosts	• One-page document sent to water bill recipients (Rising Sun)	• Friends/Foundation Facebook	Catalog • Notices • Catalog Alert Message
	• Park panels – change seasonally, can include a flyer or two	• Free ad in community services newsletter	• Targeted Facebook groups – readers, businesses	• Telephone message scripts
	• Theater playbills	• Outreach – attends events, festivals, with booths and handing out materials (20+ a year) • Branch outreach		• Automated notices (recently updated) – holds, overdues, account info, etc.
				• Digital Displays • Posters (plotter)

Marketing & Communications Plan Strategic & Tactics Audit

Results

"Cordelia's step-by-step plan was organized in a way that was clear and helped us invite different staff to each topic meeting to bring a variety of perspectives to the communications plan. We had multiple levels of participation, including our Executive Director, Manager of Communications and Development, IT, HR, Graphic Design and Youth Services."

"We developed and are still using templates for internal communications, branded based on department who is communicating. We have pre-emptively created some talking points and press releases for emergency communications. Follow the completion of our communications plan we developed a staff intranet … [including] a Communication portal for all staff communications and links to frequently needed sites. We are now working on team work sites for groups such as public services, each branch and department."

"We [also] hired a full-time digital content coordinator position to help with eblasts, segmentation of email; social media planning and traffic as well as website oversight … [and] We significantly increased the email marketing budget in order to grow the list of subscribers."

– Frazier Walker, Communications and Development Manager, Cecil County Public Library