

CLO'S February 2008 E-COMMUNIQUE

Dear CLO members,

Community Literacy of Ontario is pleased to present its February 2008 Members' E-Communiqué.

Topics covered in this E-Communiqué are:

1. Adaptive software
2. Laubach Literacy Ontario's E-Magazine
3. National Volunteer Week
4. HR Tools for Non-Profit Organizations
5. A New Issue of the Learning Edge!
6. CLO's 2008 Marketing E-Bulletin



Adaptive Software

Action Read, a community based literacy agency in Guelph, has done some wonderful work in assessing various adaptive software for adult literacy students.

- Here is the link to their assessment and recommendations for writing software:
www.actionread.com/content/adaptec/writing_software_recommendations.html
- Here is the link to their assessment and recommendations for reading software:
www.actionread.com/content/adaptec/reading_software_recommendations.html
- Here is the overall link to their valuable project on adaptive software:
www.actionread.com/content/adaptec/reading_software_project.html

Laubach Literacy Ontario's E-Magazine

Laubach Literacy Ontario has just release a new issue of its E-Magazine. This resource is an interactive, online monthly magazine for students and practitioners. This exciting issue contains articles on Integrating Essential Skills into Literacy Tutor Training; Musiccovery.com; Independent Living; and Chocolate! To check it out, please visit: www.laubach-on.ca/Trainingpost/emag.html.

National Volunteer Week

National Volunteer Week will be celebrated during the week of April 27 to May 3, 2008.

Volunteer Canada is the national lead organization for this important week. Please check out their website to access posters, postcards, volunteer recognition materials, free downloads, tips in event planning, and for strategies to promote volunteering. Please see: www.volunteer.ca/nvw

HR Tools for Non-Profit Organizations

The HR Council for the Voluntary and Non-profit Sector (HR Council) works with organizations, educators, labour and government to identify and address issues related to paid employment in the voluntary and non-profit sector. They have recently updated their website with a wealth of valuable info on HR issues and tools for non-profit organizations. See: <http://hrcouncil.ca/home.cfm>

An interesting feature of this website is a section for board members and what they need to know about HR and related tools. Please see: <http://hrcouncil.ca/hr-toolkit/access-point-board.cfm>

A New Issue of the Learning Edge!

A new Issue of the highly-regarded "The Learning Edge" has just been released. This interactive online resource for adult students has received rave reviews. Please see: www.thewclc.ca/edge/

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The Marketing Continuum

Community Literacy of Ontario's March 2008 E-Communique on Marketing

Community Literacy of Ontario received funding from the Adult Learning, Literacy and Essential Skills Program (Government of Canada) for a project called: *"Making the Connection: Effective Program Promotion in Literacy Agencies."* This valuable project had multiple goals, including:

- Conducting research into the needs and current best practices in marketing in Ontario's community literacy agencies.
- Conducting print and Internet-based research on effective practices in marketing in areas external to literacy, including the broader not-for-profit sector and the private sector.
- Holding a focus group with the CLO board of directors on marketing and outreach needs and practices.
- Writing a resource guide on Marketing and Outreach.
- Offering two online training workshops on tools and strategies for effective marketing and outreach.
- Developing a self-directed online training module on marketing.



This is the third of three E-Communiqués that Community Literacy of Ontario is sending out as part of this project. It was written by Karen Farrar, Project Researcher/Writer.

Literacy agencies are actively engaged in marketing; however, sometimes our marketing can have mixed results. We feel as though we've experienced some success, but perhaps not as much as we hoped. Community Literacy of Ontario's upcoming *Marketing Ourselves: A resource guide for Ontario's community literacy agencies* includes a tool that can help you to better analyse your marketing efforts.

If it is successful, our marketing will generate awareness, interest, desire, decision and a commitment to our programs. This progression from awareness to commitment is known as the **marketing continuum**. What this means is that our target markets begin with an awareness of our programs and our effective marketing directs them towards committing to a marketing exchange with us.

Once we have our target market's attention, they are somewhere on a continuum between awareness and commitment. Good marketing keeps the target flowing through the steps, generating momentum all the way to commitment. Poor or incomplete marketing is likely to cause a break in the continuum with the target not following through the process.

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Marketing Strategy

Make people aware of your agency and what it offers them.

Generate interest by emphasizing the relevancy of your program to the target market.

Convey the value of your program because it answers the target's specific needs or wants.

Do what it takes to help the target buy-in.

Do what it takes to keep the target committed by affirming their decision to buy-in to your agency or programs.

Target Response

Awareness



Interest



Desire



Decision



Commitment

Much of the marketing that literacy agencies have done in the past keeps us at the first or second stage in the marketing continuum, i.e. of awareness and interest. We even speak generally about "creating awareness" of our programs. Awareness is good – as long as we recognize that it is just the first in a series of connected stages.

Ideally, it is the appropriate marketing mix we have developed that will keep our target on track from awareness to commitment. Product, price, promotion and place all work to capture our target's buy-in. Customer service will affirm the decision and keep the target committed to a marketing exchange with us. If the target loses interest at some point, then our marketing may very well be faulty. The marketing continuum can help us to assess how well our mix is working.

Learners and the Marketing Continuum

For example, think about learners who have not made it past a phone call. Where were they on the continuum? At what point in time did they decide to move in another direction? We know how difficult it is for many learners to make this initial call, so we can assume that they are at a point of interest or even desire and not awareness only. While we might feel that we are not able to make changes to some areas of program and policy, issues around call back, content, teaching structure and unhelpful contact are usually comparatively easy to fix. The marketing continuum gives you a structure within which to reflect and then act on these weaknesses in program marketing.

In their "Who Wants to Learn" study (2001) ABC CANADA found that less than half of those who contact a literacy organization actually enrol in a program. Forty-three percent of those who do not enrol cite program/policy related problems as the reason. Not being called back, long waiting lists, inconvenient course times, wrong content or teaching structure and unhelpful program contact are the major reasons cited for not enrolling.

(From *Literacy Basics: Learner Recruitment*)

Volunteers and the Marketing Continuum

Let's look at another example of how literacy agencies might use the marketing continuum. Imagine that you have set up a booth at a community fair where you hope to target retired professionals as volunteers. You set up your signs and put out your brochures. Throughout the fair, people stop to chat, look at your materials and pick up your brochures. The following week, you await the calls but only receive a very few, and these do not seem very promising. What went wrong? You were able to generate interest because people picked up your brochures, but you were not able to generate desire. Clearly, the message that people were looking for was not contained in the brochure. It is time to re-think the features and benefits of your program and your target market's wants and needs in relation to what you have to offer.

Partners and the Marketing Continuum

Think about partnerships that fizzle out after a few referrals. We know that there was an initial interest and possibly desire as well because we received those first referrals. If they dry up, it could be for a number of reasons that have nothing to do with our marketing. However, if we give the referral agency a call and arrange to meet, then we can hear from their point of view how the partnership is working. We can correct any misconceptions and address areas for improvement. Even showing interest and concern at this point can get things back on track.

Funders and the Marketing Continuum

When we apply for new funding, we are very aware of the marketing continuum. Literacy agencies know that we have to interest the prospective funder in a new project or worthy program that needs financial support to work. We craft our proposals very carefully and have no difficulty envisioning the enormous gulf between interest and commitment. If we are not successful, many funders will actually tell us where we failed on the marketing continuum. Sometimes after the funding has been received or in the case of a long-term funder, there can be a tendency to take the relationship for granted. To maintain interest we have to keep our marketing relationship in good shape.

In Conclusion

Ideally, we want all of our target markets to remain committed to us for as long as the exchange is mutually beneficial. Not all circumstances are within our control; we are not always able to analyse why a certain marketing exchange is no longer working very well. Sometimes our marketing has nothing to do with a completely unilateral decision others may make to quit a program, allow a partnership to lapse, volunteer elsewhere, or fund another program. But if we can reflect on where our target markets are on the marketing continuum, we have a useful tool for analysis and action.