

## The 5 Ps of Public Libraries – Progressive Promotion, Partnerships and Popular Programs

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### **ABSTRACT**

Baby boomers have been identified as a target group who have and will be accessing a range of services in particular public libraries where they can use their leisure time in a more productive, creative and meaningful way. The aim of this project is to entice them into the library by catering for their identified needs through progressive promotion, partnerships and popular programs. The following are some examples:

#### **Progressive Promotion**

We use modern technology such as [Vodcasts and Podcasts](#), [YouTube](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), to engage the community and promote our services, programs and events.

#### **Partnerships**

We have initiated a number of innovative partnerships which encourage baby boomers to utilise the library and enjoy the experience.

Some examples of the partnerships are:

- State Theatre Company – Scene It? – promote a selected play of the season
- Australia Japan [ese](#) Association – cultural promotional days, international Japanese display
- Council of the Aging – COTA – a book review section established in [its](#) magazine, for public libraries to promote articles about books, services, events and programs
- One Book One Burnside – various partnerships with authors, local businesses, artists and musicians

#### **Popular Programs**

Popular programs that are offered at the library include a variety of computer learning courses including buying and selling on Ebay, One Book One Burnside, Scene [It](#), social programs e.g. our music, art, craft and cooking demonstrations, language and genealogy classes.

## Introduction

The City of Burnside has an aging demographic with a high percentage of baby boomers with money and time at their disposal. According to Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 [1] statistics, Burnside has seen an increase in the number of residents aged over 50. Traditionally, older patrons have attended events in the library. We were offering a range of pleasant traditional library sessions, such as author visits and various musical programs. However, whilst events were popular we wanted a more strategic approach to engage this demographic. We recognised that by offering diverse, interesting and stimulating programs we could attract more people to the library.

The development and implementation of the Burnside Library Marketing Plan was the first strategic step taken in this direction. The plan identified gaps in our service and made a range of recommendations. [These](#) included:

- collection recommendations
- removal fees and changes to policies and procedures
- suggested changes to programs and events to engage baby boomers and youth
- [a new library service point](#)
- [a range of marketing tools, such as professionally developed newsletters and pamphlets](#)
- and the creation and appointment of a Marketing and Promotions Officer

## 1. PROGRESSIVE PROMOTION, PARTNERSHIPS AND POPULAR PROGRAMS

Ultimately the [marketing](#) plan highlighted the need for innovative programs, partnership and promotion.

### 1.1. PROGRESSIVE PROMOTION

Technology facilitates progressive promotion and we have harnessed this to advertise our programs, events and services. In 2009, we purchased a camera for the purpose of taking photos and video footage to place on our Social Networking Sites. By utilising technology, we have been able to broadcast a range of events for people who, for whatever reason, have been unable to visit the library; in essence creating a virtual presence.

- Podcasting and vodcasting a range of events and then placing [them](#) on our website <http://www.burnside.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=1463>, on YouTube, Facebook, Flickr and Blyty.

- Hosting the Miles Franklin Awards and then vodcasting the session which was [subsequently](#) used at the award ceremony screening.
- Implementing Reader Advisory training to all library staff to improve customer service and increase our focus on literacy, as well as introducing a One Book One City program to engage the community with a love of reading.

The library's newsletter has also had a major makeover in that it is now produced by a contracted graphic designer/printer using professional photographs of the library and library staff. We now have 3,000 on our emailing list.

We have utilised graphic design programs such as [Photostory](#) and [GIFanimator](#) to produce creative photographic images and promotion of events, services, programs, and ultimately [present](#) the library as a third space for Twitter, YouTube, Flickr and Blyty.

[We have developed](#) a creative, humorous and entertaining virtual tour of the library for YouTube and our website with our very own library mannequins Libby and Harry exploring the riches the library has to offer when the doors are closed.

## **1.2. PARTNERSHIPS**

The appointment of a Marketing and Promotions Officer has enabled time to be focused on the development of number of successful collaborative ventures and partnerships. The following are some examples of the collaborative relationships that have been developed:

1. The One Book One Burnside program is a successful partnership, which commenced in September 2007. Four books have been used in the program. Each book has been from a different author and genre. This program has been linked with local authors, the SA Writers Centre, local book shops and businesses, and has resulted in hundreds of people reading the same book.
2. Ongoing collaboration with community groups, musicians, theatre groups, service clubs and local businesses results in thousands of people visiting the library who otherwise would not. On average there are [seven](#) events a month held in the library, with up to 200 people attending.
3. Relationships have been established with local art clubs and artists to display and sell their work throughout the library. This has served to promote local art and to encourage the view that the library is a cultural centrepiece in the community.
4. A partnership with the State Theatre Company has provided the library with the opportunity to showcase a play of the current session. Last year the play was *The Memory Water* and this year the play is *Entertaining Mr Sloan*. Once again, this will attract a wider audience to the library and encourage the view that the library is very much a cultural space for the community.

5. Burnside library has developed a close relationship with the Australian Japanese Association, which has allowed us to highlight and promote our well-used Japanese collection. The collection has become an asset for the Japanese community within South Australia. Most recently, this partnership enabled the library to secure the performance of the Puppet Theatre GAUCHOS from Sapporo, Japan, whose [visit](#) to South Australia [was sponsored](#) by the Australian Japanese Association and the Waldorf School at Mount Barker.

### 1.3. POPULAR PROGRAMS

Burnside Library has always offered a variety of programs, but without a targeted and focussed approach. Since the employment of a Marketing and Promotions Officer the library has been able to introduce popular, more meaningful and relevant programs and events that encourage lifelong learning and enhance lifestyles. These include:

1. The establishment and monthly facilitation of a “Book Discussion Group” for visually impaired patrons who use digital technology (Audio-Read Navigators) from the Royal Society for the Blind. This group has also met with a sighted group, where the same text was discussed but with very different responses.
2. Computer courses which are used predominately by baby boomers and older people. The courses include Ebay buying and selling, downloading digital photos, Photostory. During last year's Every Generation month, the library trialled running Facebook classes for older participants with young people running the training and assisting as volunteers. This will now be offered as a [session](#) as part of the computer training courses.
3. Readers' Round Table – This program involves fortnightly tours of the library with a different emphasis each session. For example, one session will involve touring the library with a demonstration of the library catalogue, including LibraryThing. The following fortnight, the tour will focus on different collections within the library and discuss Nancy Pearl's doorways into such genres. This program has been popular with the older baby boomer generation.
4. Partners in Crime Club – This club was developed in response to the interest generated from our One Book One Burnside crime book – *Bye Bye Baby*. The group meets monthly [to](#) discuss crime books and also [to](#) hear [from](#) a range of speakers, including those in the field of crime such as detectives, and speakers from the local Sherlock Holmes Society.
5. Genealogy Club – An online survey conducted by the library highlighted an interest from the community in Family History. In response to this demand a Genealogy Club was established in the library. This is held once a month on a Thursday evening and involves participants listening to guest speakers, trouble shooting each other's genealogy problems, and learning how to use online family history resources.
6. Languages Other [T](#)han English programs – the library offers German and French conversation classes on a weekly basis. This has once again been implemented in response to a demand from a library survey.

## **2. OUTCOME**

A targeted approach to progressive promotion, partnerships and popular programs has resulted in a change of perception of the library for the community and an increase in the number of baby boomers using the library. We are now seen as a cultural centrepiece that offers not only books and computers, but also plays, art displays, musical events, cultural days and a library that uses a range of technology to promote these innovative partnerships and programs. Comments from customers in surveys and feedback forms identifies to us that patrons enjoy the range of services, events and programs that we now offer and see them as adding meaning and value to their lives.

## **REFERENCES**

[1] Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006, *City of Burnside Community Profile*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra.