

12-2013

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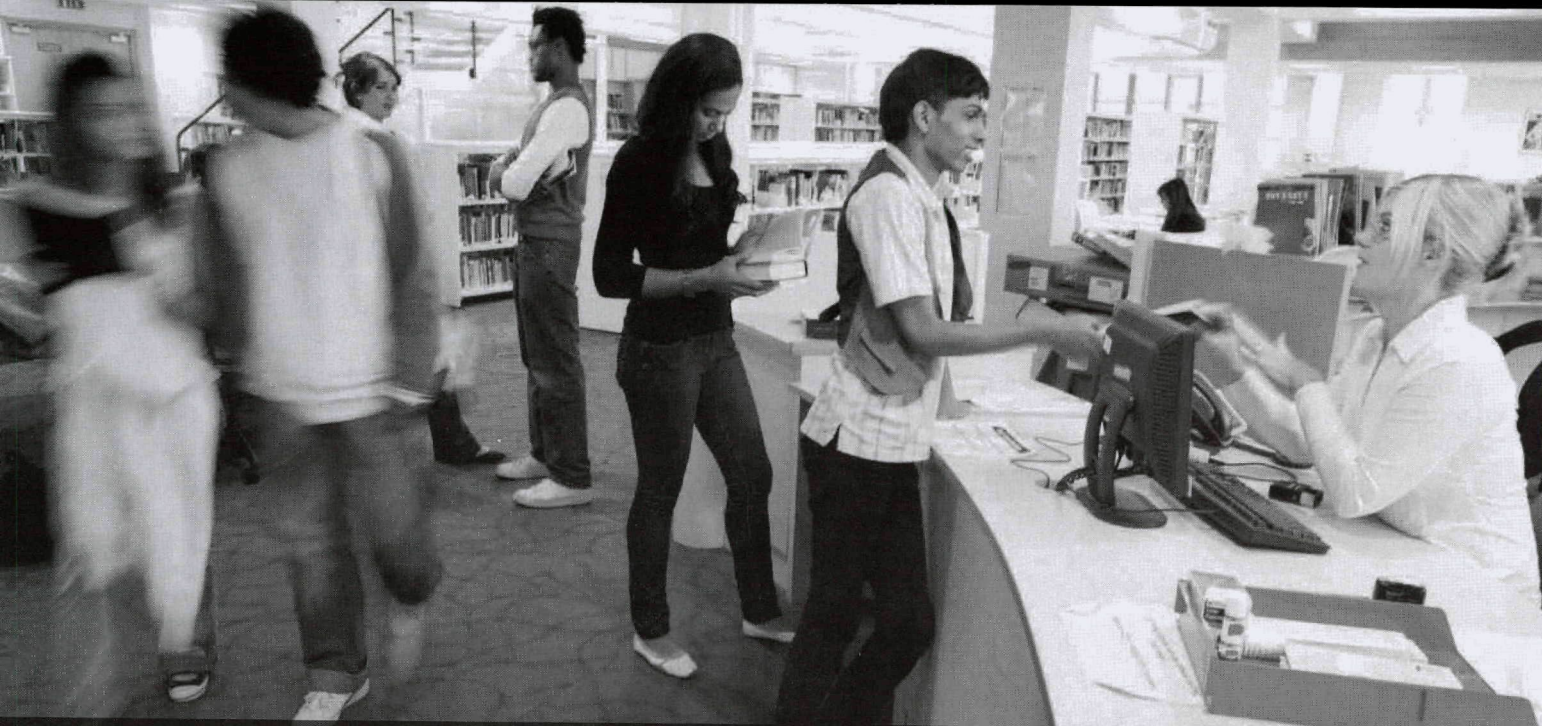
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Katy Kelly (2013). Catholic Academic Libraries and Print Promotional Materials. *Catholic Library World.* , 94-100
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Catholic Academic Libraries and Print Promotional Materials

by Katy Kelly, Communications and Outreach, Librarian/Assistant Professor, University of Dayton, Dayton, Ohio

Introduction

Advances in technology, publishing, and higher education have changed the scope of academic libraries tremendously. The results of these advances are the foundation for the importance of marketing libraries. Libraries face a challenging task of ensuring their communities understand changes to service and resources, which happen at a rapid pace. In order to stay relevant to their campus constituents, new and existing libraries need to market their services and resources on a continual basis.

Libraries are increasingly pressured to demonstrate their value within their campuses and communities. In terms of promotional materials, how do libraries communicate information, news, or fundraising with constituents? Are libraries moving away from traditional print promotional pieces due to smaller budgets and the availability of free communication tools in the form of social media? What types of print pieces are still being created on campuses and what factors into these projects? Given these questions, this study examines if and how Catholic academic libraries are producing print promotional materials (also referred to as marketing collateral).

Catholic academic libraries are the focus of this study for several reasons. Not only are Catholic academic libraries private institutions with varying budgets, but they hold special and unique collections of particular interest to a diverse group of constituents, including scholars, vowed religious, and laypersons. With these elements in mind, to what extent are Catholic academic libraries still using print promotional materials? This study aims to uncover trends concerning academic libraries' budgets, staffing, and production workflows with regard to promoting with print.



Literature Review

The majority of library literature that addresses print promotional materials specifically discusses the content of print versions of library strategic plans or annual reports (Sauer, Staines). Sauer found that the topics most often included in these documents are collection size, circulation statistics, cataloging and technical services, interlibrary loan, information technology, staff data, financial data, internal benchmarks, and comparisons to other libraries.¹ Why would an academic library produce a print strategic plan? The study found that consistently producing a print version assists as a managerial tool, tracking the library's past accomplishments and progress. Furthermore, Sauer found, print strategic plans can aid with developing the external viewpoint of the library and public relations. In another study, Staines found through a small sample size of academic research library institutions, only 39 percent produced annual reports. The themes that emerged showed annual reports most often mentioned space, offsite storage, assessment, development, and personnel.² Content similarities among academic libraries was of interest to this study, as well as the reasons why these print pieces were viewed as important to the libraries' mission and development.

Strategic plans and annual reports are two of ten categories of library promotional materials featured in an annual awards competition. Marketing collateral in libraries is celebrated through the American Library Association's Library Leadership and Management Association and Public Relations and Marketing Section's annual "Best in Show" awards.³ Through these annual marketing awards, print publicity is recognized for its excellence by experts outside of the library field. Entries are judged by a team of experts in the fields of public relations, graphic design, communications, and marketing. The materials are evaluated on content, design, and originality. The contest has included electronic marketing materials in addition to traditional print materials since 2010.

Many print marketing materials featured in the "Best in Show" awards demonstrate professional design work and thoughtful branding to clearly represent each institution. Branding is another topic of interest when discussing library marketing. Most of the literature on library branding is practical in nature. According to Shaffer, branding "embodies the tangible and intangible aspects of a product, service or entity."⁴ Beyond the context of promotional materials, branding broadly applies to all public points of contact for the library, such as the library's website and its physical location.⁵ In many cases branding goes beyond a logo, color scheme, and font selection; a library's brand describes its purpose and mission. Good branding must translate to good design because often it is the organization's designed products (e.g., logo, website, and brochure) that patrons remember.⁶ Many academic institutions have adopted university-wide branding

guidelines to ensure a consistent look and message across all marketing platforms. Although this may seem an effort reserved for departments looking to entice prospective students, many argue that branding can benefit all departments, including the library.⁷

Before considering what the end product might look like, libraries must recognize the need for staff who can dedicate time to producing marketing materials covered in the literature. Staffing models and production workflows are other important considerations for marketing. Cole-Bennett and Martin describe the development of a new print brochure that took nine months, five phases, and initially eight to ten staff members representing different departments.⁸ The team-based model of developing content for a brochure can ensure equal representation of information from the various areas of an academic library. It can also uncover previously unknown talent for writing or design. However, the same case study also described the importance of having a committed core group of individuals working on the project. In this case, three to four staff members created a large enough team to deal with the workload of the project, but small enough to circumvent the issues of larger groups (e.g., finding a time to meet, too many ideas). Appointing one team member with authority will ensure the project takes precedence over "normal" work duties when necessary. Smith describes a more formal approach using a permanent marketing committee to coordinate marketing activities.⁹ A standing committee with appointed members would ensure consistency of messaging and also workflow for staff members.

Individuals may have the primary responsibility of producing promotional materials. In their content analysis of academic library job descriptions, Okamoto and Polger found that librarians with promotional duties in their job description often also teach, provide research assistance, purchase materials for library collections, and perform other traditional librarian duties. Over 75 percent of the job descriptions that they analyzed featured the word "outreach" paired with another responsibility in the job title.¹⁰ Their study also showed that more and more academic libraries are hiring librarians into positions with promotional responsibilities.

In general, the literature cites marketing activities from an individual library's perspective on marketing. This study seeks to explore one particular population of academic libraries and their methods for promoting in print. It will



fill a gap in the literature by describing library practices pertaining to marketing materials, from content to staffing models.

Method

Catholic academic libraries were invited to complete an anonymous survey on their use of print promotional materials. The study included main libraries serving campus populations at Catholic academic institutions categorized as 16 (Research Universities—high research activity), 17 (Doctoral/Research Universities) or 18 (Master's Colleges and Universities- larger programs) according to the Carnegie Classification system.¹¹ The student populations of these institutions range from 1,902 to 25,072. The majority of institutions in the sample are small to medium-sized, which was intentional. Since the choice to continue production of print marketing materials, with no evidence of return on investment, can be a difficult one for smaller libraries with more limited budgets, the survey was targeted to this subset of the overall population of Catholic academic libraries. The survey instrument can be found in Appendix A.

Eighty-eight libraries were approached and invited to take the survey, made available using an online survey tool called Survey Monkey¹² in January 2013. The survey queried libraries about special collections and services promotion, and how library value was communicated through print marketing materials. Questions covered staffing, budget, dissemination, publishing frequency, assessment, content, and branding. Since a certain type of Catholic library was being studied, the survey was not advertised widely. Instead, specific institutions were identified and asked to participate via email. Only one applicable staff member at each library within the study population was invited to complete the survey to avoid duplicate information.

In order to identify appropriate staff members, the library's online staff directory was used to determine personnel responsible for marketing. If a person with marketing or public relations duties was listed, he or she was invited to complete the survey. If the library did not have a designated employee assigned to marketing, the library administrator was invited to either complete the survey or forward the request to the appropriate staff

member. Of the staff members who were invited to complete the survey, 81 percent were library administrators, 12 percent were librarians with outreach or marketing in their titles, 4 percent were non-librarian staff, and 3 percent went to general reference desk email accounts. A total of fifty-four libraries responded to the survey, making the response rate for this study 61 percent.

Data and Analysis

Survey results were analyzed to uncover marketing techniques, staffing models, and budget considerations. Marketing techniques included the types of materials produced, frequency of production, intended audiences, and distribution methods. Staffing questions covered what types of library employees performed the different tasks required to produce a print marketing piece. Finally, budget questions examined the average amount spent on marketing materials during the fiscal year 2011-2012. An administrator's decision to request print marketing materials is determined by each of these components.

Marketing

In the first question, respondents were asked what types of marketing materials their library produces. Results are illustrated in figure 1, "Percentage of libraries producing print marketing materials." Respondents were allowed to select more than one from a list of options. From the list of types, brochure was selected by 64 percent, followed by flyer (63 percent) and bookmark (51.9 percent). On the other end of the spectrum, 7.4 percent of the respondents selected "none." Overall, the response to this question showed the variety of print marketing materials used in these libraries. Other types indicated by respondents included newsletter (31.5 percent), annual report (35.2 percent), table tent (38.9 percent), and strategic plan (25.9 percent). These material types have varying content, target audiences, distribution techniques, and production cycles, which are addressed by subsequent questions and discussed below.

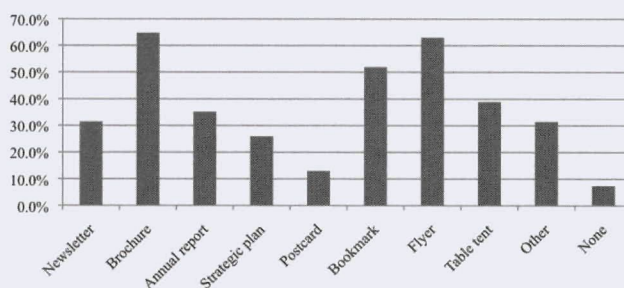


Figure 1: Percentage of Libraries Producing Print Marketing Materials



For their print marketing materials, respondents indicated that the content varied. The majority of libraries indicated that information about services, collections, and new initiatives made up the content of their print pieces. Giving opportunities, such as information on how to donate to the library or special initiatives, were included by only 7 percent of respondents. Providing information about the library's value to all areas of the campus is important.

Respondents indicated they used branding as an aspect of marketing the various types of content they communicate to users. Content in print marketing materials was designed according to a set of brand guidelines. The majority of libraries (45.5 percent) stated they used a combination of library and university guidelines. Designs that strictly follow university brand guidelines account for 27.3 percent of libraries, while 11.4 percent follow brand guidelines created by the library. Lastly, 15.9 percent reported that they do not follow a set of brand guidelines. These responses to branding show that libraries are making a conscious effort to put forth a consistent image or brand. This effort can ensure their print marketing materials can be easily identifiable as formal communication from the library, yet are part of the university as a whole.

Respondents were asked to identify the target audience for each type of print marketing material (see figure 2). Students were the main target audience for print pieces including brochures, bookmarks, flyers, and table tents. Most libraries targeted faculty and staff for newsletters and annual reports. In addition to a broader campus audience, the intended audience could include library faculty and staff. It is interesting to note that marketing tools with lesser content (e.g., bookmarks or flyers compared to newsletters) were intended for students. Pieces with more pages of content, such as newsletters, were created with faculty and staff in mind.

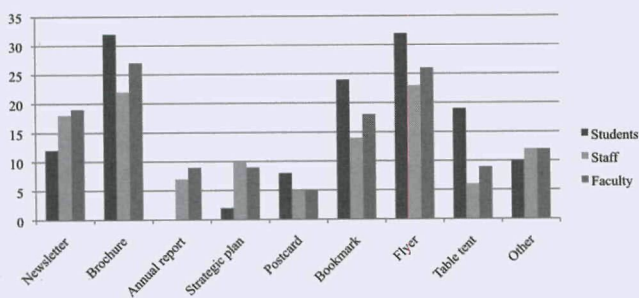


Figure 2: Target Audiences by Type of Material

The majority of pieces stayed in the library upon publication, including newsletters, brochures, bookmarks, flyers, and table tents. Results indicated that flyers were by far the pieces most often placed around campus outside of the library. Even postcards, typically designed for mailing, stayed inside the library. A couple of reasons may account for the lack of mailing as a distribution method for these

pieces: libraries might not be able to fund the mailing of marketing materials, or the mailing of items may be limited by campus policies.

In terms of a publication cycle for marketing materials, a majority of institutions surveyed indicated that newsletters were produced monthly, while annual reports were produced once during the academic year. Pieces such as table tents, flyers, bookmarks, and brochures were produced on an as-needed basis. Producing materials needed periodically would have a direct effect on project and time management, particularly for librarians with other assigned duties. Instead of being able to plan ahead for materials produced at the same time every year, asking library staff to create materials on an as-needed basis can cause issues pertaining to balancing workload responsibilities.

Staffing

The survey asked three questions about the staffing and workflows in place to produce print marketing materials. Results showed that employees who wrote newsletters, brochures, bookmarks, flyers, and table tents were most often librarians. Editing duties fell primarily to librarians for the same type of materials, but it was unclear if the same librarian who wrote the content also edited those pieces, or if an additional librarian was asked to edit. Equal numbers of administrators and librarians (34.5 percent each) wrote strategic plans. The majority of the writers of annual reports were administrators (48.4 percent). Administrators also edited the annual report and strategic plan at the majority of institutions.

Design responsibilities were also found to be primarily a librarian's job. There were only two types of materials where student workers were used for design work: flyers and table tents. No library used a hired freelancer at any stage, showing that libraries are finding institutional employees to do the work, which in some cases included support staff and university employees outside the library. All respondents said that the same person performed two or more of the following: writing, editing, or design. Based upon these responses, the responsibilities of producing print marketing materials may fall primarily on one person at the majority of libraries, which is different than the team-based process that Cole-Bennett and Martin describe.⁸

After marketing pieces are created and distributed, what happens next? The assumption of the survey was that some libraries may have an assessment method in place. Since each piece communicates information, how do libraries know when their audience receives the information, or— even better— acts upon knowing something new? However, for all responding libraries, formal assessment was not applied to their print marketing materials. Most relied upon anecdotal evidence as an evaluation tool. One library said they “judge by how fast the pile of material goes down,” while two libraries surveyed attendees at events to learn how they heard about the event. Four libraries said they were planning on implementing formal assessment, but

did not describe what that process would be or what staff member would lead the assessment efforts. Assessment is an important piece of marketing and would inform libraries whether or not the materials were effective or how they could be improved upon.

Budget

Marketing in general is a fairly new venture for many academic libraries, so a budget line specifically dedicated to marketing expenses may not always exist. The majority of respondents shared that they had no budget, while five libraries stated they have a budget in the range of \$1,500 to \$2,000 annually. Some libraries indicated that they were often allowed to use funds from other budget lines in order to produce a print piece. Part of these budget line considerations may be linked to the fact that a majority of the libraries print their materials in-house (72.7 percent) while 27.3 percent use a professional printing service. By printing in-house, libraries might be using funds from their general office supplies budget.

Although many libraries lacked an official budget, twenty libraries clearly had a sense of print and postage costs related to their marketing materials for the last fiscal year. The amounts reported ranged from \$0 to \$25,000, and the average amount spent was \$2,748. About half of the respondents were able to answer budget questions, while others reported that they were unsure of the exact numbers or that there was no separate budget, making it difficult to track the amount spent.

Open-Ended Responses

At the end of the survey, respondents were invited to offer comments on their experiences with marketing. Many responses within this section described a preference for electronic marketing methods over print. In some cases, the switch was a recent change, but others have well-established communication practices using electronic tools. One library explained that their newsletter was no longer available in a print format and that it is now shared on an online LibGuide. Electronic methods for some libraries also included Twitter, Facebook, blogs, library websites, electronic newsletters and flyers, and digital signage. One respondent stated,

We are limited by printing ability and cost to produce professional looking materials. Our new facilities will have digital signage as paper signage is viewed as “clutter” and ineffective [sic] (invisible through over-use).

Eight respondents described how their libraries were moving away from print towards electronic means of communication including digital signage, e-mail, online newsletters, and the library website. Three out of the eight respondents cited social media tools as their

new communication strategy as opposed to print. One mentioned Twitter and another named Facebook as specific tools used to promote the library.

Budgetary limitations are only one reason why some libraries were reluctant to use print materials. Although some libraries may consider print as outdated, wasteful of resources, or simply clutter, electronic marketing may simply fit better with the overall campus communication infrastructure. One library stated that they “regularly submit information to the university’s Campus Communication newsletter that goes out once each week.” This particular library benefits from the invitation to contribute to campus-wide communication, instead of waiting for the campus marketing department to write stories in campus publications about library happenings or services.

While some libraries described a preference for electronic methods, others cited the use of quick and inexpensive print tools such as flyers and table tents to promote new and existing services. One library said such items were “pretty basic and informal and done in-house and absorbed into in-house photocopy budget.” Others cited bulletin boards, orientation sessions, and library classes as other ways to easily share print marketing materials.

Very few libraries specifically mentioned print marketing materials for audiences external to campus. One library described their main print marketing material as a semiannual newsletter with an outside audience in mind. They wrote,

Largely, our semi-annual newsletter is the vehicle that we use to market these items in print version. The costs associated with the newsletter are largely due to design and fall shy of \$1,000 per year. Sometimes we have hard copies printed up either to mail to a small donor pool or just to have on hand as we have quite a few tours going through the building.

This library was the only one that mentioned donors specifically, and the audience for their print newsletter also included people going on tours. Within this survey, it was surprising to find this as an outlier, since it is a strategy that is assumed to be used by other areas on campus (e.g., athletics, academic programs) but presumably not by the majority of libraries. Respondents did not have information on assessment strategies. Most did not use a separate budget line for print marketing materials.

Conclusion

Overall, the findings of the survey show that small-to-medium-sized Catholic academic libraries mostly use print marketing materials to communicate to students through customary college campus means, such as flyers and table tents. Producing these materials requires one staff person dedicated to more than one marketing responsibility, and typically not a separate budget line. From searching library staff directories, dedicated marketing personnel are very rare. However, librarians with outreach and marketing duties were still evident within the sample. The distribution of the survey population reflects what the literature says about the trend of mixed marketing and outreach responsibilities, with traditional librarian public service responsibilities. The data indicates a mostly informal approach to print marketing projects by Catholic academic libraries.

Some institutions discussed their move away from print to electronic-based marketing techniques, such as social media or digital signage. The high cost to print a brochure or newsletter professionally could possibly drive libraries to use free-to-use outlets such as social media tools or email marketing.

The drawbacks to both print and electronic marketing are that libraries have not found a meaningful way to assess the impact on their users or potential users. Lack of return on investment seems to lead libraries to drop expensive print marketing materials, such as long newsletters, but to continue to make easy and quick printed items such as brochures, flyers, and table tents. These types of materials fit well into the culture of many campus communication techniques, such as offering brochures at orientations and instruction sessions, flyers on campus bulletin boards, and table tents within the library and campus dining halls.

This study highlights various trends within Catholic academic libraries with regard to marketing, staffing, and budgets. Additional studies could focus on the use of marketing tools within archives and/or special collections units within these libraries. This particular survey received responses that focused heavily on services, whereas a future survey could focus on ways to promote collections. Responses almost exclusively addressed internal print marketing within the library and campus. A future study could specifically address libraries' external print marketing practices, such as brochures to reach prospective students and faculty, or mailers intended for alumni and donors.

The goal of this study was to add to the growing knowledge about marketing activities within academic libraries, specifically those that are Catholic, private, and with unique special collections and services. Results of this study could be used to compare current practices of an academic library to the survey respondents. Additionally, the survey went into detail about the considerations that

apply to print marketing materials. It can help libraries decide whether or not print is still applicable to their campus community, and if staff is available to commit to these types of marketing projects. Promoting the library and communicating value can occur in many forms, and print marketing is still present in many Catholic academic libraries. ■

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Appendix A: Survey instrument

1. What type(s) of print marketing material(s) does your library produce? Select all that apply.

Newsletter	Strategic plan	Flyer
Brochure	Postcard	Table tent
Annual report	Bookmark	Other
		None

2. What type of employee primarily writes these print marketing materials? Select one from: Librarian, Administrator, Support staff, Student worker, Hired freelancer, University employee outside library.

N/A	Strategic plan	Table tent
Newsletter	Postcard	Other
Brochure	Bookmark	None
Annual report	Flyer	

3. What type of employee primarily edits these print marketing materials? Select one from: Librarian, Administrator, Support staff, Student worker, Hired freelancer, University employee outside library.

N/A	Strategic plan	Table tent
Newsletter	Postcard	Other
Brochure	Bookmark	None
Annual report	Flyer	

4. What type of employee primarily designs these print marketing materials? Select one from: Librarian, Administrator, Support staff, Student worker, Hired freelancer, University employee outside library.

N/A	Strategic plan	Table tent
Newsletter	Postcard	Other
Brochure	Bookmark	None
Annual report	Flyer	

5. Does the same person do two or more of these duties: writing, editing, design?

Yes
No

6. How often do you create a new version of each piece? Select one from Monthly, Every semester/quarter, 1x an academic year, 1x a calendar year, Every other year, As needed, Other, N/A.

Newsletter	Strategic plan	Flyer
Brochure	Postcard	Table tent
Annual report	Bookmark	Other
		None

7. Who is your audience for each? Select all that apply: Students, Alumni, Parents, Faculty, Staff, Local community, Regional media, Peer institutions, Donors, Other, N/A.

Newsletter	Strategic plan	Flyer
Brochure	Postcard	Table tent
Annual report	Bookmark	Other

8. How do you distribute? Select all that apply: Campus mailboxes, Postal mail, Placement in library spaces, Placement around campus, Community centers or businesses, Other, N/A.

Newsletter	Strategic plan	Flyer
Brochure	Postcard	Table tent
Annual report	Bookmark	Other

9. Does the design of your print marketing materials follow a set of brand guidelines determined by the library or university? If you follow brand guidelines sometimes, but not always, please answer yes.

Yes, library brand guidelines
Yes, university brand guidelines
Yes, combination of library and university brand guidelines
No

10. Do you typically print marketing materials in-house or do you use a professional printing service?

In-house
Professional printing service

11. Do you assess the effectiveness of these materials?

Please describe in the text boxes.

Yes
No

12. What type of content do you include in any or all of these print marketing materials? Select all that apply.

New initiatives	Events
Ongoing initiatives	Library staff news
Information about collections	Current trends in libraries
Physical space and infrastructure	Exhibits
Statistics	Fundraising opportunities
Services	Other
Programs	

13. Do you have a fiscal year budget for print marketing materials?

Yes
No

14. If yes, please provide the amount allotted for print marketing materials. Or, if you do not have a budget for print marketing materials or do not know your budget, please note that here.

15. How much did your library spend on print marketing materials in your last fiscal year?

Include printing costs and other costs such as freelance design costs and postage if applicable.

16. (Optional) Before the survey ends, please use this box to describe in further detail how your library uses print marketing materials to promote your collections, services, programs, etc.