



Leeds and the Thousand Islands
Public Library
resourcefully yours

LEEDS AND THE THOUSAND ISLANDS PUBLIC LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLANNING 2015 - 2020

Without leaps of imagination, or dreaming, we lose the excitement of possibilities. Dreaming, after all, is a form of planning.

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Mission Statement

Leeds and the Thousand Islands Public Library strives every day to deliver their mission, become one step closer to their vision and commit to following their values. Now more than ever the mission statement: *The Leeds and the Thousand Islands Public Library empowers the community through freely shared resources*, has been embraced and really made the library and the community stronger. LTIPL has made incredible strides since BizXcel last met with the Board and have implemented new technology and further shared resources to truly encompass the idea of the library living as a community hub.

The Leeds and the Thousand Islands Public Library is more than a place to visit, it is an experience to be shared by all community members, non-members and seasonal tourism. To empower these stakeholders the Board unanimously agreed upon an updated mission statement to read as follows:

The Leeds and the Thousands Islands Public Library empowers the community through freely shared resources and experiences.

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Changes Over the Past Year

It is always exciting to see organizations making incredible progress to make their mission, vision and values come alive.

“The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new.”

– Socrates

The Leeds and the Thousand Islands Public Library has created strong momentum of positive changes over the past year.

Here are the positive changes that the Board mentioned:

- New board members that are aligned, energized and ready to act
- New council members that support the importance and impact of the library to their community
- Transition in staff from retirees to new hires. The new staff is fantastic and is helping sustain the technology as well as bring in new clients.
- Repositioned staff to strengthen the IT presence within the branches which has kept technology consistent, improved trust levels between staff and has eliminated bureaucracy.
- Advertising methods have been recognized and successful.
- More value added programs which have left clients with positive experiences.
- New technological gadgets are available so that clients may experience before investing for themselves.
- The library continues to be relevant.
- Password for the Wifi has been removed which has addressed the tourism problem and is now creating a gathering place for all.
- Announcement of infrastructure which would change the library facility into a true community hub.
- Less of a silo and more of a working and fair playing field throughout all four branches from a staffing focus.
- Increased partnerships with local businesses has increased visibility within the community.
- Updated and expanded the website with more development in the near future.
- A system to produce reports for each branch.
- Access to social media has expanded.

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Vision: Measures of Our Success

Goals do not actualize on their own. They take hard work, planning and innovation to build short term, mid-term and long term goals of our ideal future. The vision and ultimately each goal needs support and commitment from all stakeholders. Listed below are the goals that gained a strong consensus within the continued strategic planning day.

Short Term (less than one year)

- Implementation of a strong marketing strategy, communication links and testimonials which will provide a greater awareness in the community, create a buzz and create shared experiences and stories.
- Expand clients' use of resources, services and programs to all libraries by promoting carpooling.
- Enhanced communication between library and stakeholders.
- Long term facilities plan in place including come to a resolution of how many branches there will be. It would be ideal to craft options, flush it out and make an appropriate business plan to the point where a logical decision can be determined.
- Expanded library hours without impacting the budget. For example, Friday afternoons are very busy so hours could be shifted around to accommodate this time frame. Note: More information from seasonal tourism and islanders is needed, winter versus summer hours, older generation branches clientele versus younger generation clientele branches.

Mid-Term (one to three years)

- Achieve a reputation as strong storytellers.
- Increased/improved programming by creating new/fresh ideas, evaluate current programs, update web, maintain a leading edge image through programs/technology/digital requirements, demonstrate a culture of innovation.
- Keep ahead of the curve reacting to trends.
- Develop a robust data base of patrons. Capture email addresses to keep them up to date on information while paying close attention to the Canadian Anti-Spam Legislation.

Long Term (three to five years)

- Facilities upgrade.
- Capture and react to long term trends and understand how they will affect the library's ability to improve programs and services while not allowing rural characteristics ruin the progressive thinking or put the library in a box.

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Strategic Objectives

One year ago the Board identified four main strategic objectives:

- 1) Building the experience, relevancy and value
- 2) Awareness and marketing
- 3) Strengthen relationships
- 4) Profitability and efficiency

After careful review in May 2015 the Board reviewed these objectives and updated to reflect the current strength and health of the Library:

- 1) Focus on creating experiences, relevancy and adding value**
- 2) Increase impact of awareness and marketing**
- 3) Build and maintain strong relationships with council, community and businesses**
- 4) Be the showpiece facility for Eastern Ontario**

These updated objectives reflect the library's ambition which relates back to the mission, vision and

Focus on Creating Experiences, Relevancy and Adding Value

Goals identified are as follows:

- Have a creative, flexible and long-term plan in place
- Increased large signage
 - Free wifi with arrows pointing to library
 - Signs at Rapid Valley, Fresh Mart
 - Partner with local companies/tourism
 - Big video walls
- Communal mural/billboard of the new library indicating what can be found there/what experience they can expect. Artists from the surrounding schools can be sought out to carry out the project.
- Seek out ways on how to build the community around the library
- Engage youth by providing an experience for them
- Create more messaging to speak to the idea that the library is the true community hub
- New branding to break the library stereotypes
- Supply books to islands and other services
- Invite people to participate with the library. Identify non-users/tax payers and invite to show the value the library provides.
- Continue to increase technology offerings/software and hardware programs
- Host unique events

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Increase Impact of Awareness and Marketing

Goals identified are as follows:

- Improved targeted programmes
- Update website regularly
- Create a viral campaign for summer reading
- 1000 Stories from the 1000 Islands marketing campaign. Have different categories for different age groups
- Increase community input/contributions regarding programming and services
- Communicate often and with meaningful/value added information
- Show case local culture
- Promote Facebook and unique posting (client pictures/updates)
- Use homegrown content
- Hire or partner with a local college to create the marketing the library needs
- Manage perception (library users will be called “clients”)
- Be agile (when the need shows itself the library must be quick to make any changes)
- Write and submit newspaper articles (Library Corner theme to showcase that the library is more than just books)
- Build a communication plan
- Obtain testimonials from library users
- Build a marketing plan
- Real people/client pictures for advertising
- Catchy brand, logo, slogan “free experiences”
- Be able to tell stories regarding partnerships
- Press releases for everything
- Market services broadly for all branches
- Television and radio

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Build and Maintain Strong Relationships with Council, Community, Businesses and Staff

Objectives identified are as follows:

- Quarterly presentation to council
- Adjust hours
- Small activities in (small) branches. For example a Knitting Group. This will make people aware and visit the library while keep the community healthy and active
- Partner with any and all businesses
- Video speakers corner
- Support development of staff through education and conferences
- Add couches and coffee to the library
- Continue with staff education for ongoing relevancy
- Work with community artists
- Presence at community events/fairs
- Attend community events to build relationships and awareness
- Create a junior Board (or subcommittee) for the library
- Increase engagement of staff for new ideas

Be the Showplace Facility for Eastern Ontario

Objectives identified are as follows:

- Identify needs and create plan to reach out to all age groups
- Create community buy-in for new facility
- Obtain funding for the new facility
- Hold a contest to name the new library building
- Be a part of a 'build community hub dream team'
- Become community hub for services
- Align library strategic plan with township
- Access infrastructure funds for library enhancements

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Recommendations: Some further thoughts

1000 Stories for the 1000 Islands

The importance of telling our stories

Why do we tell stories? We tell them as a gift to ourselves, a gift to those around us and a gift for future generations. Stories are ways in which we can connect complete strangers and differing generations to a common focus. There is no better way to market the library through the experiences of your clients.

When we thinking about marketing we tend to jump to the idea of print ads, radio, television and of course the internet. None of these use the ability to tell stories. We have been telling stories for centuries but we don't have to look too far to see the powerful impact that stories have on us. They engage our hearts and our minds and elicit new feelings within us.

So why is it so important to hear stories? Much like Humans of New York (A photoblog and book featuring street interviews and captures through images), this type of storytelling uncovers new stories, new experiences that motivates, inspires and creates raving fans.

It is important to hear your client stories for several reasons:

1. Stories produce experiences. Experiences make us feel emotion, they go much deeper than statistics and cold hard facts but create an impression that clients can think about, engage and connect with.
2. Stories reveal what makes the library experience unique. Products and services can always be copied but WHO you are can never be replicated. Go back to the roots of who you are, how you flourished into a great experience. These unique messages will have you stand out from other competitors and spread your offerings much faster than any marketing platform.
3. Stories are the glue that connects that library to its clients. Without stories there is no emotional glue, nothing creating a true connection between the library experiences and client experiences. Your clients need something to spark emotion, to see the value the library produces for all age groups and abilities.
4. Stories give products, services and information meaning. There is nothing more daunting than hearing a sales pitch over and over again. Anyone can create and produce boring facts but adding meaning to this information, weaving stories into updates will capture your audience. Think of a mountain. There are low valleys and high peaks. This is much like the library and any business for that matter. You will have dull facts but to elevate these and create a peak on the mountain, visual elements like images and stories will keep interest high and clients returning for an experience.
5. Stories will motivate and inspire users and non-users. Look at Steve Jobs, he was known for his corporate storytelling. He created raving fans of his products and services who essentially sold

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his products through their own storytelling to friends and family. Nobody is better at promoting your library than your clients themselves.

6. Stories have a higher tendency to be shared. No one picks up the phone anymore, they use social media platforms to share their stories they experienced. It gets retold over and over again. We search for great experiences and we know where to search through our shared stories.
7. Stories are truthful and less likely to go in one ear and out the other. Sales pitches must be told in a matter of seconds. Stories can last because naturally we like to listen to stories, we get excited, engaged and look forward to growing from that story.

By allowing community members to share their stories about the 1000 Islands it creates a culture of storytelling while creating an experience through the library. It allows anyone and everyone to participate, and everyone has a story to share. It creates relevant material, person stories and adds value to clients. Storytelling is a universal trait that each of us have the ability to do, it is what connects us to one another. What better way than for the library to be the path connecting us to one another?

Support our Municipality to take the burden off of other areas

The library is open on weekends as well so this caters better to the community to support community services. Eg. Dog tags, garbage tags

Create a Junior Board

A library is a collection of shared resources accessible to an entire community. We see at the library currently there is a senior board which has created a means of effectively capitalizing on time, talent and the professionalism in the community to maintain a successful non-profit organization. What better way than to broaden this circle by including a Junior Leadership Board to offer valuable insight from their generation, promote the library through their schools and serve the community while obtaining new talent and professional networks.

Contests/Advertising

Contests should always be a priority in your marketing strategy. Contests are nothing new, they have, however, taken on a new life with the growth of technology and word of mouth. Contests are not the answer to all marketing obstacles but should be maintained to enhance visibility within the community.

Contests are a fantastic tool to build the library fan base by driving clients to check back on the internet daily or in-house and this is also where the power of storytelling comes in. Contests enable all client bases to engage with your brand and make strong connections. This is also provides as a great opportunity to capture client information and measure against your strategic plan. As it has been evident with the library's updated website, new and fresh information and contests empower library clients to do the marketing for you.

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Ideas to revisit

- Book-mobile and book –moboat

The library has the ability to explore this idea in further detail to provide access to tourists and individual who otherwise may not have the means to reach the library.

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