



Laubach Literacy Ontario
Since 1981

Powerful Partnerships

through fundraising, marketing, and public relations



Developer:

Tudor Costache
Wilfrid Laurier University

Editors:

Sheila Roberts
Communications Specialist;
Lana Faessler
Executive Director;
Laura Cumming
University of Waterloo

Laubach Literacy Ontario
65 Noecker St., Room 8A
Waterloo ON N2J 2R6
Tel: 519-743-3309 Fax: 519-743-7520
Toll Free: 1-866-608-2574
Web: www.laubach-on.ca
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Background

Laubach Literacy Ontario (LLO) developed this manual to help support you, our member organizations, in your efforts to develop powerful partnerships of all kinds. We hope this will assist you in your goal to maintain or expand services to meet the adult literacy needs of your communities.

We developed the content with the assistance and advice of many of our members. While a number of the contributors are mentioned by name or by organization, many “unsung heroes” played a key role in the development of the content – we thank you all.

We hope you find the material helpful and, in addition, will also continue to share your partnership ideas with LLO so that this document can “stay alive” through the contribution of best practices experiences of the membership.

What’s in the manual?

This manual will reinforce the importance of building powerful partnerships: what they are, why they matter, and how to establish them... ..through fundraising, marketing, and public relations. We hope the manual will help you successfully work with other organizations, individuals, and government agencies to deliver exciting literacy programs.

Keep it handy if you’d like to:

- better understand how to establish and sustain partnerships
- get fresh fundraising ideas and techniques
- better focus your marketing and public relations efforts to create healthy partnerships
- find resources to help your partnership efforts

When researching this manual, we found out a lot about the work that Laubach Councils have put into gathering practical ideas that may work for you – and they have been very forthcoming in sharing their knowledge.

Keep in mind that what currently works for a Council in Northern Ontario won’t necessarily work for a Council in Windsor, and vice versa. Because of the dynamic

nature of partnership development and fundraising, Councils are continuously working on tweaking their strategies or creating new ones to suit the times.

Please feel free to adapt what you read here to your Council's unique needs. We trust that the manual offers enough ideas to recharge your batteries for your ongoing partnership efforts.

Defining partnerships

On the simplest level, partnerships are agreements between two or more parties that have compatible goals to do something together. As Flo Frank, an internationally recognized specialist in partnerships, states, "partnerships are about people working together in a mutually beneficial relationship; oftentimes doing things together that might not be achieved alone."ⁱ



The essential components of partnerships

Partnerships require constant care and nurturing to keep them alive, fresh and meeting the changing needs of the parties involved.

Partnerships carry responsibilities that need to be well thought out before entering into them, including:

- setting tangible goals and meeting them
- keeping your partners in-the-know about what you are doing
- acknowledging and thanking your partners for their contributions to your success

Fundraising



Fundraising is the gentle art of teaching the joy of giving.
- Hank Rosso

Fundraising

As we all know, raising funds will never be easy. It is an ongoing challenge – where many hours invested may lead to minimal results.

Grassroots organizations, like yours, compete for funding with an increasing array of other charities. Donors are often flooded with requests. Once “secure” funding sources like gambling or special events no longer provide sufficient returns.

But fundraising is also an essential component of any non-profit organization, especially in an era of government cutbacks. And there are reasons to be hopeful. Individual Canadians are supporting charities more than ever before – for example, according to the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, more than nine out of 10 Canadians made financial or in-kind donations to charitable and non-profit organizations, an increase of three per cent over 1997. In addition, there are plenty of successful fundraising campaigns out there that an organization like yours can learn from and emulate. To name just a few:

- the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario Cash and Cars Lottery
- the United Way of Greater Toronto annual campaign (or the United Way campaigns in your area)
- most hospitals in Ontario, large and small (for example, The Princess Margaret Hospital Foundation Lotteries)
- Habitat for Humanity (both Toronto and Canada-wide)
- not-for-profit organizations who support children in Canada and around the world, such as the Foster Parents Plan
- AIDS fundraisers, such as the Stephen Lewis - If I had a Million Dollars Gala Dinner, in the York Region (http://www.york4stephenlewis.ca/gala_dinner.htm)

Websites for these organizations are listed in the appendix of this manual, but there are many other websites that could be researched for ideas. They may offer information about the way an organization collects donations, and the kits and materials they use for their fundraising efforts.

This section will highlight some of the successes of Laubach Councils in Ontario and offer advice on how you can make your fundraising efforts return the results you want.

You already know that fundraising is necessary, but it can also be fun and fulfilling. It's your chance to try different ideas and approaches and to look at everything with fresh eyes. It also gives you an opportunity to:

- make each person feel good about his or her involvement in your organization
- make each event a success by setting goals ahead of implementation so that you have measures in place to gauge how well you have done
- make the organization itself stronger and more unified
- increase the visibility of the organization.

In addition, fundraising is an opportunity to include the community in your efforts and to make them aware of the great work your organization is doing. This means that fundraising should not be seen as something different from partnership development – when you fundraise, you are very much entering in a partnership with the broader community (be it individuals, service clubs, or local companies).

This chapter presents fundraising as part of your organization's larger effort of building meaningful and active relationships within your community.

The following section will discuss fundraising planning, different types of fundraising your organization can undertake, a quick list of dos and don'ts, and event ideas from other Laubach Councils. At the end of the chapter you'll find links to other fundraising resources and sample documents you can use in your own efforts.

Fundraising planning

Before you start your fundraising campaign, it is important to decide what you are trying to accomplish and how you are going to go about it. Solid planning is probably the most important part of running a good fundraiser because fundraising is not just about the money. It is also about:

- increasing the visibility of the organization
- ensuring that the organization itself is stronger and more unified
- ensuring that each event is a success
- celebrating the accomplishments of your volunteers



Before jumping into a fundraising event, have that plan in place. Ensure that your campaign has:

- a clearly defined mission and goals (for example, how much are you trying to raise and what are you raising the money for?)
- a volunteer taskforce in place to lead the effort (who will do the work?)
- a clear action plan and timeline on how you're going to conduct your fundraiser (when and how?)

- a set of prepared materials including statistics, newspaper articles, and brochures (how are you going to convince people to give?)
- a way of recording activity and celebrating successes (how are you going to track income and reward volunteers?)
- a way of tracking donors (contact information as well as donation amount, whether they are a first time donor or have given in the past) and a means in place to thank them
- a way to capture their preferred method of communication (for example, do they prefer to be contacted by email, telephone or mail?)
- a way to inform donors and the community of the progress of your campaign (how are you going to communicate?)
- a built-in evaluation and rewards process (what worked? what didn't? how can you make your fundraising more effective the next time? how do you thank your volunteers?)
- a way to track initiative results (how many donors did you contact and how many responded? what is the total brought in by each initiative?)

The list above is food for thought only. Your own experience will tell you what needs to be added to or removed from the list.

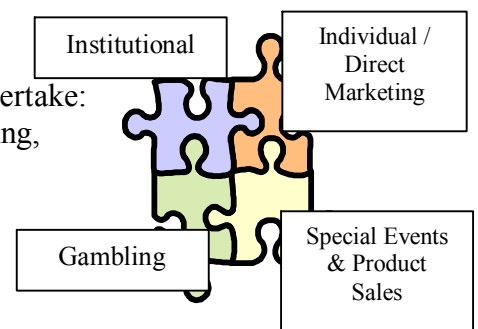
The overall guiding principles are:

- be aware of what you are doing
- be aware of why you are doing it
- plan how you are going to do it the next time.

So then, before we go any further let's look at ways your Council can raise money – and some pros and cons of each method):

Four basic types of fundraising

There are four basic types of fundraising your Council can undertake: institutional fundraising, individual requests and direct marketing, special events and product sales and gambling. In each case, you will want to tailor your message to a specific audience. Corporate sponsors, for instance, have different expectations and should be approached differently than private individuals. It's important to be aware of your audience and how to shape your message to properly engage your audience.



Each type of fundraising activity has its own set of risks and benefits and you may have to experiment with different approaches and audiences to find a method that works for your Council, given your location and existing resources.

1. Institutional fundraising

Non-profit organizations often approach foundations, corporations, service clubs, or government agencies for funding. “These groups are rational and organized in the way

they give their money, and they expect you to be equally organized in the way you ask,”ⁱⁱⁱ says Ken Wyman, a Toronto-based fundraising consultant. A generic request for funding doesn’t cut it with these organizations – they need to see the “WIFM” (“What’s in it for me?”) factor. You have to be able to answer this question convincingly to get cooperation from the many different people and organizations that you need help from, so bone up on their goals and strategies before approaching them for funding. Be prepared to present briefs, action plans, budgets, and annual reports.ⁱⁱⁱ And you must also be prepared to enter in an active partnership with them. These groups generally don’t simply hand over money – they expect to be consulted on how the money is going to be used and often build stringent reporting criteria into the system.



When you are talking to a potential institutional donor, or any potential donor for that matter, keep in mind:

- your cause is worthwhile – make your case so that the potential donor is flattered to be asked to support it
- have the confidence that you are presenting the organization or individual a unique opportunity to support an important program

They may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel.
- Carl W. Buechner

Whenever you approach a corporate or foundation representative, keep track of the approaches and requests made and their comments – these will be very useful when it comes time to follow up on your request. After each meeting, make notes about the representative’s response to your appeal. For example, was the person friendly, interested, bored, or preoccupied? Are you supposed to send further information, or call back at a later date? After making your own notes, write a letter thanking that person for their time and interest. Or better yet, send a personalized, hand written card that stands out from the run-of-the-mill, business-style typed thank yous that they are used to getting.

Some of the institutions you approach may not be in a position to make a donation. But they may be willing to support your efforts by giving you a discount, a bulk rate, deferred payment, gift certificates, or door prizes. You, in turn, can give them public recognition by publishing their name in a program or brochure.

Giving opens the way for receiving.
- Florence Scovel Shinn

Here’s a brief checklist of the package you should prepare before making a fundraising request to corporations or foundations:

- **objectives:** clearly state the objectives of your organization and your project. The two should be somewhat consistent – if the goal of your organization is to increase literacy show explicitly how the project you’re undertaking will achieve that goal

- **annual report:** this should accompany all major funding requests. However, an annual report should contain more than just your financial statements. It should also contain a brief history of the organization, your major activities and achievements, a list of current sponsors, a list of current board members, and the roles of staff members. You can also include a foreword from your president or chair person stating the successes of the year and other pertinent information
- **financial statements:** audited financial statements are preferable, but not always necessary
- **funding proposal:** this section deals with the actual item for which you are requesting funds. Your proposal should contain the following items:

- ✓ **cover letter:** cover letters are important – use them to identify what the project is about, who you are and why you are sending it to them

- ✓ **introduction and rationale:** provide a summary of what the project is and why it is necessary. The person reviewing your request may not read any further than this section, so take care to ensure that the project has relevancy



- ✓ **project description and schedule:** here is where you can tell how the project will be implemented and when it will start and end. All major projects should include a critical path which outlines who will do what and when. Also list any deliverables (for example, “we will publish a manual to be distributed to our members”)

- ✓ **budget:** the budget should indicate how much money is required for each of the various items and any sources of revenue known at the time. You can also indicate sources of projected income (for example, money applied for, but not yet received). The reviewers will want to know if the projected costs are realistic and who the main players and supporters are. They may be hesitant to assume all of the risk for a project if they’re the sole source of funding

- ✓ **anticipated results:** your reviewer will want to know the expected outcome of the project. The results should be measurable (for example, “we will recruit 20 new adult students”). If your outcome is expected to be less tangible (for example, increasing awareness of illiteracy), try to quantify it as best as you can (for example, “we will increase the number of telephone inquiries about our learning program”). Remember, funders want to feel that their involvement in your project will have a significant impact. Everyone wants to be a winner – make sure that the donor will know that, through their partnership with you, they will be just that!

***Tell me and I'll forget.
Show me and I'll
remember. Involve me
and I'll understand.***
- Confucius

- ✓ **appendices:** don't clutter your proposal with a lot of extraneous materials. Instead, include pertinent background information in an appendix. What you

include will vary depending on the project and potential sponsors, but could include some of the following: organization chart showing the Laubach hierarchy; fact-sheet of literacy statistics; list of projects undertaken; relevant newspaper clippings

Pros:

- There is a big return for the money spent since most often all you have to do is write a detailed proposal (see above)
- One good grant often leads to another (fundors will be impressed by your ability to find other sources of funding)
- Creates lasting connections with people who might be able to help you in the future
- By law, foundations have to give away money and are very willing to entertain proposals

Cons:

- You're dealing with a bureaucratic system, so it could take as long as six months after your initial submission to get an actual donation
- You're often competing with a lot of other programs for a limited resource. For example, in 2005 more than 120 organizations applied to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities for funding, but only 20 received funding
- Grants are often short-term. It is uncommon for funding to last more than three years, which will just give you enough to build a demonstration project. Don't count on receiving ongoing core funding this way.^{iv}
- Many of these grants require a lot of behind-the-scenes work – you may need a connection to open doors for you. Often it's not what you know, but who you know.

But always remember...

You've got to go out on a limb sometimes because that is where the fruit is.
- Will Rogers



Useful notes:

- Imagine Canada, a business-led leadership initiative for corporate responsibility, has an extensive database of foundations and corporate grants, which might make it easier for your Council to track down sources of funding (visit www.imaginecanada.ca for more information).

However, at \$95 per year, membership in Imagine Canada can be a bit “pricey”. Your local library may also have a book listing all the foundations active in Canada, which might offer some of the same information as Imagine Canada.



2. Individual requests/direct marketing

Often you'll want to request funding from individuals rather than large institutions. While it is always important to bring a human dimension to your requests, it is particularly important when approaching individual donors – you're asking real people to reach into their pockets and help your cause. You have to make your cause relevant to their lives by creating an emotional connection between them and you.



There are two ways of reaching your individual donors. First, you may try a direct marketing campaign. In a direct marketing campaign, you will reach a large number of people and ask each of them for a donation. Second, you may want to approach major individual donors – people who may be willing to make a major gift to your program.

In either case, it's important to let the people know how you will be using their donation, and what impact their gift will have on the community. Always ask for a specific amount for a specific program – never ask people to donate money in order to pay off a deficit or because you “need” money. Your requests must be specific and pertinent. Relating requests for a donation to a human need helps to create the emotional connection (for example, “We want to increase our resource library so that we can teach more people to read...”). As well, anywhere you can support your request with numbers, donors will have a greater affinity to how the money is being used (for example, “Our goal is to raise \$5,000 this quarter to help purchase new text books because the material we have is outdated and dog-eared.”)

As always, keep a detailed record of the donations received and the approaches made. People who may not be ready to give the first time you approach them, might be willing to help you at a later date or with a different initiative.

Donors don't give to institutions. They invest in ideas and people in whom they believe.
- G.T. Smith

Pros:

- High rate of return on initial investments
- Gives your organization a lot of visibility
- You'll have more flexibility in how to use the funds than you will have by approaching institutional donors

Cons:

- Especially when asking for major gifts, you'll need volunteers who are knowledgeable about the organization and comfortable approaching individuals for funds
- With a direct marketing campaign, it may take one or two years to build up a significant donor base
- Donors often move and your database will have to be constantly refined (you'll have to find new donors to replace those who have moved on).

3. Special events and product sales

When it comes to special events, there are a myriad of ideas your Council can experiment with. Everything from a graduation to a tea party can become a fundraising event, but in each case, donors expect something in return for their money. Often, they are motivated as much by self-interest as a desire to help your organization (in other words, they want to buy tickets to a firefighters' ball regardless of which charity gets the proceeds). Your job is to show them that they are getting something they want – and, at the same time, building loyalty so that they continue to support your cause.

As far as special events go, don't expect a big return the first time you run an event, no matter how well thought-out it is. Generally, the first year you should aim just to break even and to ensure the participants and the volunteers enjoy themselves. The first attempt will give you the chance to make mistakes s you can learn later on what works and what doesn't for your community. It may take your organization a couple of years before you'll have enough momentum to run truly profitable events. Repetition is essential since results often improve each year you perform an event.



LLO's Annual Conference 2006

However, while costly to run, special events give you advantages that money can't buy – they give you the means of reaching out to the public at large and generating positive media coverage for your organization. Other potential benefits are listed below:

Pros:

- With good planning, one night's event has the potential of raising large amounts of money with few strings attached
- Special events give you the opportunity to educate people about your organization and gain positive publicity in the media

- Large events will increase your visibility in the community. Ultimately, you'll get more support from your community when they've already heard of you – it adds to your Council's credibility
- Your volunteers and participants will get to take away something meaningful from your event or product sale, be it a charitable tax receipt or a happy experience

Cons:

- Organizations often lose money, despite investing a lot of volunteer hours in an event
- Your volunteers must spend about 80 per cent of their energy on selling tickets (which is no fun). There's no sense in organizing a big event if nobody will show up
- You must plan your event at least three to six months in advance to ensure an "overnight success"
- Even established events sometimes lose money because your organization is competing for attention with dozens of other special events

4. Gambling

Currently, many Laubach Councils rely on bingos or other gambling events for their fundraising. Bingos, raffles, and casino nights are good ways to attract people into giving to your organization, even if they are not especially interested in the work you are doing. Unfortunately, unlike other fundraising methods, gambling events will not allow you to meaningfully connect with members of your community. Gambling is not about building lasting partnerships – it's about making a profit.

And even that profit is rapidly declining, especially for bingo events. When Bylaw 164, which bans designated smoking areas in private clubs and charity bingo halls, was passed by the Ontario government, it put the survival of many bingo halls in jeopardy. For example, when Waterloo Region went smoke-free, it lost three of its five bingo halls and the remaining two are struggling.

Additionally, bingo halls have received fierce competition from slot machines. The Ontario government has steadily expanded access to racetracks and casinos, and many gamblers are leaving the bingo halls and taking their money elsewhere. Consequently, fewer charities are able to remain self-sufficient – instead, they are turning to the Trillium Foundation which distributes some of the casino income.

That being said, it's still possible and profitable to run a gambling event. Here are the main ways of using gambling to raise funds. Your Council could organize:

- **Nevada tickets sale:** Nevada tickets, also called break open tickets, are "devices made of cardboard and which have perforated cover window tabs behind which are symbols revealed by tearing open the cover tab. The winning combination of symbols is specified on the back of the ticket," according to the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO).

There are two ways of obtaining a lottery licence for break open tickets. Your municipal government can issue one



random.”^{vi}

Some Laubach Councils have been able to earn from \$45,000 to \$50,000 per year by running regular bingo nights. However, the effectiveness of bingos as a source of revenue is rapidly declining, and it will continue to do so especially now that Bill 164 is in effect (see Page 13).



To successfully run a bingo, you need a strong volunteer base. The law dictates that bingos have to be run by volunteers and, since each bingo session lasts at least five hours, you need volunteers who are willing to commit a large chunk of their time to your organization.

Bingo events aren't a one-time event; the Councils that are able to do the best have enough interested volunteers to run about 50 bingo sessions per year.

If your Council is interested in running a bingo, and the prizes for each session are under \$5,500, you can obtain a bingo licence from your local city hall. This will allow you to run 26 bingos in the span of six months – about one bingo event every week. This licence can be renewed so your Council can run a maximum of 52 bingo sessions per year. You will also have to contact a local charity bingo hall to reserve space – work with them to see what other requirements are in place.

More information about applying for a bingo licence can be obtained from the AGCO website at:

http://www.agco.on.ca/en/c_gaming/c1.3.1.regular.html

Additional details:

For any gaming event, you'll have to obtain a licence from either the AGCO or your local municipality. Quite a bit of information needs to be prepared in advance. In the case of a raffle, for instance, you must have the following information available before you apply (in the case of other gambling events, you'll still need to make available some similar information):

- total number of tickets printed (numbered consecutively)
- the date of the draw
- the number of draws
- closing date for the sale of the tickets
- total value of all prizes (or equivalent market retail value)
- separate designated lottery trust account to administer funds

Whenever you apply for a gaming licence, whether from the AGCO or your local municipality, be prepared to complete a lot of paperwork, especially if this is your first time doing it. Since only registered charitable organizations can receive gaming licences, first-time applicants must provide the following documents to prove their eligibility:

- incorporation papers (letters patent)
- constitution and bylaws

- notification of Charitable Registration (Canada Revenue Agency) – if applicable
- the most recent Registered Charity Information Return & Public Information Return, as submitted to Canada Revenue Agency – if applicable
- financial statement for previous fiscal year (audited, where applicable)
- detailed outline of all programs/services provided in the previous year and specific costs incurred in delivery
- detailed outline of all programs/service currently provided and specific costs incurred in delivery
- current operating budget
- current listing of the board of directors
- any other information that will assist in determining the charitable nature of the objects and purposes – this could include an annual report, correspondence relating to your charitable number for income-tax purposes, confirmation that you meet the reporting requirements of the Charities Accounting Act
- the proposed use of proceeds, which must be consistent with the primary objectives and purposes of the organization and of a charitable nature consistent with at least one of the four classifications of charitable purposes

Because of the amount of paper work that has to be reviewed, it is important to submit your licence application at least 30 days in advance of the actual gaming event (or 45 days in advance if you're a first-time applicant).

And now that you have most of the basic information, let's look at the pros and cons of gambling:

Pros:

- **Big profits:** Gaming events have consistently produced steady revenues for many Laubach Councils over the years. This is slowly changing, but gaming will remain relevant, especially as part of your other fundraising efforts
- **Low setup costs:** Printing Nevada tickets or organizing a raffle with donated prizes is not too financially draining
- **Financial independence:** Unlike the funding obtained from other sources (like governments or institutions), there are fewer strings attached to the money that comes from gaming events
- **Reaching new audiences:** You are able to reach new people who would never have thought of supporting your group before.

Cons:

- **Cost of prizes:** Provincial laws demand that prize money be set aside in advance in a separate account until they are claimed. This means that you may have money set aside that you won't be able to touch for years
- **Long term decline:** Gambling events are producing less and less income – racetracks and casinos are eating up a larger share of the gambling pie than ever before
- **Risky business:** People may not buy your raffle tickets, but you'll still have to give out the prizes

Fundraising conclusions

Depending on your volunteer base, you should try to diversify your funding sources as much as possible. Each type of fundraising activity has its own place and its own advantages. Don't rely on a single source of income because that source may vanish – for example, bingo halls may close down, and governments may decide to cut back funding.

Ultimately, the goal of your fundraising efforts should be to build lasting partnerships with a number of institutions, individuals, service clubs, and the community at large.

To do this, make sure that your fundraising strategy and methods allows you to reach out, create connections, and ultimately involve the community in what you are doing. Think of fundraising not just as a way to increase your revenue but as an opportunity to educate and reach out.

How to ask for money

Many Laubach Councils are currently trying to raise money to cover operational costs like salaries and rent. Unfortunately, these are some of the hardest things to raise money for. While your Literacy Council cannot operate without core funding, people in general are unwilling to donate to abstract things like “operational costs.”

Generally, people give to people, not because an organization needs funds. “Your task is to show how their donation will help others,”^{vii} Wyman writes. “Results have motivational power; monetary figures do not. If a donor knows the potential results of a donation [in terms of how many people will be helped], it changes the nature of the decision making process in the donor’s mind.”^{viii}

There is a wonderful mythical law of nature that the three things we crave most in life -- happiness, freedom, and peace of mind -- are always attained by giving them to someone else.
- Peyton Conway March

To discover the potential results of a donation, find out how each activity your Council undertakes helps people, and focus your fundraising campaign around the cost of implementing your life-altering project. Help your donors understand how your expense budget will help improve people’s quality of life. For instance, try to use concrete statements such as:

- We help X number of students
- We train X number of tutors, and each tutor significantly impacts X students
- Our outreach campaign will reach X people
- We provide X hours of tutoring each year
- We help students overcome specific problems like, _____

When talking to potential donors, mention people, not operating costs, to interest them in donating. You can ethically break down the work your Council does in terms of specific projects and build in items like salaries and rent.

For example, if your Council decides to publish brochures, you can create an outreach project and raise money for that. Similarly, activities like student tutoring and volunteer training can be their own projects with their own associated expenses. When you budget, you should integrate the overheads and administrative costs into these projects (e.g. staff, supplies, rent, etc.).



An integrated budget for an outreach project (e.g. mailing brochures) would include the following items:

- Salary for staff to develop the mailing list, print labels and stuff envelopes
- Salary for staff to research and design the brochure
- Envelopes in which to mail the brochures
- A phone people can call if they need more information
- Salary for a person to answer phones
- A desk for that person
- An office for that desk
- Heat, light and other utilities for the office

Your donors should fund the full project costs because every element is essential to completing the job of reaching out to people. Many major charities, like the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), are good at using numbers to sum up what they do – and to incorporate all of their costs in one project. For instance, UNICEF would use statistics like this: “\$253 provides a pump for fresh water in a village.” The amount given not only shows potential donors where their money is going, but it also takes into account all of the expenses of actually installing a pump in an African village (e.g. shipping costs, labour costs, material costs, etc.). UNICEF is not asking donors to just buy the pump and letting them believe that the pump will somehow install itself.

Thus, whenever you present your donors with a number, make it meaningful and make sure it encapsulates all of the costs associated with the project. In the case of your outreach project, for instance, you can safely say something like: “\$40 allows us to reach out to 20 more adult learners.” The \$40 should cover the expenses of creating the brochures, but also the expenses of hiring staff to handle phone calls and follow up on inquiries.

The information you provide should convince donors that their donation will make a significant impact. As Wyman suggests, when asking for donations you want to appeal to the whole person – “Give reasons for the head, heart and wallet.”^{xix}

He lists the following reasons to give for the Head:

- What is the societal problem that needs fixing?
- Why is it important?
- What is the specific solution?
- Why should I trust your group’s ability to solve the problem?

According to Wyman, the following, are reasons to give for the Heart:

- Why should I care about the people helped?
- Will my donation change someone's life?
- Is the problem so big that my little donation is insignificant?
- Is the problem so small that my money would be better invested in another non-profit's work?
- Is there an urgent reason to act now, not wait for later?
- Will giving a donation increase my own feelings of hope for the future or leave me drained?

And these, Wyman suggests, are some reasons to give for the Wallet:

- Is this a bargain? Will you help a lot of people for relatively little money?
- Does this focus on future activities, or are you telling me what you used to do in the past?
- Can you break costs down into bite-sized chunks that I can afford to give?
- What will the group give me in return? A newsletter, my name on a plaque, Christmas cards, or address labels? (incentives can sometimes motivate people, sometimes offend people. Be careful).

Try to answer as many of the questions above as you can – this will ensure that when you're asking for donations, you're asking people to fund specific achievements, not organizational expenses. The more you are able to articulate what each individual donation will fund, the more willing people will be to support you.

As a side note, when you are trying to appeal to people's hearts, avoid overstating your case – don't portray the people you help as helpless, inferior, or objects of pity. Don't "guilt" people into giving, but show them some of the real stories and impact that your work does.

How to establish a fundraising team

Regardless of which type of fundraising your Council decides to run, you won't be able to meet your fundraising goals without a dedicated team of volunteers. Successful events, profitable nights in Bingo Halls, and partnerships with generous donors are not going to happen without a lot of effort from volunteers. The staff or the board of directors alone won't be able to shoulder the burden of running a successful fundraising campaign in addition to their regular duties. "Special events," Wyman writes, "can be so labour-intensive that it is not economical to pay everyone... There are also fundraising jobs that must be done by volunteers only, such as visiting major donors (who can react quite negatively if a staff person visits them alone)."^x

The first thing your organization needs to do is to establish a Fundraising Taskforce. This group of dedicated volunteers should be responsible for accomplishing specific objectives within a limited timeframe. Setting up a Fundraising Committee is often troublesome because "committees" often just formulate recommendations that other people are

***Coming together is a
beginning; keeping
together is progress;
working together is
success.
- Henry Ford***

expected to carry out. A Taskforce, by contrast, should be responsible for implementing a successful fundraising campaign, not just talking about it. Members of the Taskforce should be expected to take an active role in whatever work is to be done.

Once an initial Taskforce is organized, and it decides on the type of fundraising it wants to conduct, then it is time to recruit more volunteers to help carry out the work. At this point, the Taskforce may want to go through the membership list to look for likely candidates. Remember that not all volunteers will have to ask for money or sell tickets, so look at recruiting people with other talents and skills that will be able to help your fundraising effort. For instance, you may need someone to do the record keeping or design the event brochures, so select a person with these skills.

When you approach potential volunteers, make each person feel wanted and important. You should convince them that their involvement will be positive and fun, and ensure that this happens. Importantly, let your potential volunteers know exactly what they're getting themselves into. Break down their job into manageable pieces so they'll know what they're expected to do and they'll have a feeling of accomplishment when their job is done right. Role clarification is important, and ideally you'll want to write down a job description for everyone. In addition to clarifying their role, give your volunteers an idea of the time commitment you think you need.



Speaking of potential volunteer roles within your campaign, Lyn McDonell, CEO of the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation, created the following list of potential leadership roles. Many of these positions should be filled with people from your organization (look at your board of directors for leadership):

Chairperson/Coordinator: A real people-oriented person who can help keep everyone else on topic and on time in a nice way, during meetings and outside them. Should be a good recruiter, and knowledgeable enough to provide advice.

Donor Groups Coordinator(s): Often it makes sense to divide the donors up into specialized groups. Examples might include donor groups such as clients, unions, service clubs, businesses, healthcare workers, and religious groups. If the groups are large enough, they may need to be subdivided (for example, health care businesses, local businesses, and banks). Different people take on the responsibility of coordinating activities to reach each group. Try to have people from the donor group head up each team. For example, a union is more likely to give if a union member approaches them.

Special Events Chair(s): There may be several special events underway. The coordinators are part of the task force.

Grants Coordinator: This volunteer researches granting agencies, and assists in the preparation and presentation of proposals. People from the academic world are often experienced in this area (or interested in learning).

Sales Coordinator: If you sell goods (whether through an annual garage sale or by producing special T-shirts and posters), a volunteer organizes the process, including recruiting producers of goods, collecting goods to sell, and managing the pricing and sales.

Regional Liaison: National and Provincial organizations may want to pass on fundraising ideas to their local groups. The Regional Liaison person informs local groups, encourages their fundraising, and trouble-shoots as necessary.

Publicity and Promotion Coordinator: One volunteer may be a link to the work of a promotions committee which supports the fundraising through its efforts to obtain publicity for the organization and/or event.

In addition to your leadership positions, you may also want to recruit some of the following volunteers as outlined by Wyman^{x1}:

Power Brokers: These high-powered, well connected people have clout. These people lend their names, or make a few important backroom contacts, and they give generously. They open doors, impress donors with their credibility, and collect favours. Almost every cause can benefit from their leadership and credibility. Use them only for maximum impact. Don't expect them to come to board meetings, actively serve on committees or do tasks such as stuffing envelopes or decorating the gym.

Expert Advisors: Experienced volunteers who share their expertise can help you avoid reinventing the wheel. These advisors help out in publicity and media, accounting and financial management, law, fundraising and staging events. Don't waste their time on trivial details.



Organizers: People you trust almost as much as yourself. They see a task, make intelligent decisions and get it done quickly. Then they come back with new ideas. Rare but valuable. Give them freedom to act, not rules to follow.

The “Worker-Bees”: Is this a rude title? Only in a society that doesn't value hard work! Bees could not make honey without a legion of workers. Everyone is a worker-bee from time to time in their lives, even while doing very responsible work elsewhere at the same time. These workers are task-oriented. Ask them to perform a task and they will. But when they're finished, they'll stop and wait to be told what to do next. They may stuff envelopes or take major responsibility for a precisely defined campaign. Don't wait for them to approach you: they won't. But if you fail to ask them to do a job, preferably one that fits their talents, they may be insulted.

The Decision Makers: These verbally oriented people would rather talk than do. When they're good at it, they can ask the vital questions and make brilliant decisions that create clear policy, workable strategy, and rational plans. When they're bad, the meetings last forever and the group never acts. Don't use good meeting goers for any other task – they'll submit recommendations instead of taking action!

Strong volunteer teams don't just happen – it takes a lot of effort to bring people together but, in the end, your organization will certainly benefit from it. If you're willing to invest a lot of time in recruiting people, also invest a lot of time in training them (this is one of the direct benefits of volunteering). Don't just send your volunteers out to do the work specified in their job description, but make sure they have the skills to do it – provide them with a solid orientation. For instance, if a volunteer's role is to ask for donations, work with them through different scenarios and make sure they receive ongoing support and motivation.

Celebration



***No person was ever honored for what he received.
Honor has been the reward for what he gave.
- Calvin Coolidge***

Lastly, think of ways of celebrating the achievements of your volunteers. Do this during and after the event. Think of potential, meaningful rewards you can offer, but be aware of spending lavishly on your volunteers. “They often resent seeing money needed for the work you do spent on recognition,”^{xii} Wyman writes. Wyman suggests the following possible rewards:

- a private or public ‘thank you’ (recognition in print materials, for instance)
- a promotion to a more exciting job
- something made by the clients with that one volunteer in mind
- artwork or a specially-written poem
- an award, framed and ready for display
- a holiday from volunteer work
- use of a “volunteer-of-the-month” reserved parking spot
- flowers, seeds, or plants for the home or garden
- flowers or a tree planted in his or her name
- a rousing cheer from the whole group
- a birthday or anniversary cake
- a T-shirt, mug, or pin to wear, especially if it singles out the volunteer as someone unique
- a gift certificate donated by a hotel, restaurant, golf course, or craft shop
- a trip (with the team or to see the project)
- a training course or a book on something the volunteer likes that is also useful to the group (like photography or coaching)
- a captioned photo of him/herself in action, or beside a celebrity
- a pizza party
- something you know he or she really wants

***Feeling gratitude and
not expressing it is
like wrapping a gift
and not giving it.
- Unknown***

The more enjoyment volunteers derive from their involvement, the more likely they are to offer their support on an ongoing basis.

Finally, look at some of the resources available in your community. In the case of large fundraising projects, you may benefit by going into partnership with other groups with similar goals. Before you start individual fundraising efforts, you may want to make a list of all the associations in your community that are likely to support your cause, and you can discuss with them how a partnership could be mutually beneficial.



***Opportunity dances with
those on the dance floor.***
- Unknown

Specific event ideas

Once your volunteer team is in place, it's time to roll up your sleeves and get down to the hard work of actually raising funds. If your Fundraising Taskforce decides they would like to run a special event, they might consider one of the following:

A "Stay At Home" event

Often, donors buy gala tickets because they've been pressured to do so by family and friends. Some don't even end up attending the event your volunteers worked so hard to organize. So instead of going through all that effort, sell tickets to encourage people to stay at home and relax.

"This is especially popular among people who are constantly on the go," Wyman writes. "It does not work if your supporters love to party."^{xiii} He also suggests you should explain how much the group is saving by holding a "non-event" and how much the donor will end up saving.

Many of the invitations for non-events are quirky and funny and have been well received by donors.

A real event

Parties and galas are elaborate affairs that take months of preparation and often have high ticket prices and a large number of guests. Because of this, galas and parties are work-intensive and expose your organization to a high degree of risk (organizations have lost fortunes when nobody showed up to their party). However, they can also be a way of building a sense of community and bringing in substantial net revenue. Some of the

financial burdens can be mitigated if you get in-kind donations for every possible expense.

Organize an 'Anything-A-Thon'

People love anything from a read-a-thon, to a marathon, to a hymn-a-thon. Get participants to collect pledges from their friends and family. This will not only give you a wonderful opportunity to educate your community about what you're doing but, with a high number of enthusiastic participants, your event can be financially successful too.

Examples: The Literacy Group of Waterloo Region, for instance, organizes an annual Walkathon in the park, after which participants get to enjoy a BBQ provided by Schneiders, L'Oven Bakery, and Sobeys. To maximize revenues, they even combine the Walkathon with a silent auction and a garage sale.



In 2005, LLO's Summer Student conducted a "blog-a-thon": he stayed awake and wrote in an online journal for 24 hours. The campaign was small but he still gathered pledges from over 20 people through online fundraising.

Note: If your Council is interested in conducting online fundraising, you should look at some of the resources CanadaHelps.org has to offer. CanadaHelps is a not-for-profit charity portal that facilitates philanthropy through online giving. LLO signed up to their service at the beginning of August 2005 and, after a brief online fundraising campaign, donations started to come in through that route.



CanadaHelps makes it easy for donors to support your cause. They not only issue a tax receipt, but they also process credit card payments, something that most Councils don't have the resources to do on their own.

CanadaHelps deducts 3 per cent from every transaction it handles – this fee covers credit card transaction charges and disbursement related costs. For more information, visit the CanadaHelp website at www.canadahelps.org.

A quick list of Dos and Don'ts

The following list of Dos and Don'ts should clarify some of the points discussed above and make your fundraising efforts more successful:

- Do show how your project positively impacts people.
- Do allocate every expense in your annual budget to a project or program.
- Do uncover hidden projects in the work you do (e.g. public education, training, etc.) and fundraise for them.
- Don't create new projects just to get funding (new projects often drain economic resources and detract from the original goal).
- Do develop a fundraising action that highlights specific tasks and completion dates.
- Do set up specific goals for each fundraising campaign (the goals don't necessarily have to be monetary).

- Do treat your volunteers with consideration. They need to know about the organization, why it needs money and how it spends money.
- Do meet as a group before and after each major event: discuss the work that needs to be done, share the funny stories associated with the event, applaud successes, and strategize on hard cases.
- Do keep records of all of your fundraising efforts (e.g. who gave how much? Sources of free goods and services? Volunteer talents and problems? How much time it really took? Hidden costs? Problems to avoid?)
- Do learn from previous mistakes and from other groups (contact nearby non-profits and see if they can offer any insight).
- Don't try single-shot ideas. The first time you try an event you'll likely make a lot of mistakes – that's OK. You'll get the chance to fix those mistakes next time you run it. You want to run an event enough times until it becomes part of the social fabric of your community.

***Never be afraid to try something new.
Remember, amateurs built the ark;
professionals built the Titanic.***
- Unknown

Sample materials and resources

Sample letters:

The following sponsorship letter was borrowed from the Thunder Bay Children's Festival:

Dear (contact),

Let me introduce you to the Thunder Bay Children's Festival. The event focuses on two main areas: live performance and on-site interactive activities. The venue incorporates over 14 acres of outdoor space and the 1500 seat theatre in the Thunder Bay Community Auditorium. We also use a 400-seat performance tent for smaller performances on the Festival site, and an outdoor stage on which local groups perform. The Festival is managed by a Board of ten non-profit partners: truly making it a community event. More than 10,000 children, teachers and parents visit the site each year, with the assistance of over 600 on-site volunteers.

The Thunder Bay Children's Festival continues the tradition of excellence which has garnered increasing support over the past six years. As a corporation, your support will ensure a future for the Festival and the education of our children. It is through partnerships with businesses such as yours, that we are able to present a quality, affordable event year after year. We strive to present an imaginative world of arts, heritage and entertainment for children and their families in Thunder Bay and Northwestern Ontario. Become a part of that excitement.



Attached you will find more detailed information on how you can become involved in the Thunder Bay Children's Festival. It is our belief that your partnership with the Festival will be a positive and rewarding experience. Our Sponsorship Chair will be in touch with you by January 23, 199_, to speak with you about this unique opportunity. Thank you for your consideration of this proposal.

Yours truly,

(Sponsorship Chair)
Thunder Bay Children's Festival
<http://www.thunderbay.ca/index.cfm?fuse=html&pg=573>

The following is a sample thank you letter used by LLO for individual donations:

Dear (contact),

Your thoughtful gift has made a difference.

Thanks to your support, one more literacy student has the opportunity to attend our Laubach Literacy Ontario annual literacy conference – where students and literacy workers can learn from each other and share their knowledge and experiences.

Our 2006 conference will take place in Waterloo and, thanks to your help it will positively impact the life of another one of our students.

Thanks,

Lana Faessler
Executive Director

P.S. Please find attached a charitable tax receipt for your kind donation.

Marketing, public relations and lobbying



Marketing and public relations

The more people know about your programs, the more likely they are to help or to become involved. It's vital for your Council to engage and inform the community. You need to find ways of letting people know who you are and what you are doing.

This can be accomplished either by undertaking a marketing campaign or by dedicating time and energy to developing healthy relationships with the media.

Because effective, large-scale marketing campaigns are prohibitively expensive for many non-profit organizations, you need to pay close attention to the media in your community. Getting your article in a local newspaper costs nothing and it's extremely effective at getting your message across.

Good advertising does not just circulate information. It penetrates the public mind with desires and belief.

- Leo Burnett

Think of public relations as an informal partnership between your Council and your local media. For the partnership to work, you have to communicate on a regular basis, establish trust, and remain aware of what the other side of the partnership has to offer.

On your part, you have a duty to provide the media with trustworthy information and the media has a duty to fairly cover those issues that affect the community. When the partnership works, both sides can benefit.

This section will give you working knowledge about communicating with the media so you can get your message across with confidence. On the next few pages, you'll find

information on how to create **press releases** and how to maintain an ongoing **relationship** with the local media and how to ensure **coverage** of the events that are important to you. Additionally, you'll learn how to communicate with a very unique audience – your municipal, provincial, or federal government.

Anatomy of a media release

Media releases are the main way of getting your information into the hands of journalists – every newspaper, TV and radio station has staff dedicated to scouring dozens of media releases to find information relevant to the community. Because of this, media releases tend to be overused and are often less effective than other methods in getting your story across. You'll want to ensure that the information you present can cut through the clutter of the other press releases. If you want your news release to be picked up instead of being thrown into the recycling basket, it's important to use journalistic style, know what your communication goals are and be intimately aware of the issues you're trying to address. Let's look at each item in turn:

Journalistic style

The more your release resembles a regular newspaper article, the more likely it is it will be picked up.

Journalists want to present news. If what your organization is doing isn't newsworthy, it will likely not get covered. But how can you tell if something is newsworthy or not? Generally, an event is newsworthy if it contains one or more of these news values: timeliness, impact, proximity, conflict, prominence, currency or uniqueness.

Literacy rates have a huge impact on society, so if you're writing a press release for your Council you may want to emphasize this angle. Similarly, if something is happening now, like a read-a-thon, it has a lot of news value because of its timeliness. And, of course, if the mayor of your city plans to show up at one of your events, your press release may get picked up because of its prominence value. When writing your press release, emphasize the newsworthy angles to convince the readers (and the editors) that the story actually matters.



To illustrate newsworthiness, let's look at a straightforward media release written by staff in the spring of 2005, which was sent out to numerous media outlets in Ontario. None of the newspapers contacted showed any interest in the article even though the story was very important to us: Arnie Stewart, a Laubach student and literacy advocate, was interviewed by TVO; his interview not only raised awareness of literacy but also the profile of the organization. The first few paragraphs of the release are highlighted below:

On November 30th, [2004,] Paula Todd of TVO's Studio 2 interviewed Arnold Stewart, an adult literacy learner and now a literacy advocate. Arnie traced his courageous journey to literacy, offering hope and inspiration to people of all ages who struggle with the written word. This interview will be rebroadcast on Saturday, March 27th.

The impact of Paula Todd's sensitive interview with Arnie proves the need for more television exposure to raise public awareness of literacy. It also supports the need for one-to-one literacy provision as an option for adults who want the confidentiality and flexibility this type of programming offers. At the end of the interview, Paula Todd did a great service for literacy advocates by informing that 3 million adult Canadians lack the skills required to fill in simple forms, understand food and drug labels, or read notes from their children's teachers.

In retrospect, we could have considered writing a community editorial or a letter to the editor instead. The letter could have gone something like this:

We want to congratulate TVO for shining the spotlight on adult illiteracy. Paula Todd's sensitive and moving interview with Arnold Stewart, an adult literacy learner, highlighted the struggles adult students go through. It's about time the media started paying attention to this problem that affects over 3 million Canadians...

If a story doesn't have any immediately apparent newsworthiness, but it's still important for your organization to communicate it, it might be more effective to write an editorial piece. Before you write anything, think about the newsworthiness of your story and determine the best channel of conveying that information.

But it's not just the content (or newsworthiness) of your release that matters – the style in which it is written will have a big impact as well. Most news stories are written in the inverted pyramid format. This means that the most important information sits right at the top of the page. This format helps readers – they can read the first paragraph or two and have the basics of the story.

The format gives the first sentence of your release, often called the lead, more importance than any other sentence in the article. So make the lead count – use it to hook the readers and to draw them into the article. It's more important to capture your readers' attention than to insert all the details in your lead. Media releases related to literacy, for example, can be a lot stronger if the lead emphasises the human factors. Talk about the people rather than the facts:

Weak Lead: On November 30 th , Paula Todd of TVO's Studio 2 interviewed Arnold Stewart, an adult literacy learner and now a literacy advocate.	Stronger Lead: Because he couldn't read, Arnie Stewart once fed his children dog food for supper. In a frank and inspiring heart-to-heart with TVO's Paula Todd, Arnie recounted this and other incidents in his struggle for literacy.
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Having a strong lead and an inverted pyramid will make it more likely that your release will get picked up by your local media. Ensure that your writing is concise, clear, and to the point. Some of the basic style rules of writing a press release are:

- Less is more. Try to keep the release to one page.
- Use only 3 or 4 main points.
- Make your headline and lead count. You must grab attention.
- Don't insert too much background information (use a separate page to do so if necessary).
- Make sure the article answers the five w's – who, what, when, where, why – and another important question, how.
- Use short, simple words.
- Use short, simple sentences and paragraphs.
- Write in active, not passive, voice.
- Avoid slang, jargon and acronyms – if you use an acronym, use the complete phrase or expression first (for example, Laubach Literacy Ontario) and follow it by the acronym in brackets (LLO) on the first reference. You can then use the acronym in the subsequent references.
- Use adjectives and adverbs sparingly (for example, avoid “very” or “extremely” – let the reader figure out from the story if superlatives are in order).
- Use stats, but be sure that you can back them up – give sources for stats and claims
- Start your press release with ATTN: for immediate release and the date
- At the end of the information put – End – or – 30 –. This indicates the end of the release and anything following is separate. Follow with contact information for seeking more details.
- Fax, e-mail or drop off your press release in person – call to follow up.
- Include quotes where possible. If need be, write a quote for a person, but make sure you check it with them before sending out the release so they know what was said in their name.
- Try writing in such a way that the reporter can lift entire sentences or paragraphs from the story.
- Double check spelling and facts, and always have someone proofread your writing.

Communication goals and issue identification

By writing a press release, you're not acting as a journalist, so your goal is not necessarily to convey information objectively. Instead, your goal is to advocate for your cause. In other words, you're not writing to report the facts (but the facts you provide must be truthful), but to inform your audience about key issues in literacy in order to change attitudes and behaviours.

It is insight into human nature that is the key to the communicator's skill. For whereas the writer is concerned with what he puts into his writing, the communicator is concerned with what the reader gets out of it.
- William Bernbach

Before you write anything, settle on your objective (the “why” you need to provide). Are you trying to raise awareness? Or funds? Are you trying to recruit new tutors or students? Write down the goals and make them as specific as possible. Then, depending on your communication goals, select an appropriate channel to deliver your message.

For example, if your goal is to attract new adult learners to your programs, you may want to stay away from newspapers or magazines to deliver your message. Instead, you could create a public service announcement for one of the local radio stations. Conversely, if you're trying to convince business leaders to support literacy, you'll want to target your press release towards trade publications, chambers of commerce newsletters, potential employers in your community, and focus on the economic costs of poor literacy. It's important to tailor your messages to the audience you're trying to reach.

But it's not enough to just outline goals for your communications. Whenever you talk with the public, it helps to talk about the impact of poor literacy on your audience, and not just the broad issue of literacy. Craft your message to answer the implicit question in your readers' minds: "Why should I care?" A business owner will care if you show that literacy rates impact productivity. A social worker might be motivated to help if you outline the connections between poverty and poor literacy. A health practitioner might be willing to support your cause if you show how poor reading skills lead to poor health. Finally, literacy learners might decide to join your program if you can convince them that your program is effective and sensitive to their needs.

Once you know your audience, determine how to tell your story. What will move them? How will you reach them? Each piece of communication (be it a press release or a brochure) should be targeted towards the specific audience you're trying to reach.



Contacting the media

Trisha Muise, the Executive Director of the Literacy Council York-Simcoe, knows how hard it is to get her message in the media. "The media often lose interest," she says. And what's worst, most of the releases sent to a newspaper end up in the recycling bin. According to Trisha, the only way to combat the conflicting priorities of most newspaper editors is to maintain constant contact and to offer timely, insightful articles. Trisha has had some success getting local newspapers to publish general-interest articles like "how to tell if someone is illiterate" in addition to event stories that are important to her Council.

Trisha also engages the media by participating in Community Links, a program set up in the Newmarket region to create a connection between community groups and the media. Her Council uses these weekly meetings to maintain an ongoing relationship with the local media and to make editors aware of the events and initiatives they're developing. Since any Council will benefit by keeping the media informed, you may want to check to see what community connections are available in your city.

To make it easier to keep in touch with the media, also create a list of all the publications and media outlets in your community. Make sure you write down their name, phone number, fax number, email, how they prefer to receive information, and their deadlines. Find out which audiences they serve and also write down contacts for people like the

events editor, the news editor, or the reporter who covers education or community events. And, appoint someone, staff or volunteer, to keep those lists up-to-date!

When looking at the media in your community, don't forget to include the specialized media, like the ethnic press, church and trade papers. Because the specialized media has limited resources, they will gladly work with the materials you have to give them. Alternative newspapers, like Eye Weekly in Toronto, are excited to carry socially conscious news and are unafraid to advocate for important issues like poverty and literacy. See if there are any alternative papers in your community.

But it's not enough just to send in media releases. You'll want to contact an editor or writer beforehand to let them know a release is coming. You'll also want to be available before the newspaper's or TV channel's deadline to answer any of their questions or to connect them with other people they can talk to like students or tutors. Cultivate a relationship with these writers in the local media and be there to help them gather more information. Most importantly, only send out a release when you have something to say. If your contacts know that you only send out useful information, they will be more willing to review your announcements when they come in.



Lastly, you may want to share your events on local online community boards. In Waterloo, CommunityEvents.ca is an events calendar designed “to assist local non-profit groups [spread] the word about their organizations, events and programs to the local community.”^{xiv} Similar online community boards may be available in your region, so look around to see how you can better advertise your events.

A Commitment to Training and Employment for Women (ACTEW) has also set up a content-sharing website, which is a network (or constellation) of non-profit agencies engaged in sharing web-based information. You can easily promote your news items and program announcements. Your messages will reach many individuals in the community-based training sector:

<http://www.actew.org/projects/current/constellation.html>

So, to get your message out, pursue both the media (which will add credibility to your events) and also explore other channels of distributing your information.

Specific ideas

Here are some specific suggestions for getting the coverage you want:

New literacy statistics

You'll have the opportunity to contact the local media whenever new statistics about literacy come to the forefront: this will allow you to act as an advocate for literacy and give a local perspective on the statistics – however, you should find out what the message

is from Laubach Literacy Ontario first, to ensure that coordinated, not conflicting, messages are being received by the media.

Essential services

You should also try to get coverage for stories about the essential services your council provides.

Event coverage

If your Council is running an important event, media coverage is important. It's not easy to get event coverage, especially if your event doesn't yet have much traction in the community at large.

However, if your event is sufficiently creative, it will certainly grab some attention.

Furthermore, you can also ensure some coverage if you invite the media to events attended by local celebrities (like the mayor or business leaders). The media will be more interested in events that feature prominent public figures.

The student story

It's often the stories about students that stick with us – they show the determination and passion of regular people willing to overcome the enormous barriers in their lives. Many of the articles written about literacy have a human angle: they talk about the struggles of learners and add sincerity and humour to an otherwise serious issue. Here are some samples collected from various Ontario newspapers over the years:



Three years ago Arnie Stewart could barely write his name. The 48-year-old Niagara Falls man said his illiteracy often had dire consequences. Fifteen years ago he drove into a gully on the way back from Toronto. He couldn't read a sign that said This Lane Ends Here. (St. Catharines Standard)

Denis Morneau ran his own excavating business for eight years, even though he failed every grade in elementary school and couldn't write. "I used to do everything in my head," said the 38-year-old Kitchener man. (The Record)

For a man who never learned to read or write, Ken Montminy was always a quick study. "I learned a lot of tricks to fool people," the 43-year-old Cambridge man said Wednesday. (The Record)

Trying to understand a drug prescription or read the legalese in a government document can be a nightmare for a lot of Canadian seniors. The problem? Many can't read or write. (Canadian Press)

For the first 98 years of his life George Dawson could not read or write. He was persuaded that it was never too late to learn and turned out to be a remarkably able student. (The Economist)

Viana MacGregor's husband was, at one time, functionally illiterate. At first, she thought he had dyslexia, a reading disability. Her theory was wrong. Somehow he had managed to get through high school without learning to read and write. (The Cambridge Times)

Life hasn't been easy for Nancy Swiston – five years ago she could barely read and struggled with depression. But now, thanks to her determination and the help of the Valley Adult Learning Association, Nancy has a new job, a new life, and this summer she also received the Arnie Stewart Individual Achievement Award.

It is important to bring stories about students to the forefront. As Laubach Literacy of Canada suggests, check to see if any of your students would be willing to be interviewed.

If so, talk to the editor of your local newspaper or TV station about doing a profile on the students. Stories about students will convince your community about the importance of the work you do and hopefully it will show other learners that they are not alone in their struggle.

LLO's website has several student stories you are welcome to use. They were submitted for a writing contest and we have permission to use them for outreach campaigns.

Awards coverage

Often you'll want to broadcast the accomplishments of your students and your tutors. This will not only help you create a convincing media portfolio to show potential funders, but it will also communicate to your community that your program actually works. If you emphasize the local angle and show the impact your program makes in the community, local newspapers and TV stations will be more than willing to profile your Council's work.



Handy tips

Here are some tips to make your public relations efforts even more successful:

- **The media loves a story.** Give it to them. Think of a novel approach to take and then call the media or send a press release. Your story can be about something innovative, humorous or dramatic. Include pictures – ensuring that you have clearance to use the photos and provide the names and roles of those in the photos, as well as background information on your organization (goals, members, history, achievements).
- **Tap into human interest sources.** Use the editorial or human interest sections and television interview shows, documentaries and public affairs shows. Contact your

media list and see who is reporting on human interest issues and then call them up and see if they like your angle.

- **Suggest an editorial.** Although some readers do not read editorials, they are read by many, including politicians and government officials. Offer your research data to your newspaper editor to get him/her inspired about your cause (they will likely do their own research but they may quote you in the column).
- **Use wire services, such as Canadian Press (CP).** Anything of national interest will be picked up by the wire services and used by many newspapers across Canada.
- **Provide photographs.** A photograph increases the chances of your story being read and the media of carrying it. Try to make your photo action-oriented, where something is happening, or have interesting visual details.
- **Use radio and television media.** Not everyone reads the newspaper and literacy groups know that not everyone can read the newspaper. Indeed, many adult learners are avid watchers of local community channels since this is their main way of staying informed. When sending in your story, make sure that you use short, colourful sentences. Make use of the Public Service Announcement (PSA) spots that all media must provide. These spots are free. Find out when they are aired and send in a couple of scripts.
- **Use catchy headlines.** Many people only read the headlines in the newspaper. If the headline does not catch their attention, they won't read the story.
- **Know the media news schedule.** Television needs its news before 3:00 p.m. so it can get it on the air in time for the 6:00 p.m. news. Sunday and Monday are good days to get media coverage since news tends to be slow. News is also slower in the summer. Consider using these times to get coverage unless of course, your news item is of a time-specific nature.
- **Know the proper people to contact.** Compile a media list of people to contact. Since people change jobs and positions, you will need to constantly update this list but it is worth the effort. To get the media coverage you want, you need to know who you should be talking to.
- **Realize that the media needs you.** No media source can afford an army of staff to research and report on every single issue. This is where you can help them. Send them information. Cultivate them as an ally and they may decide to do a feature story on your organization.
- **Hold a news conference – if you have something newsworthy to say.** Give the media written copies of what you are going to say. Prepare a précis of important issues. Provide electrical outlets for radio and television reporters.
- **Deal with any bad press you may be getting** – you may have communications experts and/or lawyers on your Board to help you handle this.
- **Use letters to the editor.** The letter to the editor section is widely read in the newspaper. Use this to your advantage. Have several members of your organization send in letters. If possible, have a well known person send a letter. If several people in your organization are sending in letters, have them worded differently and signed as individuals.



- **Use open-line shows.** Several radio stations carry open-line talk shows. Find out which ones do this and get a list of the topics they will be dealing with. Inform your members of this and have them call in and express their opinions.
- **Use media people as people.** Reporters and editors are people first. Remember this and treat them with courtesy. This will go a long way in getting good coverage.

What is lobbying?

As literacy workers, you'll often have to speak with a very unique and specific audience – government bureaucrats and politicians. Lobbying is a collection of activities designed to generate the response you desire from the government, like providing more funding or developing new policies. Communicating with the government often challenges you to expand your public relations repertoire, and this section will give you basic tips on talking politics.

An organization does not need to lobby if it is content with the level of support it is currently receiving from all levels of government – although it helps to know your mayors, regional government representatives, MPPs and MPs, and keep in touch with them regularly on a formal or informal basis. That means up-to-date mailing lists so that you can share newsletters, media releases and any other information that they might find of interest.



However, if an organization does not feel that it is getting its fair share of the pie, then it needs to take action to bring this disparity to the attention of the decision makers – lobbying is the way to do so. Your communication will often have the ultimate goal of motivating the provincial or federal government to implement some literacy-related reform.

Not all lobbying is confrontational. Often, you may want to communicate in support of some action the government has taken. Generally, to influence government decisions you must have quality analysis or ideas, persuasive arguments, and public support for your position. Here are some basic lobbying dos and don'ts:

Basic lobbying Dos and Don'ts

Do your homework. To be effective, you may need to monitor government policies relating to your areas of concern. Also determine what political factors will influence the government's decision. For example, has something happened which would change their priorities? The more you know, the better you'll be able to speak on the subject.

Do know the role of government. When the governing party holds a majority of seats, policy is set by the cabinet and is rarely changed by Parliament. Party discipline prevents MPs from voting against the government unless they are given a free vote. Unelected

officials draft legislation, develop policy proposals and implement government decisions. Ministers make the major decisions.

Find out the most appropriate committees you should be communicating with. If you need help with this task, contact your local public library, the office of the federal cabinet minister, the office of the provincial premier or cabinet minister, your MP or MPP, or your mayor. Another source of information is government telephone directories available at government bookstores (your public library may have copies in its reference section, if not your Mayor probably has them). In addition, much of this information is available over the Internet.

Identify the appropriate level of government you should be dealing with (federal, provincial, municipal, regional). Once this is done, determine the flow of power and the nature of the decision-making process. This review needs to be done each time a player changes. Who really makes the decisions? What are the various committees and what are their responsibilities?

Don't just complain. If you are opposed to some action being taken by the government, it is fine to express your opposition to this action but it is advisable to offer an alternate solution. Use constructive criticism; otherwise people will stop listening to you. In your response to the government, define the problem, outline your solution giving costs and benefits, be realistic, be aware of other interests which may be involved and *recommend specific actions*.

Don't use ideology and rhetoric. Motherhood is fine as such but should not be the main thrust of your arguments to the government. To influence decision makers, they need concrete data.

Don't appear to be a counter-culture type.

Government officials tend to be of a conservative nature. To influence their decisions, you need to appear to be one of them. People who are very different from government officials make them nervous. Politicians are concerned that voters will not accept such people and hence not re-elect them. Government employees may be concerned that superiors who can influence their careers will not accept such people and hence reduce their chances of promotion. If you are a counter-culture type and you think that conforming is compromising your personal ethics too much, you may want to consider your effectiveness in the lobbying game.



Don't rely solely on legislators. Relying on backbenchers to influence government decisions is not effective because they don't have a lot of clout. Instead, turn your attention to civil servants. These people are in positions where they often have an opportunity to influence the policy and decisions makers. Government staff tends to have a narrow field of responsibility. Get to know the people involved in the areas you are concerned with. Talk to these people. Often, staff will appreciate your input since it helps them do a better job.

Do focus on the minister. Ministers are the major decision makers. Do your homework on these people but don't approach ministers at too early a stage or for routine issues. Save the ministers for the really big issues.

Do work with your MP and MPP. Get to know the elected officials in your area and have them contact the ministers responsible for the areas you are concerned with. Be of help to your MP and MPP. Provide these elected people with research notes which will help them present your point of view. Find out the format they would like this information to take. For example, would they prefer briefs or questions which could be asked in question period or at a committee stage? Remember, you can derive some benefit if you help your MP or MPP be noticed.

Communicate your position to your MP or MPP on a regular basis. Use press releases and call a few days later offering to clarify any points (this is also a good way to build up your press contacts). Send letters. No postage is required for letters sent to MPs - just write OHMS (On Her Majesty's Service) in the upper right corner of the envelope. Use the telephone and ask for a meeting.

Do spread the word. Often a decision does not fall into one slot. For example, literacy falls into the jurisdiction of education (provincial sandbox), finance (provincial and federal sandboxes), apprenticeship training (provincial and federal sandboxes), and Secretary of State (federal sandbox). If your issue/position does not fall neatly into one portfolio, be sure to inform all others to solicit their support. And, be sure to keep your MP and MPP informed of what you are doing - you may need their support at a later stage.

Develop friends and contacts in all sectors and levels of governments. You can't have too many friends when you need a few favours done. Create a target list with people whose opinions you want to change (like the Minister for the area you're concerned with, the Minister's aides and top bureaucratic advisors, the Opposition critic and his/her aides and advisors, contacts at non-governmental groups working in the same area, politicians who have been vocal on this issue, business people who have a commercial interest in your area of concern and media people who report on this type of issue (their assigned beat)).

Don't forget the personal touch. Written correspondence goes a long way to persuading government officials (staff and elected). By combining written submissions with a personal form of communication such as a meeting, you can get even more mileage for your position.

Do appeal to the self-interest of those you are trying to influence. Your approach should be one of telling the government how supporting your demands will benefit them. In your arguments give answers to questions such as these: how will supporting this group advance my career, get my party reelected, support government policy.

Lobbying styles

When you interact with the government you can be either diplomatic or confrontational. Needless to say, the diplomatic approach is the more successful style. Remember the old saying; you can catch more flies with honey than vinegar? Well, the same holds true for persuading people to accept your position.

Diplomatic

Most political decision making is done informally, in the back room. That is to say, strategies are designed away from public scrutiny and only presented to the public when the decision has been made. Canadian politics can be said to be a quiet type of politics. We don't tend to wear our flag on our sleeve and beat our chest screaming nationalism. Canadians prefer to accept compromises rather than endure public conflict.

If you intend to take the diplomatic approach, consider these hints:

1. **Recognize that the government bureaucracy is made up of real people.** You need to develop human relations skills to be effective. No matter how good your strategy or how valid your logic is, if you do not handle people properly you won't get past first base.
2. **Develop a long range plan of what you want to achieve and how you will implement your approach.** Work with government officials to achieve your goal. This will take time, especially if what you want to achieve is something new. A short, intensive blitz on the government will likely not give you the end result you are looking for. Instead, it is likely to get peoples' backs up and put you further behind in your campaign.
3. **Realize that governments do not change quickly.** Governments are big machines and do not turn their thinking around quickly. However, once your desired way of thinking has been accepted, the momentum of the machine will carry it through to the end (once started, it's slow to stop).
4. **Give civil servants credit for being competent in their jobs.** Government employees really do want and try to do a good job. Give them a chance to help you. Give them credit for being competent and you will find that they will often rise to your expectations of them.
5. **Recognize that there are many other interest groups, besides yours, who are vying for attention.** To overcome this, aim your sales pitch at the self-interest of both politicians and bureaucrats. Tell them how supporting you will help them in their careers.
6. **Avoid ideology as the main focus.** Politicians want to stay in power and civil servants want to advance their careers. Keep this in mind and target how useful you are to them.
7. **Offer a win-win solution.** People who rock the boat make both politicians and government employees nervous. Conflict and confrontation will not win you any friends but showing a solution whereby everyone's interests are served will get you in the winners' circle.

Confrontational

Taking the path of quiet resistance may not always work. In this case, you will need to launch a public campaign, where you appeal to the public to support your opinion. Such campaigns tend to be dangerous (they can backfire) and expensive (you need to buy a lot of media space).

Before embarking on such an approach, you need to make sure of all the facts you are going to give to the media. You cannot afford to make even one small mistake because the group you are attacking will use it as ammunition against you. “If you are going to throw stones you better not live in a glass house.” Something else you will need is a lot of money and a very good reason why you are spending the money the way you are, instead of using it to further the goals of your organization. Private businesses not dependent on government financing are better able to use this strategy than non-profit groups who may be seen as “biting the hand that is feeding them”.

Sample materials and resources

The following is a sample news release written in May 2005 by the Movement for Canadian Literacy and the Ontario Literacy Coalition in response to Statistics Canada’s literacy survey. The goal of this news release was to inform the public about literacy issues and to advocate for more government funding:

Study Reveals Cracks in Canada's Literacy Foundation

Lead sentence clarifies the story’s impact.

A Statistics Canada study released today reveals serious cracks in Canada’s literacy foundation with as many as 4 in 10 Canadian adults below the skill level considered necessary to thrive in today’s knowledge society. Success in today’s world demands continuous learning, and the study confirms that millions are being left behind.

Quotes give credibility and improve readability.

“The Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey confirms what front-line literacy workers have long known first hand,” said the Executive Director of the Movement for Canadian Literacy, Wendy DesBrisay. “Literacy barriers are sidelining too many Canadians and this inequality and loss of potential has serious consequences for them, their families and our communities.”

This is what the press release tries to accomplish – motivate the government to act.

Despite the many benefits to be gained from shoring up our literacy foundation, Canada remains one of the few industrialized countries without a comprehensive system, vision, or approach to adult literacy and basic education. Higher-level skills training gets the bulk of attention and support from governments and employers, while adult literacy and basic education goes begging.

Recently the federal budget promised to act on the community’s long-standing call for a comprehensive literacy strategy. The announcement was greeted with optimism in the literacy field, but now there is widespread concern that political change could put the brakes on the momentum that has been building over the past few years.

“Our community’s message to politicians and government decision-makers from across the political spectrum is this: please don’t let anything stand in the way of progress on this vital issue,” said Ms. DesBrisay. “The ALL survey shows us that national attention and action on our literacy challenges is critical to the well-being of our country.”

Here are some of the survey's key findings:

- Too many Canadian adults (4 out of 10) score below the skill level necessary to meet the everyday demands of our information society.*
- Low literacy limits individuals’ chances of success in a knowledge economy.*
- Advancing literacy would address many of our most pressing social challenges, including unemployment, poverty, immigrant settlement and health.*

“Front-line literacy workers are struggling to meet the needs with too few resources,” said Ms. DesBrisay. “The ALL survey is a wake-up call to politicians – meaningful action and investments for literacy are in everybody’s best interest.”

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Movement for Canadian Literacy is a national organization representing provincial and territorial literacy coalitions. For information, contact MCL or a literacy coalition in your region.

Movement for Canadian Literacy: Wendy DesBrisay (613) 563-2464

The following sample news release was written by Laubach Literacy Ontario to emphasize student accomplishments. The local focus ensured the story was picked up by a Thunder Bay newspaper:

Stars Shine at Literacy Conference

Lead emphasizes human factors and conveys main goal of the article: to convince the reader that Laubach works.

Life hasn’t been easy for Nancy Swiston -- five years ago she could barely read and struggled with depression. But now, thanks to her determination and the help of a local Laubach literacy program, Nancy has a new job, a new life, and this summer she also received the Arnie Stewart Individual Achievement Award.

The award is given out annually by Laubach Literacy Ontario (LLO) to celebrate the achievements of literacy learners and to recognize the barriers they have to overcome. Nancy has certainly achieved a lot – since she started literacy training she not only learned how to read but also learned about customer service and got practice on a cash register.

“This helped my self-esteem,” she said, “just knowing that I can do it.” Her new skills and confidence helped her get a job at the Saan Store in Fort Frances.

“The literacy program really helped me prepare for the interview,” Nancy said. “I was surprised to get hired right away.”

An awards ceremony to honour Nancy and other student learners took place in Windsor on June 18 at Windsor Public Library’s 25th anniversary banquet. Because Nancy was unfortunately unable to attend, members of the literacy community created a home-made card for her that was signed by everyone at the

banquet. Dr. Bob Laubach, previous award winners, and Arnie Stewart joined in to celebrate Nancy's achievements.

The audience also extended a warm round of applause to Pauline Laramie from Midland and Jack Osborne from North Bay, the runners up to the award. Pauline and Jack worked hard to improve their own literacy and to inspire other students to achieve their goals.

"Pauline always has a smile and is ready to learn," her tutor wrote. "Her enthusiasm and desire to learn has kept me very committed."

Like Pauline, Jack also embodies the "each one teach one" philosophy that is central to LLO's thinking.

"Jack is a mentor to other literacy learners by talking to students," Jane Jackson wrote in Jack's nomination letter. "He talks to them and explains that they are not alone in their quest for improved literacy."

LLO is proud to work with such dedicated learners.

Literacy facts give perspective.

Nancy, Jack, and Pauline aren't alone in their struggle for literacy. A new survey conducted by Statistics Canada reveals that 42% of Canadian adults don't have the necessary reading and numeracy skills to fully function in today's society – many people across the province struggle with everyday tasks such as reading a newspaper or filling out a job application.

Volunteer-driven organizations like Laubach Literacy Ontario provide one-on-one instruction to adults. Nancy is currently a tutor and volunteers with the Valley Adult Learning Area, an LLO council. Jack and Pauline each became advocates for literacy in their own way: Jack has helped fundraise over \$18,000 for the North Bay council and Pauline continues to advocate for life-long learning.

The Arnie Stewart Individual Achievement Award is given out annually by LLO to a learner who has overcome barriers, made significant achievements due to skills gained while in a literacy program, and has given back to the community by helping raise awareness about literacy.

A word of advice

Few literacy councils have the internal resources to produce sophisticated public relations materials, and hiring PR experts is often prohibitively expensive. Take a look at your community to see what resources are available to help you with your communication needs.

Start by going to your local volunteer centre or <http://www.volunteer.ca/> and search for journalism, marketing, or public relations people who might be willing to donate their time. Next, consider hiring a summer student who has some background working for newspapers and writing stories. You can hire a summer student through the Human Resources and



LLO Summer Students: Tudor Costache and Laura Cumming

Skills Development Canada Summer Career Placement initiative. Laubach Literacy Ontario has had great experiences with summer students in the past. Lastly, check with your local college to see if their marketing class might be willing to do some PR work as a class project. Project Read in Kitchener worked with Conestoga College students to produce a Public Service Announcement that aired on local radio stations.

The more you know about the resources available, the more successful you'll be at getting your message across, even if your council has a limited or no PR budget. Good luck!



There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it.
- Edith Wharton

Additional Information

Government Publications

Fundraising Ideas that Work for Grassroots Groups

<http://www.ns.ec.gc.ca/community/pdf/fr4grass.pdf>

The Partnership Handbook

http://www.sdc.gc.ca/en/epb/sid/cia/partnership/partnerhb_e.pdf

Guide to Special Events Fundraising

<http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/pc-cp/pubs/e/Specev1.htm>

Fundraising Ideas

Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario Cash and Cars Lottery

<http://hsfo.marketspace.ca/index.html>

The United Way of Greater Toronto

http://www.uwgt.org/how_we_do_it/how_we_do_it_index.html

The Princess Margaret Hospital Foundation Lottery

<http://www.pmhf.ca/>

Habitat for Humanity
<http://www.habitat.org/donation/>

Foster Parents Plan
<http://www.fosterparentsplan.ca/WaysToGive/>

Stephen Lewis - If I had a Million Dollars Gala Dinner
http://www.york4stephenlewis.ca/gala_dinner.htm

Online Fundraising

CanadaHelps
www.canadahelps.org.

Gambling Events as Fundraisers

Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario
www.agco.on.ca

Licenses
<http://www.agco.on.ca/en/c.gaming/c1.3.1.regular.html>

Nevada Tickets
<http://www.agco.on.ca/en/c.gaming/c1.4.breakopen.html>

Raffles
<http://www.agco.on.ca/en/c.gaming/c1.5.raffles.html>

Sources of Funding Information

Imagine Canada
www.imaginecanada.ca

Environmental Scans

<http://blogs.salon.com/0002007/2005/04/25.html>

<http://www.actew.org/projects/current/constellation.html>

Contacting the Media

Thunder Bay Children's Festival
<http://www.thunderbay.ca/index.cfm?fuse=html&pg=573>

Online Community Calendar
<http://communityevents.ca/>

A Commitment to Training and Employment for Women (ACTEW)
<http://www.actew.org/projects/current/constellation.html>

Volunteers

Volunteer Canada
<http://www.volunteer.ca/>

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