

Bristol Public Library
Strategic Plan
July 2018 – July 2023

Over the past few years, the Bristol Public Library has been working closely with Summit Marketing to create a Strategic Plan to guide the Library in to the future. After much work and many focus groups, it was determined that there were four main areas in which to concentrate. These areas are: (1) Marketing, (2) Programming, (3) Networking and Partnerships, and (4) Technology. The goals and the action plans for those goals listed in the next several pages come directly from observations of the Library staff, Board of Trustees, and members of the various focus groups involved in the process.

It is our plan to begin the process of accomplishing our goals by establishing a baseline for our statistics and, by doing this, we can evaluate each year how our efforts are (or are not) working. We can then make adjustments, establish timelines, and reevaluate our plan based upon the numbers collected.

Marketing

Goal: Implement marketing strategies that incorporate traditional marketing outlets and social media communications to increase awareness of, and attendance at, Library programs and events, as well as increase circulation and usage of library services and materials.

To accomplish this goal, the Bristol Public Library will:

- Create a list of objectives that we would like marketing to accomplish.
- Create a Marketing Team within the library to clarify messages and to make sure that every event/program is covered appropriately.
- Manage and evaluate the effectiveness of social media outlets.
- Evaluate the need for various types of marketing.
- Develop marketing tools (brochures, handouts, posters, etc.) for each area within the Library.
- Make use of video and live-streaming capabilities for library classes and events.
- Continue revising and enhancing the Library's website.
- Focus on consistent branding across marketing platforms.
- Work with local businesses to display targeted marketing based upon the business audience.
- Include "where did you hear about..." questions in all survey materials so that the Library and the Marketing Team can evaluate effectiveness of the various types of marketing.

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Programming

Goal 1: Increase community programming to incorporate skill-sharing opportunities and engage the public in enriching educational and recreational programming that will contribute to greater library attendance and usage.

To accomplish this goal, the Bristol Public Library will:

- Recruit volunteer “experts” to hold workshops/classes on their area of expertise.
- Create bibliographies to go with each program to allow patrons to further explore the topic.
- Create quick displays to go along with each program that will highlight available books on the topic for checkout.
- Use surveys to determine the types of programs desired by the public.

Goal 2: Increase intergenerational programming throughout the Library.

To accomplish this goal, the Bristol Public Library will:

- Work with adult, teen, and children’s departments to encourage 2-3 intergenerational programs throughout the year.
- Cross-market library programming for all age groups in each program (i.e., advertise adult educational programs in the children’s department for the parents, etc.)

Goal 3: Find ways to effectively evaluate programming throughout the year.

To accomplish this goal, the Bristol Public Library will:

- Develop annual goals and objectives for each type of programming.
- Create meaningful ways to collect data from programming.
- Determine what data to collect.
- Develop an annual library survey to determine the type of programs that are wanted, as well as what has worked or not worked throughout the year.
- Develop short, easy to administer surveys for use after each event.

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Networking and Partnerships

Goal: Increase collaborations, networks, and partnerships throughout the community.

To accomplish this goal, the Bristol Public Library will:

- Brainstorm programming ideas that target specific agencies/companies and ask them to consider presenting a program on that topic.
- Personally invite eight agencies per year (two per quarter) that may be of interest to programs held at the Library and encourage them to spread the word to clients/others within their agency.
- Go out and establish one contact/relationship per month to encourage future collaborations.
- Offer opportunities for local agencies/companies to use the Library for non-commercial programming to not only build up our usage numbers, but to help them as well.
- Create materials crafted to individual agencies that highlight the outreach services we are able to offer to those agencies and that encourage them to consider offering outreach opportunities at the Library as well.

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Technology

Goal 1: Conduct evaluation of the Library’s technology needs annually.

To accomplish this goal, the Bristol Public Library will:

- Include technology needs questions in the annual survey.
- Work with IT team to determine future technology needs and work to budget accordingly.
- Keep up-to-date with new and emerging technologies and find ways to incorporate these technologies into Library programming.

Goal 2: Expand the Library’s digital and technological capabilities in line with the needs and expectations of the community.

To accomplish this goal, the Bristol Public Library will:

- Work with local companies to determine what needs they may see in the community that we can work with them to provide here at the Library.
- Partner with the schools to determine what hardware/software they need the students to use in order to provide these options at the Library for students who may not have access to technology at home.
- Keep up-to-date with new and emerging technologies.
- Maintain contact with patrons and non-patrons to determine what technology needs they may have and look for ways to meet these needs when financially/technologically possible.

Goal 3: Evaluate current and future digital learning opportunities available from the Jones Creativity Center and ensure that we are providing the public with the educational opportunities that they need and want.

To accomplish this goal, the Bristol Public Library will:

- Include questions in the annual user survey to find out what the patrons want to learn.
- Work closely with area schools, colleges, and organizations to determine what needs/gaps there might be out there that we can fill in regards to technology and education.
- Keep up-to-date with new and emerging technologies and educational tools.
- Work with agencies such as Mt. Rogers, Virginia Highlands Community College, and Northeast State to find ways to partner with them to provide educational opportunities to the citizens of Bristol.
- Increase marketing efforts across all platforms and formats directed at the Jones Creativity Center and the services it provides. Include “where did you hear about…” question in all program surveys to evaluate the effectiveness of the different marketing platforms.