

PR and Advocacy Interest Group

South Peninsula Administration

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In the year 2000 a task team from the South Peninsula Administration undertook a fact-finding mission within the South Peninsula Municipality (SPM) Libraries and found 'a fragmented unit that was apparently under resourced and over committed with demoralised staff operating almost exclusively in reactive mode, without an apparent leadership structure or a collective vision for the service, confused as to roles and responsibilities, with no adequate performance measurement in place, three different operating systems and a number of working condition problems'.

After recommendations and structures were implemented as a result of that mission, various interest groups were established - a PR and Advocacy Interest Group being one of them. The successful functioning of the interest groups plays a pivotal role in the transformation of the South Peninsula Administration (SPA) Libraries from a fragmented, individual library system to a more focused, efficient, effective and user-orientated service, ready to play its role within the City of Cape Town and face the challenge of the future.

Mission

To advocate the importance of free and equitable access to information in a democratic society.

Vision

To promote libraries and library services.

Objectives

- ♦ To speak out for libraries.
- ♦ To advocate that libraries and librarians are vital to the future of an information literate nation.
- ♦ To justify libraries' existence.
- ♦ To promote the services libraries offer.
- ♦ To improve usage of libraries by establishing user needs.
- ♦ To make use of marketing, publications, community facilitation, inter-departmental and external liaison as well as the Library Friends to get the message across.

Results

As well as learning various marketing skills the group has gained experience in the following aspects from projects launched:

- ♦ advertising
- ♦ team work
- ♦ creative skills development
- ♦ promotional plans development
- ♦ effective communications for marketing
- ♦ promoting and improving public relations
- ♦ support
- ♦ record keeping (for example, report writing, minutes)
- ♦ facilitation with regards to group dynamics
- ♦ interpersonal skills
- ♦ conflict resolution
- ♦ communication - internal
- ♦ strategic planning, implementation, analysis and assessment
- ♦ leadership skills

- ♦ time management
- ♦ research
- ♦ report writing
- ♦ budget planning and implementation
- ♦ computer literacy.

Events/projects launched

These are indicated in the table on the opposite page.

It is important to note that marketing is a continuous and ongoing process and that the promotion of Library Week, World Book Day, Learning Cape Festival, Literacy Day and holiday programmes are therefore included in the PR and Library Advocacy Interest Group projects every year.

PR and Advocacy plays a crucial role in the existence of libraries as access to information in the 21st century is recognised as being a critical enabler of social and economic development.

Note: This article was compiled with the help of Interest Group members.

	Events	Description	Assessment
2001	Signage	To ensure that all libraries in SPA provided adequate signage for users	The committee was satisfied that clear and user-friendly signs are displayed. Outdoor signage still needs attention
2002	Mall promotions	Tables were manned with promotional material to make the public aware of the free services the libraries offer	On the whole the committee felt that the promotions were worthwhile as mall promotions effectively target non-library users
2003	Library video	Compiling information for a library video promoting all services in libraries	In process (see article in CL Mar/Apr 2006, p.35, <i>Promote your library on video.</i>)
	Library for the Blind	Comprehensive packages were sent to all libraries with information on and how to join the Blind Library - South African Library for the Blind	The team felt this was a great success as all libraries have the necessary information to help anyone with a sight handicap
2004	Library video	Video script and editing were finalised and video produced. The video is only available in English. Translations into Afrikaans and Xhosa are still in process	The committee felt that the video is a great success and that it is a true reflection of a typical day in the library
	Library hours	Combined list of opening hours of SPA libraries circulated	Up to date information at one's fingertips
2005	Careers Corner	Compiling a careers corner with information on tertiary and local institutions for students, et cetera	In process
	Displays	Launched a <i>Behind the scenes</i> display project that will be circulated amongst libraries. To make the public aware of the specialised services the library offers	Staff felt this needs attention as this sector of librarianship is little known to the public. The public only see the 'counter' and receive the product
	Special services and sections	List of special services and sections available at SPA libraries to be circulated	All SPA libraries are aware of what's on offer
	Holiday activities	A combined list of holiday activities was sent to local publications	All activities were well attended.