



The AALL Public Relations Committee Web site contains tips and information about how to promote the value of law librarians.

## Increase Your PRQ!

### PR Committee Web Site Can Help with Promotion Strategies

by Raquel Ortiz

Have you looked at the AALL Public Relations

Committee Web site lately? Located at <http://www.aallnet.org/committee/pr>, the redesigned, user-friendly site houses public relations tips to help law librarians enhance the image of their profession and promote the value they bring to their institutions.

The site contains public relations articles, ideas for library public

relations campaigns and information about the AALL Public Relations Committee. Regardless of the type of library, the marketing task at hand or the user's level of PR expertise, this site has something for every law librarian. Their PR quotient will skyrocket in no time.

#### How-Tos

While law librarians are generally a very creative group, they also recognize the importance of not reinventing the wheel. The Web site provides proven, successful public relations strategies from those who have "been there, done that." For example, the "Public Relations" column in *AALL Spectrum* features many how-to articles for every type of law library on news releases, display cases, PR exhibits, friends groups, referral lists and more.

Here's a typical scenario. A library wants to update and redesign its newsletter. The newsletter editor's first task is to find information on design and editing. Look no further than the "Public Relations" column in *AALL Spectrum* at <http://www.aallnet.org/committee/pr/prcolumn/index.htm>. The index lists two articles on newsletters: one is a personal account of redesigning and editing a newsletter, the other an article on newsletter design.

Once the newsletter content is developed, the editor may decide to add a few graphics to jazz up the publication. The editor finds the clip art in his or her word-processing software inadequate. The Public Relations Committee Web site comes to the rescue. The "Resources" section of the site at <http://www.aallnet.org/committee/pr/resources/index.htm> lists links to clip art sites on the Web. The page indicates free and fee-based sites to find library, law-specific or general clip art.

#### Promoting Law Libraries and the Profession

In this tenuous economy, marketing and public relations in law libraries is essential for survival. Law librarians have to justify their jobs and even why libraries are needed. To do so, they may need to take a purely financial approach to demonstrate their contributions to their institutions. The monthly public relations articles in *AALL Spectrum* can provide some tangible guidance.

Robert Hu's article, "ROIs Can Validate Your Library's Value," in the October 2002 issue of *AALL Spectrum* suggests how a librarian can use the return-on-investment financial tool to calculate and prove a library's economic worth in dollars and cents. "If the libraries can show a positive ROI rate, they will have an effective marketing tool at their disposal when it comes time to prove their value to the parent organizations or clients," Hu writes.

A different approach to the value of librarians is found in Joan Shear's article "Could I See That Price Tag Again?" from the September 2002 issue of the magazine. In this first-person account, Shear illustrates how librarians save money for their institutions by finding creative solutions to everyday problems. She explains how she saved her library \$10,000 when it reclassified its reading room collection from its call number system to the Library of Congress system.

In some instances, librarians may need to spotlight the services that their libraries provide. In her article "Speakeasy: The Art of Communicating Value" in the December 2001 issue of *AALL Spectrum*, Cindy Spohr emphasizes the importance of defining and communicating the library's role within its organization. "Frequently the librarian's expertise is assumed — it is the interactions around the services provided that create the perception of the library's 'customer,'" Spohr writes. "These perceptions need to exceed the satisfactory — customers must be wowed or delighted. They need to see how the work of the library fits into their needs and the overall goals of the organization."

#### PR for AALL Chapters and SISs

The Web sites public relations tips are not relegated to marketing to a librarian's employing institution. The site also contains information about how AALL chapters and Special Interest Sections can improve their PR know-how.

The committee Web site suggests how chapters and SISs can promote the specialty of law librarianship to library school students. Sue Burch's article "Connect with Library Schools to Ensure the Future of the Profession" in the June 2002 issue of the magazine examines how the AALL Strategic Plan promotes law librarianship in library schools. Burch then suggests specific ideas for how chapters and SISs can reach out to library school students, such as offering internships and teaching law librarianship classes at local library science schools.

The ideas don't end there. If the PR committee of a chapter or SIS is writing or updating its committee's charge, it can take a look at how other chapters or SISs devised their charges in the section of the Web site called "Public Relations Committee Charges" at <http://www.aallnet.org/committee/pr/resources/charges.htm>. This section is also helpful to develop public relations activities for chapters and SISs.

The Public Relations Committee Web site includes marketing ideas from non-law libraries, too, on its "Resources" section at <http://www.aallnet.org/committee/pr/>

<resources/index.htm>. Links to the American Library Association Web site describe the ALA's many promotional events, such as National Library Week and Teen Read Week. The same section of the committee's Web site also has links to the marketing and public relations publications *The Shy Librarian* and *Marketing Library Services*, which report on the public relations activities of various libraries. A link to the Web site called Library Media & PR contains a wealth of information on public relations techniques and sources as well.

The committee's "Public Relations Clearinghouse" Web page at <http://aallnet.org/committee/pr/resources/clearinghouse.htm> lists the committee's collection of PR materials, including bookmarks, brochures, fact sheets, logos and newsletters, donated by law librarians across the country. AALL members may obtain those PR materials free by contacting Robert H. Hu, chair of the Public Relations Committee, at [robert.hu@law.ttu.edu](mailto:robert.hu@law.ttu.edu).

### **Award-Winning PR**

Once a library has achieved PR success, why not flaunt it? The Public Relations Committee Web site posts information on

the AALL/West Excellence in Marketing Awards at <http://aallnet.org/committee/pr/eim/index.htm>. The awards honor outstanding achievement in law library public relations. The page includes guidelines and an application form as well as a list of past award winners. Information about the PR honors of other library associations is also in this section. Users can obtain samples of award-winning public relations materials through the site's "Public Relations Clearinghouse" page.

### **User Ideas are Welcome**

For more information on committee activities, please go to the link "About the PR Committee" at <http://aallnet.org/committee/pr/about/index.htm>. The committee values input from AALL members. If members find a helpful, innovative public relations Web site or have suggestions on how to make the committee's Web site more useful, please send your comments to the Public Relations Committee Webmaster Raquel Ortiz at [rmortiz@bu.edu](mailto:rmortiz@bu.edu).

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