



## STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

### Date Due Slip Advertising – Customer Complaint

<b>ate:</b>	June 13, 2013
<b>To:</b>	Advertising Review Working Group
<b>From:</b>	Director, Communications, Programming and Customer Engagement

### SUMMARY

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The purpose of this report is to provide details of a complaint submitted by a customer about specific advertisements on the back of the Library's date-due-slips.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

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**The Director, Communications, Programming and Customer Engagement recommends that the Toronto Public Library Board:**

1. considers the customer complaint about advertising on the back of the Toronto Public Library's date-due-slips

### FINANCIAL IMPACT

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The Library's advertising policy states that "The Library, at its sole discretion, may remove advertising that contravenes this policy from its property, at no cost to the Library". Therefore, the Library would not incur any direct costs from removing the advertising from the date-due-slips should the Board deem them to be in contravention of the policy.

However, in order to remove the specific advertisements, all receipt rolls would need to be removed from all branches and recycled, and new rolls would need to be printed and redistributed to the branches. This would mean that the vendor would be operating the campaign at a significant loss and may put the viability of the pilot and future campaigns at risk. If the summer campaign cannot be rerun, the Library could forgo cost savings in receipt paper purchases of up to \$10,000 for the three remaining months of the campaign.

The Director, Finance & Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

## DECISION HISTORY

At its February 27, 2012 meeting, the Library Board approved an advertising policy and the implementation of advertising on the reverse side of Library date-due-slips.

In September 2012, the Library contracted the services of Receipt Media to implement the Library's advertising program.

In April 2013, the Library began a six-month pilot of an advertising program on the back of its date-due-slips with eight advertisers advertising in the spring campaign (two months), and six advertisers advertising in the summer campaign (four months).

On May 17, 2013 the Library received a complaint from a customer about specific advertisements on the back of the Library's date-due-slips.

## ISSUE BACKGROUND

The customer expressed concerns about the following advertisements, provided the following reasons for those concerns, and requested that the Advertising Review Working Group (ARWG) take the following actions. (The full text of the customer complaint can be found in Attachment 1 of this report.)

Advertisement	Concern	Action
Diamond & Diamond Lawyers	"have no conceivable relationship with library usage"	Remove from date-due-slips
Pizza Pizza and Pizza Nova	"Fast food has no nexus or purpose with the operation of the public library"	Remove from date-due-slips
MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving)	Isn't a paid advertisement. It's a free placement of a PSA.	Label future free PSAs as such.
Receipt Media	The vendor who is selling the advertising space is getting free advertising space to advertise its company	Remove from date-due-slips

The customer also asked for acknowledgment from the ARWG that all current advertising insertions were reviewed and approved in advance, with full knowledge that MADD's insertion was a free PSA and that Receipt Media was advertising itself.

Note that the Library's summer date-due-slip advertising campaign currently running from June to September 2013 does not include advertisements from Pizza Pizza, Pizza Nova, or Diamond and Diamond Lawyers. It does include advertisements from MADD and Receipt Media. Copies of the specific advertisements can be found in Attachment 2.

## **COMMENTS**

### **Advertisements that have nothing to do with the business or operation of the Library (Diamond & Diamond Personal Injury Lawyers, Pizza Pizza, Pizza Nova)**

The Library's advertising policy (See Attachment 3) does not state that advertisements must be related to the business or services of the Library. The underlying principles of the Library's policy balance "... support[ing] and facilitat[ing] the development of mutually beneficial advertising relationships between the Library, the business community and other organizations" with "... adversely affect[ing] public confidence in the Library or the value of the Library brand."

The policy also explicitly states that "The acceptance of advertising by the Library is not an endorsement of a product or service" and that "advertising on Library property does not provide, nor imply, Library endorsement of advertisers, their messaging or their points of view."

When reviewing the proposed advertisers and the creative content of the proposed ads, Library staff took into consideration the policy directives which state that "the Library will not accept ... advertising that detracts from the Library's public image" or that "is considered of questionable taste, or which in the Library's discretion is considered irritating in its style, content, or method of presentation." In the opinion of staff, the ads in question did not meet this criteria because the creative content and its placement within the Library environment is unobtrusive and simple in its presentation, and the advertising organizations and/or their products and services are not disreputable or inappropriate.

### **Advertisements that are unpaid (MADD, Receipt Media)**

The Library's advertising policy states that:

"Library staff is authorized to establish or negotiate and charge fees for advertising or contract a third party company to do so.

"Third party companies may be contracted through the Library's procurement policy and procedures to implement some, or all, of the Library's advertising program components."

The contract with the vendor for the pilot implementation of the Library's date-due-slip advertising requires that the vendor take on all costs and responsibilities associated with the sales, printing, distribution and management of the advertising program, which includes the negotiation of pricing of the advertisements with the advertisers. In return, the Library receives the receipt paper free of charge. It is the prerogative of the vendor to discount or give away advertising space to incent advertisers and/or to fill unpaid spaces. Receipt Media also provided free advertising space to the Toronto Public Library Foundation for the spring and summer campaigns.

### ***Receipt Media advertising its own business***

It is common practice for advertising vendors to promote the benefits of their advertising channels using those advertising channels. For example, park bench advertisements often advertise their available spaces with promotional messages such as “See? You just proved bench advertising works”, or available billboard spaces advertise “This space for rent” or “Advertise here”. The promotion of Receipt Media on the back of the Library’s date-due-slips benefits the Library because it encourages would-be advertisers to contact the vendor to advertise on the Library’s channel.

## **CONTACT**

Linda Hazzan; Director, Communications, Programming & Customer Engagement;  
Tel: 416-393-7214; Email: [lhazzan@torontopubliclibrary.ca](mailto:lhazzan@torontopubliclibrary.ca)

Katherine Palmer; Director, Policy, Planning and eServices;  
Tel: 416-395-5602; Email: [kpalmer@torontopubliclibrary.ca](mailto:kpalmer@torontopubliclibrary.ca)

## **SIGNATURE**

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Linda Hazzan  
Director, Communications, Programming and Customer Engagement

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- Attachment 1:** Full text of complaint from customer  
**Attachment 2:** Samples of the advertisements identified in the customer’s complaint  
**Attachment 3:** Toronto Public Library Advertising Policy