

POLICY: Communications

SECTION: II – General Policies – Miscellaneous

MOTION#/DATE: – January 27, 2003

Effective Date

January 27, 2003

Policy Objective

The objective of this policy is to ensure that Toronto Public Library (TPL) external and internal communications are effectively managed and responsive to the diverse information needs of the public.

Background

Consistent, well-organized external communication of information is essential in order that the public may understand, respond to and use the TPL's policies, products, programs and services. The same principle applies to internal communication to ensure that staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities as employees and are able to serve the public in a knowledgeable and efficient manner. Communications is both a management function and an integral part of organizational activity that is fundamental to the achievement of TPL objectives.

Policy Statement

The Toronto Public Library will:

- ◆ provide information to the public about TPL's policies, products, programs and services, that is accurate, complete, objective, timely, relevant and understandable;
- ◆ take into account the concerns and views of the public in establishing priorities, developing policies and implementing programs;
- ◆ ensure that the communications vehicles TPL uses are effective in reaching the target audiences;



- ◆ ensure that the most cost-effective means are used to achieve communications objectives;
- ◆ pursue fair communications practices to ensure that communication materials depict the diverse nature of the community in a fair, representative and inclusive manner.

Scope

This policy refers to the following communications functions:

- ◆ planning: communications planning develops corporate and program communications plans that respond to public interests;
- ◆ management: communications management applies the principles and practices of good management to the coordination of research and analysis, advice and planning, and to the implementation of communications programs and activities;
- ◆ advice: communications advice provides counsel to Library management on policy development, program planning and implementation, and public issues;
- ◆ research and analysis: communications research and analysis examines the public environment to assess public wants, needs, perceptions and understandings with respect to policies and programs, and evaluates communications programs and projects against planned objectives and professional standards.

Application

This policy applies to all Toronto Public Library regions and departments. This policy must be read and applied in conjunction with related TPL policies, as noted in Appendix 1.

Specific Directives/Conditions

The following activities that support the policy will be designated to staff:

- ◆ supporting an appropriate distribution of resources for corporate and program communications planning and delivery;
- ◆ ensuring that communications planning forms an integral part of program and policy initiatives;
- ◆ ensuring that accountability is assigned for the approval of all communications projects;

- ◆ preparing an annual operational communications plan that integrates planning priorities of Library departments, regions and committees;
- ◆ monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of communications activities in relation to the objectives stated in communications plans;
- ◆ designating a single focus of responsibility for communications with the public when developing contingency plans or crisis management;
- ◆ anticipating, to the extent possible, major issues or crises through the development of contingency communications plans;
- ◆ establishing and implementing clear media relations protocols and standards, and annual evaluation on the effectiveness of the media relations strategy;
- ◆ managing all creative services contracts in compliance with the Library's policies on acquisition of creative consulting and technical services;
- ◆ ensuring that work undertaken in communications, public opinion research and advertising demonstrates the Library's commitment to fiscal responsibility;
- ◆ maintaining an index of publications;
- ◆ ensuring information in all formats is well-identified as being from the Toronto Public Library, according to the requirements of the *Visual Identity Program*;
- ◆ using plain language and proper grammar in all communications with the public to ensure clarity and consistency of information.

Accountability

The City Librarian is responsible for ensuring that communications priorities and requirements are met; and that they fully reflect Library policies, themes and priorities; and that institutional communications are fully integrated into the development, planning and implementation of policies and programs.

The Marketing and Communications Director is accountable to the City Librarian for managing the communications function and meeting all communications priorities and requirements and adhering to policy directives.

The Directors are accountable for ensuring compliance with the communications policy in their respective areas.

Appendix 1

References

Government of Canada, Communications Policy, April 2002
City of Toronto, Access/Equity Documents 2000
City of Toronto Advertising Policy, May 2001
Toronto Public Library, Translation Policy, October 2002
Toronto Public Library, DRAFT, Publishing Guidelines 2001
Toronto Public Library, Visual Identity Policy and Manual, October 2001

Appendix 2

Enquiries

All enquiries about this policy should be directed to the Director of Marketing and Communications at 416-393-7141.

Appendix 3

Related Policies

This policy must be read and applied in conjunction with the following administrative policies of the Toronto Public Library, and where applicable, the City of Toronto. Policies noted with an asterisk (*) indicate forthcoming TPL policy.

Toronto Public Library, Advertising Policy*
Toronto Public Library, Publications Policy*
Toronto Public Library, Media Relations Policy*
Toronto Public Library, Purchasing Policy
Toronto Public Library, Displaying and Distributing Information Policy
Toronto Public Library, Merchandising Policy*
Toronto Public Library, Public Consultation Policy*
Toronto Public Library, Translation Policy
City of Toronto, Multilingual Services Policy

Appendix 4

Glossary

Advertising - refers to activities involved in the purchase, by or on behalf of the Library, of space or time in print or broadcast media, or in other mass media such as outdoor and transit advertising; it also includes any creative work associated with the production of an advertisement, any advertising research such as pre-testing, evaluating and recommending general advertising strategies, and post-evaluation of advertising campaigns.

Audio-visual - refers to activities involved in selecting, commissioning, editing and preparing information for dissemination to the public by means of an audio-visual production such as motion picture film, videotape, videodisc and sound-slide presentation; the term also refers to the subsequent promotion and distribution to the public of such items.

Editing - is the activity of improving the presentation and the quality of manuscripts by correcting errors in grammar, sentence structure and format, and by revising or rewriting portions of text to improve clarity, organization, conciseness, consistency and accuracy.

Director of communications - is the senior official designated by the TPL Board to coordinate and direct the implementation of this policy.

Marketing - the act or process of buying or selling in a market; the exchange of goods for an agreed sum of money.

Media monitoring - refers to activities involved in assessing coverage of particular topics in print, broadcast or other mass media.

Media relations - is the activity of developing and maintaining effective communications with representatives of print and electronic media to facilitate the flow of information between Library and public.

Public opinion research - refers to activities involved in soliciting the views of Toronto Public Library users and potential users.



Public relations contract - refers to activities involved in contracting with the private sector for communications services not otherwise defined in this appendix.

Publishing - refers to activities involved in selecting, commissioning and preparing information for distribution to the public by means of products such as books, periodicals, brochures, microfilms, microfiches, discs, video-cassettes and audio tapes; it also includes the subsequent promotion, distribution or sale to the public, of these products.

Writing - is the activity of gathering and synthesizing information and composing written material, usually for publication and distribution, to convey particular messages to intended target audiences in a readily understandable manner.

Appendix 5

Procedures and Guidelines

Procedures and guidelines are, or will be, developed in the following areas in support of the policy and its requirements. (* denotes already in place)

Advertising Guidelines

Communications Planning *

Crisis and Issues Management

Distribution *

Evaluation

Events and Announcements *

Media Relations *(Nov 02 under development)

Multiple Format and Translation

Plain Language

Publishing *(Nov 02 draft in circulation)