

**YALSA Board of Directors Meeting  
ALA Midwinter Meeting, Dallas  
January 20 – 24, 2012**

**Topic:** Marketing Proposal

**Background:** At the 2011 Annual Conference the board directed the executive director to investigate marketing options for YALSA and to report on the topic at the Fall Executive Committee Meeting. A proposal is provided below based on discussion at the fall meeting.

**Action Required:** Action

---

**Marketing & branding background info:**

- Branding
  - Current YALSA logo has been in use since 2003
  - Other logos have been created periodically for specific initiatives, such as Teen Tech Week™, Books for Teens, Best of the Best, etc.
- Staff support
  - 30% of the Web Services Manager position is “PR, marketing and media relations.” Other staff are directed to work with the Web Services Manager on marketing matters and do not have marketing as part of their job descriptions.
- Strategic documents
  - In 2001 YALSA leadership made the decision to develop a Marketing Plan. A draft of a basic plan was developed and presented at Midwinter 2002. In 2003 it was decided to postpone any further work on the Marketing Plan until after the Strategic Plan had been completed and adopted. There was uncertainty about whether to focus on an organizational marketing plan or more specifically on a membership marketing plan.
  - During their spring 2003 meeting via conference call, the Executive Committee felt the need to further reflect on the specifics of creating a marketing plan. They felt that internal (ALA) and external marketing was needed. Further discussion was postponed until more information was available from the Business and Strategic Plans, which were in the process of being updated. Board and Executive Committee documents for the remainder of 2003 and into 2004 do not make any further mentions of a marketing plan.
  - In the summer of 2006 YALSA’s Board adopted a communications plan, one portion of which focused marketing. The plan is available at <http://bit.ly/tw5rAg> (.pdf)
  - The 2008 – 2010 strategic plan for YALSA included a marketing goal, “the value of YALSA’s programs and services are understood and recognized by the profession, the media, and the public.”

### **Recommended strategies:**

1. Improve awareness of YALSA and its services, products and resources to internal and external audiences by working with a consultant to identify and implement a particular marketing strategy, such as developing a new logo and tag line, evaluating YALSA's current marketing efforts, developing a new marketing strategy, conducting marketing research, etc. The cost would range between \$5,000 - \$10,000.
  - a. Avenue M Group: provides consulting services, including brand mapping, logo and tag line development, communication audits, and more.  
[www.avenuemgroup.com/](http://www.avenuemgroup.com/)
  - b. Calvin Trout & Associates: provides consulting services, including marketing audits, marketing strategy development and more.  
<http://calvindroutassociates.com/index.html>
  - c. NorthStar Strategies, Inc: provides consulting services, including marketing plan development, creating advertising messages and market research.  
[www.northstarstrategies.biz/index.html](http://www.northstarstrategies.biz/index.html)
2. As appropriate, work to secure pro-bono help through graduate schools or not-for-profits, such as:
  - a. [www.kellogg.northwestern.edu/research/nonprofit/info/work.htm](http://www.kellogg.northwestern.edu/research/nonprofit/info/work.htm)
  - b. [www.taprootfoundation.org/getprobono/catalog/marketing.php](http://www.taprootfoundation.org/getprobono/catalog/marketing.php)
3. Expand marketing role for member groups and/or board of directors
  - a. Currently:
    - i. YALSA has three marketing taskforces: Midwinter, Annual and Awards & Selected Lists
    - ii. Board members have been asked to use social media to raise awareness about YALSA and its programs, resources and services
  - b. Additionally:
    - i. Create a board group on marketing, as the board moves forward with the concept of establishing standing board committees
    - ii. Board training on association and nonprofit marketing
4. Ask ALA, through YALSA's rep on the ALA Executive Board, to consider establishing a marketing department
5. Keep cost of marketing in mind when considering the development of future services and programs, such as book awards, public awareness campaigns, etc.
6. Continue to explore how social media can assist with marketing efforts
7. When the opportunity to expand YALSA staff arises, consider focusing on marketing

### **Proposed Actions:**

- Approve up to \$10,000 in FY12 funds to cover the cost of a marketing consultant's services who will evaluate YALSA's current marketing efforts and develop a new marketing strategy and collateral, and direct the Executive Director to create, distribute and vet an RFP to consultants.
- Direct the President and Executive Director to implement the recommended strategies 2 through 7 as listed in board document #15.

### **Additional Resources**

- "Communications, Marketing and Planning,"  
[www.councilofnonprofits.org/resources/communications-planning](http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/resources/communications-planning)

- “Critical Role of Marketing Research,”  
<http://managementhelp.org/marketing/market-research.htm>
- Katya’s Nonprofit Marketing Blog: [www.nonprofitmarketingblog.com/](http://www.nonprofitmarketingblog.com/)