

Welcoming New Customers to the Library



Presented By:

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Wednesday, Sept. 20, 2023



My Background



- Library Marketing & Communications Consultant
- ALA Editions Book alastore.ala.org/relevanceresults
- Accredited in Public Relations
- 20+ years in Marketing & Communications; 15 in libraries
- 2016 *Library Journal* Marketer of the Year, two-time John Cotton Dana winner
- Board Member, Library Marketing & Communications Conference
- Advisory Board Member, UNC Charlotte Atkins Library



Today's Agenda

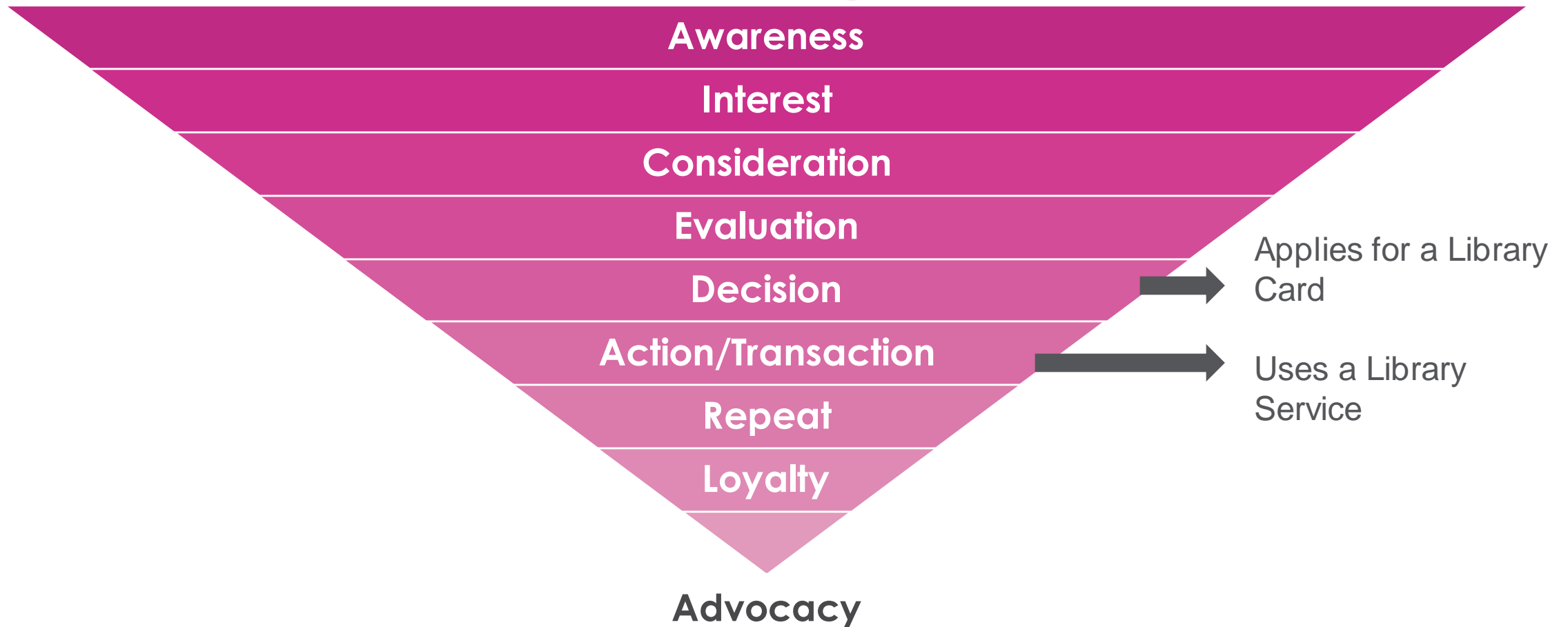
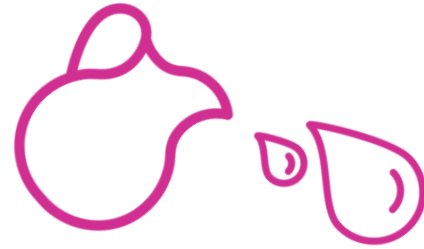


- Strategies to help welcome new customers to the library.
- Tips to get customers engaged with your library.
- Cross promotion: encouraging new customers to use different services and programs.
- Barriers that prevent new customers from signing up and/or using their card.
- How to remove barriers and increase engagement.

The Library “Marketing Funnel”

A visual depiction of how you get and keep library customers.

Members of your community



Why is the Marketing Funnel Important?



Getting someone to sign up for a library card is only half of the process.



If you don't move them down the funnel, you lose them!

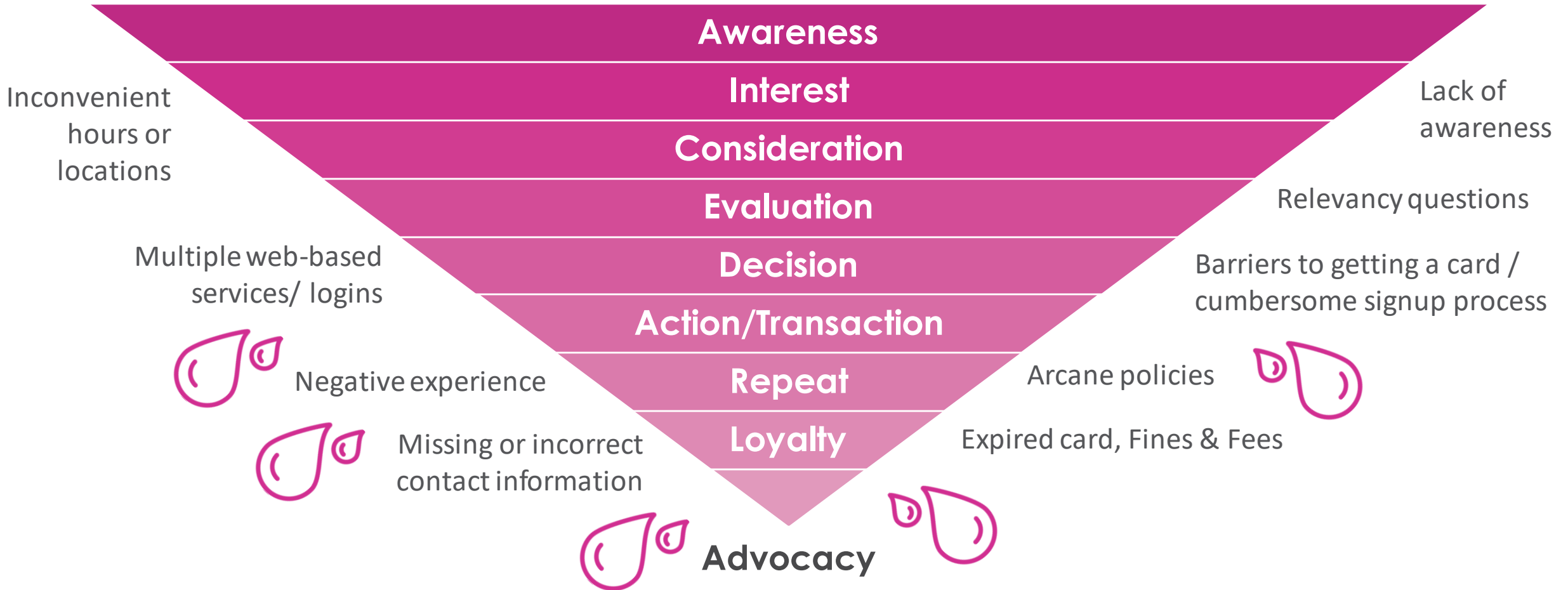
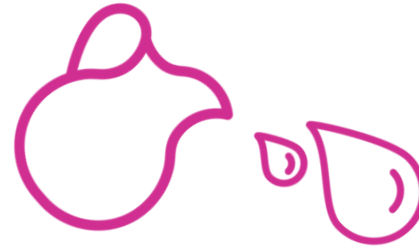


Then you have to start over.



Holes in the Marketing Funnel

Members of your community



Strategies to Welcome New Customers

Start With the Application Process



Getting a library card should be the easiest thing in the world ... but it often isn't!

Barriers to Getting a Card



Inconvenient

- Overly complicated application
- Paper application
- Customer must “activate” card in person
- Customer must show proof of residency and ID in person
- Online application is not fully online
- Physical card must be sent in the mail

Inequitable

- Transportation to a library is challenging
- Language barriers
- Residency proof requirement is challenging for unhoused or frequently moving customers, those who need us the most

Why is it so complicated?

Common Reasons:

**Systems and technology
are outdated**

**We need to ensure that
someone lives in our
community or has a
mailing address**



**Policies and procedures
are outdated**

**We need to verify
information before we can
issue a card**

**Data has to be entered
manually**

Rethink the Process

- Put the customer at the center of the conversation .
- Start by asking yourself, “What is the experience of getting a library card like for the customer?”
- Walk through the process step by step.
- Get feedback from new customers and staff.
- Simplify the process as much as possible.
- Offer online options.



Tips to Get New Customers Engaged

Get New Customers Engaged With Your Library



Give them library access as quickly and painlessly as possible



Make sure you have a way to contact them (email, text)



Make them feel welcome



Teach them about their account

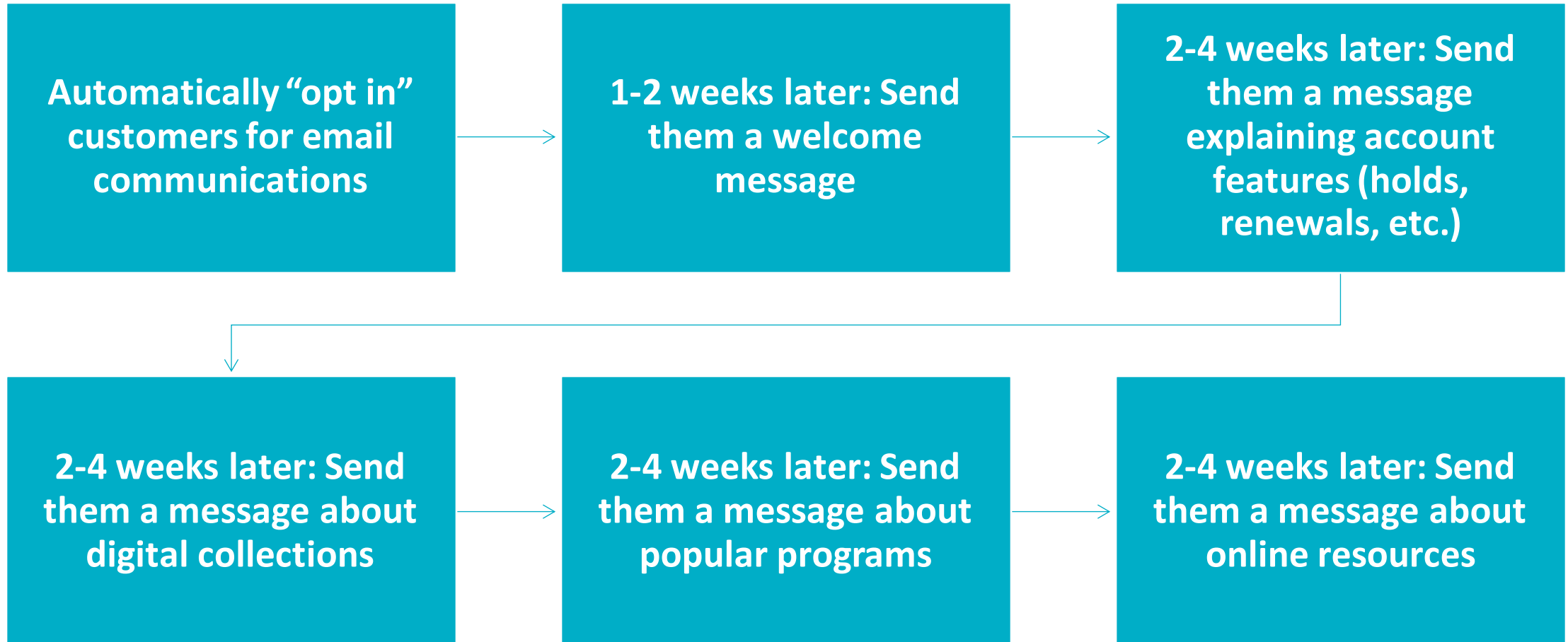


Create a regular communications cadence



Introduce them gradually to all of your library's services

Email Marketing Strategy: Automated Welcome Email Series





Are they opening and clicking on email messages?



How many new customers are using their cards?



How many customers got a card and never used it?



How can you reach those customers who never engaged?

Monitor Customer Engagement

More Engagement Strategies & Ideas

- Get their feedback.
 - Survey new customers 1-2 months after they get a library card.
 - Ask them about the signup process, library services, etc.
 - Use that feedback to improve your processes.
- Ask your frontline staff: What is the most common reason that you see that customers walk away empty-handed? How can we fix it?
- Mail new customers a postcard a month after they get their card, reminding them what library location is nearest to them.



Cross-Promotion

**Encouraging new customers to use different services and programs,
and to engage with you in different ways.**

In-Person Engagement

- Library employees can encourage new customers to use different services and programs.
- If employees need help, provide talking points or suggestions.



I'm looking for a book for my middle schooler

Sure! Can I also sign you up for our middle school newsletter? How about teen programs?

Email Engagement



- cross-promote services with programs based on special interests. Examples:
 - Small Business
 - Technology Literacy
 - Citizenship
 - ESL
 - Early Literacy
 - Homework Help
 - Special Needs



L2B Communications

Library to Business: Top 5 Resources

1. [Local Business Support page](#) | Information about COVID-19 funding and support
2. [Job Seekers page](#) | Information for career transition and unemployment
3. Beth Clower, Business Liaison | Email eclower@gepl.org with questions or to request specific information
4. [Online Digital Resources for Businesses](#) | Your [business library card](#) provides remote access
5. [Learn more about our phased reopening](#)

Upcoming Programs

Business Mentoring

At your convenience

Schedule an hour-long one-on-one session with a [SCORE](#) mentor to discuss your individual business challenges and questions. After you submit your business mentoring request, SCORE will email you directly to set up a session. [Submit a Business Mentoring request.](#)

Office 365 Business Tools

Thursday, December 17 | 7-8 pm

Social Media Engagement

- If you send welcome emails, include prominent links to your social media channels.
- In your messaging, tell customers “what’s in it for me?” What will they get if they follow you on social media?
- Make it easy for them to share your content (email, social media) with friends and family.
- Encourage social followers to join your email list, and vice versa!



Never Let A Customer Walk Away Empty-Handed



- If possible, try to get new customers to sign up for a program, join your mailing list, or check out a book before they leave your library or website.
- If needed, train your staff to get them comfortable with this approach.

Make Sure Program Attendees Have A Library Card

- Have a table at the program with library card applications and/or your online signup form on a computer/tablet.
- For virtual programs, provide a link to your online library card application at the end.
- Incentivize people to sign up by telling them what they'll get – information about more programs like this, or books and resources relevant to them.



Try Market Segmentation



- If possible, use market segmentation tools to find out what services your customers are already using.
- Use this data to recommend related programs and services to them.

Removing Customer Barriers

How to Remove Barriers

- Require as few steps as possible for customers to get a card, access services, and move down the funnel.
- Don't require customers to "activate" a library card.
- Ask your frontline staff: What are the biggest barriers that you see?
- Automatically "opt in" customers to email communications. Let them know they can unsubscribe at any time.
- Offer your staff regular customer service training.
- Don't block accounts for fines and fees.





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Thank you!



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