



Community
Literacy of
Ontario

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Guide to Marketing with Community Partners



INTRODUCTION

Promoting Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programs effectively to local employers, community partners, and fundraising donors is key to expanding reach and impact.

However, creating a tailored marketing strategy can often feel overwhelming, especially when time and resources are limited.

To maximize the impact of marketing resources, CLO has developed three guides for networking with workplace community partners:

- Guide to Marketing with Local Employers
- Guide to Marketing with Employment Services and Community Partners
- Guide to Marketing with Potential Fundraising Donors

This is the *Guide to Marketing with Community Partners*, and the other two marketing guides [can be found here on our website](#).

Each one of these resources is designed to make the process easier by providing a ready-made marketing approach that allows you to quickly and effectively connect with stakeholders.

The examples in each resource are meant to be copied and used. As it is easier to copy and paste from a Word document than a PDF, the marketing examples found in all three resources are located in a Word document that can be found [here](#).

Whether your goal is to inspire local employers to partner with LBS programs, encourage community partners to make client referrals, or attract potential donors, you can find the specific marketing language needed in these resources to address these unique priorities.

Video marketing is a powerful way to inspire audiences, tell meaningful stories, and demonstrate the impact of LBS programs. You can use video to connect emotionally with viewers and extend your reach.

Videos are particularly effective because they're easier to absorb than text and create a stronger connection with the audience. You can create your own or use the following ready-made LBS promotional videos:

- [Workplace Soft Skills Training with the Learning Networks of Ontario](#)
- [Workplace Digital Literacy Training with the Learning Networks of Ontario](#)
- [Workplace Math Training with the Learning Networks of Ontario](#)

Simply follow these marketing strategies and adapt the tools so that you can focus on what matters most - delivering LBS programs that make a difference for everyone in the community.



MARKETING LANGUAGE

Each audience connects best with specific benefits and motivations, so language should reflect what matters most to them. Tailoring marketing language for local Employment Services (ES) and Ontario Works (OW) agencies in order to get referrals for LBS programs, as well as other community partners such as Chambers of Commerce, involves focusing on their unique needs and goals.

These agencies are likely to be most persuaded by language that centers around community benefits, empowerment, and pathways to independence. Words like “empowering individuals,” “bridging gaps,” and “long-term impact” convey the idea that these classes can be a key resource for their clients’ long-term economic and personal advancement.

Messaging should emphasize how referring clients can lead to meaningful, life improvements while supporting the goals of each stakeholder.



MARKETING STRATEGY

Following the steps of a marketing strategy, also known as a sales funnel, simplifies the process and creates a sense of direction in the marketing campaign. The examples in each step can be customized for LBS programs or used as is:

STEP 1: HEADLINE

To begin creating a marketing funnel, generate curiosity with a headline that captivates your audience. Ask a question that addresses their problem or make a bold statement that hints at a significant transformation - something they can't achieve elsewhere.

Here are two headline examples tailored for social service and community agencies:

“Empower Your Clients with the Skills for Independence: Are You Ready to Offer a Lifelong Pathway to Success?”

This headline emphasizes empowerment and independence, appealing to agencies focused on creating sustainable, positive outcomes for their clients.

“What If One Simple Referral Could Bridge the Gap to Employment and Economic Stability for Your Clients?”

This headline highlights the potential for a referral to make a significant impact. Using terms like “bridge the gap” and “economic stability” will resonate with agency goals of client advancement and empowerment.

STEP 2: SCENARIO

Build rapport and get the reader curious about what's next. Present a relatable scenario they might be facing so that they feel like you understand their situation.

“Every day, you meet clients who are eager to work but face obstacles that hold them back—whether it’s gaps in essential skills, confidence, or the support they need to get started. You want to provide them with tools that offer not just immediate relief but set them on a path toward long-term success and self-sufficiency. Imagine if there was a straightforward way to connect them with upskilling resources that truly empower their progress, bridging the gap to meaningful, lasting change.”

This lead empathizes with the agency's mission and highlights a common challenge they face, setting up the promise of a practical, empowering solution.

STEP 3: SUCCESS STORY

Identify the problem in a way that feels personal and relatable by telling a success story about your agency and your clients that will interest them. Be sure to share the challenges you faced and how you overcame them.

This story captures a common scenario by showing the challenges faced by clients and how a referral to the program led to a life-changing outcome, thereby inspiring the agency to consider similar referrals.

“Recently, we worked with a single mother referred to us by Ontario Works.

She had always dreamed of a stable job but struggled with literacy skills and lacked the confidence to apply for positions. Together with her caseworker, we created a personalized learning plan through our upskilling program, focusing on literacy and job readiness. In just a few months, her reading skills improved, her confidence soared, and she secured a position that allowed her to support her family. Stories like hers remind us that with the right support, individuals can transform their lives - and it all started with one referral.”

STEP 4: PITCH

Present the solution and why it's exactly what they need. Introduce your product or service with confidence - framing the benefits as the answer to their needs.

“By offering essential literacy and job-readiness training tailored to their goals, our adult upskilling program is the bridge to independence and the empowerment your clients need. When you partner with us, you’re giving clients the tools to achieve stability, confidence, and long-term success - outcomes that align perfectly with your mission. This isn’t just another referral, it’s a pathway to real, measurable impact in their lives.”



STEP 5: EVIDENCE

Reassure stakeholders that your solution is trustworthy and proven. Back up your claims with testimonials, successes, or facts that validate the effectiveness of LBS programs:

“Our upskilling program has already helped many individuals in our community secure stable jobs and improve their quality of life. In fact, 85% of participants report increased confidence and job readiness after completing our courses. One Employment Services partner shared that their clients who participated saw ‘a dramatic shift in self-sufficiency and motivation,’ leading to better outcomes in employment and overall well-being.”

STEP 6: OFFER

Clarify exactly what they’re getting and build up the value each step of the way. Explain each piece of the offer by emphasizing how each element contributes to their success. Example:

“Our LBS program provides a full suite of support, starting with a personalized skills assessment to ensure each client’s needs are met. We offer flexible, goal-oriented training that covers everything from literacy to practical job skills, empowering participants with tools they can use immediately. Plus, our ongoing progress tracking and support mean your clients stay engaged and motivated, ensuring they reach their goals—and helping your agency achieve measurable success in fostering independence and community impact.”

STEP 7: CLOSE THE DEAL

Inspire immediate action with clear reasons as to why they should buy into LBS classes now. Remove their risk by stating that participation is free or by offering a guarantee. Create a sense of urgency and provide a call-to-action.

“Don’t wait to give your clients the opportunity for lasting change - our upskilling program is free and designed to make an immediate impact on retention rates. Imagine the difference just a few weeks could make for someone’s confidence and job readiness. Spaces are limited, so refer a client today and help them take the first step toward a brighter, more independent future.”

Following the steps in the order outlined above creates a marketing funnel that makes success more likely.



ELEVATOR PITCH

An elevator pitch is a short, impactful message that highlights the most important aspects of a project or offering and is crafted to capture attention and make a lasting impression in just a few seconds.

Here's an elevator pitch for adult upskilling agencies to use when approaching social service agencies. This pitch reinforces how upskilling directly supports the social service agency's goals and funding objectives by enhancing clients' job stability and progression potential:

"Empower your clients to achieve and maintain stable employment with our free upskilling programs! By referring clients to us, you're connecting them to essential skills that not only help them secure jobs but also keep them employed longer. We provide foundational support to help clients succeed in the workplace, build confidence, and develop skills that open doors to even better opportunities down the road. With your referrals, you're building a stronger workforce, improving employment outcomes, and supporting your own goals, as funding often depends on clients' job stability. Let us help you boost efficiency in achieving your mission by giving clients the skills they need to thrive and stay in the workforce."

EMAIL PITCH

Here's a draft email for ES that encourages them to refer clients to your upskilling program:

Dear ____,

We know that stable, lasting employment is a key goal for the clients you serve, and we're here to help you make that happen. By referring clients to our free upskilling programs, you're offering them the tools they need to not only secure jobs but to keep them. Our foundational literacy and

skill-building resources empower clients to grow in their roles, adapt to workplace demands, and even advance to better opportunities in the future.

Referrals to our programs make your work easier, too. When clients can stay employed longer, it supports both your agency's mission and funding objectives, which often depend on job stability and retention rates. Let us partner with you to create more stable outcomes, boost client confidence, and contribute to a workforce that's equipped for success.

We would love to connect and discuss how our programs can support your clients' employment journeys. Just reply to this email or call us at (phone number), and we'll be happy to provide more information.

Best regards, (LBS Agency)

EMAIL SUBJECT LINES

Here are ten marketing email subject lines that can be used with ES and OW agencies to promote LBS programs:

1. *Help Your Clients Succeed in the Workplace - Refer Them to our Free Upskilling Program!*
2. *Support Job Stability for Your Clients with Our Free Upskilling Programs*
3. *Boost Client Success and Employment Stability with Foundational Skills*
4. *Achieve Better Employment Outcomes for Clients - See How We Can Help*

5. *Make Job Stability Easier for Your Clients with Free Skills Training*
6. *Empower Your Clients to Keep and Grow in Their Jobs - Partner with Us!*
7. *Referrals Made Easy: Equip Clients for Workplace Success*
8. *Free Skills Training to Keep Your Clients Employed and Thriving*
9. *Stable Employment, Stronger Skills - Refer Your Clients to Our Programs*
10. *Help Your Clients Stay Employed with Free Upskilling Opportunities*

These subject lines focus on the benefits to both the clients and the agency, encouraging engagement and highlighting outcomes.

VIDEO MARKETING PITCH

Here is a tailored marketing pitch to accompany videos that showcase LBS programs. Use the links to ready-made marketing videos in the introduction, or create your own. This pitch is crafted to resonate with the specific priorities of Community Partners such as ES and OW to invite further engagement with your programs.



Hello ____,

We know that many of your clients would benefit from greater access to quality learning opportunities. Our video highlights the real-world skills and confidence that clients gain through our free literacy and upskilling programs. It's about equipping individuals with essential tools for employment and personal growth.

We'd love for you to take a look and see how referring clients to our programs can set them on a path toward independence and stability. By watching the videos, you'll discover how these free resources can help strengthen your support network and expand the resources you can offer to your clients.

Let's connect on how we can work together to provide lasting impact. Just reply to this email or call us at (phone number) and we'll be happy to provide more information!

Best regards, (LBS Agency)

Including the word 'video' in email subject lines increases open rates. To accompany the email above, here are three video marketing subject lines to promote LBS videos:

1. *Watch Our Video: Empower Clients with Skills for Growth and Independence*
2. *See How Our Free Programs Work - Watch the Video Today*
3. *A Path to Stability for Your Clients - Watch the Video*

CONCLUSION

We hope that you have found this resource on using marketing language with community partners helpful. Find all three marketing guides in this series along with a Word document to copy sections more easily [on our website here](#).

To learn more about creating marketing videos, please see our resource [Video Marketing Tip Sheet: Best Practices](#). To learn more about using AI to assist with writing and editing marketing copy, see [Video Marketing Tip Sheet: Using Marketing Language](#).

To find out more about collaborating with Chambers of Commerce, and Workforce Development Boards in your area along with a [directory of all offices](#) in Ontario, visit our resource [Video Marketing Tip Sheet: Networking](#).

The Guide to Marketing with Community Partners was researched and written by Community Literacy of Ontario (CLO). CLO is a provincial literacy network that serves English language, community-based Literacy and Basic Skills agencies. To learn more about our organization, [visit our website](#).

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