



Community  
Literacy of  
Ontario

December 2024

# Guide to Marketing for Fundraising



## INTRODUCTION

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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 for Fundraising* and the [other two 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

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Each audience connects best with specific benefits and motivations, so language should reflect what matters most to them. Tailoring marketing language for potential donors involves focusing on their unique needs and goals.

Although some LBS agencies are solely funded by the Ministry, other agencies are multi-funded, and fundraising is done to cover expenses.

For donors or grant-makers, use language that underscores the transformative impact on individuals and the community at large. Highlight return on investment in human potential with phrases like “changing lives,” “strengthening communities,” and “creating opportunities.” Stories, testimonials, and evidence of success are effective here as they can inspire action by showing how their support can make a measurable difference.

When networking with funders such as United Way, it is important to highlight how the LBS agency programs will affect the local economy and citizens.



## MARKETING STRATEGY

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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 that can appeal to potential donors. This headline highlights both the individual and community impact of supporting literacy, inviting donors to consider the powerful, long-term effects of their investment:

*“Imagine the Power of Literacy to Transform Lives and Strengthen Our Community—Are You Ready to Invest in Lasting Change?”*

This headline appeals to donors by framing their contribution as a catalyst for broad, transformative outcomes, suggesting that their support will have far-reaching benefits:

*“Help Us Create Opportunities and Change Futures: One Donation Can Spark a Ripple of Positive Economic and Social Impact.”*

## 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.

This scenario establishes empathy for the donor's commitment to community impact and introduces the program as a solution to long-term challenges they've invested in addressing:

*“Every day, you see the needs in our community - people striving to provide for themselves and their families, the businesses seeking skilled workers, and the social services supporting those in need. You're committed to making a difference, but you know that meaningful change requires more than a quick fix; it needs targeted support that empowers individuals for life. Imagine if there was a way to help community members gain the skills to secure stable jobs, contribute to the local economy, and lift up those around them. Our adult upskilling program can turn that vision into reality.”*

## STEP 3: SUCCESS STORY

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

*“Last year, we worked with James, a father of two, who had been struggling to find stable work due to limited reading and math skills. He wanted a better future for his family but felt held back at every turn. Through our program, James*

*learned essential skills, rebuilt his confidence, and, within months, secured a full-time job that allowed him to support his children and contribute meaningfully to the local economy. His story is one of many, proving that with the right support, individuals can overcome barriers and create lasting change in their lives and our community.”*

This story illustrates a relatable struggle and showcases how the program's support led to transformative, measurable results.

## 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:

*“Our adult upskilling program is the key to unlocking potential and creating lasting change, not just for individuals but for the entire community. By supporting our program, you're investing in a proven solution that empowers adults to gain critical skills, secure employment, and achieve stability. This is your chance to make a tangible difference—strengthening our local workforce, boosting the economy, and changing lives for the better.”*



## STEP 5: EVIDENCE

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

*“Our program has a track record of success, with 80% of participants reporting improved employment prospects and increased confidence in essential skills. One donor shared, ‘The impact of my contribution was clear - I saw firsthand how individuals gained the ability to provide for their families and participate more fully in our community.’ Our data shows real, measurable outcomes and you can be confident that your support will drive meaningful change.”*

## 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:

*“By supporting our program, you’re funding more than just skills training - you’re investing in a journey toward independence and stability for those in our community who need it most. Your contribution will go toward personalized learning plans, hands-on coaching, and job readiness workshops that equip participants with the tools to succeed. Each element of our program is designed to maximize impact, helping individuals gain not only skills but the confidence and motivation to make lasting improvements in their lives, therefore benefiting our community as a whole.”*

## 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:

*“Now is the time to invest in a brighter future for our community. With your support, we can expand access to our free upskilling program and reach even more individuals in need of a second chance. Every dollar makes a difference, and we can’t afford to wait - join us today in changing lives and strengthening our community, one step at a time. Donate now to make an impact that will be felt for years to come.”*

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



## ELEVATOR PITCH

An elevator pitch is a concise presentation of an idea or concept that aims to convey its significance and benefits in a way that’s engaging and memorable - typically within the time it takes for a quick elevator ride. Here is an elevator pitch for connecting with potential donors:

*Your support can change lives through the power of literacy and upskilling. By contributing to our programs, you're providing adults with the essential skills needed to secure stable jobs, advance in their careers, and strengthen their economic futures. Every dollar helps to equip adults with foundational skills that unlock new opportunities, build confidence, and foster lasting success in the workforce. Join us in transforming lives, empowering communities, and creating a stronger, more resilient workforce - one learner at a time. Together, we can make a measurable, lasting impact.*

This pitch appeals to donors by emphasizing the life-changing impact of their support and the broader community benefits.

## EMAIL PITCH

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Here's a draft email for potential donors that encourages them to support LBS programs:

*Dear \_\_\_, Imagine being able to unlock the doors to better jobs, confidence, and lasting success for individuals in our community - all through the power of adult literacy and upskilling.*

*By supporting our programs, you're helping adults gain the essential skills they need to secure stable employment, grow in their careers, and strengthen their economic futures. Every contribution you make goes directly toward*

*equipping learners with foundational skills that foster confidence, open new doors, and build resilience. Your support empowers individuals, strengthens families, and builds a more vibrant, skilled workforce. Join us in transforming lives and creating lasting change, one learner at a time.*

*Thank you for considering this opportunity to make a meaningful difference in our community. If you'd like to learn more, simply reply to this email or call us at (phone number). Together, we can create a brighter future for everyone.*

*Warm regards, (LBS Agency)*

## EMAIL SUBJECT LINES

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Here are ten marketing email subject lines that use marketing language for emailing potential donors:

- 1. Empower Change in Our Community - Support Adult Literacy and Upskilling*
- 2. Your Contribution Creates Pathways to Stability and Success*
- 3. Help Transform Lives Through Literacy and Skill-Building Programs*
- 4. Support Local Adults on Their Journey to Stable, Meaningful Careers*
- 5. Be a Catalyst for Change - Donate to Our Upskilling Programs Today*
- 6. Your Support Creates Lasting Impact in Our Community*

7. *Equip Adults with Essential Skills and Empower Economic Growth*
8. *Join Us in Building a Skilled, Resilient Workforce for Our Community*
9. *Support Lasting Success for Adults in Need of Skills and Stability*
10. *Your Support Can Empower Lives Through Literacy and Skills Training*

These subject lines focus on community impact, empowerment, and the positive changes donors can make.

## VIDEO MARKETING PITCH

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LBS agencies often have success stories to tell, and videos can share these in a compelling way. Video marketing can be more effective for getting a message across than words alone because many people are visual learners.

You can use the LBS videos that are linked in the introduction to this resource, or create your own marketing videos.

Here is a tailored marketing pitch to accompany videos that showcase LBS programs. This pitch is crafted to resonate with the specific priorities of potential funders and donors when using the video to invite further engagement with your programs:

*Dear \_\_\_\_\_, We are excited to share a brief video showcasing the real, transformative impact of our literacy and upskilling programs. You'll see firsthand how access to learning resources empowers individuals to build brighter futures for themselves, their families, and their*

*communities. This video is a glimpse into the lives you can help transform by supporting our programs.*

*With your help, we can continue providing opportunities that lead to better jobs, higher confidence, and meaningful economic mobility. Watch the video to see the difference your support makes and join us in expanding these opportunities for even more people.*

*Warm regards, (LBS Agency)*

Here are five subject lines that invite potential donors to engage with marketing videos. Each one is designed to evoke curiosity, highlight the transformative nature of the programs, and emphasize the importance of the donor's role in making these changes possible:

1. *Transform Lives: Watch Our Video to See the Impact of Your Support*
2. *Exclusive Video: How Your Donations Empower Local Communities*
3. *Video Testimonial: Real Lives Changed Thanks to Your Support*
4. *Watch This Video to See Why Your Help Matters Now More Than Ever*
5. *The Power of Upskilling: A Video Showcase of Success Stories*



## CONCLUSION

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We hope that you have found this resource on using marketing language with potential donors 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, read [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 for Fundraising 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](#).

*This Employment Ontario service is funded in part by the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario. The opinions expressed in this document are those of Community Literacy of Ontario and do not necessarily reflect those of our funders.*

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