GALE COURSES
MARKETING & TRAINING GUIDE

April 2014

*An education-focused library deserves
an education-focused partner.*

GALE
CENGAGE Learning®

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INTRODUCTION

Gale, a part of Cengage Learning, is excited to help your library successfully implement and promote Gale Courses. This marketing and training guide is intended to help you increase end user awareness and engagement, as well as train and motivate library staff.

Gale is your partner in helping support lifelong learning.
Together, we can make libraries the go-to source for educational content, tools, and services and drive real outcomes in the community.

Gale Courses give your library customers access to hundreds of instructor-led online learning courses that are available anytime, anywhere, any place. Other benefits include:

- Courses are free for all patrons interested in any discipline.
- Gale Courses are easy to use; patrons use their library account to sign up and log in.
- With six-week courses, you can offer new programs year-round.
- Gale provides comprehensive support.
  - Free hosting to reduce bandwidth consumption
  - Free tech support, including online self-help and live phone support
  - Free promotional materials (digital and print) and marketing suggestions to boost usage
  - Free dashboard administrative services: change the interface color, add your logo, and more to make your patrons' experience unique to your library

Continue your library's mission to be a lifelong learning center.
Gale Courses focus on lifelong learning, new skills, and/or career certification has the ability to foster positive changes in your community. Keeping up with trends in the digital age can be difficult, and Gale Courses can help your library offer new, online educational opportunities that are both engaging and thorough. Gale is dedicated to the success of Gale Courses in your community. Consider us your go-to partner for online educational resources, as well as advocacy and marketing support.

GALE COURSES PRODUCT INFORMATION

The online, instructor-facilitated Gale Courses are informative, fun, convenient, and highly interactive. Patrons using these continuous education resources will find our instructors are skilled at creating an inviting and supportive learning environment. Courses are project-oriented and include lessons, quizzes, hands-on assignments, discussion areas, supplementary links, and more.

Gale Courses offer:

- **Accessibility:** Courses can be accessed anywhere, any time, on any computer with Internet access.
- **Engagement:** Online discussion areas bring the learner and instructor together for feedback and encouragement.
- **Flexibility:** A 10-day extension period is available if needed.

Gale Courses target areas of interest to library patrons of all ages and include:

- **Computers & Technology:** Courses cover all skill levels from beginner to advanced, even focusing on specific software applications.
    - Basic Computer Literacy
    - Certification Prep
    - Computer Applications
    - Database Management
    - Graphic and Multimedia Design
    - The Internet
    - PC Networking and Security
    - Web and Computer Programming

- **Personal Enrichment:** A wide array of courses truly offers the opportunity to transform lives, whether related to hobbies, education, or life resources.
    - Arts
    - Children, Parents, and Family
    - Digital Photography
    - Health and Wellness
    - Job Search
    - Languages
    - Personal Finance
    - Test Prep

- **Career & Professional Development:** Many courses are tied to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' fastest-growing occupations.
    - Accounting
    - Business and Management
    - Certification Prep
    - Grant Writing and Nonprofit
    - Healthcare
    - Law and Legal
    - Sales and Marketing
    - Start Your Own Business
    - Teaching and Education
    - Veterinary Assistant
    - Writing and Publishing

Browse a complete list of more than 300 available courses.

MARKETING SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions include a variety of marketing concepts to promote Gale Courses in your library. Communicating the value of these online learning courses will better position your library as an innovative educational asset to your community.

KEY MESSAGES

Templates, sample text, and print materials are available, but if you wish to expand on any or just want some general talking points, you can use these key messages:

General
- Gale Courses give library patrons access to more than 300 free, instructor-led, online learning courses.
- Areas of interest include: Career and Professional Development, Computers and Technology, and Personal Enrichment.
- At the end of each course, participants can download a record of completion.
- 19 courses offer accredited continuing education credits.

Convenience and Cost
- Gale Courses are available online anytime, anywhere, any place. (You may even want to recommend using computing areas in your library.)
- Easy to use; patrons use their library accounts to sign up and login.
- Free for all patrons interested in any discipline.

Online Course Format
- Expert instructors lead each course.
- Students have access to a discussion area with instructor interaction.
- The 12-lesson format is written in "conversational style."
- A flexible course model keeps students accountable and engaged.

Timing
- Students take 20 to 24 course-hours over a six-week period.
- Courses kick off the third Wednesday of every month.

MARKETING TACTICS

Marketing suggestions focus on five areas: Web, social media, print, press, and storytelling; however, you will find Gale Courses messaging can be incorporated into much of what your library is already doing. You will find opportunities to use the following marketing tactics.

Web: Strategically place animated web banners and links on your website where appropriate. Choose the format that works best for your website and link to your Gale Courses site, which is customized for your library.

At Gale Promo > Web and Media Materials, you will find:
- 3 vertical web badges
- 1 horizontal web banner
- Gale Courses logo

Press: Send a press release to news outlets (print and digital). A press release template that tells the Gale Courses story is included in Attachment A – Press Release Template. If your library has its own media outlet (print or digital newsletter or blog), include a feature about this new resource. See Attachment B – Newsletter Messaging.

Promotional Collateral: Create a Gale Courses presence in your library with customized print materials. Gale Promo offers a variety of free materials which you can customize with your library's logo and information. Gale will print and ship directly to you free of charge. Several formats and versions exist; choose what meets your library's needs best:
- Bookmark (2 versions: female and multi-market)
- Flyers (6 versions: Business Professionals, Grant Writing, Small Business, Healthcare Training, Test Prep, and Web Design)
- Poster
- Tent card

Order online at: Gale Promo > Easy Creation

Social Media: Use Facebook, Twitter, and other social media to share information about Gale Courses with your patrons.
- Use Attachment F – Social Media Sample Text to post on Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and/or LinkedIn. These short blurbs also make great talking points for library staff.
- Because Gale Courses appeal to a broad range of people, you can create new content by targeting specific courses or simply areas of interest: Career and Professional Development, Computer and Technology, and Personal Enrichment. For inspiration, review the targeted handout materials at Gale Promo.
- If your library is new to social media, see Attachment E – Using Social Media Guide for general guidelines, tips to understanding your audience and goals, and overviews of different channels and tools.

Storytelling: Once some patrons have completed a course, ask them about the experience and tell their stories. The most compelling thing about any story is personal connection. Use [Attachment G – Q&A Story Telling Template](#) to write a blog post or pitch a story to your local newspaper. You can even use direct quotes as testimonials via social media channels. Always include a picture when you can—the more interactive the better! (We recommend avoiding plain headshots.)

TARGET AUDIENCES

Because Gale Courses focus on so many areas of interest, it can be rolled into existing themes at your library and promoted at upcoming events. For suggestions, see [Attachment D – Strategic Messaging Locations](#).

Informational handouts specific to various target audiences are available in [Gale Promo](#). This messaging focuses on the following:

- Business professionals
- Grant writing
- Healthcare training
- Small business owners
- Aspiring web designers
- Parents and teachers (test prep)
- Anyone seeking personal enrichment

Browse through the course catalog and familiarize yourself with the content areas so that you can identify other audiences at your library.

TRAINING SUPPORT

Gale is committed to providing customers with the highest quality product training available. A real benefit of this product is that Gale will host your Gale Courses site on our network, so you will not need to deal with product or web upkeep.

ON-DEMAND TRAINING

Watch this [online demo](#) for a complete Gale Courses overview. It guides you through the user interface. In about 3 minutes, you will learn how to:

- Browse the catalog
- Read course descriptions
- Enroll in a course
- Enter the classroom

Share this video tutorial with interested patrons. You can also link it on your website and/or social media.

All on-demand training videos are available at [Gale.Com/Training](#).

ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCES FOR STAFF

Gale is dedicated to providing free comprehensive support that includes:

- MARC records for online catalog discovery
- Hosting to reduce consumption of your bandwidth
- Administrative dashboard services: change the interface color, add your logo, and more to make your patrons' experience unique to your library
- Online Administrative Center
  - Real-time end-user data with in-depth tracking and reporting tools. (No information is ever sold or shared with third parties.)
  - Course updates that keep content relevant
  - Success stories from real Gale Courses students
  - Course beginning and ending dates

GALE SUPPORTS YOUR PATRONS

Your Gale Courses site includes a self-help section that guides users through:

- General Information
  - Browse Catalog
  - View Course Descriptions
  - Enrollment and Account Creation
  - Access Your Course
- Technical Issues
  - Account Update
  - Compatibility
  - Course Access
- Instructor-Led Courses
  - What are Instructor-Led Courses?
  - Course Mechanics
  - Extensions/Drops/Transfers
  - Course Completion

Current students with questions about accessing the online classroom, retrieving lessons, creating passwords, correcting an e-mail address, obtaining progress reports or completion letters, receiving an extension, or any other administrative task can complete a short form on the library's Gale Courses Help page.

Questions about lessons, quizzes, assignments, and other course materials should be directed to instructors or asked in the course discussion areas.

ATTACHMENT A — PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

Library Name
Address
City, State, Zip Code
Phone, Fax
Web site

News Release   **LIBRARY LOGO**

Media Contact:
Name of contact
Title of contact
Library name
E-mail address

NAME OF LIBRARY Acquires Gale Courses for Community Education

Library Now Offers Instructor Led-Online Courses

City, State, Month, Day, Year – **NAME OF LIBRARY** has acquired Gale Courses from Gale, part of Cengage Learning. Through this unique program, **NAME OF TOWN** residents can access instructor-led, online courses through the **NAME OF LIBRARY** website.

"Part of our mission at **NAME OF LIBRARY** is to inspire and engage life-long learning in our community," said **NAME OF LIBRARY DIRECTOR**. "With Gale Courses, **NAME OF TOWN** residents will be able to enroll in courses covering all types of topics and subjects. Whether someone is considering going back to school to pursue a degree or just interested in digital photography, the course catalog offers something for everyone."

Gale Courses, developed as a result of Gale's unique position within the library, classroom, and adult learning markets, offer patrons access to hundreds of instructor-led online courses covering everything from health and wellness to creative writing, computer programming, GED test preparation, and much more. Gale Courses are developed by expert instructors, many of whom are currently working at universities around the country, and have continuous enrollment dates.

Patrons can enroll at no cost. Courses run for six weeks, with two new lessons released weekly (for a total of 12), and new sessions beginning every month. The courses are entirely web-based with comprehensive lessons, quizzes, and assignments. A dedicated professional instructor coordinates every course by pacing learners, answering questions, giving feedback, and facilitating discussions.

NAME OF TOWN residents can enroll and participate in courses from library computers or remotely from home computers. For more information about the catalog of courses offered or to enroll in a course, residents should visit the library website [**INSERT LINK**].

For questions or more information, please contact **LIST YOUR LIBRARY CONTACT**.

About NAME OF LIBRARY

Include your library's standard boilerplate paragraph.

###

ATTACHMENT B — NEWSLETTER MESSAGING

Use the Gale Courses Newsletter Messaging in your print, online, or email newsletter.

(head)

Library Offers Access to Online Courses

(text)

Never stop learning. Whether you're looking for college-level, professional development, or personal enrichment courses, [Library Name] now offers hundreds of online courses that are accessible anywhere online, 24/7. *Gale Courses* offer well-crafted lessons, expert online instruction, and interaction with fellow students.

Gale Courses offers access to online learning courses that are available anytime, anywhere, any place. Other benefits include:
- Courses are free for all patrons interested in any discipline
- Gale Courses is easy to use; you use your library account to sign up and log in
- With six-week courses, you can join programs year-round

Gain valuable knowledge you can immediately apply to your life or on the job. **There's definitely something for everyone:**

- **Career & Professional Development:** Many courses are tied to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' fastest-growing occupations. Examples include: Accounting, Resume Writing, Business and Management, Grant Writing and Nonprofit, Real Estate, Healthcare, and Sales and Marketing
- **Computers & Technology:** Courses cover all skill levels from beginner to advanced, even focusing on specific software applications. Examples include: Introduction to the Microsoft Office Suite, Database Management, Graphic and Multimedia Design, and The Internet
- **Personal Enrichment:** A wide array of courses truly offers the opportunity to transform lives, whether related to hobbies, education, or life resources. Examples include: Children, Parents, & Family, Digital Photography, Health &Wellness, and Test Prep

Contact us at [CONTACT INFO HERE] to learn how you can benefit from this great resource. Or visit [website info here].

ATTACHMENT C — GALE PROMO

http://www.galepromo.com/

ATTACHMENT D — STRATEGIC MESSAGING LOCATIONS CHECKLIST

☐	Bathrooms	☐	Media – Special columns by library staff/directors
☐	Blog postings	☐	Media lunches (treat and educate reporters)
☐	Bookmarks/takeaways	☐	Networking events
☐	Book drop areas	☐	On-hold message or other phone recordings
☐	Calendar/event handouts	☐	"Paid" advertising (radio, TV, newspaper, Internet, etc.) *Get it donated!*
☐	Checkout receipts	☐	Posters (in and outside of library)
☐	Catalog web page	☐	Press releases
☐	Community centers	☐	Public computer areas (monitor screenies)
☐	Community events and festivals	☐	Research guides or online resource Pages
☐	Courier system vehicles	☐	Screens and monitors (plasma/marketing, public monitors, self-check screens, etc.)
☐	Day care areas	☐	Social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
☐	Direct mailings	☐	Staff attire (clothing, buttons, etc.)
☐	Displays and room signs (existing program/class theme)	☐	Table tents
☐	Endorsements and testimonials	☐	Website – banner on home page
☐	eNewsletter messaging	☐	Website – banners on other pages or public sites
☐	Foundation/Friends of Library communications	☐	Word of mouth/staff scripts
☐	Flyers	☐	Other:
☐	Hold slips	☐	Other:

ATTACHMENT E – USING SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE

General guidelines for understanding your audience, goals, and keeping engaged, plus channel overviews.

Why Be Social?
Social media is a great tool to engage your community.
- Participating in social media means you will have an active, real-time presence online.
- Your patrons already connect with friends, family, colleagues, and various products and establishments on social media channels. Get followed along with them!

There have been some historical arguments that participating in social media encourages negative comments and interactions. This is false.
- Negative comments and interactions occur every day, whether you are participating in them or not.
- Participating in social media provides you an opportunity to participate in those conversations, perhaps make some changes, and maybe change a few minds.

Administration and Tone
Determining what is best for your organization will vary and depend on a number of factors including approachability, projecting the right tone and face of the library, and resources. If you have one or more people updating your social media, it's always important that they're all on the same page.
- Best practices suggest using a combination of three tones: fun, helpful, and informational. All your posts should reflect one or more of these qualities.
- Use language that your patrons use. Avoid librarian-speak and acronyms.
- Respond to both positive and negative feedback. When someone posts about your library, everyone can see it. It's good to maintain transparency by responding accordingly.
- Post with purpose, not for the sake of posting; stay relevant and engaging.

Because all social channels require an email address, we recommend that you create a new, user-agnostic email account. This will be incredibly useful, should library employees change roles, go on vacation, etc.

Know Your Priorities
Before you decide to create an account on any social site, you'll need to determine goals and priorities for your social presence. Having realistic, measureable goals will bolster your confidence. Understanding what you can do to support your goals will help determine how you use the channels. Examples of goals include:
- Increase event attendance
- Increase use of electronic resources
- Increase engagement by number of followers, Facebook likes, and/or Twitter favorites and retweets

Understanding Your Audience
The most important aspect of social media planning, as with all marketing outreach, is to understand the behaviors and preferences of your audience.
- Pay attention to the types of posts that generate the most interest, time of day, etc.
- Use polls to ask questions in moderation.
- Remember, posting too often can turn off your audience.

While there is no cost to use social media networks, there is an inherent cost to the time you spend there. With more than 350 different social channels, it is impossible and impractical to do everything and do it well. Focus on a couple channels that you find have the best audience engagement.

Judging Success
One of the most cumbersome aspects of setting goals for social media can be how to determine success. One suggestion is to use a rating system for your posts. For example:

- Facebook Likes: 1 point
- Facebook Comment: 5 points
- Facebook Share: 10 points

- Twitter Favorite: 1 point
- Twitter Reply: 5 points
- Twitter Retweet: 10 points.

Likes/Favorites reflect general support. Comments/Replies show a greater interest. Shares/Retweets spread your message to your audiences' personal networks.

Tracking the number of followers you have is also a good practice. Perhaps you can attribute an increase in followers to a successful event or a poplar, shared post.

Social Media Channels
There is an ever-growing list of social media channels. Each has a specific purpose, such as being a go-to venue for certain types of information. Having great participation on two channels is more beneficial than having mediocre participation on five. Choose the channels that will work for your library and your users.

Facebook

- Facebook is the most widely used social media network. What you may not know is that Facebook is the second-most-used search engine, behind Google! This greatly increases the amount of traffic you will encounter from people outside of your primary audience. Note:
  - Posts should be informative and more complete than with other social channels. Try to limit all posts to less than 250 characters to avoid cutting off text on the feed post.
  - People like pictures. Share pictures of your library, resources, and (with permission) patrons when appropriate.
  - Quotes are also popular and resonate with viewers. Add quotes to photos for more impact. Always cite your source.

Twitter

- Twitter can seem daunting, but it is very popular and quite easy to use. There is no room for fluff on Twitter—because you have only 140 characters, including spaces, to get your point across. Generally, people following you on Twitter know who you are and are following you on purpose.
  - Try to include hashtags regularly and always shorten links.
  - Interact with your patrons and retweet them and library colleagues.

> **WHAT'S A HASHTAG?**
>
> - word or phrase following a # symbol
> - meant for tagging— grouping all posts by all users with that specific hashtag
> - used to create emphasis
> - can be within post or appended to the end

Google+

- Google+ works the same way as Facebook. The main benefit of Google+ is that it is owned by Google and, therefore, makes your posts web-searchable. If someone in your community is looking for cooking lessons, and you've promoted your upcoming meet and greet with a celebrity cookbook author, they'll see that in their search results.
- While participation is lower on Google+ than Facebook, the rewards of searchability may be worth the time it takes you to repost.

YouTube

- YouTube, also owned by Google, is huge! Google ranks videos higher in search results than any other media type, including websites.
- Any video you create and post to YouTube is worth the time to post. It is important to include all relevant tags on your videos. These are the terms your target audience types into Google to locate information.

Pinterest

- Pinterest is a photo-sharing website that allows you to group items into categories. The image is the most important element here and offers a great opportunity to highlight new titles, activities, weird holidays, and what have you.
- Summer reading boards, staff recommendations, travel, local attractions and history, mid-term stress relievers, and reading for fun are popular Pinterest boards for libraries.
- Unlike Facebook and Twitter, Pinterest provides greater content longevity. Pinners keep your content pinned in an organized way so it's easier to reference in the future.

Instagram

- Like Pinterest, Instagram is a photo-sharing site. Unlike Pinterest, Instagram's primary goal is to share a photo—not encourage a click-through.
- Use hashtags relevant to your community, like the name of your city or local events, to gain the attention of current and future patrons.

LinkedIn

- LinkedIn is a wonderful social channel and is under-utilized by many. Though it is more serious in nature, there can be a real value in using a LinkedIn corporate channel to promote your library. Not only does it offer the opportunity to link professionally with past, current, and future/hopeful employees—LinkedIn has more job postings than any other website—it allows you to connect with your audience in a way that supports what's important to you.

Helpful Tools

There are many great tools for managing social media. Below are some free and helpful ones.

Bit.ly

- *Bit.ly* is a service that shrinks a long, unedited URL down to a manageable length. This is especially useful with Twitter, where space is a valuable commodity.
- Bit.ly also tracks your click-through count, letting you know how many times your link has been opened.

HootSuite

- *HootSuite* is a service that lets you monitor and post to your Facebook, Twitter, and Google+ channels in one place. You can schedule posts in advance, allowing you to plan ahead. This leaves your time free to handle immediate issues.
- While you can post the same item on all three of these channels simultaneously, we do not recommend it. Take advantage of the space allowed on Facebook and Google+ for a longer post. Post something more concise to Twitter. HootSuite also has the ability to shorten a URL and track click-throughs.

ATTACHMENT F — SOCIAL MEDIA SAMPLE TEXT

Use these short messages to help reach social media followers on Facebook and/or Twitter to encourage them to use Gale Courses at their local library. When writing your own messages, try to use 120 characters or fewer (140 minus the number of characters in your user name) to allow others to retweet or share.

Message	Character Count
Online courses for academic learning & professional/personal enrichment. No cost; your library's got you covered! [bit.lyurlhere]	129
Enroll in online courses today courtesy of your library. From ACT prep to Real Estate Investing. [bit.lyurlhere]	112
Want to take a course but no time or money? Now, WE provide access to online courses, 24/7. [bit.lyurlhere]	107
Check out hundreds of online courses. Just another community value your library provides. #neverstoplearning [bit.lyurlhere]	124
Expert online instruction, live interaction, lifelong learning-courtesy of [insert name] Library. [bit.lyurlhere]	113
Learn at your own pace. Choose from hundreds of online courses. Available now to our library cardholders. [bit.lyurlhere]	121
Six-week courses. Lifelong impact. Choose your next learning adventure, courtesy of [insert name] Library. [bit.lyurlhere]	122
Creating websites or want photography secrets? Pick hundreds of online courses. Courtesy of your library. [bit.lyurlhere]	121
Med terms not your bag? Or want an Office Suite intro? Choose from 300+ online courses. Courtesy of your library. [bit.lyurlhere]	129
Start a Small Business. Accounting. Grant Writing. Who says it has to be hard? Take our online courses! [bit.lyurlhere]	119

ATTACHMENT G — Q&A STORY TELLING TEMPLATE

Interview patrons who have completed Gale Courses. Share their stories in your newsletter, blog, or on social media. Stories with community impact may be great to pitch to local news sources as well.

Background Information: *Use this information to write a brief introduction that sets the stage.*

- **Name**
- **Age**
- **Profession**
- **Residence**
- **Gale Course Title(s)**
- **How they found out about Gale Courses**

Questions: *Use several of the following questions to tell your patron's Gale Courses story. Also, add questions specific to the type of course. Use 5-8 Q&As a basis for the final piece. Keep the Q&A format for a quick feature or edit it into a feature story.*

- Have you ever taken an online course? If so, how did Gale Courses compare?

- What was your reason for taking <name of course>?

- Tell me about your Gale Courses experience.

- Did <name of course> help you meet any personal or professional goals?

- Where did you complete most of your course work?

- How did you fit your Gale Course into your schedule?

- Give an example of something you learned in <name of course> and how you applied it.

- What was the online instructor experience like for you?

- What did you think of the format and overall timing of the course?

- Describe Gale Courses in one word.

- Would you recommend Gale Courses to a friend or neighbor?

- Do you plan to take any more Gale Courses?