**Marketing Libraries: What the not-for-profits can learn from the lots-of-profits**

Libraries can learn from marketing strategies that for-profit organizations use. Get beyond the one-off approach to promotion. Explore how to build "ambient awareness," establishing your library as an authoritative source and a definitive provider of services for the community. Learn how to use social media not only for communication, but as a tool to monitor and document the impact of the library. Get your whole team on board to tell the library’s convincing story of its impact on your community.

This guide is designed to build on the subject matter of the webinar in greater depth, rather than necessarily to be used at the same time as the event itself.

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| **What are your goals for viewing this webinar?** | |
| **Personal Goals** |  |
| **Team Goals** |  |

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| **Discussion question** |
| **What is the key message you want to communicate about your library?** To both existing users and potential new users. Try to think in terms of the benefits to the user, not just the features of the library! |
| **Exercise #1: The Elevator pitch** |
| **Elevator Pitches** are a **1-2 minute piece of spoken marketing**, most commonly associated with **individuals**, but are just as important for **organizations**.  **Tips for a good elevator pitch:**   * **It needs to be short.** This is partly an exercise to make you think about the most important services your library offers, but it should also result in an actual pitch you can put into everyday conversation, in actual real life, when the chance arises, with key stakeholders. * **Focus on the benefits of what the library does, rather than the features**. So it’s not: ‘We subscribe to lots of databases’ - it’s: ‘we provide good quality academic information which Google can’t find’ * **Cut out the jargon and the acronyms** * **The idea is not to say everything there is to say about the library** – you’re saying just enough to leave the listener **interested in what you do**; interested enough to then **ask a question** which allows you to **tell them more** (and perhaps build a relationship, and so on) * **Normal conversations are like essays** – they often set the scene, and build upon arguments, and grow to the big conclusion. **An elevator pitch is more like a report** – it should state the most important thing first to grab attention and make sure the listener / reader knows how its relevant to them, and then moves onto context and supporting ideas later   Take a moment to **reflect** and **write down the 3 most important services your library provides**, in order, here – then build the 1 minute pitch around that. |

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| **Exercise #2: Competitive Benchmarking** |
| Using the **ideas from the Elevator Pitch**, the **3 most important services your library provides** (as you listed above), **now consider the nearest competitor** who also provides an equivalent service.   **Competitors** **might include** bookshops, internet cafes, home PCs, search engines, other libraries, or even just ‘doing nothing’.  In the chart below, consider **how important your three services are in the eyes of the user** (rather than, for example, in the values or mission statement of the library) and **then rate how well your library performs compared with its nearest competitor**.  Note that the 1 – 5 scale used makes some assumptions about your top 3 library services: specifically that all of them are at least fairly important, and that for all of them the service is at least okay. Anything scored less than 1 (i.e. the service is unimportant to the users, or is currently really bad) really shouldn’t be on the list in the first place...   |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Your Top 3 Library Services** | **The nearest competitor** | **How important are these services in the users’ eyes (where**  **1 is fairly important, and 5 is absolutely critical)** | **How good the Library’s service is in this area (where 5 is very good, and 1 is okay)** | **How good the nearest competitor’s service is in this area (where 5 is very good, and 1 is okay)** | | 1. |  |  |  |  | | 2. |  |  |  |  | | 3. |  |  |  |  |   Generally speaking, **you’d want the numbers for the importance of the service, and the quality of your library’s delivery of it, to match up.**   So for example, a **3 for ‘expertise with finding resources online’ in both categories is fine** – it’s **important** to the **users**, and the **service is good**. If it was a **4 for importance to the users but only a 2 for quality of library service** then clearly there’s a **problem**: the users feel this is fairly vital but the library is underperforming.  On the other side of the coin, **5 for the Library’s service but only 1 for importance to the users is also something to make a note of** – investing too much time and resource in something the users don’t value is particularly problematic in marketing terms. The Library wants to excel in all areas, of course – but **where you focus your marketing resources (money - but probably more pertinently, staff time) should be dictated by the users** to a large extent: continue to do all the things we value, but focus the marketing on the things *they* really value.  If a service is really important to the user, and the Library’s nearest competitor is doing a significantly better job at providing it than the library, then it may be that even a great marketing campaign will have little impact until the service itself is changed for the better. **Resources are scarce; you need to focus your marketing to make it count.** |
| **Exercise #3: Plotting your Library’s success** |
| **Label your three services as A, B, and C, then plot them on this chart** – the numbers **along the top** represent **importance to the user**, and the numbers **down the side** represent how good the service is.   **Label your competitors as X, Y and Z and plot them on the chart too**. Generally speaking, anything **on the line is good** – services are meeting expectations. Anything **above the line shows where your library is underperforming** – the user thinks this area is important, but the library is delivering. Anything **below the line shows the library is** **exceeding expectations** – this is great news, of course. But keep in mind we shouldn’t expend too much effort on marketing resources which are not top priorities for students and staff.   |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | | **1** |  |  |  |  |  | | **2** |  |  |  |  |  | | **3** |  |  |  |  |  | | **4** |  |  |  |  |  | | **5** |  |  |  |  |  |   **Understanding the ‘offer’ your library is making, how good it is, and how it is perceived by the users, is an important foundation for marketing well.** This graph is not an exact science; it’s just a way of achieving an at-a-glance overview of where the library is successful. It works best when using actual data from users as to what their priorities are and how the library is performing, rather than our speculations.  Good luck! |

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| **Action Plan** (include next steps, who, when, etc.) |
| **What are the next steps you will take to market your library’s programs and services?** List steps that are actionable and can be accomplished in the near future.  **Step 1:**  **Step 2:**  **Step 3:** |

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| **NOTES** |
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