
Marketing and promotion: issues and challenges

Marketing and promotion of library and related services is the main theme of this edition of *SCONUL Focus*. If we are going to maximise our value and impact, then it is imperative that we not only ensure that our stakeholders have a clear understanding as to how we can support their teaching, learning and research agendas, but of equal importance is the requirement to understand who our stakeholders are, and which of them might be our frequent users and non-users, and how we can engage with them in a positive way.

Hopefully the variety of topics and approaches presented in this edition both show the complexity of the issues and offer some food for thought and good practice as to how they may be tackled. They show how marketing and promotion is not just about having fancy fliers, posters and a descriptive digital presence!

For example, the articles from the University of Manchester demonstrate the importance of working with students as partners, both through the Eureka project – a competition which invited students to put forward ideas as to how services could be improved – and by deploying students as consultants as a fresh approach to customer engagement. Sam Dick from the Open University demonstrates how Library Services at the OU have developed a Market Research and Insight framework (MRI) to determine students' needs, a particular challenge when the focus is on distance learning. At the University of York, Jackie Knowles and colleagues describe the introduction of a Lean methodology for improving customer experience and satisfaction with library loans – another practical example demonstrating that effective marketing is as much about dealing with service improvement, based on evidence, as it is with providing information.

Nevertheless, investing in effective and engaging promotional activities remains an important facet of marketing. David Bennett offers examples of branding initiatives undertaken at the University

of Portsmouth to communicate change and raise awareness of products and services, whilst Lisa Anderson and colleagues from the University of Birmingham describe the launch of a library roadshow piloted with the university's Business School.

Developing effective relationships, both within and outside the library, can also be seen as a vital ingredient in the marketing and promotion process. The article from Ann-Marie James, describing the Great Read at Birmingham (GRAB) project, is an example of how libraries are well placed to run campus-wide events, capitalising on connections with academics, whilst lessons from the retail sector have been investigated at Brunel University to inform the marketing of the library collections.

Finally, you will see that this edition includes an article from Duncan Chappell from Glasgow School of Art, highlighting the findings of a survey of all members of the Scottish Visual Arts Group (SVAG). Colleagues will be aware of the devastating fire that destroyed the Mackintosh building of the Glasgow School of Art. The Mackintosh Library and its many unique collections were lost in the fire. The Glasgow School of Art has since received many offers of book donations to help them rebuild their lost collections. In response, they have released a wants list of specific titles. The list and information on how to donate items can be found here: <http://lib.gsa.ac.uk/update-on-fire-affected-library-services/>. Information on how to make a financial donation can also be found on this page.

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