

5 Things Librarians Want You to Know About Marketing & Outreach

2018 Charleston Library Conference Lively Lunch Panel Discussion

Introduction

In November 2018, Taylor & Francis & Choice co-presented their first collaborative White Paper and hosted an interactive panel discussion at the Charleston Library Conference. The panelists of this “lively lunch” delved into topics from the White Paper titled: [“Marketing Academic Resources and Services.”](#)

“[Marketing Academic Resources and Services](#)” discusses that marketing and outreach are the backbone of an academic library’s advocacy. In order to advocate successfully, libraries need to determine who their constituents are and how to best market their programs and services to them. This snapshot will cover topics based on the Charleston Lively Lunch Session

Key topics covered in this Snapshot include:

- Marketing vs. Outreach
- Defining and Describing the Main Objectives of Marketing & Outreach
- Marketing & Outreach Efforts Seem Too Informal
- Marketing & Diversity
- Marketing Digital Resources

How do Marketing and Outreach differ?

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Marketing:

Recognize the needs and create the awareness that the library provides services and programs. Showcase the library’s programs and resources. Create a strategic marketing plan. Marketing plan should align with the school strategic plan. Physical items and promotional materials. Partner with college marketing department.

Outreach:

Building relationships with people and units that allows the library to meet its strategic goals. Working with students, faculty, and sometimes community. Collaboration

Librarians were asked what are the Main Objectives of Marketing & Outreach?

2

The top responses based on the survey--

Increase participation in instruction, research, and reference services:

- Increase the time we spend with users. Opportunity to promote resources. Always be available and spend time with students and faculty.
- Face-time with users. Assess qualitative and quantitative measures to determine what worked and what did not work.
- Assessment of programs- How did they find out about the program? Why did they attend the program? Did they learn anything new about the library and the library's operation? Are the hours of the library convenient? How comfortable is the seating/structure of the library?

Demonstrate value and/or impact of library on institutional goals/priorities:

Takes effect through programming. Value of library to wider institutional goals. Allows outreach through learning outcomes and library and campus goals. Consider campus and library goals when creating outreach goals. Can we demonstrate how the library improves student's success?

Digital Resource promotion:

Capture information from assessments, surveys, and evaluations.

We need to consider the diversity of the school population

3

How do you adjust your marketing plan based on different user groups?

Identify and represent diversity (identity, cross gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, religion, disability). Survey our target market and direct to their needs. What motivates target population? Different audience, different approach. Reaching the target population can differ depending on target market. It is important to know how to communicate with different users.

Marketing and Outreach are important to a successful library

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Why are Marketing & Outreach Efforts Too Informal?

Formal Training:

75% don't receive formalized training in marketing and outreach. Marketing and Outreach is a new trend. Librarians don't have formal training in marketing and outreach. In order to create a strong, formal marketing/ outreach plan it is necessary to have knowledge, understanding, and experience. There is much literature and support to help librarians learn about marketing and outreach.

Cross Training:

There is a shortage of staff. It is difficult to cross train especially when there is turnover.

Time Consuming:

Learning about Marketing and Outreach is time consuming. Staff are loaded with many tasks; engaging in marketing and outreach is very time consuming.

Formalize Marketing Plan:

Need to understand marketing and outreach. Learn useful marketing and outreach tips from trainings and groups.

The panel touched on the value of dedicating time and resources to digital resources

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Why are marketing and outreach efforts dedicated to digital resources rather than print?

The rise of electronic resources in the past twenty years has altered the way academic libraries are marketing their entire resource mix. Money is geared to digital resources. Users prefer to get their resources digitally. It is difficult to justify spending time on the small budget. Spend the time on where the budget is intended. Examine different components of resources before spending time and effort. There is a bigger push for digital resources, it is most valuable to dedicate time and resources to digital resources rather than print.

Conclusion

Conferences as the Charleston Library Conference are instrumental in supporting librarians and giving them the opportunity to meet, exchange ideas, share best practices, and strategize on how to improve tactics. Although the primary goal of the 2018 Charleston Library Conference panel discussion was to present our White Paper, we also wanted to give our audience useful tools to bring back to their own institutions and to create a collaborative space for dialogue among the librarians themselves.

Visit the Taylor & Francis Resources for Librarians page to learn more about our commitment to the librarian-publisher relationship.

References

The contents of this snapshot were derived from a white paper entitled, "Marketing Academic Resources and Services" and its subsequent presentation in a panel discussion at the 2018 Charleston Library Conference.

Charleston 2018 Panel Discussion, November 2018 Lisa Martin (University of Houston), Jennifer Park (Mount Saint Mary College),

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