

Marketing libraries is about using unique opportunities

John Stanley

Television commercials, newspaper advertisements, billboards, flyers, posters in buildings — where does it stop? According to researchers, we are exposed to up to 30 000 interruptions a day by companies trying to promote their products. And it is getting worse. We are about to be exposed to advertising on the web — watermarks (advertisements behind text); interstitial (advertisements that intrude across your screen while you download); expanding banners (advertisements that intrude once you have downloaded); road blocks (companies that book all advertising space on websites); DHTML's (floating advertisements on screens); and movies (advertisements that play like movies on your screen) — and I am sure there is more to come.

Therefore you have to be pretty savvy to get your message across to the consumer and ensure that it sticks in their mind. Those of you who have seen the movie *I am Sam* will surely be aware of the success of 'Starbucks' and hope it subtly got a positive message across in that movie. Fed Ex did the same in the Tom Hank's movie *Castaway*.

But, libraries do not have those types of dollars to promote their services, but you have to be just as savvy.

Let me give you two ideas I know that work.

Before I explain them, let me give you the scenarios you are looking for.

An advertiser's dream is to hit its target audience when they are not distracted by other advertisers and have time to absorb the promotion. In today's hectic world those situations are rare, hence the high dollars to get product placement adverts on movies.

The two ideas I will provide you with fit into the above scenario ideally.

The first idea will only work for some libraries.

Many libraries are now seeing the attributes of incorporating a coffee shop or networking with a local coffee shop. Consumers linger longer and book borrowing tends to increase. I have visited and worked with a number of libraries who are seeing the benefits of the coffee shop. What I am not seeing is libraries using the coffee shop to promote their services and books.

Café menu holders featuring a promotion are used in other retail sectors. The objective is to educate and promote whilst the person is having a cup of coffee.

Coffee shops often have perspex menu holders and you can use these to promote the library, services and this month's book theme. The great thing about these holders is that people read them while having a relaxing cup of coffee.

My second choice of promotion is available to all libraries and has a huge potential although I accept some readers will be turned off by it.

Research carried out by A C Neilsen has found a way of getting ninety per cent of people to notice promotions, at the same time eighty-three per cent find them informative and seventy-three per cent entertaining. Where is such a location? The toilet facilities.

One of the leading companies in this promotional area is the South African based business, *Watch and Wash*, who have now started developing the concept in Australasia.

Promotions in the toilets need to be amusing, but not crude. Your aim is to get peoples attention, not offend them. I do not know of a library that uses this promotional opportunity, but why not? Dare to be different.

If any libraries do use this last resource, do let me know. I am seeing it used exceptionally effectively around the world and it would be great to know if a library is using it successfully.

Placing adverts in newspapers is not the way to grow the library industry, we need to be innovators and the opportunities are there.

John Stanley is a conference speaker and retail consultant with more than twenty years experience in fifteen countries. John works with libraries around the world assisting them with their merchandising, staff and management training, customer flow, customer service and image. John Stanley Associates produce an e-newsletter specific to library retail, including innovative ideas and advice to help grow your library. If you would like to receive a regular copy visit the website at <http://www.jstanley.com.au> or e-mail newsletter@johnstanley.cc.

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Basket weight	1.5 Kg each
Frame weight	5 Kg
Total weight	8 Kg
Basket capacity	30 Kg each
Total load capacity	60 Kg

*Suitable for Libraries