

Signs of the times, part two

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In the last article [*inCite*, November, p26] we looked at how you can improve the signage strategy in your library. A well-developed, consistent signage strategy can increase the average lend per patron dramatically. I am a believer that someone in your library should have a dedicated role to manage and implement your overall signage policy, as the key to the game is consistency.

In the last article I provided the first six steps to improving your silent communications, in this article I will provide you with the next six key tips.

Power Word Alphabet

A	Action, accomplish, ahead, anybody, achieve, answer, announcing, amazing, at last	N	New, now, need, nude, nice, neat, never before
B	Benefit, best, bible, big, bargain	O	Opportunity, occult, Open, on, original, occasion, own
C	Can, calm, care, career, clean, comfort, challenge, compare, cash, control	P	Proven, power, positive, promote, protect, payoff, pro, pleasure, profit, performance
D	Discover, deliver, destiny, definite, dynamite, decide	Q	Quality, quick, quiet
E	Easy, earn, effective, efficient, entertain, extra, exciting	R	Results, respect, revive, right, rich, revolutionary, remarkable, record
F	Free, famous, full, fancy, fun, future, facts, friends, fast, found	S	Save, safe, sale, satisfaction, self, service, sensational, special, smile, super, startling, secret, suddenly
G	Guarantee, get, glamour, great, gold, give	T	Today, take, taste, thanks, time, true, try, total, tempting, think, trust
H	Health, happy, heart, heaven, help, home, 'how to', hurry, honour, hot, hope, honest	U	Urgent, unique, understand, ultimate, useful
I	Introducing, intelligent, invention, invite, innovate, incredible, interest, improve, immediate, important, instant	V	Victory, vitamin, vacation, VIP, value, valour, volume
J	Join, jewel, jumbo, joy, just arrived, juicy	W	Win, wise, wanted, worth, willing, wow, which, when, why, who else, wonderful
K	Know, key, king, keep, knowledge, kind	X	x-ray, Xanadu, Xavier, X
L	Love, land, liberty, luxury, look, last chance, life, lasting, listen, learn	Y	You, your, yes, young, youth
M	Money, magic, more, maximum, minute, modern, miracle, most, mind, mine, many	Z	Zest, zodiac, zip, zenith, zeal, zero

Tip 7

Promote new books or recommend books with simple shelf talkers. Have a stash of these made up so your team can easily use them. Patrons like to know what your offering that's new or what you as the experts recommend.

Tip 8

One of the debates in the retail world is should hand written signs be used. Researchers tell us we read hand written signs before we read printed signs, but is that a reason to use them? My view is that hand written signs detract from a professional image and there is only

one legitimate use for them. When you recommend something as a team member in house, such as 'My favourite...'. Then I believe there is a role as it provides a personal touch. Having said that I would ensure only one person in the team wrote the signs. The consistency rule still applies.

Tip 9

Use words that increase lend rates by increasing your patrons interest.

Attention words are:

At last
Attention
Back by popular demand
Finally
For the first time
For those who insist on the best
Good news
Hurry
In a class by itself
It's here
New
Now you can
Reasons why you should _____
State of the art
Switch to _____
Take a look at these

Use positive words to promote books. Donald Caudill from the University of North Alabama suggests using power words from his 'Power Word Alphabet'. [See box]

Tip 10

Promote books not signs. The aim of the sign is to draw attention to the book you are promoting. Often the sign is so dominant that all the patron sees is sign and no book.

Tip 11

Always review your signs once a week. You should have a checklist for your library tour and produce an action list as a result.

The checklist on the next page should help.

Tip 12

Review your signage strategy every year. Signage changes rapidly and new technology could mean you are soon out-of-date. You should therefore review your whole signage strategy once a year and decide how you wish to develop your silent salesperson in the future.

Activity	Good ideas	Problems
<p>Review this week's sale signing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all advertised books signed? (list) • Do any ad items have traditional problems, such as always needing two signs for back-to-back signing etc. <p>Review general signing policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any out-of-date signs still up? • Are there enough signs, per agreement, per fixture, gondola, etc.? • Are there too many signs in any area? Too few? <p>Review general sign quality issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are signs consistent — legible and neat? • Are the benefits well presented? • Do the signs, in general, enhance the appearance of your library? <p>Review trend signing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is 'what's new' proudly out in front for the patrons to see, and is it properly signed? • Are there any trends without signs? • Does the patron understand the trend? • Review any problems uncovered by other team members. • Communicate this checklist to other team members. 		

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, which includes innovative ideas and advice to help you grow your library. If you would like to receive a regular copy please visit <http://www.johnstanley.cc> or e-mail us on newsletter@johnstanley.cc.

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Age 6: She'll make autumn leaf collages in the children's room of her local library.

Age 15: She'll write a report on herbal remedies based on interviews with Native American healers collected by the Smithsonian Institution.

Age 26: She'll study 3-D models of the molecular structure of rare plant species using her medical school's database resources.

Age 32: Her daughter will make autumn leaf collages in the children's room of her local library.

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