

## To market, to market ...

*"The key ... is to be noticed, then remembered, and then preferred."*

John Stanley – retail experience and library marketing

In a world of ever-increasing accountability, promotion and marketing have become essential elements in the successful operation of library services. In the 2008 academic year, the Sunshine Coast TAFE libraries undertook a year-long pilot project to actively up the ante regarding this crucial area. We adopted a multi-faceted approach to cover as wide a range of exposure opportunities as possible.

The first order of business was to create a year-long master promotion/marketing plan for the SCIT branch libraries. We wanted to expand on the usual 'Library Lovers Day' and 'Library & Information Week' activities to have a more consistent flow of events/promotions throughout the year. It was decided that we could viably host four functions/events during the year: Library Lovers Day, Library & Information Week, Olympics Contest, and the roll out of our new Library & Information Management System. We included contests/prizes/give aways with each event as these are always popular (Welch 2006). We incorporated a 'Suggestions for the Library' section on all contest entry forms as a means of capturing feedback. Creating a long-range plan had several advantages including all library staff knowing ahead of time what was coming up and being able to allow for required budgeting and rostering.

We also wanted the library to be perceived as a place of change – a dynamic place. In order to achieve this, we concentrated on visual display opportunities (Scaggs 2008). A 'Cosy Corner' was set up, a comfortable reading area that brings available resources together by changing themes. We also created a 'Student Gallery', an area to showcase the talent of our students. These student shows included fashion design, graphic design, art, and photography.



Current entry to  
Mooloolaba library



Student Graphic  
Redesign Project #1  
– Mooloolaba library  
entry



Student Graphic Redesign Project #2 –  
Mooloolaba library entry

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Attending a workshop given by Kevin Hannah on 'Interior Design, Merchandising & Space Management for Libraries' provided more food for thought. His advice was to approach the library as a retail space, an analogy that included getting customers into your store, making the most of your floor space, and encouraging customers to buy your products.

*"What would you change about your library if you got \$1 for every book that was loaned out?"*

Kevin Hannah – Visual Marketing Workshop

Fortuitously, just as we were grappling with these concepts, the teaching team for Certificate IV in Interior Technology were looking for a retail space to set as a redesign project for their students. After a bit of consultation it was decided to use the Mooloolaba Campus Library. This proved to be a fantastic opportunity for library staff to collaborate with students. As can be seen above the results were creative, innovative, and were an inspiration to library staff, a win-win situation.

The main outcome from our foray into promotion/marketing in 2008 was the realisation that it is an ongoing process that requires continuous dedication. It is work and in order for it to work it must be given appropriate time and resources.

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#### References

Welch, Lee. *The other 51 weeks: a marketing handbook for Australian libraries*. New South Wales: Center for Information Studies, 2006.  
Scaggs, Gayle. *Look, it's books! Marketing your library with displays and promotions*. North Carolina: McFarland & Co, 2008.