

# ADOPTING AND ADAPTING FOR YOUR READERS

Regina McDonald commenced the Frontline reader development training program in May 2013 to improve her readers' advisory skills. She soon realised that although the theory was directly relevant to her role, she would need to adapt the practical parts of the course to suit the needs of her library's members.

I work at the Vision Australia Information Library Service, a division of Accessible Information Solutions within Vision Australia. We provide and deliver a national library service for people with a print disability, where most of the collection is in the alternate formats of DAISY Audio, DAISY Audio Text or braille.

As our books in these formats have plain packaging and/or are downloadable, the library's promotional methods involve communicating information about books, rather than creating book displays.

The first two assignments involved interviewing borrowers who visit one's library; the first on how they choose what to read, and the second on what they thought of a particular book. As I speak to many more members over the telephone than in person, I adapted this by conducting telephone interviews.

The next practical assignment involved designing and executing a stock-centred promotion. I adapted this by conducting a book promotion featuring books from less popular genres in the library's fortnightly e-newsletter. As there were no book covers to attract attention, I chose books that sounded intriguing and included a brief summary of each.

The next assignment was designed to encourage reader to reader recommendations. For this module trainees were given a choice out of four assignments. I chose the 'Any Answers?' assignment, which involved posting readers' reading questions (and answers) on post-it notes onto a board in one's library. I adapted this by posting some readers' reading questions, and calling for readers' reading questions and answers on the library's Facebook page.

The final assignment involved designing and executing a reader-centred promotion. I again used the library's e-newsletter, targeting a demographic of men aged 30–50. I featured books on the theme of 'journeying' to encourage self-discovery, where possible including books from a genre that was attractive to this target audience.

The Frontline training was of great benefit to both the library and me. The promotions succeeded in encouraging more loans and I learnt how to discuss books more effectively and to find interesting ways to promote the collection. I encourage anyone involved in readers' advisory to participate in a course such as Frontline – it will give you a whole new perspective!

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