Public Libraries SA marketing update

Purpose
To provide an update on the development of a marketing strategy for the SA Public Library network**.**

Background
Since 2000 the Marketing Committee has been actively marketing and promoting Public Libraries to the community, funders and stakeholders. Key achievements during this time have included market research documenting customer satisfaction, website development, @ your library campaign, high profile Royal Show presence and a state-wide approach to targeted promotional activities.

The recent recruitment of Jon Bentick, Publicity and Promotions Officer, Public Library Services has been the ideal opportunity to develop a new marketing strategy for the network. A strategic planning session facilitated by Jon and attended by network members resulted in identifying new opportunities, key objectives and outcomes. The group is scheduled to meet again on 30 March to further develop the objectives and outcomes of the marketing strategy.

Marketing Strategy
The group identified the following opportunities and objectives to be further developed:

Business objectives for marketing to help achieve:
Primary focus
- Increase perceived relevance of libraries (not just seen as for 'some people')
- Increase usage of resources
- Increase visitation levels

Secondary focus
- Increase library membership levels across the public
- Increase perceived importance of libraries in the eyes of funders

Marketing opportunity: infrequent visitors
55% of SA adult population have visited a library at least once in the last 12 months (2006 survey) …but 42% of this group (which corresponds to 23% SA adult population) visit **only** 3 to 4 times a year or less often.

→ ***Key opportunity***: increase visitation/usage by infrequent visitors which is likely to involve increasing frequency of communication about what's on offer in the local library:
- Library staff reminding users face to face
- Messages in the library (e.g. signage, other reminders)
- More frequent communication to the local library membership base (e.g. electronic)

Marketing opportunity: increasing public 'buzz' about libraries
Generating a 'buzz' about product/service/events can be very powerful marketing tool.

Examples where this has occurred include: iPods, Boost Juice, Enjo cleaning products, IKEA, Fringe Festival, Avatar, moustaches (Movember).

When a buzz is created, people talk more often about the product, which means people talk more often about the product, which means …

There's often a strong link between high 'top of mind awareness' and usage.

Whilst there may be a buzz about libraries amongst some library users/circles, there appears to be little buzz in the 'mainstream'.

> → **Key opportunity**: generate a buzz amongst the public about public libraries and what they offer:
> - Likely to increase usage from current users (particularly infrequent visitors/users)
> - Likely to increase membership levels (convert 'fence sitters' to becoming library members)

Marketing areas identified by the Marketing Committee for further development

1. Media/communication/PR
- Develop a media release strategy to proactively seek media coverage
- Develop communication plan for online resources (e.g. mags such as Boomer etc)
- Use library story in LGA's "Out of the Ordinary" series
- Develop a generic e-newsletter template/functionality for libraries currently without one
- Develop high profile annual library design poster competition (like Fringe poster competition) that could also be used for library card designs
- Develop key messages and 'brand positioning' for the Public Library Network

2. Staff development
- Develop Best Practice customer service standards (e.g. suggestive selling "Would you like fries with that?") and for these to become part of standard behaviour in libraries
- Develop online resource for the intranet for marketing techniques/ templates and how to use these tools
- Develop promotional kit for PressDisplay (housed on intranet) that libraries can access. Kits for other promoting other library products/services should be developed too
- Develop format so that training courses can be delivered online (e.g. good for country libraries)…see what other states are doing here
- Some Marketing Committee members to attend Customer Service Committee meetings

3. Programs
- Develop lifestyle program leveraging private and public partnerships that is based on library card that allows us to simultaneously:
  o build a buzz about libraries
  o educate non-users about benefits of libraries
  o reward current library users
- Develop major life transitions packs (e.g. new retirees packs)

4. Funders/research
- Treat funders like customers – are we meeting their needs? (i.e. conduct research with funders)
- This issue will need further collaboration with PLSA
- PLSA to meet and nominate a representative

Developing a branding logo for all libraries (to be used in addition to existing signage) has also been discussed to help the public identify where libraries are in their local area (i.e. logo would function in similar way that the Australia Post 'P' logo identifies post offices). How does Network feel about this idea? Could consensus be achieved across the Network on the idea itself and any one logo?

The Marketing Committee chaired by Kimberley Hargrave, welcomes comments and feedback on the marketing strategy.

Recommendation

That Public Libraries South Australia notes the report

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