Making it prosper: The role of marketing in developing a successful virtual reference service.

Boosting your virtual reference use. (Lightning Talk)

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Making it prosper:
The role of marketing in developing a successful virtual reference service

1-Introduction-sharing my journey with VRef.
2-Libraries-marketing or bust?
3-Definitions-getting the terminology straight.
4-Marketing-developing a plan.
My Journey with Virtual Reference Service.
Libraries: Marketing or bust?
Public Relations

“business of inducing the public
to have understanding for and goodwill
toward a person, firm, or institution” (1807)
Marketing

“Marketing is the management process which identifies, anticipates and supplies customers requirements efficiently and profitably“ (1)

~The Chartered Institute of Marketing

Promotion

“something (such as advertising) that is done to make people aware of something and increase its sales or popularity” (15th century)

Advertising

“the action of calling something to the attention of the public especially by paid announcements” (1751)

Branding

"promoting of a product or service by identifying it with a particular brand” (1913)

Research Help Now Website
Develop a marketing plan

- Learn process (books, articles)
- Recognize higher education variations
- Commit it to writing
- Designate someone on staff or spread work between individuals
- Ongoing process
  - Focus on users; learn what they want and need; ask them
  - Evaluate efforts (statistics, antidotes, surveys)
  - Update, keep fresh
- Connect with available resources
  - Campus marketing department (experts)
  - RHN resources (website from previous slide)
  - Software itself (Proactive chat service, Zopim, John Carroll)
Audience Consideration

• Market Segmentation (need a strategy for each group)
  – Library staff: promote service
  – Students: promote service & advertise
  – Faculty: promote service & advertise

• Targeted Marketing (targeted efforts to various groups in market)
  – Campus students
  – Online students
  – Commuter students
  – Full time faculty
  – Online faculty
  – Adjunct faculty
  – External campus population
Medium Considerations

• Audience driven
  – Traditional means: TV, Radio, Newspaper, Posters
  – Social media: Facebook, Twitter, Email, Blog

• Technology options
  – Course management systems
  – Database integration
  – Widget placement

• Personal interactions with users
  – Circulation desk
  – Reference desk
  – Library instruction
    • Mention during sessions
    • Infomercial

“The medium is the message.”
~~Marshall McLuhan
Promotion @ Jackson College

- History
- Reference Services
- Multiple Campus’
- Collaboration with marketing department
  - Focused awareness campaign
  - Reach out to other campus locations
- Process
  - Met with Director of Marketing
  - Employed Graphic Designer
  - Cost
  - Benefits (RIO)
Discussion Points:
* Wording to Use
* RHN Website
* Website Link
* Mediums to Use

Graphic Designer Comments:
* I wanted to convey conversation, talking, asking questions
* Graphic, yet abstract
* Bold colors, yet in harmony, don’t compete, conversation, not argument
* For students, keep it clear, concise, yet fun & get attention fast!

Campaign Included:
* 2 Large Banners
* 25 Posters, 11x17
* 24 Table Tops
Marketing/Promoting/Advertising: What are you doing?


