



Creating and marketing a WOW-library

Kathy Kunneke
University of South Africa
Pretoria, South Africa

Meeting: 122 Management and Marketing with Metropolitan Libraries
Simultaneous Interpretation: No

WORLD LIBRARY AND INFORMATION CONGRESS: 73RD IFLA GENERAL CONFERENCE AND COUNCIL
19-23 August 2007, Durban, South Africa
<http://www.ifla.org/iv/ifla73/index.htm>

The flavour of the services of libraries should never be watered down or only be “vanilla flavour”. It must always be the best you can offer, the richest most beneficial service available to your customer. Is the service your library offers rich, sweet, creamy and fruity like a marvellous “pavlova”, or is it watery, with a touch of sweetness and fruitiness, like an ice lollypop? If it is like a “pavlova”, you have a good brand, which tells customers a lot about your service. Yes, your library is brand worthy and your brand is a good asset that should be treasured and nurtured. Your brand tells your customer if yours is a wow-library.

I want my library to be a wow library

How do I reach this?

Adopt a marketing philosophy

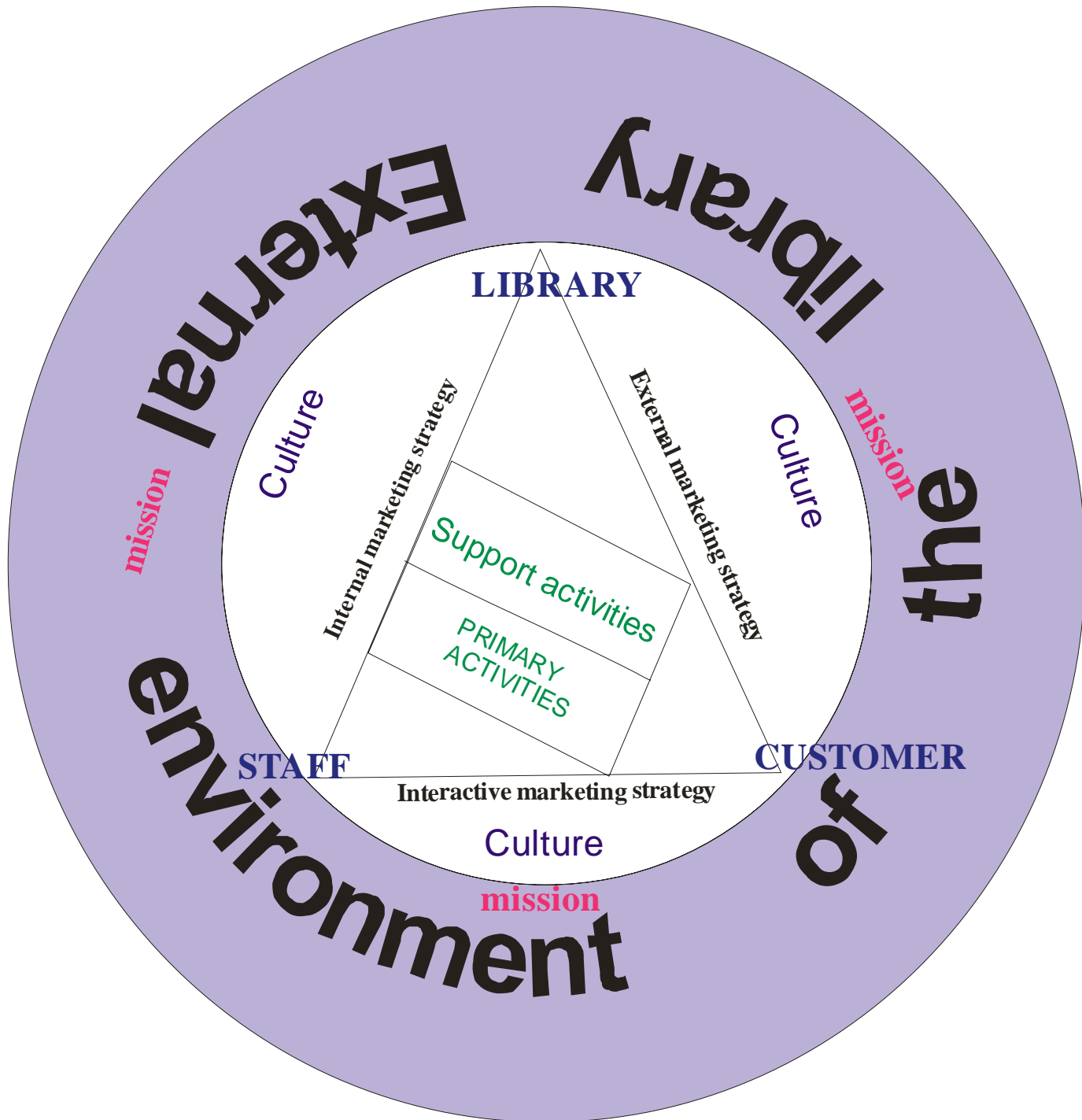
A paradigm shift to a marketing philosophy as a means of renewal and survival in the 21st century is inevitable if a new perspective has to be reached. This new perspective involves both a new way of looking at libraries’ external environment, as well as their internal environment and processes.

What does this entail?

Using a marketing model to guide strategic thinking

The proposed marketing model offers the strategic thinkers of the library a visualisation tool and a guideline to expedite the paradigm shift. It offers a guideline as to how a marketing philosophy can be incorporated into the library in a service triangle and how the internal processes in the value chain, designed to create value for the customer are placed within the service triangle.

MARKETING MODEL FOR LIBRARIES



The model

Components of the model

The various components of the model are an integration of the **service triangle** of Irons (1997:15) and the **generic value chain** of Porter (1985:37), and the support and primary activities. The service marketing triangle emphasizes the activities which need to be performed to bring the overall marketing strategy to fruition. No organisation can exist without performing certain processes and activities and these Porter (1985) depicts in a value chain. The model incorporates these components within the context of libraries' external environment. The outer circle of the model represents all the influences, developments and changes in the external environment in which the library functions and which impacts on the libraries.

The inner concentric circle represents the mission and culture of a library. The service marketing triangle functions within the mission and is depicted as an equilateral triangle which indicates that each aspect of marketing has equal importance. The library is at the pinnacle of the triangle and the customer on the right axis, where the external marketing strategy functions and outlines the promised service. The horizontal axis represents the interactive marketing strategy which delivers the promise from the staff which are on the right axis where the internal marketing strategy functions to enable staff to deliver the promise.

At the centre of the triangle lie the processes which Porter (1985) divides into support and primary activities within which are a chain or series of activities which are all sources of competitive advantage.

The model is therefore comprised of three main parts:

1. The external environment of the library

The library as service organisation is functioning in a rapidly changing environment and there are three main areas which influence its strategic direction and reason for its survival and growth, or its demise. This external environment offers both threats and opportunities for the library.

1.1 Global economic, technological and information and education trends

The information age has brought with it a plethora of changes. The result is a radical change in information, knowledge work and the elevation of service work. The changes in information creation, storage and delivery as a result of the computer networks are especially significant to the library. A library has the responsibility to adapt its services to the changing environmental scenarios and must continually adapt.

1.2. Library customers

A definition of a customer is concerned with two aspects. Firstly, establishing the groups of individuals or organisations who are customers e.g. customers from the private or business sector, X and Y generation customers (which I will describe later), pre-schoolers, teenagers, professionals, the list can be quite long. Secondly, clarifying the context in which they use the

product e.g. seeking information for studying purposes, recreation, attaining life skills, to apply in a profession or business, etc.

Market segmentation divides the market into distinct and increasingly homogeneous subgroups of customers where any group or groups can be selected as a target group in the market that can be served by a distinct service mix.

The customers of the library have rapidly changing information needs and preferences and changing demands for the delivery thereof. Customers bring the external environment of the library into the heart of the organisation and determine the way they prefer services to be delivered, be they online or actual hard copy. The customer is more discriminatingly aware and is the greatest asset to the library, when the library is customer-centred and there is a dialogue between the customer and the library. The library must cross the service bridge to the customer and not vice versa as.

1.3. Human and capital resources

Human and capital resources are also sourced from the environment. Market demands establish the competencies and skills that staff brings to the organisation and the library must remain a competitive employer. Productivity and commitment go hand in glove with efficient service delivery.

Capital resources are also sourced from the library's environment via the number of students enrolling at a university, the number of tax payers etc. The library is one of the assets of its community and its services should add to the competitive advantage that customers should have and maintain in the market.

2. The internal environment of the library

The internal environment encompasses:

2.1 Strategic directives

In the organisational and marketing context strategic thinking can be referred to according to Bossidy (1987 in Jenkins 1996:32) as understanding customers, market conditions and competitors, all of which are constantly changing. This approach therefore defines the concept of strategic thinking from the viewpoint of its content. Here the level of analysis is the organisation and an understanding of the context in which the organisation finds itself or will find itself. The focus is therefore more on the longer term, which distinguishes strategic thinking from other forms of thinking. The analysis of factors which will have an impact on the whole organisation and not only parts of it are considered. The focus is, firstly no longer on the short term but on the long term although it should be borne in mind that things change rapidly. Secondly focus is also placed on issues which will impact on the whole organisation and not on a particular function or activity.

2.2 Processes

What is a process?

“A business process is a set of related activities that produces specific end products” (Lientz : 3). A business activity includes marketing, and branding as a process within the marketing cluster of processes. Processes very seldom exist in isolation. Processes must continuously be improved or adapted to new demands to continually add value to the customers' information seeking experience.

Porter, one of the world's leading authorities on competitive strategy, offers the strategic thinker a tool to visualize the organisation and its processes and a systematic way of examining and mapping all the activities an organisation performs and how they interact. Using this technique, current processes can be mapped and redesigned or new processes can be designed

2.3. Primary activities

Primary activities are those activities involved in the physical creation of the product and its sale and transfer to the customer as well as after-sale assistance. In any organisation primary activities can be divided into five generic categories. Each category is divisible into a number of distinct activities or processes that depend on the particular industry or service.

2.3.1. Inbound logistics

These activities are associated with receiving, storing and disseminating inputs to the product, such as handling, warehousing, inventory control, vehicle scheduling and returns to suppliers.

2.3.2. Operations

These are associated with transforming inputs into the final product form such as machining, packaging, assembling, equipment maintenance, testing, printing and facility operations.

2.3.3. Outbound logistics

Here the activities are associated with collecting, storing, and physically distributing the product to customers such as finished goods warehousing, material handling, delivery vehicle operation, order processing and scheduling.

2.3.4. Marketing and sales

These activities are associated with providing a means by which customers can purchase or use the product as well as inducing them to do so. Marketing and sales processes, as a generic category, can be subdivided, as indicated by Porter (1985:46) into discrete activities, in the generic value chain to include marketing management, advertising, sales force, sales force operations, technical literature and promotion.

2.3.5. Service

Here the activities are associated with providing service to enhance or maintain the value of the product, such as installation, repair, training, parts supply, and product adjustment.

Each of the categories may be vital to competitive advantage, depending on the industry of service. For a distributor inbound and outbound logistics are the most critical. For a service organisation providing the service on its premises, such as a restaurant or retailer outbound logistics may be largely non-existent and operations the vital category. For a bank engaged in corporate lending marketing and sales are a key competitive advantage through the effectiveness of the calling offices and the way in which loans are packaged and priced. For a high speed copier manufacturer, service represents a key competitive advantage. For a library, all the categories are vital but service seems paramount. In any organisation, however all the categories of primary activities will be present to some degree and play some role in competitive advantage.

2.4 Support activities

Support activities support the primary activities and each other by providing purchase inputs, technology, human resources and various organisation-wide functions. The dotted lines

reflect the fact that procurement, technology and human resource management can be associated with specific primary activities as well as support the entire chain. Firm infrastructure is not associated with particular primary activities but supports the entire chain. The four generic support activities are:

2.4.1. Procurement

This refers to the functions of purchasing inputs used in the organisation's value chain, not the purchased inputs themselves. Purchased inputs include raw materials, supplies and other consumable items as well as assets such as machinery, office equipment and buildings.

2.4.2. Technology development

Every value added activity embodies technology, be it know-how, procedures, or technology embodied in process equipment

2.4.3. Human resource management

Human resource management consists of activities evolved in the recruiting, hiring, training, and development and compensation of all types of personnel.

2.4.4. Firm infrastructure

This consists of a number of activities including general management, planning finance, accounting, legal and government affairs and quality management. Infrastructure, unlike support activities, usually supports the entire chain and not individual activities.

2.5. Staff and organisational culture

Customers draw much of their final belief of the service from the personality and behaviour of the person they meet, because he/she provides more clues as to the personal suitability of the solution offered than does the core product itself. This emphasizes that services are about people. The service organisation has lost the direct simplicity of the market perception of the product; instead the interaction has taken centre stage. These interactions with the organisation, result in the customers' positive or negative perceptions, whether the solution to their problem was appropriate will determine whether they accessed value, will repeat a visit or purchase, or recommend it to others

In turn continuous interactions occur within the organisation. Therefore it is the service culture of the organization which will be experienced by the customer. If the culture of the organisation is not customer driven the experience that the customer will have will most likely be negative, impacting negatively on his/her repeat visit, purchase or recommendation of the service to other potential customers in the market. The staff and the organisation develop an internal culture. The customer experiences this culture when he/she interacts with the staff. A customer-driven culture can be an immensely uplifting experience for the customer. This is what makes the customer return and is one of the main catalysts to achieving the competitive advantage. Customers will return repeatedly to use a library's services when their valued opinions are monitored and seen to be implemented. Each service will present its own mix and emphasis. It is a service and the culture of the organisation which gives distinction, or a significant competitive advantage, rather than simply the core values of the product.

3. The marketing components of the model

The service triangle encompasses the processes of the value chain since all the processes needed to deliver the service to the library customer, as well as the processes which must be designed to fulfil the marketing of these services. To deliver the promise or offering to the customer three distinct marketing activities and processes around these are emphasized in the model.

3.1. Interactive marketing strategy and related processes

Interactive marketing strategy and processes occur on the horizontal axis of the triangle and involve processes concerning marketing of the library's services from the staff of the organisation to the customer. Interactive marketing processes actually deliver the promise of the library to its customer and are based on the assumption that staff satisfaction and customer's satisfaction of the library are inextricably linked.

THE SERVICE MARKETING TRIANGLE



Source: Adapted from Zeithaml & Bitner (1996:23)

3.2. Internal marketing strategy and related processes

Internal marketing strategy and processes are on the left axis of the triangle and involve the marketing of the library's services from the organisation to the staff. Internal marketing processes have a critical role in enabling the staff of the university library to keep the promise that has been made to its customers. The processes concerning internal marketing are those that the library must carry out to train, motivate and reward its employees.

3.3. External marketing strategy and related processes

External marketing strategy and processes are on the right axis of the triangle and involves marketing processes from the library to the customer of the library. External marketing processes set the promise of the service of the library. This is any processes that the library engages in to communicate to the customer before service delivery, what their expectations can be concerning the service promise.

An encompassing circle can also be added to this triangle, representing the mission and vision of the library, which encapsulates and drives all the activities taking place within the library.

What can we conclude?

The proposed marketing model for libraries if used as a guideline to strategic thinking and the design of internal processes and marketing processes, should result in the synergistic matching of the internal processes and offerings of the library with the external demands of global development and customer needs and preferences. This synergism of internal processes, the dialogue between the library and customers and customer-centred strategies should bring about the needed paradigm shift.

What have I done for the organisation?

Created the foundations of a brand.

What is a brand?

A brand is the “corporations promise to deliver specific attributes, its credibility based on reputation and the visitor’s possible previous experience” (Marcella:9). Frankel, the most widely read on (and off) line branding expert, on the other hand feels that “branding is not about getting your prospects to choose you over your competition: its about getting your prospects to see you as the only solution to their problem”.

Branding gives the organisation personality. The organisation’s brand gives it a distinguishing character and is enhanced by a name, symbol, icon or logo and or catch phrase or jingle which distinguishes it or enhances the recall about the character of the organisation and its products or services. A brand is bigger than the individuals who happen to be managing the organisation.

To the organisation the brand forms the cornerstone of marketing decisions. The brand enhances the ability of the organisation to demonstrate its value in the marketplace. Once it has established the value of its services or products in the marketplace, it uses its brand recognition as leverage for future marketing campaigns. The value that the organisations’ brand has in the marketplace can be evaluated in monetary terms.

It is important that every time anyone represents the library in various forms of communication or in person that they reinforce the unique positioning of the library. Branding is the symbolic representation of the vision of the library created to ensure a consistent presentation of the library externally and internally. The brand is intended for everyone who is involved in the building of the brand, library staff, suppliers and stakeholders.

Libraries in the 21st century need to vigorously market their services since the traditional library consisting only of books does not exist any more. The immense changes that technology and the Internet have brought about and will continue to be instrumental in rapid change in library service delivery have to be communicated to the library customer. The library has to remain synonymous with visionary information sourcing and delivery. Libraries have to continue making their brand top-of-the-mind information sourcing organisations. Many processes exist to actually deliver the service of the library. As commented before branding is a specific process that enhances the customers’ knowledge and recall of the quality and kind of services being offered by the organisation. Out of between eight to ten marketing processes that can be identified to market the services of a library “branding the services of the library” is one of the processes.

The quality of the service delivery of a library will determine its worthiness as a brand. Just like any customer, library customers “buy” benefits. They seek information for a purpose. The library creates a service with features that enable the customer to find appropriate information in the most efficient way. The customer, by means of finding appropriate information, is seeking a benefit. The library must therefore understand the benefits that its different customer segments are seeking and create the most appropriate route for the customer to be satisfied that they have benefited by using the library.

A service organization runs on the perceived quality and value-add of the service offered to its customers. This happens in the processes followed by the staff of the library in offering the information gathering service to the customer and they either enhance or break down the customer’s experience. The library customer should depart with a piece of the library’s ‘soul’ when they feel that they have benefited from using the library. Innovative processes, which supply timeous and efficient service delivery, add to the library customer’s shopping experience. The strong “flavour” of quality of the library services should shine through in any contact that the library customer has with the library.

The current appeal in using libraries is low, since Google “seems” to “solve” all the information needs of information seekers, who want the information immediately even though it is of lesser quality. Libraries must be overhauled and become super efficient. They need to be marketed as such to attract the broader public back to using the vast resources of current libraries. We must ask the question; do people know just how much libraries can offer?

The experience of entering a library physically or virtually must be as pleasurable and habit forming as reading a daily newspaper or magazine. Commercial experiences that customers enjoy can be incorporated in libraries and a “Starbucks” feel must be created, where customers can gather information, interpret it and incorporate it into their research via their own laptops, which connect seamlessly to library systems. The experience of the service of the library must result in the customer wanting to stay and not just rush out.

A need in the market arises, for various reasons, to obtain information on a multiple array of subjects. Libraries cannot create a need for information. In a world of information, a library merely assists its customers, entering its portals, in finding appropriate sources of information to satisfy their needs. When they are seeking a solution to this need for information, a service organisation springs to mind that has a strong brand recall, that is, a strong reputation for delivery and need fulfilment.

What does process improvement achieve?

A brand requires extensive organisational commitment. Brands come from within the organization. What the organisation does is therefore its processes. These processes reflect on the organization’s image. When you improve a process you attempt to make it better. When improving marketing processes one is attempting to improve processes by means of which the customer is made aware of the personality and qualities of the organisation and its products or services. The customer is one of the critical audiences involved in marketing, and has a diverse set of interests and preferences. One desires to improve a process in the long term and in the short term and thereby improve the

supply chain of the organisation. The specific goal therefore of improving marketing processes in the library is improving the process by which the library assists the customer in acquiring knowledge about the services the library offers. Processes must provide exemplary services to customers and therefore it is not only the marketing processes that must be improved, but also the processes that back up the library's service delivery. This therefore includes processes involving customer facing services as well as support services, which all lead to improvement of the quality of services, reduced time of delivery and greater efficiency. This does not just involve reducing costs since this can lead to poorer services, when the resulting processes are so lean that they are no longer effective. To remain a top-of-the mind brand the organization must constantly work at improving what is good.

To implement and improve the branding process, an in-depth understanding of what the business offers is essential. The brand should reflect the reality, not a blue-sky scenario. Are libraries giving branding the necessary attention? Are their operations fine-tuned to exploit the power of their brand as engines of growth and success? There are many critical success factors involved in ensuring that all employees of the organisation accept the brand. Are libraries giving their brand the investment, care and feeding it needs to grow and develop the brand to its greatest possible value to the organisation?

A new generation of users'

Johnson (2006:4-7) in her "Mind your X's and Y's" makes interesting reading. I refer to her research with the following ideas.

"The people who have dismantled the marketplace, share more than age and image – they share the same world view which fuels a subsequent set of cravings.... To a large extent, this worldview belongs to Generation X (1965– 1979) and Generation Y (1980 - 1997), collectively known as the Connected generation" Johnson (2006:4). The Connected Generation covers a huge blanket of ages (9 – 41 years) and life stages (from teenagers to new moms, to students and high powered executives. What links them are their attitudes, a worldview which informs their education, careers, choices and lifestyles. They are radically restructuring the way we live and behave in the market. Empowered with new tools this networked community of young customers are not prepared to watch the market from the sidelines but are actually reinventing it, for instance, Wikipedia which does not have an organisation compiling it fulltime, but relies on those people who are prepared to use their own time and resources to build it.

Growing up with rapid technological growth requires learning to multitask. Recent technologies have changed how our brains operate. They have altered today's consumer in the way they think, act react and which products and services they find compelling.

Organisations need to understand how to reach the multitasking, constantly upgrading customers who grew up in the Internet era – the Connected Generation. Baby boomers have a lot of cash, but the Connected Generation is radically changing the rules of engagement and setting the pace of how organisations will interact with customers. Today's customers self-organise online chat rooms, conventions and meet-ups to celebrate their products and services. They are empowered and more powerful than

the customers of the past. Customers' word of mouth "marketing" actions and loyalty to the brand has never been so important.

Together the Connected Generation has grown up to expect an accelerated innovation cycle of compelling, well designed and customised products and services. Generation Y have largely only been studied (Johnson:2006) as teenagers. We are therefore not sure what their adult information seeking behaviour will be. They have grown up with a desire to want information to be accessible online and to find it immediately. As Childress postulates "the net generation doesn't love a wall" (Malan:2007). Games have taught them that trying over and over makes you wiser; therefore they believe that there are an endless amount of skills they can acquire.

Judging by these attributes the library brand ought to want to adapt its services to epitomise a wow library fit for the Connected Generation to have:

- a Starbucks feel where customers can pick up a cup o coffee as well as work, study, catch up on e-mail and hang out;
- Wifi where customers can, via their laptops, and wireless adapters access all the services of the library. Wifi is short for wireless fidelity and is meant to be used generically when referring to any type of 802.11 network. A wireless network uses radio waves just like cell phones. One wireless router can allow multiple devices to connect to the Internet and access all their library's services;
- a knowledge commons where customers can also access information but also interact with other users such as other students in the academic library scenario;
- mechanisms that make your customer the centre of your universe by asking their opinions and needs;
- mechanisms that bring the customers dreams to life buy treating them as individuals
- actions that show the customer how your brand will truly influence their lives by engaging with them in compelling ways;
- tools in place that lead the customer via Google back to the library's resources. This applies especially when searching for scholarly information.

How can library's jump onto the "cool Googleing" bandwagon?

Wow what a brand Google is! As Sergey Brin, its co-founder states, Google exists "to organize the world's information, making it universally accessible and useful" Since the world's information increases as Edwards and Day (2005:49) state at a rate of 800 megabytes per person per year – 30 feet of books for every person on the planet. This is no mean undertaking.

Libraries need to "weave into the open web" and "facilitate the rendezvous of users and library services" by "surfacing the library where the users are" (Malan:2007). In a recent survey conducted by OCLC, 62% of users using search engines as their first port of call to find information reported that they use Google as the preferred search engine. By using Worldcat.org which is directly searchable using the web, libraries resources can be linked and users can click on the resource they have found and be directly referred to the catalogue of a library in their area holding the information source. Users of information must be made aware that information must be evaluated and not just accepted. Also that information that is comprehensive scientifically tested

and peer reviewed is usually found in libraries. Here then the Connected Generation will become brand loyal when they know they have a one-stop access to information of the richest and reliable kind.

Not one size fits all

There is no brand blueprint. The market of a specific library differs from city to city, organisation to organisation. Whatever the characteristics of the customer segments served by the library are, will determine the service that the library should offer. The community a library serves can consist predominantly of the Connected Generation, which will then determine the characteristics and success of the services offered by the library, resulting in satisfied customers whose needs have been satisfied via their preferred mode of delivery with no barriers to physical, self-help or online access to information.

If the community is predominantly the older generation of book lovers, especially in the community library scenario, they will not be happy with just a technologically driven information service. They still want to slip between the covers of a good book. This does not imply that they are not technologically savvy and want to be net-linked.

Conclusion

We live in interesting times and should embrace that. I am referring to us, the older tribe, the “Non-Connected Generation”. We have a long way to go to truly know what especially the Generation Y users’ information seeking needs will develop into. I cannot emphasise the need strongly enough to continuously check that the marketing idea for each customer segment fits the marketing objective. All customers want to experience the “pavlova” scenario and enjoy the services libraries offer. The challenge is with us. Librarians never put up a white flag and give up.

Bibliography

Edwards, H & Day, D. 2005. *Creating passion brands: how to build emotional brand connection with customers*. London: Kogan Page.

Irons, K. 1997. *The marketing of services: a total approach to achieving competitive advantage*. London: Mc-Graw Hill.

Johnson, L. & Hanson, C. 2006. *Mind your X's and Y's*. New York: Free Press.

Kunneke, KJ. 2001. *The paradigmatic shift of service organisations: a proposed marketing model for South African university libraries*. M-Inf thesis, University of South Africa, Pretoria.

Lientz, BP & Rea, KP. 2002. *Achieve lasting process improvement : reach Six Sigma goals without the pain*. San Diego, California : Academic Press.

Gupta, DK. et. al. *Marketing library and information services: international perspectives*. Munchen: Saur.

Malan, P. 2007. *New trends*. 2007 Annual Research Symposium. [Online] Available: http://www.unisa.ac.za/contents/library/docs/UNISA_3May07%20Pierre%20Malan.ppt

Marcella, AJ. 1999. *Establishing trust in virtual markets*. Altamonte, Springs, Florida: Institute of Internal Auditors.

Porter, M. 1985. *Competitive advantage: creating and sustaining performance*. New York: Free Press.

WiFi. 2007. [Online] Available: <http://www.webopedia.com/TERM/W/Wi-Fi.html>

Zeithaml, VA & Bitner, MJ. 1996. *Services marketing*. New York: McGraw-Hill.