Reimagining Libraries:
What your communities really want

Presentation to the 2017 ARSL Conference
September 8, 2017
Let’s get this out of the way (or “Who is this guy?”)

Based in Kansas City

In business since 1992

Staff of six (all working virtually – low overhead!)

Work almost exclusively for public entities – K-12, libraries, cities and counties

Clients have raised almost $7B in new revenue at the ballot box

Simply put: We work to help our clients better connect with their key stakeholders
If anything I say seems a bit up here, please hang in there.

We will move from principles to practices very quickly!
However...
None of this!

- Ask questions
- Talk
- Participate!
(n) The thoughts, feelings, emotions and ideas that come to mind when a person, a product, a service or a business is considered.

Let’s begin with a definition:

Brand
What thoughts, feelings and emotions come to mind when you see the logos associated with these brands?
What are the key elements of a community’s brand? (or, “What does it take for a place to be a community?”)
Some examples of community “brand” elements

- A school
- Health care services
- Post office
- Library
But fewer than 50% of 2016 research participants had been inside a library, gone online to a library website or accompanied someone to a library within the last year.
Column 1: Circle the words that your current cardholders would use to describe your library’s brand.

Column 2: Circle the words that the rest of your community would use.
The marketing challenge – close the “brand gap”

How we are perceived by our advocates/customers/friends, etc.

How we want to be perceived by everyone.
The following strategies and tactics may generate this kind of reaction... *(been there...done that...you can’t be serious)*
If you remember nothing else from our time together today, remember this: Stakeholders are only interested in one thing...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features (what you offer)</th>
<th>Benefits (What’s in it for them)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Expanded hours!</td>
<td>1. More time for you to enjoy the services the library offers!</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. More computers!</td>
<td>2. No more waiting to use our computers!</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Updated website!</td>
<td>3. Easier to find what you want, reserve it and get your questions answered!</td>
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Strategy 1: Celebrate your staff

• Honor their accomplishments – professionally and (where appropriate) personally. People relate to other people, not to institutions.

• Name tags for everyone with their “passion” on it – library-related or not (cooking, mysteries, CrossFit, etc.)

• Print business cards for everyone to provide a point of contact. (“If you need any more help on this project, here’s my card, please call and ask for me.”)
Strategy 2: Maximize relationships with cardholders (so they look happier than these folks...)

- Conduct an annual survey (online, paper or some combination).
- Ask what’s working? What isn’t? How can we better serve you?
- And report the results!
Strategy 3: Dip your toe in the social media waters (or expand your presence)

Pictures, pictures, pictures of people doing cool things at the library. Reframe the image of “library” through what your users are doing.
Strategy 4: Keep your website updated (this is a recording...)

Case studies of users
Meet the staff
New services
FAQ
Etc.
Strategy 5: Take a lot of pictures (you never know when you might be able to use them) *

*Don’t forget to get a signed release form
Strategy 6: Have a first time visitor protocol
Above all ("If you remember nothing else, remember...")

Benefits NOT features will build and strengthen your library’s brand!

Thank you! Comments, questions, recipe ideas?

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