

## **Library marketing: “Love Your Library”**

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### **Abstract**

In order to attract more non-medical staff, the Sir Thomas Browne Library at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital decided to create a marketing campaign called “Love Your Library.” The campaign sought to make non-medical staff aware of the library’s many services and materials available to them. During the campaign, the library increased the number of new members by 160%, with 25% of these being non-medical members. Future promotions will help create a community hub for staff and achieve a prominent position within the Trust.

### **Introduction**

The Sir Thomas Browne Library at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital was established in 1973 and has primarily focused upon the needs of medical staff and students. Whilst being essential for academic and research use, statistically the value to non-medical staff was limited with less than 5% of non-medical staff joining the library in 2018/19; anecdotal evidence suggests that these staff members think that the library is exclusively for medical staff (Halevi & O’Hanlon, 2016). Non-Medical staff includes Support Workers, Allied Health Professionals (AHP), Student AHP, Biomedical Scientists, Additional Professional Scientific & Technical, Admin and Clerical and

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Estates and Ancillary only. This factor combined with a decline in the number of overall visits was a concern. It was therefore essential to increase the number of visitors and attract new users which would be helped by widening our customer base.

To demonstrate what an important and significant resource the library is to all members of staff and to strategically plan for the future, the library team decided that a marketing plan which created awareness of the products and services available to every member of staff was necessary. After several initial library team meetings, the “Love Your Library” campaign was created.

### **Aim**

The aim of the campaign was to increase the number of non-medical staff using the library by 100% (a baseline number of library memberships was taken to assess any increase in numbers) as well as to increase library visits by all staff as compared to the previous period in 2017/18 (as measured by gatekeeper software).

### **Methods**

As a group of passionate librarians, we wanted to demonstrate that we are so much more than guardians of books. The library itself is where information is shared and disseminated in order to improve patients’ lives but also where staff can go to relax and unwind.

We knew that a marketing campaign which was engaging and high profile within the hospital would be required. With an event at the end of the campaign to showcase the enormous amount of work we do to meet the needs of our staff from student nurses to experienced consultants would equally help to raise the profile of the library.

It was decided that a short month long campaign, as a trial for future promotions would be launched on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2018, to encourage employees to join and use the library. This

month was chosen to coincide with the publicity created by the National Libraries Week campaign.

At the outset a phased internal marketing plan was developed, allowing the library team to target objectives at specific times. The first phase of the plan was to create a marketing tool kit; this was designed by library staff to promote a clear and consistent message, encouraging staff to join the library. The 'kit' contained posters and flyers and a briefing about the event for the Trust's media department.

This was created at minimal cost and labelled "Love Your Library" and contained all the information about the campaign which included a book sale, a bake sale for charity and entry into a prize draw for any member of staff who had a library membership card.

The "tool kit" was distributed to the Trust communications team so that the campaign could be advertised on the intranet to all staff. Posters were then strategically placed in high footfall areas of hospital, such as the restaurant, lifts and staff notice boards

The challenge with this phase of the campaign was to ensure awareness of the promotion amongst all staff. It was therefore important to work collaboratively with other departments within the Trust to help broadcast the campaign and appeal to a wide range of staff groups (particularly non-medical staff). Working closely with the careers and apprenticeship team and Health and Wellbeing (who interact with a large number of non-medical staff) to promote the campaign and encourage their teams to join and use the library.

For the next phase of the campaign, personalised emails targeting heads of departments and prominent members of staff were used to create as much awareness of the promotion as possible. To avoid the risk of emails being lost in clutter, the library created personal invites to

attend a “Love Your Library” showcase event. These were sent to heads of departments with the aim that they would cascade the information down to their staff.

During this phase of the campaign, the library’s Twitter account was also used as an alternative method to advertise the promotion with the hashtag #loveyourlibrary used to help spread the word amongst followers.

For the final phase of the Love Your Library campaign, an event was held in the hospital’s main atrium to showcase the many different products and services that the library can offer including fiction books, eLearning and literature searches.

It was important to use this as an opportunity not just to promote the library’s existing services but also new products such as the newly created “Timeout Collection” of fiction and non-fiction books and a monthly Craft Workshop to appeal to all members of staff. A display of books and a craft area was created to showcase some of the collection along with literature about the library services.

To attract a wide variety of staff to the event, the Apprenticeship team, Health and Wellbeing and Staff Training teams were invited to have stands in the hospital atrium demonstrating what they do and promoting how the library can assist staff.

The principal challenge of the event was that the atrium is open to all patients and visitors. The local public library was invited to host a stand and display a range of books and services so as to appeal to members of the public.

As part of the event, an area of tables and chairs was used to encourage people to stay and browse the variety of display stands and enjoy tea and cake being sold by library staff as part of a bake sale.

## **Findings**

During the campaign period the library increased the number of new members by 160% with 25% of new members from a non-clinical background.

Visitor numbers for the campaign period were up by over 7% with the upward trend continuing for the first quarter of 2019/20.

## **Discussion**

A promotion of this nature takes considerable time to produce and plan the content. Yet despite having a prominent marketing campaign a considerable obstacle during the promotion was still encouraging staff to take the time to visit the library or attend the “Love Your Library” event, with the time constraints of staff a possible factor.

Although the campaign met its intended aim of increasing the number of users, which ultimately resulted in raising the profile of the library, it was difficult to produce quantitative data to support this. It is likely that there are still staff that are unaware of the library service and the resources available to them. It may take a substantial amount of time and more promotion to become a prominent resource for all staff.

## **Reflection/Conclusion**

For the library to remain relevant and deliver content which library members find useful, it is vital to engage with all members of staff within the trust. By adapting and responding to staff needs and showcasing what the library can do for them, it has helped to promote the library as more than just a domain for medical staff. We have been able to create relationships with a variety of employees through creating a space for the whole staff community where everyone is welcome.

It is clear that regular marketing of the library can increase not just the number of users, but the variety of employees from diverse backgrounds that use its services. Keeping the cost low and using the resources available, promotions of this kind will help to demonstrate how substantial a resource the library is. With future promotions planned, the objective will be to create a community hub for staff and achieve a prominent position within the Trust.

### **References**

Halevi, G., & O'Hanlon, R. (2016). Creating content marketing for libraries. *Journal of the Medical Library Association*, 104(4), 342-345.