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Info about Rajesh's OLA 2014 Presentation:

Rajesh gave a presentation entitled "Library Brand Advocacy: An Innovative Approach for Engaging the Community" at the 2014 OLA conference on "The Inside Out Library" in Salem. The presentation was focused on how libraries can position themselves by embracing the concept of brand advocacy within the context of the STEPPS (Social Currency, Triggers, Emotion, Public, Practical Values, and Stories) framework provided by Bergen (2013). By applying the STEPPS framework, libraries can better attract and engage the community. Real-world examples of innovative libraries illustrated how elements of the STEPPS framework could be successfully implemented.

A cherished goal of libraries and information organizations has always been to engage the community. The digital revolution is ushering in new ways to deliver and combine services in the prevailing experience economy. In a recent study of more than 1,000 adults in the United States and the United Kingdom, researchers found that 81 percent of Millennials, 79 percent of Gen Xers, and 78 percent of Baby Boomers value experiences more than they do material items (Pally, 2013). Moreover, we have a fairly good idea of the methods customers are using to read, review, research and consume library services and programming.

However, the challenge is not how communities' information expectations are evolving—whether it is their preference for receiving information services via a library app, Twitter or Facebook—but to discover and manage what our communities value most and to transform their expectations into memorable and enriching experiences in physical and virtual environments. Can you imagine a future in the library and information science (LIS) profession where libraries are not judged by the size of collections and service offerings but rather by experiences? Well, it is already happening! This transformation calls for a shift in our marketing and communication approaches in order to provide robust and compelling library experiences to the communities we serve. In this article, I focus on how libraries and information organizations can create engaging experiences by embracing the SAVE (Solution, Access, Value and Education) framework and through effective content management.

Evolving Landscape of Marketing in the Experience Era

The field of service marketing has come a long way, evolving from the 4Ps framework (McCarthy, 1975) to relationship marketing (Berry, 1983) and more recently, transitioning into experiential marketing in the experience economy (Pine II & Gilmore, 2011). The shift from products to experiences is obvious. Research shows that highly successful organizations are enhancing the value of their products and services by providing "total experience" (Arons, Driest, & Weed, 2014). Many libraries have gone through major transitions during the last decade in their goal to provide a total experience by adopting the bookstore model, redefining their ambiance, learning spaces, roles, responsibilities, functions, and embracing creative strategies to engage communities. Drucker's profound statement that "the purpose of business is to create a customer" remains as relevant today as it was many decades ago. In fact, the advent of experience economy is forcing organizations to move beyond simply creating a customer to evolving a customer. Many organizations are responding to this call by investing enormous resources in managing their content in a strategic way in order to grab and hold the attention of today's technologically sophisticated, well-informed and knowledgeable customers. Libraries are no exception to this phenomenon and will benefit greatly by adapting their marketing and communication approaches to create unique, impactful and differentiating content-driven experiences in order to inform, entertain, engage and evolve the customer (Rose & Johnson, 2015).

Content-Driven Marketing

The revolution in information and communication technology has given people enormous capabilities to seek, gather, publish and distribute content and experiences in unprecedented ways. Given today's ease with which information can be digitally published and shared, most libraries have jumped on the bandwagon by providing large amounts of information targeted toward their communities. Yet without a proper strategy, this kind of information can easily bewilder and disengage customers from our service offerings, and ultimately from our library brand. The solution is simple: Provide relevant and engaging content across different distribution channels in an effective and strategic way to tell your library story.

The idea of providing education, recreation and general usefulness through effective content management provides a new and powerful way to enrich interactions with customers at every stage of their library journey. This approach calls for a shift in libraries' traditional marketing approach—that create content only to inform and describe the value of their services and programming—into one that knows how to create, manage, and lead the development of valuable experiences (Rose & Johnson, 2015). The SAVE framework proposed by Ettenson, Conrado and Knowles (2013) can be more useful for libraries in setting the stage to create engaging experiences through effective content creation.

The SAVE Framework

The SAVE framework looks beyond the 4Ps model (product, place, price and promotion) and focuses on:

> **Solution** instead of product. Define program and service offerings by the needs they meet in their pursuit of improving society through facilitating knowledge creation (Lankes, 2011).

Access instead of place. Develop an integrated cross-channel presence that fits customers' entire library experience journey, instead of individual service encounter in physical or virtual environments.

Value instead of price. Talk about the benefits communities derive from libraries in the ease of accessibility to resources, time and money saved, fulfillment of their informational, cultural, recreational, educational and professional goals, and so forth.

Education instead of promotion. Provide information relevant to specific needs at each library touch point, rather than relying on generic advertising and public relations. Many libraries are already doing a good job by educating communities through various services including, but not limited, to story hours, cooking lessons, immigration services, bicycle checkout, and other educational, cultural, and recreational programs.

Creating Engaging Content Experiences

Rose & Johnson (2015) suggest an interesting and novel approach to creating robust, compelling, meaningful and engaging content-driven library experiences by creating four archetypes of contents:

The Promoter

Promoter content is the content we are most familiar with. The promoter content sets the stage for initiating a conversation with the community. The purpose of the promoter content is to satisfy customers' information needs and wants and persuade customers to consume library resources. How can libraries create this type of content? Actually, we create this type of content every day. Some examples include, but are not limited to, our websites, brochures, information about library events, programs, story hours and so forth. This is the content we create to describe the value of our products and services— and propagate it through all the different channels we manage, including the Internet, mobile, social, physical and virtual space. For instance, Chattanooga Public Library promotes the value and uniqueness of its fourth floor in an interesting way by stating "While traditional library services support the consumption of knowledge by offering access to media, the 4th floor is unique by offering access to tools and instruction" (http://chattlibrary.org/content/4th-floor/about-4th-floor). Similarly, the Inspiration Lab at Vancouver Public Library sparks a conversation with its community by highlighting the resources it has about digital creativity, storytelling featuring high-performance computers, analog-to-digital conversion, sound studios, and self-publishing and editing software, and benefits they provide to the community (http://www.vpl.ca/programs/cat/C1051/). This type of content may be structured as a library story to persuade the community to not only utilize our resources, but also to invite them to become co-partners in designing content and spark a meaningful conversation in a mutually beneficial relationship that furthers the mission of the library.

The Preacher

Preacher content evangelizes remarkable ideas. How can libraries create content that will drive discovery and awareness in their communities? We develop this content to attract new customers. Its purpose to be easily accessible and promote a larger idea

in an easy-to-consume way. For example, for years libraries have prided themselves on making a host of items available to the public: books, DVDs, compact discs, and computers. And, now the Winter Public Library in Florida has started checking out bicycles to the public since February 2014. This program is called "Checkout Bikes" (http://archive.wppl.org/info/checkout-bikes.html). On the date it was officially unveiled, a crowd gathered at the front entrance of the library to check out the new bicycles that were available. People can easily see the practical value to this service as it is a healthy initiative—it is all about encouraging people to be more active. This example shows how preacher content may be instrumental in driving awareness and engagement in the community. Halligan and Shah (2014) also suggest that the rules of marketing have changed, and the key is to stand out by becoming remarkable, unique and useful to the community.

The Professor

Professor content fuels and enriches the interests and passions of your community. The most important purposes of the professor content are to drive meaning and provide solutions to your customers' evolving information expectations. It establishes us as an authority within our community and engenders trust that our expertise as librarians makes a difference in customers' lives. This type of content is considered unique and valuable in communicating the unique value proposition of the library. This means that more attention, creativity and effort will be required in crafting this type of content. One way to do that is to position your library as a thought leader or authority in the area of your strengths—and, in that capacity, educate your community about what unique things you offer in your library and how relentlessly you strive to make a difference in their lives. For instance, the Howard County Library System (HCLS) in Maryland positions itself as a central component of the very strong public education system it serves in its community. The HCLS rebranded itself from merely being a community service to an educational organization, which helps people in their learning endeavors. The HCLS developed "the three pillars" education philosophy, with each pillar representing a distinct, equally important curriculum segment: self-directed education, research assistance and instruction and instructive and enlightening experiences (http://hclibrary.org/about-us/welcome/). The marketing approach of HCLS clearly positions libraries as educational institutions and librarians as educators and can easily help people see the timelessness, practical value and uniqueness of their library services.

The Poet

Poet content drives feelings and beliefs in our community. It aims to make our community feel differently and focuses on changing a belief about a particular thing. How can libraries create content that will get people more emotionally connected with the libraries' mission and services? Examples include any type of content that appeals to the pure emotions of our community whether it is inviting them to share their library stories with us or organizing a community event. We are looking to make them laugh, shout, cry, or feel some emotion that aligns with our library story or purpose. For instance, when Edmonton Public Library rebranded itself they embraced the role of community activator with the help of their exciting, engaging, and emotional campaign messages, such as: "I'm an information ninja," "We make geek chic," "I'm happy and I know it," and "Spread the

words" (Thomas, 2011, p.113). Similarly, Queens Library in New York City emphasizes the importance of four strategic themes: powerful people, powerful programs, powerful partners, and powerful places in its most recent strategic plan. Moreover, it prominently highlights how customer and staff engagement sets the stage for memorable library experiences (http://www.queenslibrary.org/sites/default/files/about-us/ALL_NEW.pdf). Such messages are funny, poignant, emotional, inspirational and can be used effectively for telling your library story. The poet content is most often associated with telling the story of the library, and more importantly, its approach to creating unique and engaging experiences for customers. However, it needs to be remembered that all of the content types discussed above should be designed and created in an integrated way to be able to contribute to the story of the library.

Communicate Your Difference

Understanding and categorizing content by type will not only improve libraries' effectiveness, but it also helps us communicate and differentiate our library story in a strategic way. If you prefer defining four content archetypes differently to suit your work environment, do so. The bottom line is: We must create meaningful content-driven experiences! We not only have to grab the attention of our communities that matter to us, but we also have to hold it long enough so that we matter to them. Now is the time to share our unique and compelling library story by cutting through the clutter and managing content in an effective way by demonstrating how we make differences in patrons lives every day. This is an incredibly exciting time to be in the LIS profession. We are in the midst of redefining our role from merely being librarians to becoming difference makers who evolve librarianship. Our profession has a vital role and responsibility to drive and shape the information expectations of the communities we serve, and, ultimately, to create experiences that woo and capture their attention. Let's make those experiences remarkable by creating remarkable content!

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