Marketing Innovation Awards 2012

Cardiff Central Library: Internal Marketing – Staff Awareness Packs

Background

Cardiff Central Library opened in March 2009. Our events programme commenced in 2010. Events included a Psychic evening, Battle of the Bands, Stand Up comedy and Cocktail evenings. Evaluation showed that our events programme had the markings of success - objectives had been achieved, attendance was good, press coverage had been obtained etc. Furthermore the events programme had been successful in obtaining two marketing awards in 2011.

A marketing strategy had been put into place for each event. Part of this involved distributing print promotional materials (flyers and poster) to each branch library in Cardiff. The Central Library Events Team assumed that these were being displayed prominently in each branch library.

Several further assumptions were being made by the Events Team:

- That staff were reading the posters and flyers and gaining an understanding of what each event was
- That staff knew how to respond to enquiries from the public relating to specific events
- That staff knew what the objectives for each event were
- That the communication strategy being used was effective
- That staff motivation and enthusiasm for events was high
- That all staff were acting as advocates for the library service and for the events programme in particular

In order to ensure that the marketing strategy for the events programme continued to evolve and improve, we decided to carry out an audit and evaluation of our current position. In order to help achieve this we conducted a secret shopper exercise in July 2011 to measure the knowledge and engagement of the staff.

We used two communication methods to carry out the secret shopper exercise – telephone and email. An individual was tasked with asking staff specific questions relating to an event using both communication methods. We were confident that the results of both surveys would be favourable. We chose a random sample of branches for the secret shopper exercise.

Secret Shopper exercise 1

Telephone approach

A secret shopper telephoned each of the selected branches and asked a question from the following:

1. Could you tell me what time the event starts?
2. How much does it cost to attend the event?
3. What does the event involve?
4. Where is the event being held?
5. Who is the event suitable for?

Evaluation of the responses was based on the following:

- Was the staff member aware of the event that the secret shopper was enquiring about?
- If they were, was the information they gave the secret shopper correct?
- If they didn't know themselves, did they take the secret shopper's contact details and ring them back with the correct information? Or did they refer the secret shopper to someone who might know (if so, who did they refer them to?). Or did they offer no additional help?
- Did the secret shopper come away with sufficient information to be able to make an informed decision on whether to attend the event?

The results were evaluated using the following traffic light system:

Green	Excellent Marketing	Displayed good knowledge of the event and enthusiasm for it. Secret shopper received all the information necessary to attend the event.
Amber	Effective Marketing	Displayed a little uncertainty but secret shopper received the information necessary to attend the event.
Red	Poor Marketing	Displayed little or no knowledge of the event and did not furnish the secret shopper with the information required.

The results of the telephone secret shopper exercise were as follows:

Library	Response	Comments
Branch 1	Friday 15th July, just before 6pm. Answered after 2 rings. Staff member knew about the event and that it was being held in Central Library. Told me to telephone Central Library for more information, and gave me the correct telephone number.	Effective Marketing
Branch 2	Friday 15th July, just before 6pm. Answered after 4 rings. Staff member seemed a bit unsure, and said it was probably an event being run by Central Library. They didn't offer any additional help or information.	Poor Marketing
Branch 3	Friday 15th July, just before 6pm. Answered after 3 rings. Staff member didn't seem to know what I was talking about and said they were just closing so I should ring back	Poor Marketing

	tomorrow. I suggested that I would look on the internet. Staff member then said they thought they had an email about the event, but as the computers were off they couldn't check.	
Branch 4	Friday 15th July, just after 6pm (late opening). Answered after 7 rings. Staff member knew about the event and that it was being held in Central Library. They tried to access the information on their PC but failed, so offered to ring me back with the information from the poster in the foyer. Staff member rang back within 5 minutes with all the correct information including the telephone number to ring to book a place.	Effective Marketing
Branch 5	Friday 15th July, just after 6pm (late opening) Answered after 2 rings. Staff member knew about the event and that it was being held in Central Library. They checked on their PC and got confused with another event being held in Central Library. They couldn't find the email about the event, so went looking for the poster instead but didn't know where that was. Staff member offered to take my number and get back to me. They rang back within 5 minutes with all the correct information. I then asked if the event was free, but the staff member didn't know, so they promised to find out and ring me back. Again they rang back within 5 minutes to say the event was free and that places were still available.	Effective Marketing
Branch 6	Saturday 16th July, 10am. Answered after 5 rings. Staff member didn't know about the event at all. They asked me what I knew about it. I told them a friend of mine had told me about it and I said it was probably being held in Central Library. Staff member then gave me Central Library's telephone number.	Poor Marketing
Branch 7	Saturday 16th July, 10am. Answered after 4 rings. Staff member told me the event was being held in Central Library, but they weren't sure when it was taking place. They asked a colleague but they didn't know either. They eventually gave me Central Library's telephone number to ring for more information.	Poor Marketing
Branch 8	Saturday 16th July, 10am. Answered after 3 rings. Staff member asked me to hold while they accessed an email about the event. They gave me all the correct details and the telephone number and email address to book a place.	Excellent Marketing

Email approach

A secret shopper emailed a random sample of branch libraries with a question about an event. The results were evaluated using the traffic light system above.

The results of the email secret shopper exercise were as follows:

Library	Time Taken to Respond	Response	Comments

Branch 1	14 Hours 56 Minutes.	Full details of event supplied.	Excellent Marketing
Branch 2	No response received.	No response received.	Poor Marketing
Branch 3	No response received.	No response received.	Poor Marketing
Branch 4	No response received.	No response received.	Poor Marketing

Conclusions of the secret shopper exercise – and evidence of need!

The results were clearly mixed and demonstrated a definite lack of engagement from some areas of the service. This could not be seen as a failing by the staff members concerned – this was the result of a flawed communication strategy. External marketing had been the focus of the events programme thus far, internal marketing needed to be given a higher priority. It was clear that the best advocacy tool available to the service - the staff - was not being utilised effectively. Staff could not engage with something that they had little or no knowledge of. If we had failed to engage the staff then they could not be criticised for not always being able to motivate others, particularly customers and potential customers.

It was clear from the secret shopper exercise that we were spending money to print posters and flyers for the events, but that staff weren't interacting with them in the way we had hoped. Many were displaying the posters and flyers in their libraries but weren't actively promoting the events, thus we weren't getting the most out of our print materials nor best value for money. We could achieve greater return on investment, and greater market penetration by utilising our staff as champions for the events programme.

We discovered that internal marketing was therefore essential to the future success of the events programme. We realised that knowledge is power and a well informed member of staff is a powerful marketing tool.

Staff engagement with the events programme needed to be improved. Staff needed to understand why we were holding a particular event in order to share the vision and develop ownership of the programme. Individual objectives had been set for each event in the Central Library events programme, however they had not been communicated effectively to the staff. If the staff did not have an understanding of what event was taking place and why, it is not surprising that they failed to champion it. In order to do this, improvements needed to be made to our communication strategy.

The staff needed to be given full details of all events with specifics such as timings, who we were working with (partners), programme information, and why were holding each event (the event objectives). The objectives would help give staff an understanding of the importance of each event and also help them to understand who we were marketing our events to i.e. who the target audience was.

Staff also needed to have a clear idea of what was expected of them and how they could get involved to help achieve the objectives set. They needed to be given all of this information in a timely manner, using a method suitable to them.

Staff Awareness Pack Project

We decided to develop a Staff Awareness pack that would be issued to staff prior to each event.

The overriding aim of the Staff Awareness packs was the development of staff as advocates for the service and the events programme in particular.

The objectives for the packs were as follows:

- To increase staff awareness of the events programme at Central Library
- To equip staff with the knowledge to respond accurately to public enquiries regarding events
- To communicate event objectives - why events are taking place and the importance of them - in order to increase staff motivation and enthusiasm for events
- To increase staff participation in each event through encouraging them to create related stock displays and hold satellite events at their location. This would also widen the 'reach' of each event and increase the likelihood of achieving the event objectives
- To furnish the Social Media Team with event information and increase the frequency of event updates via Twitter, Facebook and the Blog
- To contribute towards the sustainability of our relations with partners. By strengthening their understanding of our objectives, future shared agendas can be identified

We realised that the setting out of objectives for each event was useful not only from an internal staff point of view, but that the packs could also be used to inform partners working with us on events and help identify shared agendas. This could then help to identify and inform future events, sponsorship and joint working opportunities. The distribution list for the packs therefore includes any event partners and also some prospective ones.

We decided that the packs should follow a set template so that staff could be provided with consistent information each time. Each Staff Awareness pack contained the following information:

- Full event details
- Event objectives
- List of partners
- Promotional poster/flyer drafts

- Suggestions for staff involvement, such as targeted stock promotions and satellite events

Please see appendices 1, 2 and 3 for examples of Staff Awareness Packs.

We decided to provide staff with both a hard copy and electronic version of the pack via email, prior to each event. In addition we provided all libraries with a designated coloured folder in which to keep the Staff Awareness packs. The packs were introduced to Branch Librarians and Heads of Department at Library Operational Team meetings. The concept of the packs was explained and it was made clear that every member of staff needed to read the packs. Staff were informed that packs needed to be housed in the Staff Awareness folder which was to be kept up to date. In addition to this, a written Work Instruction was issued to all staff emphasising the necessity of reading the packs and referring to them when answering customer queries.

After the Staff Awareness pack project had been running for several months we decided to evaluate its effectiveness. We sent a survey to staff to find out how they were using the packs.

Staff Survey

The survey consisted of the following questions. Fourteen responses were received in total:

Do you find the Staff awareness packs useful?	100% replied yes
Are you more aware of the events at Central as a result of the packs?	93% replied yes – 1 respondent indicated no but stated that was because they already knew about each event, and that the packs did serve as a good reminder that an event was coming up.
Do you feel better equipped to answer any queries relating to events?	100% replied yes
How do you use the packs?	"One member of staff arranges a display on the theme so all staff are aware of the month's theme" "To give further information to borrowers who have an interest" "As an information source and to help raise awareness of the events in the communities." "For referral if any questions are asked about the events" "Update Central Library folder" "Read and refer to when answering questions from public"

	"It helps answer enquiries!" "Put it with the staff diary" "For information knowing what events are taking place in Central Library and hopefully any branches who link to themes" "As a useful guide to all the staff in the Department so that they are better prepared to answer enquires, promote the event and to organise a display/tie-in with the event" "More for information. We also know to make a display of our stock to run alongside Central Library's event. "Keep it by the phone. We have had phone calls asking about events" "I use them as a guidance as to whom to direct the (stock) display at; what to display; to give customers correct information and hopefully use appropriate stock" "As reference resources when channelling information through our social networking sites, i.e. Twitter, Facebook and Blogger"

In addition to the information above, a number of branch libraries have held satellite events alongside the main events at Central Library. For example when Central Library hosted 'An Evening of Mediumship', Rhydypennau Library (smaller venue in a different part of Cardiff) held its own Psychic Night featuring a local medium. Branches have indicated that the Staff Awareness packs are extremely useful when planning their satellite events, because as well as providing information on event objectives and organisation, they also provide a list of partners that they can utilise/approach to arrange their own satellite events.

As well as the staff survey, we also carried out a second secret shopper exercise to find out if any improvements had been made in staff awareness and knowledge of events as a result of the Staff Awareness pack project.

Secret Shopper exercise 2

We used the same methodology for the secret shopper exercise post the introduction of Staff Awareness packs – i.e. we used both telephone and email approaches.

Telephone approach

A secret shopper telephoned a random sample of branch libraries with a question regarding an upcoming event at Central Library**.** The same traffic light system was used to rate the responses received:

Library	Response	Comments
Branch 1	Staff member was very informative and helpful. Advised it was an all day event with different organisations there, including free demonstrations and free samples i.e. smoothies, massages taster sessions. Information on classes available and jobs. Will have Detox information i.e. giving up smoking, slimming/dieting. Everything is free. Will give you an insight into what the council has to offer i.e. in sports centres, leisure centres. Advised that I could look for more information on the Cardiff Council website, Facebook page and Blog.	Excellent Marketing
Branch 2	Staff member didn't give any specific information about the event, just had posters in the library. Advised me that it was best to contact Central Library for more detailed information, and gave me contact number for Central Library to make further enquiries.	Poor Marketing
Branch 3	Staff member asked if I had contacted Central Library about the event for more details, gave me contact number for Central Library to make further enquiries.	Poor Marketing
Branch 4	Staff member advised event was on 28th Jan in Central Library 10am – 4pm. Free event, with massages, beauty treatments, Tai chi, healthy eating, all the detox information.	Excellent Marketing
Branch 5	Staff member advised that the event was in Central Library on 28th Jan, 10am – 4pm, free event with aromatherapy, Slimming World, exercise referrals, massages, lots of detox information.	Excellent Marketing
Branch 6	Staff member advised that the event was in Central Library on 28th Jan, 10am – 4pm, free detox information and taster sessions on things like massage, Tai chi, smoothie making, healthy eating.	Excellent Marketing
Branch 7	Staff member didn't know much about the event so looked on internet for more info. Advised was in Central Library, on 28th Jan, 10am – 4pm. Free taster sessions on likes of quitting smoking, massages, Tai Chi, smoothie making, Slimming World, gave me contact number for Central Library if I needed further information.	Effective Marketing
Branch 8	Staff member knew event was being held at Central Library on Sat 28th Jan, 10am – 4pm. Free taster sessions on aromatherapy, Slimming World info, Cardiff ramblers, hypnotherapy, and lots more detox information and sessions. No timings for each session could be given, or didn't know if there was a booking in system for each session, so staff member advised me that I could give	Excellent Marketing

	Cardiff Central (gave me the number) or that they could give them a call to get details for me and phone me back.	
Branch 9	Staff member advised that the event is on 28th Jan, 10am – 4pm in Central Library. Free taster sessions for a range of things such as aromatherapy, Slimming World, UWIC, local training and enterprise, Tai Chi, massages, Cardiff Ramblers, CV workshops.	Excellent Marketing
Branch 10	Staff member confirmed that the event was on 28th Jan 10 – 4pm in Central Library, gave full details on free taster sessions, massage, beauty treatments, relaxation sessions, Tai Chi, hypnotherapist etc a whole range of detox information. Gave me contact number for Central Library if I required any further information. Said it sounds like a good event to go to.	Excellent Marketing.
Branch 11	Staff member advised the event is being held in Central Library on 28th Jan 10am – 4pm. Went to look for info pack for more info, advised it's a free event, based on detox and healthy living event and job hunting. Includes stress and relaxation sessions, exercise referrals, hypnotherapy, Slimming World, CV workshop, Tai chi. Staff member advised that I didn't have to book onto any of the sessions before hand, just go along and see what's on offer, said it sounds like a good event.	Excellent Marketing
Branch 12	Staff member informed me that they didn't know a great deal about the event, so best to call Central Library for more information with it being held there, and gave me their contact number.	Poor Marketing
Branch 13	Staff member was not sure of information so went to find more info on it. Found an e-mail about it but could not open it as it looked corrupted. Informed me that they would try and find out more information, offered to call me back or e-mail information across or that I could call back in half hour and they should have the details.	Poor Marketing
Branch 14	Staff member asked me if the event was being held in Central Library. As they did not have the information about the event there they gave me Central library contact number to make further enquiries.	Poor Marketing
Branch 15	Staff member knew the event was being held in Central Library, and thought there was an email about it but could not find it, so looked it up on the internet. Informed me that the event was being held on Sat 28th Jan from 10am – 4pm. Includes a variety of events such as massage, beauty, slimming world, job seeking, stress busting, relaxation remedies, Tai Chi, and there all free sessions too. Sounds like a really good event.	Effective Marketing
Branch 16	Staff member knew that the event was in Central Library, went to find more info on it. Advised that it's being held on Sat 28th Jan from 10am – 4pm. Includes stress and relaxation sessions, Tai Chi, Exercise referrals, hypnotherapy, rambling info, Slimming World, massage,	Excellent Marketing

	meditation and CV workshops. It's a free event giving small taster sessions. Informed me that it sounds like a good event so they have booked time off to be there too.	
Branch 17	Staff member went to find more information about the event, advised it's being held in Central Library on 28th Jan from 10am-4pm. Free event, including aromatherapy, Slimming World, massage, meditation, UWIC, Cardiff Ramblers. Also asked if there was anything else they could help me with.	Excellent Marketing

Email approach

As with the previous email secret shopper exercise, a random sample of branches (including those in the original sample) were emailed with a query regarding an event at Central Library. The traffic light system was used again to evaluate the responses, which can be found below:

Library	Time Taken to Respond	Response	Comments
Branch 1	26 Minutes	Full details of event supplied.	Excellent Marketing
Branch 2	7 Minutes	Full details of event supplied.	Excellent Marketing
Branch 3	39 Minutes	Full details of event supplied.	Excellent Marketing
Branch 4	60 Minutes	Full details of event supplied.	Excellent Marketing
Branch 5	5 Hours 13 Minutes	Full details of event supplied.	Excellent Marketing
Branch 6	1 Hour 1 Minute	Full details of event supplied.	Excellent Marketing
Branch 7	2 Hours 7 Minutes	Full details of event supplied.	Excellent Marketing

Comparison between Secret Shopper exercises

	Secret shop pre Staff Awareness packs	Secret shop post Staff Awareness packs
Number of branches approached by telephone	8	17
Number of branches approached by email	4	7
Number of branches that demonstrated excellent marketing of the service	2	17
Percentage of branches approached that demonstrated excellent marketing	17%	71%

of the service		

The percentage comparison between the two exercises demonstrates a 318% improvement in the marketing effectiveness of the staff.

Partnership survey

We also sent a survey to a random sample of our event partners to find out their impressions of the Staff Awareness packs. Despite receiving a disappointing number of responses, those that replied were extremely positive:

Do you find the Central Library events Staff Awareness packs useful and in what way?	"Yes of course, as an active working partner they are essential to us. Specifically we can programme any contribution we make to events in a meaningful way." "Yes, a good way of promoting events which in turn I can forward on to our C2C/Switchboard and Housing colleagues to help promote awareness with staff and friends/ family."
Are you more aware of the events at Central Library as a result of the packs?	"Definitely, they are an excellent communication tool." "Yes."
How do you use the packs?	"We use them in a number of ways, mainly to define our own activity if we are participating in the event, but also for awareness within our own networking circle." "Look at information and promote via email facility."
Do you feel your perception of what Cardiff Libraries have to offer has altered as a result of receiving the packs?	"Yes we have discovered a number of shared objectives." "Yes."
Is there anything else you would like to see included in the packs?	"Nothing comes to mind." "No it is comprehensive."

Having carried out this consultation and the secret shopper exercise, we needed to look back at our original objectives for the Staff Awareness packs to see if they had been achieved.

Project Evaluation

Revisiting the objectives – The Results!

The objectives for the packs were as follows:

- To increase staff awareness of the events programme at Central Library

We are delighted that the secret shopper results show a marked increase in the number of correct responses to customer queries regarding events, indicating an increase in staff awareness and knowledge of events.

- To equip staff with the knowledge to respond accurately to public enquiries regarding events

Again, the secret shopper results show a marked increase in the number of correct responses to customer queries regarding events, and also in the time taken to respond to such queries. This is a direct result of the Staff Awareness packs - as the staff survey has shown, staff are using the packs to refer to when responding to queries from the public.

- To communicate event objectives - why events are taking place and the importance of them - in order to increase staff motivation and enthusiasm for events

There is evidence of increased staff enthusiasm for events in the post Staff Awareness pack project secret shopper exercise. More branch staff are choosing to volunteer at Central Library events and also to attend them as customers in their spare time. There is evidence of staff understanding the target audience and objectives of events in that more staff are creating stock promotions and holding satellite events aimed at the correct target audience (young people, unemployed, older people, families etc). Also the make up of the people attending events shows that the right people are being ‘reached’.

- To increase staff participation in each event through encouraging them to create related stock displays and hold satellite events at their location.

Again, there is evidence of increased staff enthusiasm for events in the post Staff Awareness pack project secret shopper exercise. There has also been an increase in the number of satellite events held, and number of themed stock promotions in branches (as evidenced by the staff survey). There has also been an increase in the number of branch library staff volunteering at events and attending them as customers in their spare time.

- To furnish the Social Media Team with event information and increase the frequency of event updates via Twitter, Facebook and the Blog

The Social Media Team indicated in the staff survey that the number and frequency of Tweets and Facebook updates has increased as a result of the readily available information in the Staff Awareness packs. This increase in number of tweets etc has meant an improvement in the quality of our Social Media offer and has also led to an increase in the number of our followers and likes on Twitter and Facebook.

- To contribute towards the sustainability of our relations with partners. By strengthening their understanding of our objectives, future shared agendas can be identified

There has been an increase in suggestions being made by existing partners for future events, and partners are choosing to work with us time and time again. This is also evidenced by the results of our partner survey.

Evaluation Conclusions

The evidence from the survey and secret shopper exercise demonstrates that a marked improvement in response to customer queries regarding events has been achieved. More staff are volunteering to take part in events and there has been an increase in themed stock promotions. Related satellite events have also increased. The packs have had a positive effect on partner relations. They have helped our partners develop greater understanding of Library Service objectives and helped them to recognise links and shared agendas for future working.

The Social Media Team have increased their event updates due to the ready availability of authoritative event information.

We have witnessed an improvement in the market penetration of our event publicity, leading to better value for money from our printed promotional material. Whereas previously we may have spent £100 on posters and flyers to display in libraries (and elsewhere), but had no one actively promoting these, nor able to respond to any queries on them, we now have more aware, marketing savvy staff who are championing events and highlighting them to customers.

We have a more capable workforce - spread across the entire city serving a population of over 341,000 - that are equipped with the right information to be able to act as advocates for our events programme.

There is a greater awareness of the Cardiff Library events programme and ownership of this by the library staff. The project intended to tap into the marketing potential of every member of staff. Evaluation shows that this has been achieved and that big improvements have been made.

Project Sustainability

There is a small expense associated with the printing of the packs. This currently stands as follows:

Cost of one pack	£0.30
Number of packs produced Monthly	30
Monthly Cost	£9
Annual Cost	£108

We include a coloured cover at the present time (in order to develop a brand identity) but this could potentially be altered to black and white which would reduce these costs substantially.

The packs continue to evolve. We are currently extending the “what do we want you to do” section of the packs. Options we are looking at include tasking staff with the distribution of printed posters and flyers to locations in their communities and directing specific branches to hold mirror events.

We are also evaluating the packs as an advocacy tool with partners and are investigating the possibility of creating specific, targeted packs in order to attract new partners.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Get Active Staff Awareness Pack
Appendix 2. History Day Staff Awareness Pack
Appendix 3. Wine Tasting Staff Awareness Pack