

# Step three: Journey of excitement

John Stanley, marketing consultant

In the previous article in this series we looked at the 'journey of inspiration'. The consumers in your catchment area have discovered you, and taken the time to come into your library. Now that they are there, how do you inspire them to walk into your library and go 'wow!?' Your next challenge is to excite them so they leave singing your praises!

Basically, customers are bored with seeing books on shelves, they are looking for more exciting experiences. Now is the time for you to move on from being a commodity organisation and start providing an experience. This means we should fully engage our customer with what we are doing. In the USA, Pike Place Fish Market is looked on as the ultimate experience in Seattle's retail scene. In Australia, the Beechworth Bakery in Victoria, many would argue, creates the same experience. Many would argue that New Zealand is recognised as providing the best library experiences in the world.

How do you create an experience? The library experience should be exciting. If it is not, then consumers will not come back. However, everyone is different — what excites some people will leave others cold — so do not think everyone will be stimulated by your displays, merchandising and awesome customer service. The best thing to do is to focus on *your* target market and make it exciting for them.

## Who are your customers?

You need to do some market research and find out who your target market is and what excites them. Are you targeting female 'IKEA' babies (Generation X) or the female 'baby boomers' (45–60 year olds)? Both are major target markets at present. But every region has a different demographic mix to be addressed.



The Rainforest Café presents a consistent image

You need to understand your customer's lives and what appeals to them. You then present yourself in a leading edge (not bleeding edge) way. If you are bleeding edge you may lose your patrons as you are too far ahead of them.

As an example, I recently worked in Italy and thought the Italian furniture stores were amazing. But if I had introduced the concepts *en masse* to my hometown, Perth, the marketplace would have rejected them. The leading edge in Bergamo, Italy, is bleeding edge in Perth, Australia.

## How do you generate leading edge excitement?

Firstly, you need to ensure the whole of your team are behind the notion that you need to be leading edge. You can then divide the work between the whole team and, in my experience, they will enjoy coming up with new ideas and will want to be involved. The ideas come from a number of areas, including: lifestyle television programs; newspapers; fashion magazines; retailers; trends overseas within and outside the library; books (always check your books for the latest ideas); conversations with customers; leading libraries around the world; and the web.

The fun of creating excitement is that often all you need to do is take your existing products and rearrange them in a different way to create a new, exciting display. This can be achieved by ensuring displays are topical and that you have introduced interesting display 'props' to help set the scene. Do not forget the importance of ambience; get the space right for the consumer, get the correct music (and volume) and the aroma has to be right. Yes, libraries are introducing music in some zones within the library.

Do not fall into the trap of making your library look attractive and then having the team let you down. You are far better to have an enthusiastic team and a dull display than great displays and a dull team. The team control the atmosphere of your library. There is nothing



Your whole team needs to help generate excitement

ing worse for a customer to discover an exciting environment being let down by the team.

## You must be consistent

The challenge is not in the creation of the excitement, the challenge is ensuring you do it consistently. I come across businesses that can achieve it in December but lose it in January. The customer expects a consistent message from a library. This is not easy to achieve and few businesses achieve it successfully.

Having said that, many people would argue that if Disneyworld, The Body Shop and Rainforest Cafés can achieve it, why can't a library? These consistent organisations should be looked on as models. In all of them the business culture is critically important. They are not operated by managers, but by leaders. It is often said that the difference between a manager and a leader is that when a manager has a bad day the team knows about it. When a leader has a bad day the team is not aware of it.

Consumers want a visit that excites them. It is our role not to disappoint them. For more ideas and strategies for creating an experience and maintaining it, consult my new book, *Think for your customer* (2004).

Don't miss out on the next instalment on providing a rewarding experience for your customers. In the final article we look at the trust factor.

*John Stanley is a marketing consultant with over twenty years' experience working with libraries to assist them with their merchandising, training, image and customer service. Contact John Stanley Associations at <http://www.johnstanley.cc>.*

*Step one: Journey of discovery (May inCite)  
Step two: Journey of inspiration (July inCite)  
Step four: Journey of trust: coming in December*