

Providing a rewarding experience for your customers

Step four: Journey of trust

John Stanley, marketing consultant

You got your customers' attention through your innovative marketing, you dared to be different. Then you inspired them when they first entered your library, and when they borrowed a book it was a rewarding experience. Now you must win your customers' trust so they keep coming back.

One of the most important issues for businesses is consumers' lack of trust. In the United States, consumers do not trust businesses and in recent Australian surveys 69 per cent of respondents mentioned they do not trust big business. This is a huge opportunity for any organisation.

The 'trust' factor

The key is using the 'trust tool' to your advantage. If you are perceived as a trusted organisation, you have an opportunity to expand your market share. Customers talk and you become more trusted.

What can you do? Consider the following possibilities:

1. Name badges: A garden centre owner in New Zealand recently changed his name badge to say 'John Smith, proud owner'. This small detail made a difference. One of the most common comments he received was 'I did not realise you were a small business, I thought you would be part of a chain'. Research carried out by Shopper Anonymous in Australia indicated that people who wore name badges were perceived to provide 15 per cent better customer service. Yet how many librarians still don't wear name badges?
2. Promote: Mention that you are local in your promotions. Remind customers by thanking them for supporting 'local'.
3. Team information: Place certificates earned by your team and their photographs near the desk. This provides the personal touch and also promotes customer knowledge of the team.
4. Products: Promote books you believe in and make sure all the team recommend them and are consistent in their recommendations.
5. Inform: For example, inform your customers that you select books by local authors.
6. Celebrities: Promote local authors as celebrities and recommend their books.
7. Sponsorships: Sponsor local relevant events. Be seen to be involved with local clubs and charities. Do not be shy of getting your name promoted at such events.

8. Training: Ensure all your team are trained in customer service and product knowledge. Trust comes from librarians who are confident. Confidence comes from feeling you have the capability to be professional in front of the customer.
9. Trust: And finally, brainstorm 'trust' with your team. I am sure they could extend this above list and expand the trust marketing tools in your organisation.

Over the last four articles we have taken you on the customers' journey through your library. The key idea is to walk your library in the customers' shoes. You will constantly need to evaluate your work. The days have long gone when you could set up your library and leave it looking the same for long periods. Customers today soon get bored and are looking for new stimulation from your library. Bored customers leave libraries. Do not play safe, it is the least safe thing you can do in today's market.

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.

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Step one — Journey of discovery (May inCite)

Step two — Journey of inspiration (July inCite)

Step three — Journey of excitement (November inCite)

Gateways Online at the NLA

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