

# PEOPLE POWER:

## MARKETING YOUR LIBRARY

In January of this year, Yarra Plenty Regional Library (YPRL) introduced a new Marketing Strategy with a bold vision: to tell the story of the library through its people. The strategy has two main goals: to take a digital-first approach to communications, and to empower all staff to be involved in marketing the library. After all, as professionals who are at the front lines of library customer service every day, who better to run our social media platforms?

YPRL's new strategy positions our digital channels as an extension of our branches. In the digital age it's important that our website is not a separate entity, but another location where we can serve our customer's needs, connect them to the collection, answer questions and provide feedback. Likewise, social media should not just be tools of the marketing department, but active sites for library staff to connect and converse with the community – delivering the same top-notch customer service in the digital space as we do in the physical.

An important part of the staff training included developing digital marketing guidelines to inform social media interactions. Audience segments were developed for each of our digital platforms, so that relevant content could be targeted for our diverse audience, such as: Facebook – our member-community and local residents (news, events, customer service); Instagram – book lovers and readers (promoting the collection); Twitter – engaged library lovers and the GLAMR industry; and enews – library members and local residents (news & events).

YPRL staff have embraced the challenge and are avidly writing blogs, creating recommended reading lists, taking snaps for Instagram, connecting with patrons on Facebook and chatting with fellow librarians on Twitter – all under the banner of Yarra Plenty Regional Library. With robust policies in place and training offered, the marketing department gave staff the passwords to our social media accounts and off they went.

Staff now shape content and communications to match the platform and target audience to ensure a consistent and meaningful, rather than scattergun, approach. In the first six months of the strategy, YPRL's digital platforms have enjoyed significant increases in engagement: Facebook 28 percent increase; Instagram 15 percent increase; Twitter 12 percent increase; website six percent increase.

Of course, success doesn't only lie in the numbers. We believe we are building a more satisfied and informed community of members by mindfully connecting people to programs and collections and offering increased customer service in the spaces where people are. Through online conversations and connections, we are building a collegiate, supportive and collaborative relationship with other people and institutions in our sector. And YPRL staff at all levels are learning new skills such as blogging, offering reader's advisory in the digital space, social media, photography and more.

YPRL is proud of our innovative approach to marketing – and we are not surprised that it is working so effectively. After all, the success of a library service lies in the care and expertise of its staff. The location may change – from in-branch to online – but by putting our librarians in charge, the high-quality connections, advice and service remains consistent. 🌟

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