



Faculty-Librarian

Relationship Building:

Best Practices

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Relationship Marketing (RM)

- Faculty-Librarian relationship building necessitates Relationship Marketing
- “Relationship marketing addresses getting and keeping customers” (*Besant & Sharp, 2000*).
- Relationship Marketing can be achieved by:
 - *Strengthening Liaisons Role*
 - *Offering client-centered service*
 - *Following Information Consulting Model*



Strengthening Library Liaisons

- Create opportunities for liaisons to become more directly engaged in faculty teaching and research
- Systematically target administrator and faculty information technology needs (treat as special users)
- Become indispensable to faculty (keep faculty informed of what is relevant to them)

Strengthening Liaisons...

- Embrace liaisons as your frontline troops for building & managing faculty-librarian relationships
(Rodwell, 2008)





Strengthening Liaisons...

- Support as “the cornerstone of the library for promotion, marketing, resource development, and provision of library services” (*Matacio, 2007*)
- “Focus on outcome-based communication when talking with faculty” ...to engender ‘backup’ support for ideas (*Thompson, 2007*)
- *In the Literature: George Washington University’s Faculty Outreach Librarian.*



Initiating an Information Consulting Role:

- “Information consulting denotes a dynamic interactive process in which librarians are active, full partners with faculty and students facilitating teaching and research”
(Frank, 2001)
- Take initiative in developing active partnerships
- Urge staff to retain proactive mentality, anticipate faculty needs

Information Consulting...

- Seek collaboration with faculty to design student assignments, prepare grant applications





Information Consulting...

- Change staff position titles to ‘face the college’ (i.e. “Consultant Librarian to Social Sciences”) (*Donham and Green, 2004*)
- Have faculty to participate in ‘hiring’ their consulting librarians
- Offer personalized research clinics, “individualized scheduled consultations with a librarian that focuses on a specific research need” (*Cardwella, 2001*)



Information Consulting...

- Promote staff flexibility when advancing multidisciplinary teamwork, research
 - Let faculty know liaisons are not ‘straight-jacketed’ to any one subject domain
- Recognize that providing personalized information literacy skills is a “value added service” (*Holmstrom, 2002*)
- *Example: Iowa’s Cornell College*



Creating Client-Centered Service:

- Absorb faculty perspective:
 - “assume library will work together with client and resolve their problem with whatever products and services are needed, regardless of who provides them.”
(Holmstrom, 2002)
- Assume “context-of-client” rather than “context-of-library” mentality *(Holmstrom)*

Client-Centered Service...

- Doctor-Patient & Taxpayer-CPA relationships are similar client-centered models (*Hernon, 2002*).





Client-Centered Service...

- Promote staff services as time-saving, keep faculty informed of relevant resources made available
- Consider tiered reference structures (using paraprofessionals for *general* reference)
- Get to know faculty personally, seek insight into their research (requires careful listening)

Client-Centered Service...

- With this knowledge, librarians can build collections that generate higher usage among faculty





Client-Centered Service...

- Implement CRM (Customer Relationship Management) software.
- Work closely with faculty in their offices, laboratories, and classrooms
- Be the expert, be visible, be quick, and take credit for work performed (*Bolin, 1997*)
- *Client-Centered Institutions: Georgia Tech, NCSU, UVA, Cornell, Rochester, Purdue University's D2C2*



RM Obstacles:

- Reluctance of certain faculty to become involved in long-term relationships
(Preston, 2006)
- Remote contact can become an obstacle to successful rapport with faculty
- Relationship burden falls strictly upon librarians *(Gwemler, 2000)*
- Expectations are raised-- perhaps to later detriment (?)



RM Obstacles...

- Requires expansion and intensification of outreach work which means that...library staff will likely need to be released from other duties (general reference, collection development)



RM Benefits:

- An opportunity for librarians to move up the value chain
- “interpersonal contact has a significant positive correlation with faculty attitudes regarding library service”
- Increased faculty support for the library translates into greater student usage (*Kotter, 2001*)
- Faculty support is the “best defense against budget cuts, the best offense for expanding services” (*Besant & Sharp, 2000*).



Final Remarks

- “We have to shift our focus to building relationships and partnerships just as substantive as the resources and services we have spent so long developing. If we nurture those relationships and create a loyal customer base they will do some of our marketing for us” (Soules, 2000).



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