

Building the Foundation of our Bridges at the New Zealand Police Library

This theme particularly resonates with the team at the New Zealand Police Library, as they start heavy construction on the foundations of a new promotional strategy

To this effect, the Library team are working with other departments within New Zealand Police to boost information in existing channels, as well as exploring new forums for delivery of customer services.

Current situation

The NZ Police Library is currently allocated 3.4 FTE, including the Library Manager. The Library Manager reports to the Training Development Group (TDG) Manager. Previous to the new Library Manager's appointment, the role was vacant for over 18 months.

This left two FTE's 'holding the fort' with help from

- a 15 hour a week casual to assist with administration
- a contractor who assisted with cataloguing around other obligations
- the Training Development Manager who assisted with strategic development

During this time a three-year strategic plan was developed with the help of the Training Development Manager, but there was no action on this strategy in that time.

As of April 2009 the new Library Manager has been in the role for seven months. The Training Development Manager left in October, and the Library now reports to a temporary Training Development Manager who has no previous experience of Libraries other than as a customer.

Promotional objectives

The Library's three-year strategic plan identified the following marketing objectives:

- Increase our visibility to ensure relevance - there have been previous reviews and calls to disestablish the Library, and current plans to move to an academic 'schools' structure. The Library will need to ensure we fit into that plan.
- Create a shift in customer thinking - from Library as 'lender' of physical materials to 'connector' of information
- To increase usage - as a consequence of the previous two objectives and as a measurement of success. Subsequently we have SMART'ened this objective, and are aiming to increase circulation transaction by 10% in 2008/09. Membership is not a relevant benchmark as we are currently systematically weeding our membership list for the first time ever.

Strategic challenges

On the surface these objectives look achievable, but the New Zealand Police presents some unique challenges as a result of being one national jurisdiction -

- Potentially we have <15,000 staff across the country, but actual membership is just under 6,000. The Library currently facilitates approximately 2,000 information transactions a month.
- There is little or no face-to-face contact with customers, unless they are staying at the College on a course. We are unable to do face-to-face orientation with recruits due to the increased amount of course content that needs to be crammed into their 19 week course - this course has had no corresponding increase in time since the 80's.
- Many workgroups have their own publications budget, and 'mini' libraries have sprung up in many workrooms. Many staff feel they can supply their own information needs through Google and Amazon.
- There is little focus on academic achievement, therefore little demand in operational areas for library services. This is meant to change with the proposed move to a 'schools' structure.

Promotional strategy

We have clear objectives, are aware of our challenges, but needed to come up with some simple strategies to ensure we weren't creating an increased demand we couldn't keep up with, as we knew we would have to achieve this within existing budgets and existing staff resources. We identified the following strategies to help meet our objectives.

- Look for existing opportunities to strengthen relationships and show how the library can 'add value' to their projects.
- Mainly use existing delivery channels - but bump up the volume of information being delivered through these. But still maintain awareness of technology innovation that may allow for improvement
- Become account managers - staff need to be aware and responsive to the changing information needs of the organisation e.g. structural changes or strategic projects can create new information needs, so check in with our medium to high-volume customers semi-regularly to see if their needs have changed.

Matching tasks to objectives

Our first customer survey is drafted and ready to be delivered in May. We know that this will be a huge source of customer information on which to build and give us direction to focus.

We did not want to be static until then, so came up with a list of 'quick wins' that we thought had the least risk of pre-empting or being negated by our survey results.

OBJECTIVE	TASK /	DONE	TO DO
1) Increased visibility	A) Rewrite Library intranet page. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move from a static one-page site to a dynamic multi-page site to encourage repeat visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft version in HTML 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch new site with associated promotion e.g. competition, articles in newsletters and bulletin boards
	B) Look for partnering opportunities within the organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cameo speaker at CIBs 'Introduction to Research' course • Involved in records management audit • Annual Research Symposium is hosted by the Library 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep looking for opportunities!
2) Create a shift in customer thinking - from Library as 'lender' of physical materials to 'connector' of information	A) Create Library policy document <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New policy document to be a one-stop shop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy created • Undergoing peer review process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be launched April 2009 after signoffs • Linked from Intranet page when Intranet design completed • New customer processes e.g. new forms
	B) Redesign Library brochure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brochure redesigned and signed off • Published in new recruit handbook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be linked through Library intranet page when Intranet design completed
	C) Ebooks investigation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved content delivery for distance customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigation completed • Budget secured 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further ICT testing to ensure all can access

3) Increase circulation transactions by 10% in 2008/09	A) Collection review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete weed and collection refresh / update Will eventually have layout impacts Develop current awareness bulletins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy developed Staff workshops completed Planned approach with timeframes and staff allocated Developed regular new content newsletter, currently disseminated through print distribution channels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement weeding work Bulletins to be linked from Intranet page when Intranet redesign completed Investigate how bulletins can be syndicated / disseminated e.g. RSS
	B) Promote Library services to on-site course attendees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All senior course attendees emailed with invitation to visit the Library while on site 	
	C) Promote Library services to distance users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular articles in organisational newsletters and bulletin boards e.g. tip of the month, or did you know we can..? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop online tutorials for the catalogue, online databases and Research 101. Create in Powerpoint and link through the Library Intranet site Eventually to be developed in Police's new online learning software - Moodle

Evaluation

- Our plan is on track re timeframes.
- Circulation statistics do not show any results - yet. It's a little too soon to tell.
- Many of our visibility projects are reliant on the redesigned Intranet site - so also too soon to tell.

BUT...

- Support of Library staff has been absolutely positively fabulous - they have been keen for change, as they feel the Library has been static or moving backwards for too long.
- Our temporary Manager has been supportive, but has needed reassurance that this is what Libraries do.

The workload feels like a year's work crammed into four months. We may have been a little ambitious as we were so keen for action, so will have to watch for burnout. It was a risk to implement so many things at once, so we just have to watch that results do not swamp us.