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"Maybe libraries need to employ marketers #alialibtech13"

This paper will address a tweet posted on 30 October 2013 which drew a range of responses (both on and offline) about the place of marketing in libraries. It will provide a brief overview of key concepts of services marketing as they apply to the library and hospitality sectors. A variety of operational models will be considered with attention to the University of Tasmania (UTAS) model of calling for expressions of interest from all levels of the library. The author will draw on experiences in this and other industries to demonstrate surprising similarities between a Tasmanian vineyard and an academic library.

Lionel Cooper began his varied working life as a furniture conservator. Later he worked as a Vineyard Manager while studying Horticulture and Management. In 2006, he became a full-time Library and Information Services student and has worked in primary schools and public libraries as well as UTAS library.

This Paper begins by posing what looks like a fairly straightforward question; rather than a prescriptive approach it will provide a framework for further consideration.

Maybe libraries need to employ marketers?

 It will explore five key themes:

1. Libraries can legitimately be seen as very complex businesses in which groups such as human resources staff, all levels of management and most importantly clients and client facing staff interact.

2. Services marketing appeared as a distinct discipline in the mid-twentieth century. It began to be applied to libraries in the late 1960's. It is distinctly different from marketing of goods.

3. Library scientists have advocated a client-focused approach to library management since 1880; one of the modern forms of this is Customer Relationship Management (CRM) An excellent example of this idea at work is embodied by (Synk, M. 2001) as the 'Cheers Model'. 'Places of safety' is a concept gaining currency in many client-focused businesses and should inform our thinking in understanding this model.

4. Is the role of today's Library staff that of "shopkeeper or salesman?" Do we offer a range of services to who- ever presents before us or alternatively promote services which are relevant to our clients based on a sound appreciation of their needs?

5. How are these concepts put into practice in academic libraries? How can we measure the success of our efforts and confidently say that libraries should employ marketers?

    My previous experience in the wine industry suggests that a way can be found to collect data, use it intelligently, and operate a successful business with co-workers and clients fully invested in the brand by embracing the principles of service marketing.

An anecdote related by (Huber, J. 2011 P. 7) suggests that libraries should not be regarded as businesses as they provide a free service. He defines a business as:

> 'Any entity that provides needed goods or services that competes with other entities that provide the same goods and services'.

A business may also be defined as an organisation or individual engaged in commercial, industrial or professional activity with the aim of receipt or generation of financial gain in exchange for their efforts and acceptance of risk.

Consider the daily activities of a library where librarians offer professional opinion and advice. Fees for fines, printing costs and membership may be levied. Library items are prepared for delivery to other locations by a transport contractor and distributed to clients. Meanwhile, new items are purchased and processed ready for use in the hope that they will be valued by the clients and used. There is a clear financial risk to be mitigated by well-informed selection of new items and of de-selection. All the while statistics are gathered for senior staff to use in reporting the success of the enterprise to the funding body.

To further emphasise the complexity of the business of running a library, several authorities contend that Human Resources have a key role along with management to attract and retain staff that 'fit' their roles in the service-scape.

Service marketing evolved from marketing of goods in the middle of the twentieth century. Marketing began as a process where a need was identified for a product. After production, it was placed before the consumer often but not always supported by some form of advertising. Modern Service Marketing is described by (Palmer, C 2011, p.2) as:

> The production of an essentially intangible benefit, either in its own right or as a significant element of a tangible product, which through some form of exchange satisfies an identified need.

Broadly six elements are present in the process of service marketing:

- Services are intangible; they cannot be dropped on your foot
- Services are perishable; they can be provided but not stored
- Consequently services cannot be transported
- Services are produced and consumed at the same point in the process
- Services are diverse; they vary with relationships between producers and consumers
- Services can only be produced and delivered in the presence of a client

All of this occurs in the service-scape. It can be compared with the French wine term; 'terroir' the **specificity of place**, which has come to include not only the soil in a region, but also the climate, the weather, the aspect of the vineyards and anything else that can possibly differentiate one piece of land from another. (Musings on the vine 2003–2015)

In libraries, the process of service includes the building, its furniture and decoration, collection scope and management, staff, the client and other users of the space. The specifics vary, but it is useful to think of 'Terroir' as being the space where grapes are produced, winery and cellar door along with terroir contribute to the service-scape.

Marketing is a coordinated set of strategies which place the client at the centre of the enterprise; it involves each and every member of that enterprise and need not include advertising, discounted offers or advertising, rather it is a way of thinking. (Rowley J.E. 1995, p.24)

The American sit-com "Cheers" is referred to by (Synk M) and (Rowley JE) Those of us familiar with it may remember it as a "feel good" comedy. The loyalty of Sam's customers can be attributed to 3 key factors:

- Sam knows his regulars and provides for their expressed needs, further he provides for needs not explicitly expressed. The experience is about much more than the beer.
- There are no gimmicky theme nights; instead the regulars can rely on genuine service customised for each of them
- The regulars see Sam's bar as a third place of safety

Satisfying the customer is the primary concern in the marketing process. Users will only come back for more service if they are satisfied; if they are not, they will find a different resource…A library has to have sufficient understanding of existing clients and potential users to create superior value for them. (Gupta, D and Jambhekar, A 2002)

As demonstrated by Synk, M. 2001 successful marketing occurs when needs not explicitly included in the service process are met. Many Tasmanian vineyards have successfully used this idea since the 1980's. Programs with titles such as "Important Imbibers" identify red, white or sparkling drinkers and keep them in touch with activities in the vineyard, how this might affect the wine and special sale offers relevant to them.

It was and still is much more than goods marketing, it is about developing a relationship with customers and most of all about encouraging a sense of connection with the wine and the staff who bring it to the marketplace. The vineyard gains a loyal supporter and champion who becomes another part of the marketing strategy.

Do front line library staff function as shopkeepers or salespeople? The answer no doubt varies from library to library and even depending on circumstances.

Traditionally, libraries were storehouses of knowledge administered by store keepers who controlled access to print and manuscript material. This tradition lives on in the minds of occasional library users and influences their perception of what a modern library is. This in turn makes the work of the Librarian as salesman more difficult.

Australian library attitudes about marketing vary from 'not relevant to the public sector' to misunderstanding 'promotion and community outreach is marketing', 'a client centred approach is marketing' 'advertising is marketing'. While it is true that promotion, outreach, client centredness and advertising are all part of marketing, there is much more to be considered.

Human resources staff have a key role in service oriented businesses via appointment of staff, (Matanda, M. and Ndubisi, N. 2013) demonstrated that there is a correlation between internal customer orientation, internal branding and perceived person-organisation fit and employee intention to stay with the organisation. These employees are likely to effectively communicate their organisations brand. In effect, they are front line service marketers.

The idea of 'places of safety' is gaining credence in the tourism and hospitality industries. A number of studies such as that by Jeffres, L Bracken, C and Guowei, J. 2009 provide quantitative data to support this. In essence, it is the idea that home and work are the first and second places of safety. Typically third places include coffee shops, bars, pubs, churches, restaurants, clubs and the like. The emphasis is on places which enhance quality of life. Hamid, D.P. et. al. evaluated this in the context of libraries in Tehran and discovered that libraries are indeed third places of safety and presented the Venn diagram below in their paper. Of particular note is the prominence of technology in library attributes which

contribute to place of safety. All of these elements contribute to the 'service-scape' and form part of service marketing strategy.
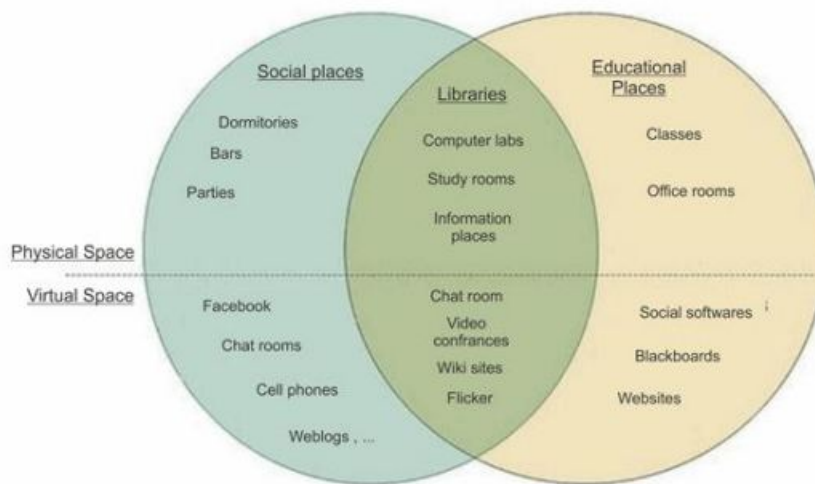
Third places category related to physical & virtual spaces

(Hamid, D.P. et.al. p.310)

McClelland, T. 2014 found that 37% of job listings in The American Library Association (ALA) jobLIST included marketing-oriented content while only 11% required experience or training in the field. This link is clearest in mid-level professional positions vacant. He found that while not averse to marketing, librarians as a whole are largely unaware of its value, a point also made by Zhixian, L Lodge, D. and McCausland, S. 2013
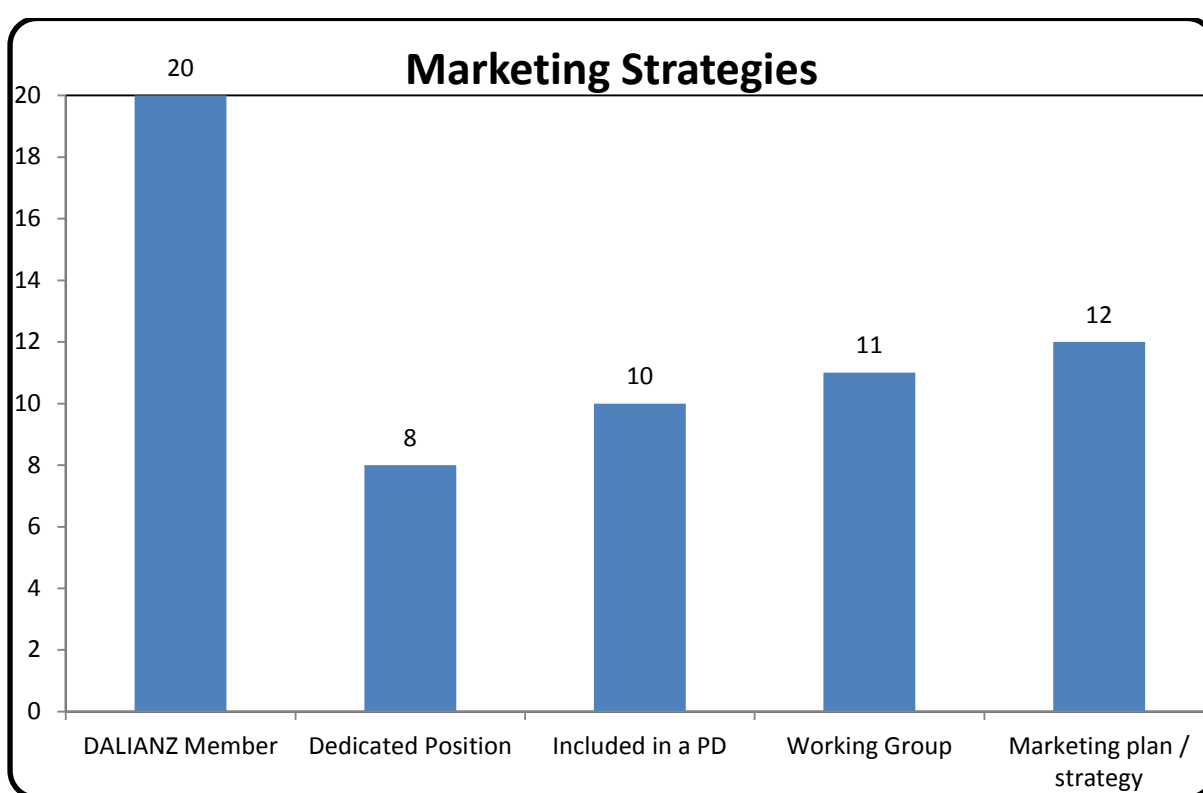
There are, as Marks, L. 2014 describes many issues to resolve before marketing becomes an integral part of Australian libraries. The most important are:

- The model may be adopted under cover of innovation and modernity with no benefit to the client
- Hollow claims to be a client-centred organisation whose best asset are its people
- There is no direct link between usage and revenue or increasing usage which may require increased resources
- Should we give them what they need or give them what they want? ; Typically 'they' are a mandated and well-defined clientele

In October 2012, Charles Darwin University posted a query to The Deputies and Associates list Australian and New Zealand Libraries (DALIANZ) mailing list with the following questions;

- Does your library have a position dedicated to marketing / communication?
- If not, is marketing / communication included as a key accountability in any of your position profiles?
- Does your library have a working group or similar which manages the library's marketing and promotional activities?
- Does your library have a marketing / communication plan or strategy?

Marketing Strategies

Category	Value
DALIANZ Member	20
Dedicated Position	8
Included in a PD	10
Working Group	11
Marketing plan / strategy	12

The graph above is derived from responses provided by 20 respondents and shows that formal arrangements around marketing, while higher than that found by McClelland, T 2014 in the U.S.A, has limited application here. One library satisfied all four criteria, a further 7 satisfied three. Four libraries satisfied 2 criteria and two had no formal arrangements. The University of Tasmania (UTAS) Library, until recently had a committee drawn from all levels of library staff who acted in an advisory capacity; our primary focus was on promoting services after first ensuring they worked effectively.

We established a working relationship with the UTAS Office of Marketing & Communications, to coordinate UTAS wide and library promotional activities. A major handicap was the absence of funding.

As I reviewed literature for this paper it became increasingly obvious that there are many similarities between a Tasmanian vineyard 'Dalrymple Vineyards' and my current workplace UTAS Launceston Campus Library.

Ongoing development to usability of Dalrymple Vineyards website from 2002 (appendix) to 2007 (appendix) acted as a portal for our clients from interstate, just as it is increasingly possible for library clients to visit our virtual library to support their study.

All vineyard staff were multi-skilled and genuinely focused on ensuring visitors enjoyed their visit, whether at cellar door or a close-up look at viticultural and winemaking activity. Similarly at UTAS we welcome any questions whether shelving or at the Client Services Desk. In both cases, staff were appointed based on their ability to relate with people of all stations as well as their abilities to complete all of the tasks required by their position description.

Quantitative viticultural data collection allowed us to calculate returns by variety and site and to plan future pruning regimes. Via sampling of number of grapeseeds per bunch, we were able to assess yield and to identify end use of fruit. In a vineyard, this will always be manual, whereas in most libraries relevant data collection is automated via the library management system. Data which is collected to serve a clear purpose and presented in a digestible way is a valuable tool in both workplaces. The accompanying presentation will focus on these and more similarities in detail.

Both of these workplaces are focused on client satisfaction. The literature suggests that there is an incomplete understanding of what marketing is in libraries. This contributes to the perceived lack of success of various marketing activities. Through the understanding and application of sound marketing principles Dalrymple, vineyards became a more efficient, profitable and visitor-friendly place.

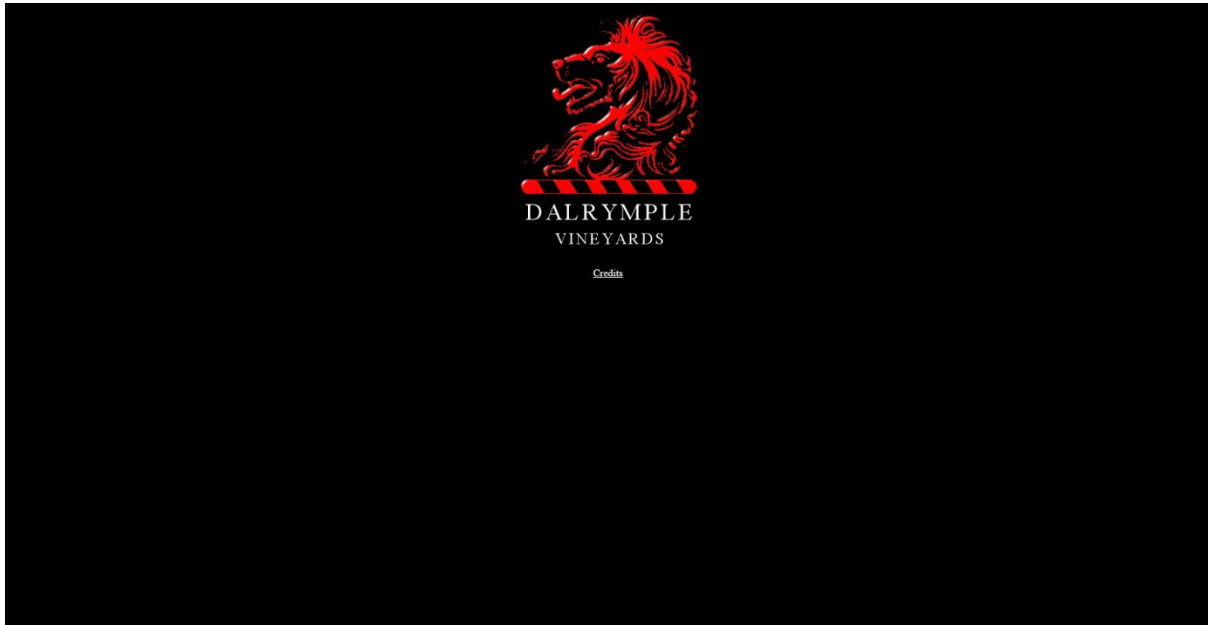A successful shift to a service marketing focus in libraries depends on these key points:

- Individual service transactions are about 'right here, right now'
- Commitment and participation in marketing by all staff
- Keep the idea of 'service-scape' and 'terroir' in mind, everything matters

- Design workable means of gathering and interpreting metrics to inform forward planning
- Knowing your clients combined with useful statistics will keep you in touch with the reason for your work

With all of this in mind, libraries should integrate Service Marketing concepts into their business in a genuine and focused way. Employing marketing professionals is worthy of consideration dependent on their integration into the business of providing library services and, of course, budgetary constraints.

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