

SCONUL Focus is the journal of SCONUL, the Society of College, National and University Libraries.

SCONUL Focus aims to bring together articles, reports and news stories from practitioners in order to generate debate and promote good practice in the national libraries and the university and college sector. As well as the paper copy, the current issue of *SCONUL Focus* is also available electronically via the SCONUL website (<http://www.sconul.ac.uk>). Contributions are welcomed from colleagues in all fields and at all levels: we merely request that the items contributed are concise, informative, practical and (above all!) worth reading.

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The New Testimonies

Recently our marketing group at Warwick was discussing how we could take our portfolio forwards. As we explored using a partnership approach with some of our key stakeholder groups I was reminded of one of my favourite bits of branding theory.

To take a historical perspective, branding has really seen three waves.

Wave One saw brands develop as a guarantee of physical quality. Up to the Industrial Revolution everything was produced locally so you knew if you could trust the producer. For example, clothes would be made by the local tailor and you would know what level of quality to expect. All of a sudden goods were produced centrally and shipped out to the towns. You hence needed a brand to give a guarantee of quality. To continue my clothing example, for years we knew that the St Michael label was a badge of quality.

Then, around the 1960s and 1970s branding started to get a bit more interesting. Adverts would show young people on a hillside drinking a black fizzy drink, exclaiming that they wanted to teach the world to sing in perfect harmony. Wave Two saw the brand develop as a statement to express personality and community. The brand was not restricted to a label in the back of a garment. It was emblazoned on the chest: GAP, FCUK, Abercrombie and Fitch.

More recently brands have taken a new turn and Wave Three has seen them develop as partners with consumers, with consumers influencing

design and playing a more active role in the brand community. In the clothes world I would quote Howies as a good example, with Web 2.0 elements of their Web site encouraging a two-way conversation about style, design and marketing.

Marvellous – a history of clothing, just what *SCONUL Focus* has been missing!

The reason I raised this is that I feel libraries can learn a lot from Wave Three. It isn't just alternative clothing companies that can work with their user customers to develop their product and messages. We librarians generally have a very good relationship with our users who are usually more than happy to try to influence our offering and our marketing campaigns. At Warwick we have a well established service called 'You Say We Say' where we encourage users to give us feedback on services, some of which have led to service enhancements. We have also worked with students to develop marketing messages. My favourite is the video students put together explaining to Freshers what they really needed to know about the Library. I never tire of watching the most relevant and honest Library induction session a student could ever wish to get ¹.

Using students to market your service is a technique that is under-utilized by our profession. Anyone looking for a textbook approach of how it should be done should turn to Alison Minns' article included in this issue of *Focus*. Alison worked with design students to promote the University of Brighton Library service and the results are quite incredible.

I hope this will inspire others to take a similar approach ...and, of course, capture the outcomes for *SCONUL Focus*.

NOTES

- 1 See <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/main/help/training/advice/>