

F12: Protecting the Library Brand

By Heather B. Compeau.

Ken Roberts and Daphne Woods gave a thought provoking workshop on public library branding to a packed room at the 2009 BC Library Conference. Their presentation laid out some key ingredients for public and really all libraries to consider in branding library services. As defined in the presentation by the American Marketing Association, the word brand is a *name, term, sign, symbol or design or combination of them that is intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of seller to differentiate them from those of competitors*. Through example library case studies, Ken and Daphne took us through some key considerations:

What are the public perceptions and expectations of libraries?

- Libraries are seen as collectors of books and people have difficulty understanding the role of the library in our complex online, digital world. How can we get play and acceptance in the growing digital presence and role in people's lives?
- Public libraries are accepted in the literacy development of young children and as a result are perceived as safe places. How does this play out in terms of intellectual freedom challenges?

Ken and Daphne took us through three examples of public libraries (two U.S. and the UK's "Idea Stores") that failed to live up to promises and expectations of their communities in many ways and as a result tarnished, scarred and damaged the library brand in their communities.

It is often very difficult to come back from such an impact on the brand. Ken and Daphne pointed out that libraries act **like our brand is unique to each community but this is not the case**. A negative experience impacts the brand as whole and results in the devaluing of our brand. No one funds anything that they do not value or trust.

Emotional-intellectual Rewards Scale

In OCLC's report "[From Awareness to Funding](#)", Ken and Daphne brought forward the emotional-

intellectual rewards scale that puts the public library firmly in the quadrant of service that provides "Information with a Purpose". Historically, this has been the case but with the development of alternatives like the Internet, Amazon, Google and bookstores there is intense competition for this space.

Ken and Daphne stressed that there is an opportunity to shift a quadrant and move library service **from information with a purpose** to a **transformational force** in people's lives. This expectation of the library as source for transformation has a greater opportunity to drive funding support much more strongly! What does this mean for your library?

Jungian Archetypes

Daphne presented some interesting ideas around branding and Jungian archetypes (Outlaw, Lover, Hero, Magician, Sage etc.). Some of the most powerful brands use Jungian archetypes to promote themselves and their products. For example, [Harley Davidson](#) (Outlaw), Hallmark (Lover), [Nike](#) (Hero), Magician (Calgon) and [Oprah](#) (Sage).

How do you describe your library? What characteristics? What type would you see matching the library being a transformational force in people's lives? A book to check out for further reading: [The Hero and the Outlaw: Building Extraordinary Brands through the Power of Archetypes](#) by Margaret Mark and Carol Pearson. Daphne also recommended the CBC radio show [The Age of Persuasion](#) for some interesting discussions on branding and marketing.

In conclusion, Ken and Daphne promoted taking the brand to the community and building a love affair with our customers. Ken outlined how [Hamilton Public Library](#) has done this in their own community. For example, the re-signing of all locations with Hamilton Public Library and branch name prominently displayed, a newspaper insert of all services, Ti-Cats promotion, and the development of the [city information portal](#).

Heather B. Compeau is the Education Librarian at University of the Fraser Valley.