

BOOK REVIEW / CRITIQUE DE LIVRE

Breakthrough Branding: Positioning Your Library to Survive and Thrive. By Suzanne Walters and Kent Jackson, Chicago, IL: American Library Association, 2013. Paperback: 191 p. Price: USD \$77.00. ISBN 978-1-55570-766-8.

In a fiercely competitive marketplace, it is safe to say that the success of a business is highly correlated with the experience that customers associate with their brand. Although libraries are not necessarily classified as businesses, they face many of the same challenges. They too must differentiate their brand from competition in a crowded space, create a unique customer experience, and continuously evolve to meet the changing needs of their target audience.

With extensive experience in branding and marketing in both the public and private sectors, authors Suzanne Walters and Kent Jackson present a branding approach exclusively for libraries that addresses the challenges of securing public engagement and establishing relevancy in changing communities. In *Breakthrough Branding*, the step-by-step process of creating and marketing a brand is defined and described in great detail. The book is divided into three sections describing branding, positioning, and promotion. The first section defines what a brand is and what it means to experience a brand. It explains in detail how you assess and develop your library's brand. The second section defines positioning strategy and how to use it to differentiate your library's unique personality based on the community or target audience groups. The last section, promotion, helps you to define products and how to market those products to target markets/audiences. It also explains how to effectively communicate your brand and how to select the appropriate channels to do so. Finally, the book addresses advocating for your library and how to position an academic library within the brand of a university.

The book is aimed at library professionals who are unfamiliar with marketing concepts and are considering branding or rebranding to position their library to "survive and thrive". The authors provide real library case studies of the branding process and how branding creates better awareness of, and loyalty to, a library. Examples are taken from the Wyoming State Library, Queens Library in New York, Denver Forest Range Library District of Adams County, Columbus Metropolitan Library, and University of Denver. Having a more equal distribution with respect to different types of libraries including university, special, and health would have strengthened the book. However, the strength is that despite the lack of diverse library representation, all of the branding and marketing principles and questions the authors pose to their readers can easily be applied to any kind of library.

With many health libraries advocating for funding and experiencing cuts, branding, positioning, and promotion are more important than ever. The branding principles outlined in this book give librarians the tools to advocate for their needs while creating a positive customer experience with their target audiences. *Breakthrough Branding* is an easy to read guide full of practical advice for librarians taking steps towards branding their library, regardless of whether or not a marketing professional is involved in the process. Additionally, there is tremendous opportunity for smaller libraries with limited budgets to embrace and apply the principles taught in this book to help establish, position, and market their brands in a cost-effective manner.

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