

## Book Review - The Marketing of Academic, National and Public Libraries Worldwide: Marketing, Branding, Community Engagement

Patrick Lo and David Baker have brought the world of marketing to the center ground of libraries in their book *The Marketing of Academic, National and Public Libraries Worldwide: Marketing, Branding, Community Engagement*. Published by Chandos-Elsevier its sheer size and substance is indicative of how far the language, culture, and operations of marketing have taken root in the library sector worldwide and is in the minds of those who lead important libraries. Lo and Baker have captured an immense amount of information to fill a significant gap in the literature. Far from being a dirty word, the 'marketing' of libraries is clearly necessary, essential, desirable, perhaps uncomfortable at times, and quite fascinating.

This book contains 45 interviews with academic, national and public librarians from 19 different countries and territories. So many voices! The focus is on the librarians themselves who have played an important role in the marketing and branding of libraries and have designed the processes to engage communities. What is intriguing to the reader is just how far the attitudes and perceptions of librarians affect the salience and achievements of any marketing practice in the library. These attitudes and perceptions fall out of the interview conversation and onto the page. Perhaps unsurprisingly, older branding methods which are predicated on physical spaces and collections have been supplanted by methods and approaches which re-orient us to the digital realities we live by. Lo brings his trademark interview technique to the book and Baker brings his recent benchmarking mindset to bear on the book's conception, in addition to their many decades of leadership in the library and information sector.

Each chapter presents an edited transcript of a dyadic dialogue (question and answer format) between a library leader and an interviewer. A helpful introduction to each organization is provided on the first page. Each interview follows a loose template of questions consisting of an average of around 25 questions, of which between 7 and 12 are questions directly concerning branding and marketing. The book

has a great deal of visual appeal in that it contains a riot of formal and informal color photographs associated with each chapter, in the print and digital form of the book.

While the interviews are contextualized by an Introduction and a Conclusion from the editors, readers are in charge of their own exegesis of the raw material. In this sense, the book is not a *transaction*, manifested in close analysis and interpretation of the chapters from the editors, but more of an *interaction* with readers presenting a huge amount of firsthand information, experience, and knowledge from first principle of empirical data gathering is access to participants, and the editors clearly have access to a great many people.

The interviewees are all successful marketers who have been able to retain and maintain existing audiences while attracting new ones, sustaining the relationship with their target markets after the initial marketing, branding and community engagement activities have concluded. The purpose of this book, and its value to readers, is the collation of best practices and to document some great examples of marketing tailored for this distinctive sector.

### Note

The book titled 'The Marketing of Academic, National and Public Libraries Worldwide: Marketing, Branding, Community Engagement' was authored by Patrick Lo and David Baker in 2023 and published by Elsevier. For more information, please visit <https://shop.elsevier.com/books/the-marketing-of-academic-national-and-public-libraries-worldwide/baker/978-0-443-13435-7>

Lucy Ellis\*

David Baker Consulting, UK

E-mail: [lucy@davidbakerconsulting.co.uk](mailto:lucy@davidbakerconsulting.co.uk)

Received: June 17, 2024

Accepted: July 23, 2024

Published: July 31, 2024