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THE SUCCESS STORY OF THE MENU – HOW HEALTH LIBRARIES SHARED AN INNOVATIVE MARKETING TOOL

Abstract

Marketing is an essential role for health/hospital librarians (1). The concept of the menu as a tool for marketing and promoting library's educational services was introduced by Karolinska University Hospital Library, Stockholm, Sweden in the EAHIL 2010 conference in Estoril, Portugal. The idea has since been implemented and developed further in many health libraries. In this article we share the experiences of three different libraries in three countries, Finland, Poland, and Sweden, in putting the menu concept into action, and discuss the case of the menu as a practical, low-cost marketing approach and also as an example of sharing best practices in libraries.

Keywords: marketing, hospital libraries, medical libraries, education, training

Background

The basis of every marketing plan is a product. A whole library can be seen as a product or a collection of services but a library can also market its different services, such as training sessions, as products (1, 2). It is equally important to identify customer needs (3).

During the 2010 EAHIL conference Marie Källberg presented the concept of a menu as a way to market the library and its services (4). Other medical libraries found this approach interesting. This article is about how sharing ideas can be useful. It also aims to encourage other health libraries to promote their services and gain more visibility in their organisations, as well as emphasising the importance of improving information literacy of hospital staff.

The Medical library at *Karolinska University Hospital (Karolinska)* wanted to find a new way for marketing the library. Previously they tried to use News from the library etc, but that was not a very catchy subject. Then one of the librarians came up with the idea of having different topics to choose from, with different lengths of time. Just like in a restaurant – the customer can, in his/her own time, decide which dish is the most inviting and at what time it is best to eat it (*Figure 1*). Because some of the presentations are only 15 minutes long, it is easy to combine them and also to obtain a variety of menus at the same time.

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KAROLINSKA
University Hospital
The Medical Library

Menu

Spring 2012

Not to Eat but Good to Digest!

Invite us to your clinical department. We adjust our presentations to fit your needs!

Keep updated and save time To keep updated shall be easy. Learn how to do it with both journals and searches in PubMed. Use e-mail alerts or RSS-feeds. 15 min	Google or PubMed? Is it enough to "google" for articles? How does Google Scholar work? A few hints on how to get the best search results. 30 min
For nurses Search for support in your work through guidelines, e-books and scientific articles. We show you both Swedish and international nursing databases. 30 min	"Second opinion" for clinicians Access Medicine and Access Surgery, Best Practice and TRIP Database gives a good support in your daily clinical work and during residency. 30 min
Information to your patients We give you tips on high quality online resources for your patients. Both in Swedish and in 30 other languages. 15 min	Search tips for EBM Formulate your question using PICO. We give you more tips on how you will find the relevant evidence for your questions. 30 min
The researcher's toolbox Smart functions in PubMed and EndNote, publication with Open access and verification in the bibliometric database. 30 min	E-books in your speciality The Library offers many titles from different publishers. Make use of the advantages of the electronic books – easy to search, always accessible. 15 min
Images & multimedia Where do you find images and multimedia? Which are you allowed to use? The Library has a rich selection on databases with medical images. 15 min	The Library in your mobile phone Find articles in PubMed and search for diagnosis in Best Practice, make a reservation on a book or apply to our classes. We present the library's mobile website. 15 min

Book us using e-mail: libbi@karolinska.se or phone: 89313/37 (Huddinge), 74132 (Solna)

Fig. 1. The Menu at the Medical Library at Karolinska, Spring 2012

The *Kuopio* University Hospital (KUH) Medical Library provides tailored library services for KUH staff, including training sessions on library resources. Though we have been active in marketing our services and visiting staff-meetings we have often felt that we are unable to reach quite as large an audience as we should. However, we were fortunate to attend the EAHIL Conference in 2010, and there we heard how *Karolinska* had created a menu to improve hospital staff information literacy.

The idea of the Library of the Medical University of Lodz (MUL) to use the menu coincided with the promotion of the online library resources tutorials which were created and maintained on the Moodle e-learning platform. What was really needed was a marketing/promotional idea and at the right moment the menu came along. It was obvious that the concept of the menu, which was introduced at the EAHIL conference could be interwoven into our project.

Methods

At *Karolinska* the menu consists of short and long presentations and by 2009 there were 13 dishes or topics, on the menu: *Keep updated!* (45 minutes), *Images- where to find and how to use* (15 minutes), *Find useful search terms and search in PubMed - an introduction* (30 minutes).

The subjects were chosen according to the FAQ from library users e.g. *Where can I find pictures I am allowed to use in presentations?* So before adding the topic to our menu, we started to update our own knowledge on a variety of web-sites and to learn about copyright laws.

Sometimes resources were highlighted which were not widely known, but very useful, for example electronic books. So a dish on the menu was created on how to find and use e-books. Each semester the printed menus were sent to all clinics and departments of the hospital. The menu is also available on the library's pages on the intranet and all directors of studies for resident physicians have been informed as well.

Other times the clinic or department contacted us, asking us if we could arrange a specific meeting. Sometimes they wanted to combine 2-3 topics. When a clinic contacted us we learned that it was important to ask them what they want us to focus on, on that specific dish. We were also careful to ask them to give us examples of terms and topics or situations meaningful to them that could be used in our presentation. We learnt the hard way that it was better to do this as we discovered that their and our approaches differed in the interpretation of the dishes on the menu. On one occasion a clinic with many researchers wanted to book *Get started with EndNote*, but they were already familiar with *EndNote* and wanted us to tell them about advanced functions in the program instead.

At the end of each semester, we analysed the menu, removed a topic with little or no demand. In the first semesters when we had *Keep updated*, we tried to put too much

into the presentation and had included not only how to save searches or to subscribe to ToC, but also about RSS and pod casts. We soon discovered that the majority only wanted to know how to save searches and subscribe to ToC, so we excluded RSS and pod casts in later menus. Some topics stay on the menu even if they are not in demand so much, mostly because of marketing purposes.

We added new topics recommended by the medical or the library staff. In 2010/11 we added a dish called *Information to your patients*, in 2012 *The Researchers toolbox*.

The first versions of the menu (Figure 2) tailored for KUH staff were published and disseminated in August 2010. The menus were chosen to be marketing tools from then on. They were slightly modified for year 2011 and again for 2012 according to the feedback and the success of the different servings. Also KUH library's menu consists of shorter and longer presentations but we ended up making two menus – *a la carte* and *buffet* – and we decided to split the *a la carte* into three sections – parallel to starters, main dishes, and desserts of restaurant menus – called *Something to nibble*, *Slap-up portions* and *Selection of delicacies*. The *buffets* are open sessions with diverse contents.



Menu 2011

KUH Medical Library á la carte

Choose from the **á la carte** and invite us to your staff meeting.

<u>Something to nibble</u>	
1. How to access e-journals 15 min 2. How to find e-books 15 min	3. Stay up-to-date! a) Learn how to use PubMed's MyNCBI 15 min b) Learn how to activate e-journals alert services. 20 min
<u>Slap-up portions</u>	
4. Library collections database JOSKU Search books and other printed material. Browse the list of new titles. Make reservations and renew your loans. 30 min 5. MEDIC How to use the Finnish health sciences database effectively. 30 min	6. Effective searches in CINAHL How to search the Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature. 45 min 7. Effective PubMed searches Search strategies in PubMed with your own terms and/or Medical Subject Headings. Using Limits effectively. 60 min
<u>Selections of delicacies</u>	
8. Utilize UpToDate Database and services to support clinical decisions. Also a database of drug interactions. 30 min 9. JBI Connect+ Evidence summaries, systematic reviews and more to support evidence-based practice. 30 min 10. Cochrane Library Systematic reviews and more to support evidence-based practice. 30 min	11. Do you know PsycINFO? International database on psychology and psychiatry. 30 min 12. PEDro Physiotherapy evidence database. 30 min

Free of charge!
Please, book in advance!

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Fig. 2. Kuopio University Hospital Library's a la carte menu 2011

The KUH Medical library's *a la carte* consisted of 14 different portions lasting from 15 to 60 minutes. We offered four different 15-minute *snacks*, four different 30 - 60 minutes *proper portions*, and six different 30 - 60 minutes *goodies*. The *snacks* or *something to nibble* sessions were about how to access e-journals and e-books, how to use alert services, as well as a short introduction to impact factors. The main courses or *slap-up portions* included the library OPAC *Josku*, the Finnish health sciences database *Medic*, CINAHL, and *PubMed/MEDLINE*. The delicacies were *UpToDate*, *JBIC Connect+*, *Cochrane Library*, *PsycInfo*, *Pedro* and *RefWorks*.

During the autumn term 2010 the most popular dish from the *a la carte* menu was the 15-minute introduction to e-journals. The next most popular were *JBIC Connect+*, *Medic*, *PsycInfo* and *PubMed*. One portion was never ordered. We attended altogether 18 meetings that often combined several portions from the menu. They were tailored to meet the needs of the specialities of the participants, who were 203 staff members during the autumn term. There were six buffets that lasted together 6 hours and 45 minutes, and had 29 attendees.

Some time ago in MUL, we came to the realization that the growing number of both full text journals and databases were not being used efficiently by our students and faculty. The reason was simple: our patrons did not have a clear knowledge of what the library is able to offer and how to use all available tools in their work. We launched the tutorials series in December 2009 as an ongoing project. Since then the librarians have been producing user's guides explaining step by step the library services and how to operate databases. All these guides have been placed on an e-learning platform - Moodle. Although we have got a very positive feedback from people who had an opportunity to glance at the tutorials, the statistics indicated that not many users had viewed the courses.

We decided to implement the menu idea in our library and university, and prepared our own menu which contained topics using databases and other tools for searching and managing retrieval results. Moreover, we included general topics designed to discuss new trends in searching systems, changes in publishing industry, especially the open access movement and the repository concept. Our menu contained 15 topics with brief descriptions and approximate time of duration, just like the *Karolinska* one. We entitled this project *Make friends with the library -Zaprzyjaźnij się z biblioteką-* (Figure 3). We introduced and presented the menu while attending faculty meetings in 2010/2011 academic year. Also, we wrote an article about this initiative which was published in the *Information Bulletin of the Medical University of Lodz*. The list of topics was published on the library web page and promotional leaflets were prepared and in addition doctoral students during scientific information classes were also notified.

We knew that the promotion of the menu could be a crucial point for the next stages of our project development. We wanted to combine the tutorials presentations on Moodle with practical exercises to meet our clientele information needs.

Make Friends with the Library

How to navigate the new library home page Presentation of the new library website. How to navigate within the site and find what you need 5 min.	EMBASE Find information related to pharmacy and toxicology. 20 min.
What's new in biomedical sciences We will show you how to stay in touch with recent developments in your field. Take advantage of personalized services such as My NCBI, eTOC, and alerts. 30 min.	Everyone knows Google Presentation of specialist Google service such as Google Scholar or Google Books 15 min.
How to find favourite journal and a full text article of your interest Use Ansz service to access e-journals and full text articles 20 min.	Open Access What is Open Access, Publishing models, Open Access journals and publishers 30 min.
PubMed - basics Often frustrated about search results? You will learn how to build efficient search strategy 20 min.	Deep Web search engines How to navigate the hidden web and how to find information unavailable in the Google search results 15 min.
Health professionals We tailor a presentation according to your needs and advise you on relevant information 40 min.	Web 2.0 in science The internet tools for collaboration and sharing scientific output 30 min.
Polish Medical Bibliographical Database Explore the Polish Medical Database 20 min.	Digital repositories Institutional repository as a tool for collecting and disseminating scientific output 20 min.
EndNote Web - What is that and how to use it? The reference management tool. It allows you to collect and manage your citations. We will teach you how. 30 min.	Digital libraries Digitalization of library resources, examples of digital libraries in Poland and the world 15 min.
Web of Knowledge The platform containing such databases as Journal Citation Reports, Web of Science and Medline. We will show how you can create citation report and check the Impact Factor of the particular journal 30 min.	

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Fig. 3. Medical University of Lodz Library's menu 2011

Results

At *Karolinska* we can say that not only has the hospital staff increased their information competence but that we librarians have also increased our competence working with the different menus. However we cannot say yet that that we have found the perfect solution to reach hospital staff. But it certainly is one useful method. The most popular dish has been *Find useful search terms* and *Search in PubMed*, with a total of 17 presentations. At *Karolinska* we have given 93 Menu-presentations.

During the first months of using the menu concept in KUH both the number of training sessions and the number of participants grew significantly compared to previous years. The number of sessions increased about 30 %, and the number of participants tripled. Year 2011 there were 48 *a la carte* or *buffet* sessions with a total of 614 participants. Compared to the whole year of 2010 the number of training session grew by 62 % and the number of attendees grew 141 %. The menus turned out to be a very effective tool.

Most *a la carte* sessions have been 15 to 30 minutes with one choice from menu, but some have had as much as four portions and lasted 2 hours. Tailoring the sessions according to the user needs has been essential. On the other hand, also the *buffets* with the set contents have their audience as there is no enrolment.

In the MUL this initiative had received positive responses from the academic community. We were invited by some of our faculty members to conduct workshops and presentations. The number of these meetings varied from one (dedicated to a single topic) to the series of meetings during which we covered all topics (5 meetings, approx. 1.5h each). Also the number of participants of the training, varied from 3 - 4 to about 20. We also started to observe growing number of individual consultations given by reference librarians as well as the increased interest in attending workshops organized by different publishers.

All these activities, educational materials, meetings and workshops were prepared to reinforce our clientele's researching skills and assist them in using the library resources efficiently. However, these initiatives have also a second implication: we have been creating the new image of the professional librarian skilful in knowledge management and the expert who educates his patrons regarding the University library information system. This undertaking serves as the creation of the modern, biomedical academic library model.

Discussion

For the library at *Karolinska* there have been some things that have been more important than others. The menu has been an excellent method in reaching more staff and marketing our resources and the competence of the library staff. Through the menu we have offered different topics that our users probably did not know they could learn from us. We have also noticed we received more requests from clinics and department on other customized presentations, not only the ones found on our menu.

By visiting the hospital staff at their workplace or clinic we therefore saved their time. They appreciated that they could choose the topic and decide the length of time for each presentation. We learned that it was very important to ask for examples from their point of view to make the menu more attractive.

What needs to be paid more attention to in KUH is collecting feedback and evaluating the outcomes of the training that have so effectively been marketed. Evaluation confirms success and identifies whether aims and objectives have been achieved (2). We need to go on developing the menu according to user needs and adding new services and products. It is also necessary to develop the staff's marketing skills. One aim is also to spread the concept of the menu from the university hospital library (which is part of the university library) to the other library units of the University of Eastern Finland (UEF).

In MUL we still have to work on the promotion of the concept. The new, updated version of the menu was published on the web site and we also plan to repeat the presentation of the menu at faculty meetings. Due to feedback from the participants, new topics on citation indexes and the evaluation of the University's units scientific achievements are to be introduced. We would like to design hands-on workshops where the participants can practice newly acquired knowledge, and put it as a separate special topic into our menu.

Sen states that market orientation is an important concept for the survival of libraries (5). Understanding the market can help planning library services and support customer needs. According to Wakeham, marketing a library engages people in a relationship that encourages them to use the service (2). The menu is one example of putting these theories into practice.

Conclusions

According to Bridges it is essential that libraries remind their customers that they have libraries, and there are many ways to do that, among them e.g. making a presentation at a group's regular meeting, and teaching people new ways to receive library information (1). Wakeham states that librarians should find marketing a core element of their professional role (2).

Deviating from the library's more traditional marketing methods gives libraries more visibility in their organizations. Having a menu to choose from makes it easier to choose the training needed. The menus provide tailoring tools to adjust the training according to customer needs instead of the previous, rather similar events. By using a menu it is easier to give a title to a training session, to describe the focus of each topic, to adjust the training accordingly to each group.

Key messages:

- Libraries should market and promote more. It must not be taken for granted that libraries will always be valued and financed. We have to promote and market our services and skills plus the library's value and collections etc.
- Libraries should outreach their library space and go to the customers, instead of waiting for them to come to the library.
- Libraries should share their innovations and methods. Attending seminars and conferences is not always about gaining something but also giving and sharing.
- Libraries should try out each others tools and methods. Going to conferences or reading articles is useless unless what you have heard and learned there changes something in your library and work.
- Libraries should adopt, implement and tailor the shared tools and methods, always bearing in mind their customers and their organization.

Finally some suggestions for further research:

- what are the best (most effective, yet low-cost) marketing and promoting tools and methods in (health/hospital) libraries?
- what is their impact?
- evaluate their feedback tools and methods.

Received 13.04.2012 Accepted

This article was first printed in *JEAHIL* Vol. 8(2) 2012 and the authors are grateful to EAHIL for their permission to reprint this article in *Medical Library Forum*.

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