Custom Options

S
o far in this issue of Library Technology Reports, we have looked at a range of different library
engagement platforms. Some of the companies
that build library engagement platforms also offer
customized marketing services or some strategic plan-
ing services that can be tailored to each library.
This chapter dives into some of those offerings and
describes what each service provides.

Why include marketing services in a report about
library engagement platforms? Your marketing plan,
your branding guidelines, and other strategic plan-
ing can be a type of platform you use to engage with
your community. In addition, some companies offer
marketing services in their products.

So, let’s take a closer look at four companies that
offer some type of marketing or promotion service.

**LibraryAware**

LibraryAware offers customized marketing services
that include promotion campaign guides. These guides
provide a step-by-step path to follow when implement-
ing a promotional campaign. LibraryAware also offers
professionally designed templates for collateral.

Here’s what LibraryAware says about its templates:
“Library-focused templates: Whether you’re promot-
ing a STEM story time or a Library of Things, our tem-
plates have you covered.” These templates offer a way
for a library to have nice-looking promotional material
like bibliographies, posters, reading maps, signs, and
bookmarks without having a graphic designer on staff.

Resource promotion kits go a step further, cre-
ating a promotional campaign for library resources.
The kits include e-mails, bookmarks, and flyers to use
when promoting a library resource.

For example, if your library is participating in a
1000 Books before Kindergarten program, “Library-
Aware customers can find an entire 1000 Books Before
Kindergarten program kit with customizable reading
log templates, signs, social media graphics, a certifi-
cate of completion, bookmarks and more. To see the
full kit, search 1000 books in LibraryAware.”

This type of product is great for libraries that
have a small marketing department or no marketing
department. Many libraries share some marketing
and promotion duties among staff members. Instead
of spending valuable time making flyers, posters,
bookmarks, and so on for a program or resource, with
LibraryAware, you can use a predesigned promotion
kit, and you are well on your way to having a pro-
motion campaign for your resource, service, or event.
You’ll learn more about developing future successful
marketing and promotion campaigns as you follow
LibraryAware’s preformatted campaign guides.

**Koios**

Koios applies for and manages the Google Ad Grants
program for nonprofits (more info online) that is avail-
able to libraries. Topeka and Shawnee County Public
Library is a Koios customer.

Google Ad Grants
https://www.google.com/grants/

Besides setting up the grant program, Koios has
helped my library figure out what web pages could
benefit from Google Ads. We also have a regular meet-
ing with Koios to discuss ad performance and what we
might want to do next with ads. These meetings help
my library stay on top of our ads and they help keep
the Koios team in our planning loop.

Topeka has a variety of Google Ads for services
and library catalog records (figure 4.1), and those ads
are being clicked. Here’s what Mike Lannen from Eter-
nity (a marketing agency in Vermont) says:
People really do click on Google ads.

...According to a survey by Clutch, 75% of those survey [sic] claimed they had clicked on a paid ad in the past month and said that it helped them find the information they were looking for.\(^3\)

This trend makes sense. Google has created algorithms that find what you are looking for when you use its search engine. When people decide to click the Google Ad, it’s because that ad leads to the answer they were seeking. In addition, the ad is usually at the top of the page, so people see it first.

Koios says its click-through rate (CTR) average is 12.8 percent, which Koios says is well above the industry average of 3 percent.\(^4\)

To illustrate this point, here are some monthly stats from my library for the month of April 2021:

- 31,630 impressions (people who saw the ad)
- 3,686 clicks
- 12 percent click-through rate (CTR)
- 2,007 conversions
- $5,132.22 of the allotted $10,000 per month used
- $0.16 cost per click (CPC)

A lot of the impressions and clicks came through ads on the library’s catalog and our YouTube channel. Some clicks came from ads pointing to our web pages, as well. Our jobs and careers, local history and genealogy, and business resources pages all received multiple impressions and clicks via a Google Ad.

By paying a small amount of money for the Koios service, Topeka is getting a good return. We are benefiting our customers—and seeing thousands of web impressions, clicks, and conversions—as customers discover our services and resources and engage with us—all because of Google Ads.

**Library Market**

Library Market has a few library engagement platform offerings that we have already examined. Its Library-Brand service offers professional branding and marketing services tailored specifically to public libraries.

Branding is your organization’s visual look and feel, defined by Investopedia as follows:

> Brands often use identifying markers to help create brand identities within the marketplace.\(^5\)

Library Market tackles this visual aspect of branding by providing a logo package with logos designed in a variety of formats, including different size logos for websites or for social media platforms. Sizing options prepare you for all your website, social media, and third-party vendor logo needs.

Library Market can also create an editorial style guide for your library: “We provide a thorough style guide based on your preferences that outlines rules for library communications with an emphasis on consistency, clarity, and correctness.”\(^6\) If you use a style guide, all communications will have a consistent look, which is important when branding your library. Using consistent branding rules helps your communications be recognizable and professional. Library Market can also create a branding guidelines book to help you maintain consistency online and in print with branding.

For marketing planning, Library Market will assess your current marketing efforts and will then use that assessment as a stepping-stone to create a thorough marketing strategy for your library.

This can be a very customized service depending on your library’s needs. Library Market can even set up a visit to your library to meet your staff and customers in order to create a comprehensive plan for marketing and branding.

**OrangeBoy**

OrangeBoy also does some custom marketing and promotion consulting work and will help you with strategic planning, marketing, and branding initiatives. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library has used this service from OrangeBoy.

We wanted to do a series of short-term marketing and promotion efforts to see if we could impact specific groups of people in our community. So we formed small teams, each focused on a demographic section of the community. I was on our Modern Family team.

OrangeBoy led the project by holding focused discussions with each team so we could figure out what we wanted to do for the project and what our deliverables should be. My team focused on young, busy families in a specific zip code in Topeka. That focus
provided a small, yet measurable, target group for our project.

Our goal was to encourage this demographic to take advantage of the TSCPL@Home home delivery service. You can find out more about the library’s TSCPL@Home service online. We shared information about the home delivery service by using postcards that were mailed to households in the targeted zip code area and by sending multiple e-mails to customers when we had e-mail information.

Next, OrangeBoy measured activity via its Savannah product. By mid-July our statistics showed success: we had 461 signups for the service! OrangeBoy also kept track of e-mail open rates (about 17 percent), clicks on links in the e-mails, and activity after opening the e-mail. OrangeBoy also tracked the number of lapsed library card holders who reengaged with the library. Statistics also showed that out of 1,396 households, 1,225 used their library card after getting our messaging.

OrangeBoy was able to look at our data and develop a plan to help the library plan a promotion effort from start to finish. Through this and similar projects (we had five teams focused on different demographics), we were able to reengage our customers and introduce them to new library services. We were also able to measure our effectiveness by using OrangeBoy’s Savannah platform and our own analytics. This experience has increased our marketing and promotional savvy by teaching us what works and what doesn’t.

Notes