

Custom Options

So 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 planning 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 planning 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 implementing 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 promoting a STEM story time or a Library of Things, our templates have you covered."¹ 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, creating 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, "LibraryAware customers can find an entire 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program kit with customizable reading

log templates, signs, social media graphics, a certificate of completion, bookmarks and more. To see the full kit, search 1000 books in LibraryAware."²

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 promotion 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 available 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 meeting 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 Eternity (a marketing agency in Vermont) says:

People really do click on Google ads.

...

According to a survey by Clutch, 75% of those surveyed [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:

The term brand refers to a business and marketing concept that helps people identify a particular company, product, or individual. Brands are intangible, which means you can't actually touch or see them. As such, they help shape people's perceptions of companies, their products, or individuals.



Figure 4.1
One of our Google Ads created by Koios

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.

TSCPL@Home
<https://tscpl.org/tscplathome/>

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

1. LibraryAware web page, NovelList, EBSCO, accessed August 21, 2021, <https://www.ebsco.com/novelist/products/libraryaware>.
2. Lindsey Dunn, "Partner with Parents with a 1000 Books before Kindergarten Campaign," *The Latest* (blog), NovelList, EBSCO, August 10, 2021, <https://www.ebsco.com/blogs/novelist/partner-parents-1000-books-kindergarten-campaign>.
3. Mike Lannen, "Do People Really Click on Google Ads?" *Eternity* blog, June 13, 2020, <https://eternitymarket.com/blog/do-people-really-click-on-google-ads>.
4. "Frequently Asked Questions: Koios Ads FAQs," Koios, accessed August 23, 2021, <https://www.koios.co/libre-frequently-asked-questions>.
5. Will Kenton, "Brand," Investopedia, accessed August 28, 2021, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/brand.asp>.
6. LibraryBrand Branding and Marketing web page, Library Market, accessed August 21, 2021, <https://www.librarymarket.com/library-brand>.