Re-Thinking Survey Promotion: It's Not Just About the Numbers

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## Re-thinking Survey Promotion: It’s Not Just About the Numbers

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Library Services Assistant, James Madison University Libraries

**David Vess**  
Digital User Experience Librarian & Social Work Librarian, James Madison University Libraries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When it comes to...</th>
<th>My Minimum Service Level Is</th>
<th>My Desired Service Level Is</th>
<th>Perceived Service Performance Is</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Employees who instill confidence in users</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Library space that inspires study and learning</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Giving users individual attention</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Alcohol in a site employee is not located in a place to go to</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Library staff who are consistently courteous</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

October Conference, Dartmouth University, Fall 2015
Excerpt from our promotion plan

The main **message** we want our audiences to remember after seeing our promotional materials is that "**your life could change by taking this survey.**" We will back up this claim by providing examples of how JMU Libraries have made changes -- and therefore changed "your life" -- after seeing results from past surveys.
Excerpt from our promotion plan

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We want them to **feel** that their feedback is valued and that the libraries will act on it.

The **action** we want them to take after hearing the message is to click on or type in the URL & complete the survey.
Students, make your voice heard by taking the JMU Libraries survey. Your feedback impacts changes. bit.ly/JMULib

YOUR CAMPUS. YOUR LIBRARY. Have Your Say. bit.ly/JMULib

Inspiration
Inspired by our students!

- Content
- Style
- Tone

Our Claim: It’s Your Campus, Your Library. So, have your say.

- Conversations about library spaces.

- SGA focus group: no “dorm furniture”

- Candid discussions with student workers, 3D pens cool, ironic student culture evident:
2014 James Madison University Technology Trends Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Device</th>
<th>Looking to Purchase</th>
<th>Interested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>iPod Touch</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iPad</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Android Tablet</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows Tablet</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Posting your suggestions on Yik Yak won't change anything.

But this library survey will bit.ly/jmulib
Outcomes

1. Number of surveys completed
2. Engagement via social media
3. New organizational tools/workflows
4. Connecting library service points
5. Failures = learning
Number of surveys completed

Engagement via social media

Library Service Quality Survey - Welcome!
We are committed to improving your library services. Better understanding your expectations will help us tailor these services to your needs.

JMU Libraries
Sponsored by
It's Your Campus. It's Your Library. So, Have Your Say...

12,110 Posts/Reach (1M) 221 Actions (1M) $99.00 Budget Spend

Actions | People | Countries
--- | --- | ---
139 Link Clicks | | |
24 Page Likes | | |
91 Post Likes | | |
See More Details

Ad Stopped: April 20th, 4:27pm
Target Group: People who like your Page and their friends
- Age: 38-45+
- Gender: Male and Female
- Location: - United States

Boosted By: Jon Reed
Engagement via social media

WHERE THIS BITLINK WAS SHARED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>0.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Sites</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>0.05%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**De-stress for SUCCESS**

On Stress for Success at JMU Library

- Public: Workshop • Hosted by JMU Library
- April 27 - May 5
- April 27 at 11:00am to May 5 at 3:30pm
- Harrisonburg, Virginia

Everyone is stressed during finals week. JMU Libraries offers some free activities to relaxation during finals week, including yoga, meditation, coloring books, therapy dogs, free cookies & more.

- Meditation
  - 5:30-6:30pm at Carver Library (room 1167)
  - 11:30-12:30pm at Moore Library (room 0219)
  - 12:30-1:30pm at Carver Library (room 1167)
- Therapy Dogs
  - Carver Library: 9:10-10:15am, 10:30-11:30am... See More

954 went 8 interested 687 invited

INSIGHTS
- 82 reached
- 0 new contacts
- 0 new this week
Unexpected outcomes

1. Number of surveys completed
2. Engagement via social media
3. New organizational tools/workflows
4. Connecting library service points
5. Failures = learning

Failures = learning
Why, this was not the end, at all. It was only, at last, the beginning.

Resources you may find useful
- Library student employees and any other students you work with - talk with them to get ideas about style and content for promotion campaigns
- Canva ("Amazingly simple graphic design software")
- bit.ly ("URL shortener & link management program")
- Start a revolution: stop acting like a library (book by Ben Bizzle)
- Library Marketing and Outreach Facebook group (facebook.com/groups/acrl.lmao)

Presenters
Please contact us if you have questions or ideas about this presentation!
- Jon Reed - reedjj@jmu.edu
- Kristen Shuyler - shuyleks@jmu.edu
- David Vess - vessds@jmu.edu

Image credits: Jon Reed as JMU Libraries Instagram manager (setting photos), Ashim D. Silva from unsplash.com (berries photo) Stefanie Warlick (bus fail photo), Kristen Shuyler ("the end" photo), Zan Guendert (all graphic designs for campaign materials)
Full text of presentation given at "Innovative Engagement: October Conference 2015" at Dartmouth College, October 16, 2015

Title: Re-thinking survey promotion: It’s not just about the numbers

Authors: Kristen Shuyler, Jon Reed, and David Vess

Presenters: Kristen Shuyler and Jon Reed

Slide 1 & 2:

This is the story of how the three of us worked together try a new approach to promoting the LibQUAL+ survey at James Madison University Libraries.

Only two of us could travel here, but David Vess helped write this presentation and design the survey campaign.

Slide 3:

Before we start the story, let's introduce the setting & some background:

James Madison University is a comprehensive public university in the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia. Its primary emphasis is on the undergraduate student, but it also offers masters and doctorate degrees. The total enrollment is almost 21,000 students.

The JMU Libraries and Educational Technologies unit includes the Center for Instructional Technology (or CIT), as well as the Libraries. There are 4 library buildings on campus, including 2 main libraries (Rose and Carrier, pictured here), a music library, and an education resource center.

LibQUAL+, as many of you know, is a survey and a suite of services from the Association of Research Libraries. It's used widely to help libraries understand perceptions of library service quality. In our unit, the Libraries use the LibQUAL+ data, but the CIT uses other surveys to track service quality.

Our story begins about fifteen years ago, when the LibQUAL+ survey was first implemented at JMU.¹

For many years, the survey wasn't promoted very strongly to campus.

Then when the Libraries started to promote it, the promotion focus was on the "prize" that would be offered to a random survey participant: e.g., "you could win an iPod if you take our survey!"

Fast forward to this past spring... the three of us were asked by the Library Administration to promote the survey.

¹ JMU was a pilot location, which is why we started so early.
The approach we took is what we're describing in this session.

But I want to be clear: this is not a story about increasing the number of surveys completed.

Of course, getting survey responses is important. However, boosting LibQUAL+ numbers was not our top priority. What we were really trying to do was re-think our library assessment cycle and to move beyond the basic numbers, in two different senses:

1. First, we wanted to use the survey promotion to influence how people feel about the Libraries, even if they didn't take the survey.

2. Second, we believe that getting a high survey response rate isn't as important as doing something with the data we're gathering. We need to act on the input, and SHOW our community that we're acting on their input.

Building off those two ideas, we designed the campaign with a focus on three things: how we want campus to feel, what action we want them to take, and what message we want them to remember.

**Slides 4, 5 & 6:**

Here are excerpts from our promotion plan:

The main **message** we want our audiences to remember after seeing our promotional materials is that *"your life could change by taking this survey."* We will back up this claim by providing examples of how JMU Libraries have made changes -- and therefore changed *"your life"* -- after seeing results from past surveys.

We want them to **feel** that their feedback is valued and that the libraries will act on it.

The **action** we want them to take after hearing the message is to click on the link (or type in the URL) & complete the survey.

**Slide 7:**

And we love that our community seemed to really get our main message, as evidenced by this tweet from the main JMU social media account, which JMU Marketing wrote.

This tweet shows one of our images, and states (in their own words), "Students, make your voice heard by taking the JMU Libraries survey. Your feedback impacts changes."

Next, we will talk about how we made these general goals concrete with our promotional campaign materials.
Slides 8-14 (Inspiration slide through slide with procrastination-themed ad):

Our campaign was inspired by our students!
For content,
for style,
and for tone.

To back up our bold claim that a library survey can improve one’s life, many of our promotional materials highlighted changes the library had already made in response to previous user feedback. And to help our message of being “Your Library” resonate with our campus community, we worked closely with a student employee on the wording of these taglines and on the graphic design. We talked to student workers for a sense understanding of these messages in general.

One of our short videos referenced "dorm furniture" - this was in response to a Library Building Task Force focus group with members of the Student Government Association. In that focus group, they stated, "We want the library to be classic and high-tech like the White House, not like dorm furniture."

Connection to other units in the organization, video production services unit personnel, filming videos. Creative use of skills we already have in the organization.

Typeface reference to Run DC, theme from t-shirts on campus -- subtle but important connections to student culture, sense of irony.

For prizes - 3D pen and iPad. A student showed us the 3D pen. And we used data we had about what devices students were interested in.

Yik Yak Message
Procrastination message
Videos also walked boundary of funny, straightforward and ironic

Slide 15-17:

Here are some more examples of campaign materials that we developed based on this inspiration:
  - library website
  - student newspaper
  - The Breeze
  - Candy wrappers

Slide 18:

So, what were the outcomes of this promotion campaign? We'll discuss 5 outcomes: the number of surveys completed, engagement via social media, and then three outcomes we didn't expect: new organizational workflows/tools, the ability to connect multiple library service points, and a
few of the failures we learned from.

Slide 19:

To measure the success of our "action" goal, we looked at the number of surveys viewed and completed. This chart shows the number of surveys completed and on which day.

This year 636 surveys were completed and valid. The survey was viewed 3403 times. These numbers were a bit lower than recent years featuring the prize-focused campaign.*

*Previous years:
2015: 3403 views of the survey; 636 completed
2013: 1841 views of the survey; 1034 completed
2011: 5190 views of the survey; 2675 completed
2009: 2659 views of the survey; 872 completed
2006: 1676 views of the survey; 725 completed

One reason for this is that the length of the survey deters them from finishing it - we know that from anecdotal evidence. But we were doing the LibQUAL+ Lite version and can't make it any shorter.

We believe one reason for the low numbers is that JMU had an email problem, in which official "bulk emails" were going directly to the spam folders, all over campus. So when our email originally went out around April 11, nobody got it.

By April 28, this huge jump in surveys, IT was able to fix the problem and send our email.

This so-called problem allowed us to see how many patrons were actually typing in the URL from a poster or clicking on it from their social media or our website.

This experience shows us that getting the link in their inboxes is very important! If what you care about most is getting the maximum number of surveys filled out, think about how to get that link in their email inbox.

But it's impossible to know why they clicked: perhaps if they hadn't seen our campaign for the previous two weeks, they wouldn't have clicked on it in their email.

So it's difficult to know if the email minus the offline promotion would have had the same impact on survey numbers.

Slide 20:

It's hard to measure how positively campus "feels" about the Libraries, whether or not they took the survey, our second goal. But we can know how many people engaged with the campaign on social media. This shows one of the Facebook ads we bought and how people interacted with it.
Slide 21:

Also, we can see analytics from Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Bitly, and more which gives us some idea of how people interacted with our campaign and how they feel about the libraries. This is a screenshot from Bitly.

Slide 22:

Also we launched our finals week event series simultaneously - and we had a HUGE amount of engagement online (and in person).

62,000 views and 995 interactions!

It's impossible to say whether the additional library visibility from the LibQUAL campaign influenced this, but we think it might have.

Slide 23:

One of the outcomes we didn't expect was that, based on what we learned by trying a wide range of promotion activities, we were able to create a "DIY Promotion Checklist" to remind ourselves and others in the library of all the promotion & communication opportunities on campus.

Also, our requests for multiple purchases, such as candy and newspaper ads, helped the Library Administration create a new organizational workflow to streamline purchase requests.

Another unexpected outcome was the ability for this project to connect multiple library service points. In our 4 JMU Libraries buildings, there are many service points. We contacted almost all the service point managers and worked with them to have LibQual+ promotional candy available at their desks. We also offered candy to the Liaison Librarians to hand out to their departments. This was the first time that we had all service points and liaisons participating in the same promotional activity, and it may be paving the way for future coordinated promotion activities.

Slide 24:

Sometimes failing is the best way to learn. We had a few failures and learned a lot from this campaign. One example is here:

- We learned how to produce bus ads. Our printed ads were first too thick, then too thin. They never really worked with the bus ad holders, as you can see from this photo, sent to us by a colleague.

- We learned to double-check ads that we pay for. The Breeze put our ad at the bottom of the front page instead of the top, which we think we paid for!

- We learned about problems with campus email. The issue of email not going to anyone wasn't our failure, actually. But we were the ones to uncover this huge problem with JMU
emails. Campus IT was grateful to know about it so they could fix it. Also, library overdue notices had not been going out because of this problem, so for a while the library had to do a fines amnesty project to make up for this problem.

Slide 25:

So here we are at the end of the story, which is actually the beginning of the next phase of work.

Through this campaign we were trying to show that we "close the loop" - or use data to inform library decisions as part of a healthy assessment ecosystem that includes a cycle of measurement, results, reflection, action, engagement, and communication.

Ultimately, we wanted everyone who saw the campaign, whether or not they clicked through to the survey, to feel that the library is “their library” and to feel empowered to share feedback, now or in the future.

And now it's up to our library to actually do what we promised: analyze and act on the feedback we collected.

Slide 26:

Finally, here are some resources we used, which you might find useful. We'd be happy to answer any questions. Thank you!