

Does your library smell?

John Stanley

In my consultancy work with libraries one of my concerns is looking at the ambience being created for patrons. Ambience covers a number of aspects, how one uses space, colour and of course the aroma within the building.

I often get puzzled looks when I talk about aroma. In my early consultancy projects I was just as puzzled that librarians hadn't considered it important. Aroma is used as a positive development tool in many businesses, including supermarkets and museums. Why?

Research carried out by Harvest Consulting of New York highlights that our recall of scents and odours is stronger than any other of our recalls. This means that if your library smells of musty books that smell will be recalled, often years later. If your library has a pleasant smell, the same will occur and if it has no smell then recall is a lot more difficult.

Those of you who have attended my one-day workshops will recall that I encourage you to visit a 'Lush' store in the High Street. People come back either loving or hating the experience: it is not an okay store. They use aromatherapy to create an effect. You never please everyone, and Lush has either advocates or one-time-only shoppers.

Aromatherapy is the art of using one hundred per cent natural essential oils to modify the state of mind. I must stress 'natural' as some of the artificial aromas being manufactured have had a negative effect on the public's health, especially pregnant women.

As I mentioned, supermarkets use aroma exceptionally well. Positioning bakeries near the entrance to influence shopping habits and placing extractor fans over the fish. And look how the aroma of coffee has grown the coffee culture. In Germany they are using the smell of oranges in cinemas to increase the sale of snacks, and in museums aromas are being used to create a more positive experience for the consumer.

In retailing, aroma is being used to stimulate buying decisions. In libraries it should be used to relax patrons and get them to linger longer.

Our sense of smell is 10 000 times more sensitive than our sense of taste hence the interest in it as a marketing tool. Different essential oils affect people in different ways.

Aromas to convey concepts			
Adventure	Tradition	Nurturing	Sophisticated
Salty air	Leather	Vanilla	Wine
Sawdust	Wood	Baby powder	Perfume
Mud	Tea	Apples	Cigars
Fuel	Wool	Cinnamon	Oak
Mint	Cedar	Lavender	Scotch
Spice	Rose	Cotton	Musk

Why not place an aromatherapy unit near your checkout counter and see what reaction you get from customers. If you don't try it you'll never know.

Phil Lempert in his book *Being the shopper* (John Wiley & Sons Inc, New York ISBN 0 471 15135 1) provides the following guidelines on essential oils.

Essential oil	Effect
Juniper Berry	Energises, relieves exhaustion
Lavender	Balances emotions, relieves stress, burnout, worry, addiction
Rose	Calms, relieves grief, fears of love, jealousy, bitterness, an aphrodisiac
Vetiver	Uplifts, relieves fear, scattered thoughts, hurt, neurotic behaviour
Ylang Ylang	Brightens mood, relieves anger, releases irritability, frustration, an aphrodisiac

When will scented books arrive that portray the aroma based on what is happening in the story?

If I-smell can transfer aroma through computers, it will not be too long until the scented book is on your shelf.

John Stanley is a conference speaker and retail consultant with more than twenty years experience in fifteen countries. John works with libraries around the world assisting them with their merchandising, staff and management training, customer flow, customer service and image. John Stanley Associates produce an e-newsletter specific to library retail, this includes innovative ideas and advice to help you grow your library. If you would like to receive a regular copy please visit <http://www.johnstanley.cc> or e-mail us on newsletter@johnstanley.cc.

Training package under review

The Library and Information Services Industry Training Package, developed by CREATE Australia with significant input from ALIA, was endorsed by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) in 1999 subject to review within three years. The Training Package incorporates national competency standards for the sector, national qualifications aligned to the Australian Qualifications Framework from Certificate II to Advanced Diploma level and national assessment guidelines. It was designed to provide pathways to qualifications through formal education and assessment in the workplace.

In November 2001 ANTA contracted CREATE Australia to undertake the review

of the Training Package. The review was to be conducted in two phases. Phase 1 involved extensive research and analysis and a broad consultation process to examine the suitability and effectiveness of the Training Package, identify barriers to its full implementation and areas for improvement and to determine the range and quality of support material available. Stakeholder groups consulted in this first phase of the review included, amongst others, Registered Training Organisations, for example TAFEs, organisations in the process of implementing the Training Package, employer and employee associations. As a major stakeholder ALIA provided important input through participation

in focus groups and promoted awareness of the review in particular through an information session at its 2002 Biennial Conference.

Phase 1 was completed in October 2002 with a series of recommendations which will form the basis for the next phase in the review. Phase 2 will see re-development of the package based on the recommendations arising from Phase 1. These relate to the structure and content of the standards, assessment guidelines and presentation and marketing of the package. Following completion of the review, the re-developed package will be submitted to ANTA for endorsement. ■