



IMAGES (from top): Library Manager Dr Emma Banyer and Systems Librarian Joan Bratton.  
Research Librarian Stephanie Picozzi demonstrating library resources.

# VERY SPECIAL WITH VERY LITTLE

**T**his is not a big story about big successes. This is a modest story, about a small special library, doing modest things but doing them well.

Staff members in the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) have a strong need for quality information in their day-to-day work. When investigating companies, regulating industries and pursuing litigation, Google and Wikipedia don't tend to 'cut it'. Perhaps that helps explain why usage of the ACCC Library's online resources is already very high for an agency of our size (around 850 staff).

But we can't afford to rest on our laurels. There are still staff members who don't know the library exists, or the products and services we offer.

So how does a library that serves a nation-wide clientele with only three staff, no library space, and no marketing resources promote itself? By giving its clients what they need.

It starts with buying the right products in close consultation with client business areas. The products that have been selected over time by canny library managers all fulfil clear business requirements. We provide cases, legal commentary, company and industry reports, economics articles, and a smattering of other things, but nothing is superfluous. It's all 'core'. Many of the ACCC's staff can't do their jobs properly without these resources.

The library connects people to this information in the easiest possible way, generally through internet protocol (IP) authentication. If IP's not possible, we provide clear access instructions on the website.

We regularly explain our role in negotiating contracts and providing access to our clients, so they understand their 'seamless access' is, in fact, brokered and managed by the library.

The library encourages leaders within the business areas to pass on information about products to their teams directly. Because they are invested in the products, they are happy to do this. This peer to peer promotion is the most powerful form of marketing we have at our disposal.

We also use information literacy training as a primary promotional tool, and have had success by focussing on the 'pain points' of our clients, rather than specific products. I recently read a library report from 2006 that excused poor attendance at training sessions for the new TDNet journal management system by saying that staff were just "too busy" to attend. That argument doesn't fly with me. We held three training sessions in September 2013 on Finding Company and Industry Information and had 74 attendees! If you put on the sessions people want to go to – and advertise them sufficiently – people will come.

The library uses traditional forms of promotion too, such as staff bulletin articles and posters, but these are used sparingly to avoid saturation, and kept interesting for the clients. For example, a recent article featured quotes from prominent ACCC staff members extolling the benefits of a new product. This is much more interesting than a dry product description.

We may not have many staff, a shiny library space, or any marketing budget, but our library is well-known and, I believe, well-respected within our agency. In any special library, the success of your marketing activities will come down to having the right products, quality relationships, and a few smart, well-placed promotions.

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