

# 5 marketing strategies school libraries can use

By Elizabeth Libberton

## Snapshot

Elizabeth Libberton, reprinted from the AASL Knowledge Quest Blog, engages with five simple and sensible marketing strategies that are worthy of consideration by all school libraries.

Getting books into the hands of students is the goal for any school library, no matter the age of the students. I am always looking for new ideas on how to draw students' attention into the library, and how I can entice them to leave with materials. I decided to start researching some simple marketing strategies and then tweaking them from the business world to meet my library's needs. These are the 5 biggest takeaways I had from my baseline research that you can start today.

## #1: Personalization

Personalizing any kind of curation of content for students can be a draw into the library. To promote the personal programs I already had in place I created larger signage to inform students walking by and on our library website. I offer [Personal Book Shopping](#) as an option for students. They can fill out a Google Form and I will choose 4 books I think they might like for them to browse through. I also offer personal [research appointments](#) for students to help with any aspect of a research project. I have a google form for this as well where students can let me know about what they are researching and where they are having trouble.

## #2: Use data

The next marketing strategy I looked at was using data. I felt like the most natural part of the library to use data would be to inform me in decisions on what books to display. I started by pulling some data from the *Library Reports* section of my Destiny account. Specifically, I looked at the *Collection Statistics* both *historical* and *summary*. This data helped me to see which



books are circulating really well right now and in the past. I then made sure to showcase these books front and center for students to find easily.

### #3: Keep things updated

The way that students view materials online and in the physical library space is usually quick and at a glance. If outdated information is displayed, they may not pursue the opportunity or let you know that is wrong. After reading about this marketing strategy, I started with my school library website. I went through clicking on each link on each page to make sure the information was up to date. I found so many links that were broken or pages that needed to be updated from last year that I had completely overlooked. This was a great reminder to make time to update information we are giving out to our students.

### #4: More visual the better

We live in a very visual world. Constantly being bombarded with information in a visual way. Students have been conditioned to respond to the visual cues around them, so it makes sense that the more they can see the more likely they are to pick something up. To connect this marketing strategy of visualization to the library I thought about ways I could increase covers being shown. I had extra display stands in our storage closet and was able to find a home on the shelf for every single one. I found in just a short time that books were being taken from the display stands at an increased rate then when they were simply lined up on the shelves.

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### #5: Declutter

The last marketing strategy that I applied to my library was the idea that clean and decluttered spaces attract buyers. I started by looking at my shelves alone. Most of my shelving, especially in the nonfiction sections, was very overcrowded. I decided to go with a model of trying to only fill 40% of each shelf. This required me to move some books around, but it was well worth the effort. Once the shelves were cleaned and less crowded, I had more room to display books on



stands to present covers. I also had feedback from a student that it made it a lot easier to get the book off the shelf because it wasn't tight and crowded.

These 5 marketing strategies that I was able to apply to my school library really helped to liven up my approach and circulation techniques. I spent no money, just used some already existing tools to review different aspects of my library. Marketing doesn't have to just be for the business world, we can take some of the research techniques that work in that setting and apply them to the school library to liven up circulation and beyond.

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