Building Business Connections in Your Community

Welcome to today’s Infopeople Webinar!

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Building Business Connections in Your Community

Let's get acquainted!

- Business Liaison Librarian
- Community Outreach
- Library OnConference
- Sharing stories and understanding how communities connect

Latest publication!

- ALA Editions 2016
- Embedded Business Librarianship for the Public Librarian

Embedded Business Librarianship

- "Embedded Business Librarianship is a library professional who becomes engrained in their library's business community."
- Do not function as an outsider, but as a peer, equal, and colleague
- The title is not important! It’s the action that matters the most

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Why should we care about businesses?

- Because they care about us!
- Small business owners are 64% of the "new net jobs created between 1993-2011".
- 18 million entrepreneurs and counting.
- Upwards of 30% of job seekers use the library.

How can we build meaningful relationships with these groups?

Pop Quiz!

- How often does your library provide outreach?
  - A: At least once per week
  - B: Once every few weeks
  - C: Once per month
  - D: A few times per year
  - E: Never

Outreach is not embedded librarianship

- The key difference: promotion
- Outreach is occasionally going out into the community
- Embedded is consistently being integrated in the community

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Benefits of being embedded

- Get to really know your community—no superficial relationships!
- Changes the perspective of public libraries and librarianship
- Streamlines your job: programs, collection development, and more
- Benefits to them? Countless!

Transform existing relationships

- You don’t have to start from scratch
- Take your current relationships to the next level
- Make new connections from current community partners
- Start small and focus on consistency

5 Steps to Embedded Business Librarianship

- Create your networking list
- Start reaching out
- Make your debut: initial presentation
- Create a call to action
- Network, network, network

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Before you get started, remember…

- Guiding principle: the public library adds value to the community
- You are building meaningful relationships by learning about their needs, worries, strengths, aspirations by becoming part of the community

Step 1: Create your networking list

- Chamber of Commerce
- Career Centers
- Small Business Development Center
- Village Hall
- Neighborhood meetings
- Community colleges
- SCORE (www.score.org)
- Rotary Club
- Shopping Centers
- Religious organizations
- Meetup.com
- Entrepreneur Forums

Step 2: Start reaching out

- Begin with someone you are already connected with—don’t reinvent the wheel!
- Email vs. phone
- Key words to use: brief, information, learning
- Avoid “partnership” words
- Start slow!

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Step 3: Making your debut

- Initial presentation
- Make it count
- Make it interactive, engaging, short, sweet
- Focus on what you can do and getting to know them

Step 4: Call to Action

- The most important part of the process!
- Think outside the box
- Networking breakfasts
- Off-site training sessions
- One-on-one consultations
- Ask them what you can customize!

Step 5: Network, network, network!

- The real work now begins
- Practice your elevator speech
- Sharing what you can do + learning what they need = crystal clarity
- Get out there regularly
  - Job fairs
  - Network scrambles
  - Ribbon cuttings
  - Open houses

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Bringing it back to your library

- Networking events
- Video/broadcast series
- Tech training - opps, video production, Etsy, social media, blog/website design

Coworking spaces

- Shared, open workspaces for entrepreneurs and professionals meet, collaborate, and network
- Good news: they are looking for public spaces - that's us!
- More good news: It doesn't have to be expensive or a big commitment - simply rearranging furniture or adjusting library rules
- Does your library create a welcoming environment?

Pop Quiz!

- How big is your library?
  - A: Less than 25 employees
  - B: 26-50 employees
  - C: 51-80 employees
  - D: 81-125 employees
  - E: More than 125 employees

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Making it work for your library

- Action creates clarity
- Relaying the benefits to management/board
- Using a hybrid model to work for your library, department, and community

Questions?

- Let’s stay in touch!
  - www.barbaralvarez.com
  - @alvarez_b3
- THANK YOU! 😊

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