

Connecting Library with APEX Community

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Abstract

Hamzah Sendut Library as an APEX university library has taken a more proactive approach to rebrand promotional and outreach programs. A more creative, unique and innovative style have been used to ensure that the library's mission in reaching out to the users is accomplished. 'Skuad Pelanggan' was formed to increase the effectiveness of library's engagement with customers. The ultimate goal is to reach out to customers, increase the usage of library facilities, improving the relevance of the existence of the library in the campus community and provide additional value to the library users. Important aspects emphasized in the program include teaching and learning supports, with the focus on research and consultation. Efforts conducted through myPHS programs, exhibitions, and virtual marketing have established positive impacts and realization of library's relevance by the campus community.

Keywords

Library; user engagement; library promotion; academic library; outreach.

INTRODUCTION

"Got a question, get a live answer" is the motto used by Hamzah Sendut Library (PHS), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) to reach out to the customers through varied customer engagement programs during its early appearance. PHS which is located in the Main Campus and serves about 28, 000 customers, should always be alert and active to ensure that the services and facilities offered to its customers are used by them for learning excellence. Librarians at PHS should always look for alternative and creative new programs in promoting library services and facilities to their customers in the form of either physical or virtual to ensure that the mission and vision of the University to produce quality graduates are achieved.

On January 15, 2007 Customer Relations Division was established in PHS. This division is responsible for promo-

tional activities of the Library and also Reprography and Document Delivery tasks. Due to the constraints in terms of staffing and responsible task, function for promotional and marketing activities of the library was a bit overdue. To overcome these problems, the Head of Customer Relations has proposed to the management to set up a committee that could facilitate in executing promotional activities and customers engagement program in the Library. Meeting in 2010. The meeting agreed with the proposal it has triggered Customer Day Committee, better known as 'Skuad Pelanggan', which will jointly BPP to implement promotional activities and roadshows. In that same year, for the first time Library Clients Day was held successfully with an overwhelming response from customers who were excited with the different approach that was taken by the Library.

Early attempts to get out of the common practice in the promotion and marketing activities of the Library gave a new boost to the CSB to explore other branches in marketing services. Since then, many have been carried out to establish the activity of a very strong relationship with library customers, whether at the campus and off-campus such as community engagement programs, students' day, exhibitions, social media and also touring the campus. In 2011, the Library branded promotional activities with the motto MyPHS. MyPHS is significant in creating a sense of belonging with the Library customers. 'My' translated in Malay, means mine, while in the northern dialects, especially in Penang, 'mai' means come or lets. With the combination of this word My and PHS, MyPHS means Library welcome the customers and at the same time, it created a feeling of togetherness with Library.

At the end of 2012, the library underwent re-wiring and upgrading of its building. This project will be carried out until the end of 2013. In view of this situation will change library services and constraints in the use of the facilities provided to customers, 'Skuad Pelanggan' has introduced a

new motto Like myPHS for marketing activities that focus on library customers are not affected. Motto was chosen in line with efforts to foster consumer interest in the services and facilities offered by the library. In this regard, the Library has taken steps to be more mobile, to go out to meet the customers around the campus to help them enjoy the services that are available if they come to the library as borrowing and returning library materials, reference consultation and update the membership.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Current academic libraries should play a greater role in promoting library services to users. Thus the outreach program should be done to reach out to the citizens of the university.. The term 'outreach' to mean approach and expand "beyond the border" a physical library and promote the use of completely new library. 'Outreach' is categorized into two categories which are services and promotions .Services include research assistance or information, the resources available in the library .Promotion facility services involving marketing and public relations to promote the services, resources and library facilities [1; 2]). The role of academic libraries now further described in the following verses.

"Libraries are perfectly positioned to be brokers on campus; we connect people not only with resources and scholarly materials, but also to each other. Libraries bring people together for academic, cultural, creative, and social causes; no one else on campus so completely fulfills that role. And so it is vital that we try to be visible on campus, not just as salesmen pitching our products, but as participants." [3]

To ensure that the "outreach" program to succeed successfully, academic libraries and librarians should take the initiative to move this program. By the establishment of a committee to move this program is appropriate and should involve all library staff. This is explained by Carter and Seaman [1] that all library staff involvement in this program will help ensure the success of this program. Librarians should collaborate with other departments and coordinate all staff so that they can do this program successfully.

Saylor, Schnitzer, Allee, and Blumenthal [4] explained that in order to implement the network in a community, we should be promoting outreach services by using a variety of social media. According to them, we should create a Facebook account to publicize the latest information and library services. They also explained that Facebook can recognize users demographic, disseminate and promote library activities continuously. Other than that users can receive daily updates via frequency by posting.

Among other promotional activities that can be used by academic library to attract customers is exhibition. Exhibition is a medium attraction to solicit interest and could indirectly create a network of cooperation with users. Exhibition is dependent on the type of theme that consists of a variety of content such as posters, books, manuscripts or bibliography that lists the thematic readings recommended by librarians. Sidorko and Yang [5] explains the diversity of the exhibition was conducted at the University of Hong Kong Library to attract outside communities to visit the library.

CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Four major promotional activities undertaken by the Skuad Pelanggan are MyPHS: Jom ke Perpustakaan / MyPHS: Hari Bersama Pelanggan, exhibitions, LIKE myPHS and virtual marketing.

'MyPHS': Jom ke Perpustakaan/ MyPHS: Hari Bersama PelangganSubsections

Customer engagement program, 'MyPHS: Hari Bersama Pelanggan/ Jom ke Perpustakaan' organized by PHS since 2010 is to appreciate library customers and celebrate new students of the university. The program was conducted at PHS foyer. Activities conducted were discovery of library information, fines discount, Like PHS Facebook and promotion of information literacy workshop. Apart from these activities, "MyPHS" was introduced as library branding strategy.



Figure 1. MyPHS program: Jom ke Perpustakaan/ Hari Bersama Pelanggan

In 2012, there are few programs held such as quizzes and Info Explorace which highlighted the questions on history, services, collection and management of the Library. The purpose of this activity was to provide opportunities for students to recognize the Library as one of the attractions to the program.

The Library also took the opportunity to launch a new services such as the opening of the 24-hour reading room and lending Tablet PC . This new service is in line with the demands of graduate students who want a more conducive space after the library closed . Tablet PC services were in-

roduced where it has now become the latest facilities used by students to facilitate learning and research activities.



Figure 2. Launch Tablet PC by Professor Dato' Dr Omar Osman, Vice Chancellor USM

MyPHS : Jom Ke Perpustakaan / Hari Bersama Pelanggan has become a marketing mechanism that build or strengthens ties between the library and students, especially new students. Besides introducing Library as a key for learning support and research, the program has become a medium to raise awareness about the facilities and services provided by the Library. Effectiveness of the program can be seen in the increasing use of library services, increase attendance and decrease consumer education class basic reference questions at I - Counter as questions regarding the location of the materials and procedures locate the material through the online library catalog (OPAC KRISALIS).

Exhibitions

Library is the place where synonymous with many exhibitions to publicize new information and materials to Library customer. In 2012, PHS has taken further steps to organize exhibitions with new dimensions which display variety of reading materials, artifacts, manuscripts, realia, maps and media items. The library has organized five exhibitions with different themes. Each theme has its uniqueness and capability in providing a visual and emotional impact straightly to visitors. Indeed, the exhibition is an opportunity for the Library to create a network of cooperation or collaboration within internal and external institutions or organizations. The exhibitions were collaborate with many organizations such as USM Center for Policy Research & International Studies (CenPRIS), Tuanku Fauziah Museum & Gallery, School of Humanities, Penerbit USM, Centre for Instructional Technology and Multimedia, Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka and Penang Institute.

Besides, there has many programs held during the exhibitions such as Poetry Declamation Contest, the launching of new books of Professor Emeritus Dr. Muhammad Haji Salleh and Dato' Haji Shahnnon Ahmad, poetry recital by Professor Emeritus Dr Muhammad Haji Salleh which has been translated into many languages such as Thai, Japanese, Spanish and Chinese. The poetries have been recited by

USM students and lecturers. The other programs were Poetry Forum by Professor Emeritus Dr Muhammad Haji Salleh, Drama Showcase which its adapted from the novel of Dato' Haji Shahnnon Ahmad entitled 'A Handful of Rice', the launching of fan page in Facebook of Dato' Haji Shahnnon Ahmad and forum on novel 'Ranrau Sepanjang Jalan' by Dato' Haji Shahnnon Ahmad and it has a movie which adapted from this novel in 1970.

- Wanita di Sebalik Bait Puisi**
(7th March - 4th April 2012)
- Pengembara Ilmu: Muhamad Haji Salleh**
(18th April - 2nd May 2012)
- myPHS: 1969-2012**
(10th - 28th September 2012)
- Shahnnon Ahmad dalam Media**
(8th - 13th October 2012)
- Pulau Pinang di Alam Melayu**
(19th - 30th November 2012)

Figure 3. Five exhibitions had been organized by the Library in 2012

These programs engage various types of community and society such as primary school students, USM students, lecturers and public. Furthermore, the programs will be enlivened by popular artists and celebrity such as Sarimah Ibrahim. She was an actress in the film 'Ranrau Sepanjang Jalan'. Thus, she was invited to be honored as one of the panelist of the Forum 'Ranrau Sepanjang Jalan'.

The forum of Poetry by Muhammad Haji Salleh was held in our programs and the primary school and USM students were invited to join for this forum. One of the poetries by Muhammad Haji Salleh is being created as one of the syllabus in Arts subject in primary schools in Malaysia.

Filem adaptasi novel perlu dikekalkan jalan cerita

Oleh MOHAMMAD KHAIRIL ASBRAF MOHD KHALID

Filem yang diadaptasi daripada novel seharian mengisahkan jalan cerita asal bagi memberi kesan mendalam kepada penonton anak-anak mengenai pengalaman daripada cerita yang ditayangkan.

Tambahan Dekan Pengajian Sains dan Pendidikan Pasca-Persekolahan (PPK) USM dengan kerjasama Persekitaran Hutan, Sempit dan Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP) baru-baru ini.

Utara bertindak sebagai ahli panel ialah Sarimah Ibrahim, Datin Siti Nur Hafizah dan Abdul Wahid Haniffah dari DBP dan Pengarah Penerbit USM, Prof Dr. Dato' Dr. M. S. Salleh sebagai moderator.

Sesering panel Sarimah, Abdul Wahid Haniffah dan Datin Siti Nur Hafizah.

MENGIMBAU KENANGAN... Datin Siti Nur Hafizah dan Prof. Dato' Dr. M. S. Salleh. Yagier melihat pameran pameran Forum Novel Ranrau Sepanjang Jalan karya Dato' Shahnnon Ahmad.

Filem yang diadaptasi oleh Pusat Pengajian Ilmu Keratanjatan (PPK) USM dengan kerjasama Persekitaran Hutan, Sempit dan Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP) baru-baru ini.

Utara bertindak sebagai ahli panel ialah Sarimah Ibrahim, Datin Siti Nur Hafizah dan Abdul Wahid Haniffah dari DBP dan Pengarah Penerbit USM, Prof Dr. Dato' Dr. M. S. Salleh sebagai moderator.

Sesering panel Sarimah, Abdul Wahid Haniffah dan Datin Siti Nur Hafizah.

Walaupun filem Ranrau Sepanjang Jalan telah menjadi masalah adaptasi.

"Novel ialah idea tentang gambaran dan berfikir-pikir, manakala filem lebih bersifat fizikal dan realiti atau gambaran menerangkan dan psikologi yang perlu dipelihara secara utuh," katanya.

Sementara itu, Sarimah Ibrahim, Datin Siti Nur Hafizah dan Abdul Wahid Haniffah berkata beliau amat meminati karya sarimah pada zaman mudanya dan mahu mengadaptasi karya Shahnnon Ahmad menjadi sebuah filem.

"Karya Shahnnon Ahmad perlu difikirkan kerana ia adalah sangat hebat dan hebat, walaupun ia kebanyakan diterbitkan dalam tempoh 1970-an yang banyak, namun karya yang hebat perlu ditayangkan kepada orang ramai," katanya.

Figure 4. Sarimah Ibrahim was joining one of programs and getting the local media's

All these programs are against the perception of library where the place for repository. PHS is proving that the library has potential to enrich the community engagement with contribution to development of knowledge, social and culture rather than offering services to support the academic activities. In reality, PHS was successful in marketing strategy and demonstrating the effectiveness of communication and dealing with USM community and public. It shows that the library still relevant in opposition to those who presuming the library is not relevant for this age. Nowadays, PHS is not only as academic library in providing the academic materials for research but it will be a hub for social and cultural activities among USM community and public.

Like myPHS

In 2013, customer engagement program has been further strengthened by the 'Skuad Pelanggan' by introducing a program called *Like myPHS: Connecting Library with APEX Community*. This program is not just a day with clients such as the commonly held before. It is an outreach program, the first ever held outside the library over 43 years of the library establishment age. The original idea for the program arose mainly because of the wiring and upgrading library 1 building that lasts until the end of 2013. During this period, *Like myPHS* will serve as a platform to reach customers around the campus and play an initiative to ensure that the Library continue to provide the best service to customers.

With the same direction of *MyPHS program: Let's Go to Library / Customer Day*, the method has been given a new lease program through the concept of mobile library to apply the idea of 'if you don't come to the library, the library will go to you'. This concept helps in giving services directly to the customers. Services given are loans circulation, return materials and pay fines for late return of books

This program can be categorised as library mobile services provided in places that become the focus of the campus community as administration buildings, public areas, cafeterias and study centres. During the program, the 'Skuad Pelanggan' has brought new materials including books, media and magazines to be on lent to customers. In fact, customers also receive discounts up to 70 % if they settle the outstanding fines on that day. This is the main attraction for customers to visit the 'booth' of *Like myPHS*.



Figure 5. Booth Like myPHS

Until midyear of 2013, the program was successfully carried out three times in a place with a different background. The program was held in the administration building, cafeteria and the last is at the school. Besides circulation services and new materials exhibition, other services are also offered, including consultation or reference inquiries, complaints or customers feedback and receiving donations of books. The program also enlivened with additional activities such as customer satisfaction surveys and 'like' Facebook PHS.



Figure 6. Like myPHS that was held at the Chancellery Building, Hostel Bakti Siswa and School of Management

Through *Like myPHS*, Library has crossed the boundaries of communication practices, marketing and services normally offered by an academic library. The program has managed to become one of the Library rebranding strategies through three approaches like visual, values and emotions. Visual approach used during the program through the use of the logo and motto *Like myPHS: connecting library with APEX community* will make library more memorable and recognizable, services offered during the program that affect the value of customers' perception of the Library and the next emotional connection with visitors through interaction in the day of the program will create a harmonious relationship between the library and the customers. Visual, values and emotions approach of *Like myPHS* is applied through the key elements that have contributed to the successful rebranding of PHS.

In addition, this program also has created collaboration and relationship between library and other departments and also schools in USM. This collaboration and relationship is very important to ensure that the library cares about the client's needs and contributes to the services that always friendly, efficient, effective and dynamic.

Virtual Marketing

The rapid growth of technology has been harnessed by the PHS to gain more interactions with the customers. If in the past usually interaction occurs physically, but now the interaction is expanded into a virtual form. Among the advantages of virtual interaction is that it is quick and easy which

allowing a question being answered without having to come physically to the library. Facebook, blog, Twitter, and Tumblr are now become the main topic of discussion and also attracted the attention of the library as well.

Recognizing the importance of the virtual marketing and widely use of social media, PHS has involved into the league by creating facebook account, blog, tumblr, and e-newsletters. PHS has its own facebook account starting March 16, 2010, and since then started to get the attention of customers. Handling an official library facebook is not as easy as handling personal accounts. Each post or statement in the facebook must be responsible to because it represents organizational standpoint indirectly. Most of the time facebook administrators need to aware between the unofficial nature of facebook and the official nature of every organizational statement. Thus, the administrator must know how to post an official statement leisurely to ensure good acceptance from customers. Until July 16, 2013, PHS received a total of 4,447 facebook like with average 108 likes per month.

Obviously facebook brings a lot of benefits to the library. Facebook enable the library to receive numerous complaints, suggestions and inquiries directly from the customers as well as giving feedback in a timely manner. Indirectly, this virtual medium serves as an alternative interaction besides e-mail and traditional complaint box. In addition, it is also becomes an effective channel for disseminating information to customers quickly. Library facebook can be accessed through this official name: Perpustakaan Hamzah Sendut, Universiti Sains Malaysia.

Blog is another virtual medium used by PHS to deliver important information. It can be accessed via the following link: <http://hamzahsendutlibrary.wordpress.com/>. Blog namely 'Blog PHS' was registered on 30th November 2009 and has since been fully utilized to record all the activities that take place in the library throughout the year. The narrative of every post is made more detail in the form of report aims to inform the public about the program has been going on in the library. This blog provides useful information for customers include PHS facts, questionnaires, guide books and bulletins. In short, this blog becomes alternative references to the Library's official website for those who want to get information about PHS. Normally, this blog will be updated once a month depending on the frequency of activities that take place. Until July 17, 2013, the blog had received 15,356 hits that reflect its importance and popularity.

Library aren't left behind to create their own Tumblr account on August 28, 2012 which can be accessed through

<http://hamzahsendutlibrary.tumblr.com/>. Tumblr is a site in the form of mini blog allows administrators to upload photos, videos and short texts. PHS has uploaded old photos, photos of activities and corporate video in this site. This site is suitable for customers who want to get close to the library through photography, video and illustration. For promotional purposes, PHS also upload photos of new books to attract customers to come and borrow the books.

In addition, PHS also promote the services, facilities and collections through a virtual bulletin called 'PHS & U: Connecting with the APEX community library'. This e-bulletin is published mainly to inform customers of news and useful information about the library. To date, a total of 6 issues were produced from January 2011 to December 2012. The bulletin is very helpful in promoting every library departments, particularly how things are done behind the scenes. In each issue, the editor will choose a specific department of the library to be highlighted through 'zoom in' slot. In addition, a column namely 'Happening @ PHS' is also dedicated to display photos of activities that have been going on. This bulletin acts as an intermediary between library and campus community in giving them a clear picture of the services or facilities offered. So far, library is getting good feedback from the campus community, and even some of them contacting the author to ask more about the information given in the PHS & U.

In short, the diversity of virtual marketing techniques carried out by PHS has help a lot in promoting the library as well as to reduce the gap with the customers. PHS will continue to empower themselves with the latest technology and developments in order to walk hand in hand with our customers with a diverse background.

CONCLUSION

PHS with the engagement 'Skuad Pelanggan' has successfully rebranded promotional programs and outreach with specific focus on the needs and demographics of users. The impact of this program, it can promote a transparent and accountable communication to empower and strengthen the PHS progress with customer relations. Promotional efforts and marketing is expected to continue the importance of Library to provide more outstanding information services in support of the University aspirations. It also proves that the Library remain competitive and progressive in breaking the trend of development of teaching and learning in higher education institutions for a sustainable tomorrow. Promotional and marketing activities in the early stages of this library can be used as a benchmark and continue the legacy of customer engagement through new marketing techniques that will be explored by a librarian in the future.

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