Strategies for Engaging Authors

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Overview

• Know your authors
• Speak their language
• Respond to their needs
• Get the word out
• Initiate collaborations
• The subtle approach
• The personal touch
• Lessons learned
Know Your Authors

To understand authors and their needs, pick their brains.

- What are their problems/issues?
- What would make their job easier?
- What is important to them?
- What is their least favorite task?
- What is their most favorite task?
- What is on their wish list?
- Do they read their copyright agreement forms?
Speak Their Language

To engage authors, use terms they understand and be specific.

- Communicate with your authors using terms they understand
- Include a specific listing of author support services/resources

http://becker.wustl.edu/services/scholarly/research.html
Respond to Their Needs

Develop author support services/resources to meet the needs of authors.

http://becker.wustl.edu/services/scholarly/.nihpolicy.htm
**Get The Word Out**

*Getting the word out to engage authors requires outreach outside the library.*

- Becker on the Road series
- Take an author out for lunch or coffee
- Visit labs, offices, and lunchrooms
- Initiate contact with the “gatekeeper” of departments or programs
- Host a luncheon for support staff of authors
- Join committees
- Provide a presentation at a faculty meeting
- Participate in working groups
- Host a table (Research Fair)
- Offer to help sponsor a conference
- Attend:
  - Departmental seminars and meetings
  - Journal club meetings
  - Special events (Nurses Week)
Initiate Collaborations and Partnerships

Initiate collaborations or partnerships with non-library units on your campus.

Benefits:

- Adds credibility to library efforts ("stamp of approval")
- Allows for subtle introduction of author support services/resources
- Provides a new perspective of the library (more than just "books and dust")
- Results in invitations to participate in working groups
- Helps identify trends and issues that are impacting authors
- Learn what other units on campus are doing to avoid redundancy and to share expertise
Use the Subtle Approach

The “By the Way” approach allows for subtle introduction of author support services/resources offered by your library.

“By the way, did you know. . .?”

- your $h$ index is “X”?
- your works have been cited “X” times?
- we can set up email alerts for you to be kept informed when your works are cited?
- we have “X” resource that allows you to compare journals you are considering for publication?
- we have a customized copyright form that allows you to retain rights to post your work on your lab website?
- we can verify your citations noted in a manuscript to be submitted for peer review or for a grant application?
The Personal Touch

*The personal touch speaks volumes about your library’s commitment to author support.*

- Develop specialized resources in response to a need or feedback from authors
- Provide customized presentations on a topic authors are interested in
- Act as a third party submitter on behalf of NIH-funded authors
- Set up database alerts for authors
- Contact publishers or other parties on behalf of authors
- Review publisher copyright forms and seek clarification on behalf of authors
- Make “house calls” to offices or labs
- Follow-up with an author after providing a service or answering a question
Lessons Learned

• Be flexible in meeting the needs of authors - be willing to meet in their offices and outside of normal working hours

• Neutrality enhances credibility - present all viewpoints and options to allow authors to make informed decisions without influence or bias

• Partnerships outside of the library are vital to enhancing awareness of author support services/resources

• Authors love cookies

• Be responsive to authors who need to meet a deadline

• Be willing to do “dirty work” - it will pay off in the long run

• Some author outreach efforts will fail despite good intentions