Library League: Advisory Powers Activate!

Carol Schrey, Sara Nielsen and Maggie Melson
St. Charles City-County Library District
Who Are You?

Carol Schrey
Collection Services Manager

Sara Nielsen
Adult Services Manager

Maggie Melson
Youth Services Manager
What about the Library?

The St. Charles City-County Library:
Serves 390,000 residents of St. Charles County - STL Metro
350 Square Miles
12 branches
400 staff, mostly part-time
LOTS of kids!
What did you do in the past?

No designated Readers’ Advisory staff
No form-based Readers’ Advisory (online or otherwise)
Readers’ Advisory not well represented on website
Readers’ Advisory was everyone’s job, and therefore no one’s
There was no structure in place to create change
What changed?

New Administrative staffing structure created in the summer of 2015

Goals:

- Connect Services, Collections and Programming
- Coordinate initiatives centrally and offer strong support for those initiatives
- Breakdown any silos that had previously existed
Our Inspiration: Lead the Change

November 2015:
Library Journal’s Lead the Change: Transform the Stacks in Kansas City (supported by the State Library/LSTA)
Three Key Takeaways:

Turn over the collection more

*Don’t be a warehouse. A book that doesn’t circulate has no value.*

Increase discovery

*Be the place for people who are looking for suggestions. Use the backlist, midlist, deep displays, displays in the right places, and reading maps to facilitate this.*

Position the library staff as experts

*Have district-wide staff picks. Make sure you let the customers connect to you as a reader*
Was there a committee?

Always.
Transform the Stacks

- District-wide Displays
- Merchandising Improvements
- Staff Picks
- Reading Maps
Staff Picks

Looking for something new?
Try an item selected by our expert staff!
Doing our Research

Looking at RA best practices online, the Beyond The Stacks committee got excited about:

- Lawrence Public “Book Squad”
- Multnomah County “My Librarian”
What’s the Next Level?

Creating a way to showcase our staff as super-cool people who can help you find a book to read, a movie to watch, a podcast to listen to...

DID WE JUST BECOME BEST FRIENDS?
Next Level:

Library League!
Building a Foundation
And... details

- Involve all staff
- Considerations:
  - Diverse interests, platforms, ages, genres
  - Personas vs. behind-the-scenes
  - As always, staff and manager buy-in

"We need to come up with 10,000 possible responses to 10,000 possible scenarios."
Implementation On the Cheap
Gathering interest

New website coming - huge opportunity!

Google form created to gauge staff interest.
Google Form Creation

Tool for both collecting input but also to communicate what we were looking for to the staff.

Stressed that it was for EVERYONE
Three Levels of Participation

- Featured Persona
- Team Member
- Responding to Requests
Great response!

36 staff responded, by the end nearly 40 are involved - ten percent of our staff!

Too many people interested in being personas - one of the biggest challenges
Forming the League
Forming the League

3 Squads
12 Personas
2-3 supporting teammates per persona
Forming the League

Each squad started meeting to narrow the focus of the personas, what kind of support they would need and most important - what would the persona’s picture look like
Expectations
Expectations for Squad Leaders

(That’s us)

- Communicate to the group
- Give the contributors guidance
- Edit their writing/submissions
- Liaison with Marketing Department
- Administer the online Readers’ Advisory form
Expectations for League Members

(That’s everyone else)

- Contribute new content based on a schedule
- Work with members of their persona team to divvy out work and make sure there isn’t crossover
- Learn the blog platform and be able to post/edit themselves
- Once RA form goes live, respond as needed
Behind the Scenes
Organization

As frustrating as it can be - Google Drive ended up being our answer

Decided to use LibAnswers for the RA Form
## Schedule

**Library League Persona Timeline and Topic Ideas**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Person Writing about Topic</th>
<th>Blog or List?</th>
<th>1st Draft Shared With Person Group</th>
<th>In Format/Emailed Squad Leader</th>
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<td>YA Fantasy, alternate history</td>
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What’s Next?
Going Live

- Website/blog platform training
- Figuring out how it fits in on the website (and with other content within the website)
Promoting Library League

• Marketing plan
• Library League Events in branches
• Displays in branches
Measuring Success

- Analytics for the Library League Blog
- Use of RA form
- Circulation of recommended titles
- Staff Engagement
- Impact on Customers
Group Effort

- First completely new initiative that was coordinated centrally
- Successes so far have been due to the team effort of the staff
Let’s Chat
Let’s Chat

Questions?

Share what YOUR library has done!
Questions? Contact Us!

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