E.P.A. (Entrepreneur to Public to Academic):

Lessons Learned about Serving Entrepreneurs from Three Different Settings

Presenter:
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• "Out of the Box" and "Out of the Ordinary": Conference presentation are typically Research and/or Program Service Development --> Reflection and Assessment. This is Reflection --> Examples backed by Some Research.

• Brief Overview of my Professional Background: A brief overview of the Entrepreneurial, Public, and Academic settings that I have worked in as well as my roles within them.

• Key Takeaways from Entrepreneurship on Serving Entrepreneurs: Processes Matter and are (often) Interdependent, Advice can come from People you don’t Expect, *Importance of Business Stage and Type*

• Key Takeaways from Public Libraries on Serving Entrepreneurs: *Importance of Business Stage and Type*, Real Relevance of Monographs, The Power of Partnerships (Standards and New Directions), *Licensing and Access (Cost and Compliance)*

• Key Takeaways from Academic Libraries on Serving Entrepreneurs: *Licensing and Access (Cost and Compliance)*, The Value of Non-Business Sources, High Impact Practices = High Engagement
Flomotion LLC:
- Florida lifestyle apparel company, originally focused on the surf and skate markets
- Official Clothing Partner of the PGA Players Championship at TPC Sawgrass in Ponte Vedra
- Sold in roughly 100 retail locations (including Ron Jon Surf Shop)

My Role:
- Sales Representative
- Marketing and Advertising Strategist: including the management of sponsored athletes and brand ambassadors
Brooklyn Public Library:

- Separate system from NYPL and Queens Public Library with 59 branches that serves Brooklyn's 2.6 million residents
- Dedicated Business & Career Center that oversees Small Business, Career, and Personal Finance collections and programming for the entire system

My Role:

- Team lead for "Small Business" and developed collections and programming for Entrepreneurs/Business Owners
- Market Research instructor for the PowerUP! Business Plan Competition
- Co-developer of the BKLYN Fashion Academy (A grant funded, fashion business development program)

San Diego State University:

- A Hispanic serving (HSI), high research activity (R2) university located on Kumeyaay land less than 20 miles from the Mexican Border
- The third oldest member of the California State University system with a full time enrollment (FTE) of 35,081
- The Fowler College of Business offers Bachelors and Masters degree programs in Business Administration and Accounting and has roughly 6000 undergraduate and 300 graduate student enrolled.
- Several Business-related University Centers and Institutes, such as Zahn Innovation Platform Launchpad

My Role:

- Sole Library Liaison and Collections Librarian to the Fowler College of Business, the Payne School of Hospitality & Tourism Management, and the Business-related Institutes and Centers
- Interim Assistant Head of Collection Development and Management
"It is extraordinarily difficult — and, at times, impossible — to understand or alter a single process without first taking account of others on which it depends (Garvin, 1998, p.42)."

**Allegorical Example:**
Our Trademark for Flomotion was contested by a large company after we produced six figures worth of product and began our sales and marketing operations. In hindsight, we should have known to wait for the trademark to be approved before starting these other processes.

**The Point:**
Aspects of the legal formation process had a huge impact on separate processes
Entrepreneur Takeaway: Processes Matter and are (often) Interdependent (Part 2)

• **What does this mean for Entrepreneurship Librarians?:**
  A Deeper Reference Interview that considers adjacent processes.

• **Initial Reference Q&A:**
  Q: A product business needs financing but does not have a strong credit history.
  A: The Small Business Finance sources say Factor Lending could be the best approach.

• **Is there a separate process that could make the rate more favorable?**
  The client list has an impact on the factor rate:
  "Because factors extend credit not to their clients but to their clients’ customers, they are more concerned about the customers’ ability to pay than the client’s financial status (Entrepreneur, n.d.). "

• **Additional Suggestion:**
  Have you used Data Axle (ReferenceUSA) to try to find additional buyers or check the credit ratings of your existing accounts?
Allegorical Example:

• When we started Flomotion, we were very nascent in the industry (I was the only one with *some* experience).

• A lot of our early success was a result of information, guidance, and mentorship from **Competitors** and potential **Customers**.
Theories Based on the Literature:

- "On the one hand, there is a stream of research based on Coleman's (1988, 1988, 1990) claim that dense networks with highly interconnected actors should be beneficial for the development of trust among network members, which in turn facilitates resource exchange (Semrau & Werner, 2014, p.504)."

- "While providing access to information and knowledge, for example, is almost cost–free, the situation is different when it comes to supporting a nascent entrepreneur with contacts or financial capital (Semrau & Werner, 2014, p.516)."

Librarian Application, "It doesn't hurt to ask":

- Encourage Entrepreneurs to ask for advice from competitors and clients. If they don't make a sale, tell them to ask for advice on what they can do differently to close future sales. The worst they could say is no.
Flomotion's Information Needs (Start-Up and Growth Stages):

**Start Up:**
- Legal Formation (Trademark, Incorporation, etc.)
- Basic Banking and Bookkeeping
- Bootstrap Financing (Crowdfunding, Pre-orders)
- Technology (Website & eCommerce)

**Growth:**
- HR (Talent Acquisition, Management, and Retention)
- Supply Chain Management
- Equity Financing (VC and PEI)

**Sourcing**
- (Onshore vs. Offshore)

**Sales & Distribution**

**Partnerships & Marketing**

**Start-Up, Expansion, and Maturity Information Needs from Different Business Types:**

**Start Up:**
- **Hot Sauce Business: Labeling** (Try Cornell's Food Venture Center)

**Expansion:**
- **Packaging Free Grocery Store: Franchising** (Books like the Bond's Guides, financial ratios, and Referrals)

**Maturity:**
- **Bar: Selling the Business** (State Liquor Authority, Books, and Referrals)

What it means for Librarians:
- Identify and learn about key industries in your region or programmatic relationships
- Know that more research and will be required
- Ask for advice on sources/referrals from industry professionals
"You know what you develop: My monthly monograph allocation at BPL was higher than my yearly allocation at SDSU"

Practical Advice Example: International Nonprofit Operations?

- Q: My Nonprofit is planning on providing relief efforts in Haiti? Financial or Legal Issues?
- A: This book from Wiley should give you good Practical Advice and places to seek further input

Data Discovery Example: Global LGBTQ+ Market?

- Q: My business sells LGBTQ+ cards through eCommerce channels. What are good global markets?
- A: This book from New Press should tell you where to find relevant statistics on the global LGBTQ+ community
"To continue to grow and thrive as a community business center, it is necessary to leave the traditional boundaries of the library and to build relationships with the local business community. Forming relationships takes much time and effort, but it is key to developing strategic partnerships that will allow for future growth. (Weiss, Serlis-McPhillips, 2011, p.70)."

Standard Partnerships:

- Programming (in and out the Library)
- Business Mentor Services (in and out the Library)
- Library Research Services (in and out of the Library)
- Referrals

New Directions:

- "In Kind" Donations – Most of the food and beverages at BPL events was in the form of "In Kind" Donations from companies like Sixpoint Brewery and Brooklyn Winery.
- "In Kind" Memberships – The BKLYN Fashion Academy identified partnerships with Trade Groups as a route to enhance information access through "In Kind" memberships for program participants (Tully, 2019).
CUAL as the Basic Framework:

- **Currency:** Does the resource need to be current, or would, for example, older data for which access might be more readily available or affordable be an option?"

- **Uses:** Is the resource needed for the classroom? For an individual researcher? The number of access points needed can inform decisions about how to proceed."

- **Access:** Is mediated access an option, perhaps for a limited number of users? How will users know this resource is available to them? Can it be effectively represented in the catalog or on a guide? Does your library have a physical space in which users might be provided with single-point access? Can parallel access be offered to online students who may or may not be on campus?

- **Limitations:** Does the license have restrictions on access, for example, for academic use only or specific wording regarding password sharing, and how do you inform users of those terms? Could these limitations defeat the purpose of subscribing? To what extent do limitations on use and access impair user experience of the resource?"

(Cooper, McCracken, Orcutt, & Rotenberg, 2017, p.220)

**Intro to Licensing for Business Librarians:**


Academic Takeaway: the Value of Non-Business Sources

- According to the Reference and User Services Association's Business Research Competencies (Appendix 1), "Trade and Mass Market Providers (including Magazines)" are important Business Information Providers (RUSA, 2019).

- Many Trade Journals are NOT in Business Article Aggregators, and my realization to check other databases was largely a result of having Ulrichs Online.
"Proprietary online business databases are the bread and butter of truly efficient and successful business research (Ross, 2013, p.9)."

Databases not readily associated with business can be equally beneficial or effective

**Engineering Databases Useful for Prototyping or Web Development:**
- IEEE Xplore
- ACM DL
- ASM Handbooks

**Social/Computer Science Databases for Primary Research/Market Validation:**
(Hot Topic: Being discussed by Heimann and Krstevska at this Conference)
- SAGE Research Methods
- Safari Tech Books
Based on Internal Data, Entrepreneurship HIP Courses or Programs Generated the Majority of my Traffic:

Rhetoric & Writing Studies 290 (Business Writing Prerequisite) - Collaborative Assignments and Projects

"Collaborative learning combines two key goals: learning to work and solve problems in the company of others, and sharpening one's own understanding by listening seriously to the insights of others, especially those with different backgrounds and life experiences (Kuh, 2008)."

Business Administration 404 & 795 (Small Business Consulting & Business Consulting) - Capstone Courses and Projects

"Whether they're called “senior capstones” or some other name, these culminating experiences require students nearing the end of their college years to create a project of some sort that integrates and applies what they've learned (Kuh, 2008)."

Zahn Innovation Platform Launchpad (Market Research Mentor) - Learning Communities

"The key goals for learning communities are to encourage integration of learning across courses and to involve students with “big questions” that matter beyond the classroom (Kuh, 2008)."


