



This is a place for everybody.

A Marketing Librarian is a relatively new career path in the library world. At some point, we realized there was an identity problem with libraries. People still picture the stereotypical librarian, the old lady with a bun in her hair, shushing everyone, and assume libraries are only for people who read boring books. So, as an industry, we wanted to change that perception. This is where the Marketing Librarian role emerged. Now, many library schools offer marketing courses to help students learn how to better communicate what's happening in public libraries.

I see my job as highlighting our personalities, which is a little different from what you might expect. I come from a different background, and I've seen the impact that approach can have. The people in our building, the staff and employees, are the lifeblood of our library. It's my job to showcase that, along with our resources, books, events, and programs. We want the community to know what they can find here: job search assistance, resumé help, entertainment, and even companionship through activities like craft classes. But most importantly, we want them to feel welcome.

Our librarians and staff truly care about the community. They love their jobs, and I want everyone in Florence to know that! That's why I focus on capturing moments of fun and laughter. It's not always about reading books or discussing book titles; though, of course, we do that too. But we also do so much more. I want to make people laugh and entertain them while showing them that, no matter who they are or what their background is, they will feel welcome here. They will find someone on this staff they can relate to. That's the biggest part of my job at the library.

Public libraries are taxpayer-funded, and we rely on our community. In return, we strive to give back. That's the message we work to communicate we are here for everyone, as a resource and a support system.

Beyond marketing, many of us wear multiple hats, as is common in many industries. In addition to my marketing role, I also work in reference services. Today, for example, is my late shift, I didn't have to be here until 10, but I was so excited to post a reel we created that

I woke up at 8 a.m. to do it. It was a spur-of-the-moment idea. Sometimes I plan these posts, but other times, inspiration just strikes.

I also find fulfillment in working at the reference desk, you handle all kinds of requests.

Some people don't know how to use a mouse, open a Word document, or format a résumé. Others just need help printing something. These may seem like small, everyday tasks, but sometimes, you encounter someone facing what feels like an overwhelming problem, and within minutes, you can help them solve it. That's what makes this job so rewarding.

I remember a woman who came in and said, "I don't know how to use my phone." We often help older adults who find technology overwhelming. She had just gotten the phone, but her grandkids weren't around to assist her. I don't even remember exactly what I helped her with, but I do remember her reaction. At the end of our conversation, she reached across the desk, took my hand, and said, "You are a blessing to me today. I'm so glad I came here, and I'm grateful for your help."

That's happened a few times. I recall another gentleman who kept returning to the desk, apologizing each time for needing more help. I reassured him, saying, "It's okay, that's what I'm here for." And that, to me, is what being part of a library is all about.

Kimberly Basso, Marketing/Reference Librarian

Florence County Library