Introduction

Feedback from our students in recent years has consistently identified limited study space and environmental hygiene as the main sources of dissatisfaction. Students complained that people were treating the library as their own personal space, littering shared work spaces, attempting to 'reserve' computer study spaces by leaving personal possessions around them for extended periods, and singly occupying group meeting pods. It was decided to approach this challenge with a promotional behavioural modification campaign to encourage a considerate, respectful attitude among students.

What the campaign involved

Campaigns that attempt to influence people and call for improvements in behaviour risk being perceived as criticisms that attack a person's sense of self-worth. A typical response is to do anything to reinforce and protect ones' sense of self-worth in the face of this perceived attack, rather than modifying one's behaviour (Cooper, 2007, p. 92). A campaign was therefore developed that centred on aspirational motivation rather than criticism.

A strong motivator for students in a time of relatively low employment is arguably the offer of skills, attributes and competencies that will make them more attractive to prospective employers (*e.g.* Cooper, 2007; Gbadamosi, Evans, Richardson, & Ridolfo, 2015). Leveraging this existing motivation, a gentler, more subtle campaign was introduced that promoted considerate behaviour, resource sharing and professional conduct as key skills students could develop at university to enhance their employability.

The "Employability starts at university" strapline and consistent campaign design motifs united the campaign, making the different messages quickly and easily recognisable wherever they were displayed. All available digital and printed communication channels were employed: images with coaxing messages on social media (primarily Facebook and Twitter) and supportive sentiments and retweets of complaints from students about the behaviour of other students; advice on employable behaviour on the Library blog; large posters around the Library and plasma screen slides displayed on screens across the open access computing suites across campus. Convergent design of modern media afforded efficiency savings because the same widescreen format landscape image designed to fit a modern plasma screen is a perfect fit for Facebook and Twitter.

Mild humour was used to soften the messages and encourage the audience to reflect and adopt a collective identity with their "colleagues". Students were encouraged to think of university as a workplace and that they should treat the library as their workspace and fellow students as professional colleagues. The suggestion was that

the same attitudes, behaviours and competencies expected in workplaces are those appropriate to university study.

Whilst there is no direct evidence to show that the campaign has changed behaviour there has been a reduction in the number of complaints received about these issues and staff feel that there has been a reduction in litter.

Examples of campaign materials

References

Cooper, J. (2007). Cognitive dissonance: fifty years of a classic theory. London: Sage.

Gbadamosi, G., Evans, C., Richardson, M., Ridolfo, M. (2015). Employability and students' part-time work in the UK: does self-efficacy and career aspiration matter? *British Educational Research Journal* [early online view]. doi:10.1002/berj.3174

Tomlinson, M. (2008). 'The degree is not enough': students' perceptions of the role of higher education credentials for graduate work and employability. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 29*(1), 49-61. doi: 10.1080/01425690701737457

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