

The best-value route to the heart of your community
Genuine Library Bookmarks.

Replicated from the collection of Mrs B. A. Smith Leicester, circa 1920.



Obviously, the concept of putting promotional messages on a variety of materials including bookmarks is anything but new. Bookmarks specifically have had a long and obvious association with public libraries, but the last twelve years have seen a significant change in the way that libraries use materials such as bookmarks to promote their own services to their visitors.

Bookmarks have been used as vehicles for promotional messages for centuries, and as with any other form of marketing media, one of the challenges has always been to ensure that they finish up in the hands of the target audience.

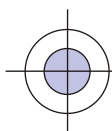
Public libraries have long been seen as a means of achieving this, and since librarians are by the nature of their profession helpful and accommodating people, they have rarely turned away bookmarks from organisations with a public service message. Librarians of course have always seen the power and effectiveness of bookmarks, but they have never had the resources to produce their own to a sufficient quality and standard that made regular production a possibility – that is, until we came along!

In recent years public libraries have come under a deal of scrutiny by government, notably the Audit Commission and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, both of which have encouraged a greater awareness of marketing in general and made specific recommendations to improve in-house marketing and promotion of library services to visitors. To that end, most of the public libraries in the UK now use our services as an integral part of their strategic promotional activity. Not only does senior management look upon bookmarks as a vital weapon in their armoury, but the 'front-line' counter staff feel a genuine sense of ownership in what they see as their own bookmarks – tools which they can use directly to enhance the service they give to their customers.

It is for precisely this reason we make a point of stressing to potential advertisers that what we produce are the libraries' 'own' bookmarks, which they take care and pride in distributing. On the surface, it is probably natural for sponsors to imagine that they would be getting better value for money if they can see their own message on both sides of a bookmark - after all, twice the space for the same money can seem like a good deal. But the reality is that not only has the enthusiasm of librarians and staff to distribute the bookmarks completely vanished, but on top of this bookmarks without a library message are now in direct competition with the libraries' own bookmarks, which we produce for them in accordance with their marketing strategy.

Oddly, the good news from your point of view is that the libraries have effectively been given the remit to improve their marketing, without any significant improvement in the funds available to them to do so! The benefit of this from the advertiser's point of view, is that the single side which is now available to you on a library bookmark is considerably more effective than double-sided bookmarks ever were, since the medium is now an actively-promoted marketing tool. Double-sided bookmarks were once considered by libraries to be a mere nuisance, indulged with customary good grace, but now are just considered to be a nuisance and are frequently not even tolerated at all!

It is therefore understandable that so many organisations, at both local and national level, which had previously experimented with their own double-sided bookmarks are now firm converts to the proven benefits of using our services to harness the persistent, penetrative and persuasive medium of genuine library bookmarks.



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