[1]Articulating Value and Impact Through Outcome-Centered Service Delivery: the Student and Learning Support Experience at the University of Sunderland.

Abstract

Purpose- The purpose of this paper is to share the ways in which Student and Learning Support at the University of Sunderland has embedded and matured a new outcome-centered performance model - our Quality Model - in order to create an agile evidence-base of value, outcome and impact evidence. We will also share how, having established the fundamental principles regarding value and impact capture in our library setting, the concepts and approaches have also been developed and applied successfully within the context of multi-converged service delivery across our wider Student and Learning Support Service, using the AMOSSHE Value and Impact Toolkit (AMOSSHE, 2011.) Our approach will be illustrated with two case studies, the first focusing on University Library Services and the second upon the Student Counselling Service.

Originality/Value
As a performance approach, the The Quality Model is an original concept in that it is a self-formed model designed to meet the strategic needs of the University of Sunderland. It differs from many performance models in that it is founded on a holistic approach to service culture and customer-relationship management and is based upon strategic marketing principles.

The Quality Model and AMOSSHE Toolkit are of particular relevance as many Higher Education services are being increasingly challenged to demonstrate their value and impact and the outcomes their services deliver. This calls for a strategic approach to managing qualitative evidence. Therefore, although bespoke, our approach is transferable to the strategic priorities of other HE settings.

Findings
Our findings will reveal that by establishing an outcome-focused model we have been able to apply it across a converged service in order to generate the evidence required to articulate the value and impact of our key service objectives.

Keywords – Academic Libraries, Student Services, Counselling, Higher Education, performance management, organizational culture, customer relationship, strategic marketing, impact, value, value for money, outcome, AMOSSE

---

[1] This paper was presented at the 11th International Conference on Performance Measurement in Libraries

Introduction
Evidence of the value our customers place upon our services, the outcome they make possible and the impact of those services, has arguably never been a more precious commodity in securing, maintaining and developing services for our communities. In a fast-changing, sometimes financially uncertain and increasingly consumer-led H.E. landscape, proving value and worth is at a premium.

This paper will build on that delivered at the 10th Northumbria Conference in 2012 (Grieves and Halpin, 2014) which described our initial approaches to establishing an outcome-based performance model – University of Sunderland Library Services, Quality Model. Through it we will explore how our maturing Quality Model has nurtured an outcome-based culture, that now drives service planning and delivery and that has enabled us to implement a strategic approach to developing an agile and qualitative evidence-base. This evidence-base gives us the ability to demonstrate to our customers the outcomes they gain and the long-term, sustainable benefits and impacts of engaging with our various service offers. This customer-derived evidence demonstrates to our stakeholders how our customers value our services and the wider impact they have.

Having established the fundamental principles of capturing value and impact, the concepts and approaches were developed in tandem across our Library and Student Services, within the context of Student and Learning Support – a multi-converged service.

This paper is illustrated with case studies from University Library Services and the Student Counselling Service at Sunderland.

Defining terms
For the purpose of this paper the following definitions have been used, which are influenced by Poll's definitions (Poll, 2012, p. 121):

Stakeholder: decision makers and funders e.g. university executive
Customer: students, staff and visitors to the service
Output: quantity of products/services delivered as a result of processes e.g. number of article downloads
Benefit: a helpful or advantageous effect for the customer
Outcome: direct, pre-defined, anticipated or desired consequence to the customer as a result of the output. Outcome illustrates planning objectives and mission
Impact: the resultant, longer-term change(s) or influence(s) made upon the customer after interacting with products and services
Value: the importance customers and stakeholders attach to services, which is related to the actual or potential benefit, outcome and impact. Monetary value may be a factor

Principles and drivers

A performance model enables an organization to generate evidence of its contribution to the fulfillment of wider strategic aims for service planning purposes, both for its customers and for its stakeholders. It should be aspirational and transformational in driving the organization to instill new cultures and achieve new priorities. Our performance model at Sunderland was not able to deliver on these principles and the emerging culture in H.E. expedited the need for a more sophisticated approach.

'An Avalanche is Coming' (Barber, Donnelly and Rizvi, 2013) predicted an emerging sea-change towards consumerism that would have a major impact on newer universities, such as Sunderland. 'University leaders will challenge the university as a whole, and individual departments, to answer the question, 'What's so special about you?' (Barber, Donnelly and Rizvi, 2013, p. 50). In order to advocate and champion the contribution of library services to achieving wider organizational strategic priorities they, 'need to demonstrate and provide evidence of their relevance, value and worth.' (Danuta, Nitecki and Abels (2013), quoted in Jantti, 2014, p. 1).

We also need to evidence value for money as leverage to justify resource requests. 'Libraries need compelling evidence that directly links their activities to positive outcomes… Libraries that do not provide such evidence will be at increasing risk of having their funding reduced or eliminated.' (Cox and Jantti (2010), quoted Jantti and Cox, 2012, p. 309).

Sunderland's existing performance model was not designed to support this new evidence-based, outcome-focused culture. It focused on measuring past performance via rigid service standards and performance indicators and it was detached from our strategic priorities. As Hosseini-Ara and Jones describe, 'We spend all our design and development time on the how question rather than why and what questions…why are we investing in this service …What do we want to 'come out' of this service for our users'. (Hosseini-Ara and Jones, 2013, p. 2). Targeted outcome and impact were neither mapped against wider strategic priorities nor built-into service planning and design.

We were failing to capture or articulate evidence of the value our customers placed upon our services or the real impact we had upon their aspirations and experience. 'Indicators, measures and analysis that may have served libraries well in the past, are now being questioned for their adequacy to communicate outcomes, impact or positive affect for the various stakeholder groups the library serves.'(Matthews (2012), quoted in Jantti, 2014, p. 1). Whilst our model managed quantitative data capture, it failed to recognize and strategically harness qualitative feedback as the vital service asset it could be. We required a strategic approach to capturing relevant and timely qualitative evidence that when presented alongside quantitative data would create a powerful, agile evidence-base.

The impetus for evidence capture was also a driver. This impetus may be driven by the stakeholder e.g. to inform a judgment regarding return on investment or by the

customer e.g. how attending a skills session could have a long-term impact on success. Often, however, our stakeholders and our customers do not drive this impetus, in which case our service itself must demonstrate thought-leadership in order to generate, feed and articulate the evidence that we want stakeholders and customers to take notice of and understand.

Our Quality Model needed to engender a cultural shift in order to build resulting value, outcome and impact into the design of service planning *ab initio*, thus driving our outcome-focused service culture and ensuring that our approach to capturing evidence was agile and timely.

Comparison of priorities of our existing performance model and our Quality Model
Reflecting upon our existing performance model we shaped the priorities that would underpin our new Quality Model.

Existing Performance Model	The Quality Model
Fixed set of reactive, service standards and performance indicators. Not aligned to current strategic service priorities or stakeholder goals	Proactive, fluid and agile measures. Aligned to strategic service priorities and stakeholder goals. A 'snapshot approach' that combines to form an agile evidence-base
Performance measurement is the add-on at the end of service delivery rather than a driver for service priorities and planning	Evidence capture is a driver for service culture, planning and delivery. Expected outcome is 'built into' service planning from the ground up, therefore having the ability to capture evidence of contribution to current strategic priorities and stakeholder goals
Predominantly quantitative. Qualitative feedback capture is not strategically managed in the same way as quantitative data but is ad-hoc and focused on customer satisfaction	A strategic, targeted approach to qualitative evidence capture that when presented alongside quantitative data forms a 'rounded narrative.'
Inward-looking and output-driven. A preoccupation with procedure and internal efficiency. Neglecting customer experience-led evidence as a service asset	Customer/stakeholder-centered and capturing evidence of customer value, outcome and impact. Ensuring customer-led evidence is a core service-asset
Data collected on individual services in isolation of their combined outcomes or impacts	Capturing evidence of the value, outcome and impact of holistic service offers

The strategic marketing approach to developing an outcome-based Quality Model

'Marketing is managing profitable customer relationships. The aim of marketing is to create value for customers and to capture value from customers in return.' (Kotler and Armstrong (2009 p. 26).

It was the potential of strategic marketing to nurture mutually beneficial customer relationships that lead us to explore its methodology in relation to performance management. Strategic marketing and our 7 Step Strategic Marketing Toolkit (Grieves, 2010), provided us with the process and techniques to define, articulate and capture evidence of our value and impact through a new kind of relationship with our customers.

Our 7 Step Toolkit defined the key steps of strategic marketing and formed the fulcrum of our thinking:

FIGURE 1: THE 7 STEP STRATEGIC MARKETING TOOLKIT

1. Identify your strategic direction
2. S.W.O.T. services offers
3. Profile customers into segments
4. Match offers to segments
5. Transform offers into benefits
6. Translate benefits into messages
7. Plan your conversational campaign

Elements of strategic marketing methodology were particularly relevant to us. First, an alignment with wider strategic priorities of the organization, 'The Library's understanding of the current university landscape and therefore its alignment with the stated aspirations of the university.' (Jantti, 2014, p. 3) and the understanding that, 'the library needs to set its sights on those few impacts that are meaningful to the decision makers.' (Hosseini-Ara and Jones, 2013, p. 2) By aligning our services and the outcomes *we* wanted to capture with our stakeholders' goals and 'how *they* define and measure value' (Hosseini-Ara and Jones, 2013, p. 2), we ensured that our model would be proactive, agile and aligned to current priorities, and capable of generating meaningful evidence for our stakeholders.

Strategic marketing places the customer and the stakeholder firmly at the heart of service design and delivery - as Barber states, 'the student consumer will increasingly be king.' (Barber, Donnelly and Rizvi, 2013, p. 51) Refocusing our culture around our customers and involving them as, 'active agents' (Barber, Donnelly and Rizvi, 2013, p. 65) successfully moved us on from our internal, process driven model. By focusing on the aspirations and values of our stakeholders *and* customers, we were also able

5

to make the shift from measuring individual services to combining those services into integrated service offers with an expected holistic outcome.

Key to marketing methodology is the focus upon 'benefit' or 'difference-made'. Rather than selling the features or characteristics of a service we must sell the contribution we expect it to make to an individual and describe the possible value they will place upon it. This concept directly reflected our aim for a focus on outcome and has shaped our approaches in both our Library and Student Services settings. We, therefore, defined the expected benefits or outcomes for our holistic service-offers and built them into the design of our services from the outset. Asking ourselves, 'What will success look like for this service? Why will this success measure be valuable for the users, our stakeholders, and us?' (Hosseini-Ara and Jones, 2013, p. 2).

The result was a holistic service catalogue with defined expected outcomes, aligned to the strategic priorities of the organization. Strategic marketing techniques have enabled us to become skilled in articulating these expected outcomes to our customers so that they are clearly exemplified and contextualized in terms of longer-term impacts. This articulation is realized through a series of imaginative and innovative campaigns (Pinterest/UniOfSunLib). We have embraced Barber's challenge to become 'sharper and clearer' about what we offer and why. (Barber, Donnelly and Rizvi, 2013, p. 51).

To refer back to Kotler, (Kotler and Armstrong (2009 p. 26) strategic marketing focuses upon mutually beneficial customer relationships. We offer value in the form of the articulation of outcome-focused service offers and our customers provide us with value in the form of tangible outcome evidence. As our model has matured, we have seen the true return on this value in terms of nurturing and refining our customers' capacity to generate the qualitative outcome-centered evidence we require. The success of this approach is embedded in the strategic marketing process. It is absolutely fundamental that expected outcomes are built into service-design and aligned to strategic stakeholder goals; that these expected outcomes are clearly articulated and that through carefully nurtured customer relationships, the opportunity for facilitated reflective practice is built into service delivery. This clear articulation of expected outcome provides the customer with a frame of reference in which they are best placed to reflect, make a judgment and better articulate the actual outcome of our services.

At Sunderland, we refer to this as a 'facilitated conversation.'

FIGURE 2: FACILITATED CONVERSATIONS

ULS Strategic Marketing

1. Identify expected outcomes
2. Design outcome based services
3. Articulate expected outcomes
4. Deliver service to meet expected outcomes
5. Customer reflects on actual outcome
6. Capture evidence of actual outcomes 'Rounded Narrative'
7. Package powerfully and share outcomes

The rounded narrative and agile evidence-base

Our Quality Model is now aligned to strategic objectives and stakeholder goals: it is meaningful, targeted, agile and responsive. We collect targeted evidence based on what we need our stakeholders to understand, rather than collecting ongoing data against a static set of service standards. Thus, we take a 'snapshot' rather than a longitudinal approach to qualitative evidence capture.

For each service offer/campaign we strategically plan the generation of a body of qualitative 'solicited' evidence from: our 'facilitated conversations' with customers; from library and academic staff and from 'observed evidence' (Poll, 2012, p. 126). The qualitative contextualizes the quantitative, and the quantitative underpins the qualitative.

We visualize this evidence-base as a 'rounded narrative.' As Killick describes in relation to analyzing data for subscription management, the 'quantitative system did not take into account the value of the information … the new framework sought to bring together a narrative approach on ... the impact any cancellation would have … To bring together quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods equally.' (Killick, 2014, p.1).

FIGURE 3: 'THE ROUNDED NARRATIVE'
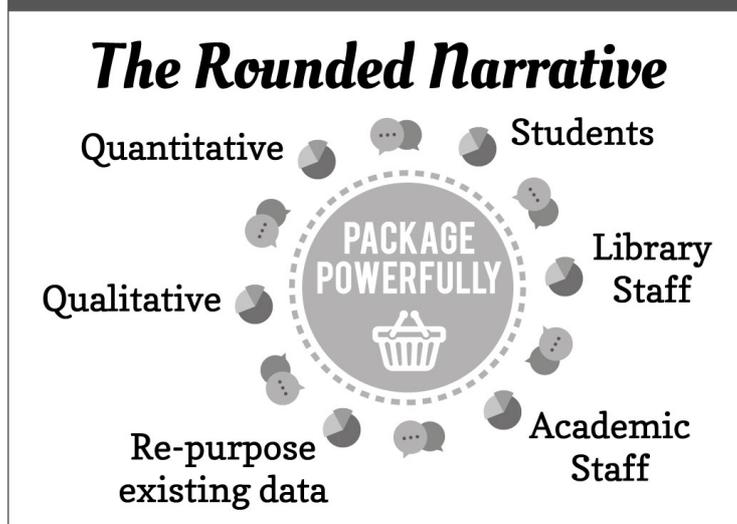
The result is an evidence-base of 'solicited' qualitative and 'unsolicited' quantitative outcome-focused data targeted around our key service-offers. The importance of being able to package data so that it can be easily digested by stakeholders and derive maximum impact cannot be underestimated and is again founded in the fundamental strategic marketing technique of matching outcome to stakeholder motivation. We became more practiced at creating, 'a new narrative for communicating our role and unique contribution to the University's agenda.' (Jantti, 2014, p. 3).

Thus, we provide bespoke reports, which directly evidence the customer perception of the expected values, outcomes and impacts that we defined and built into service-offer, planning and design. As these service-offer outcomes are closely aligned to institutional priorities from the outset, they powerfully evidence our contribution to strategic outcomes. They also provide evidence that enables our stakeholders to make judgments about our longer-term impacts. Aligned to our stakeholder goals and therefore, 'the perceived value influential people attribute to the library' (Jantti, 2014, p.1) they are a powerful influence on the ways in which stakeholders define, understand contextualize and appreciate our value.

Student Services and the AMOSSHE Value and Impact Toolkit
The drivers of outcome-focused service delivery also necessitated a strategic approach to evidence-capture in Student Services. A key driver for Student Services was to demonstrate service impact, 'hidden value' and value for money to University stakeholders.

The fundamental principles that had underpinned our development in the Library were directly comparable across both service areas. Core and common in approach were the identification of client groups and particularly a focus on service benefits and 'difference made.' Whilst University Library Services had employed strategic marketing to form the new Quality Model, Student Services drew upon and developed the AMOSSHE Value and Impact Toolkit (AMOSSHE, 2011).

FIGURE 4: AMOSSHE VALUE & IMPACT TOOLKIT

AIM	What is it you set out to do?
OFFER	What specific services do you give to your students?
BENEFIT	What benefits do students get from you service(s)?
IMPACT	Evidence from students: evaluations and numbers engaged
COST	£ investment in staffing and non staffing
VFM	**VALUE FOR MONEY JUDGEMENT** Based on all of the above does the impact make the cost worthwhile? Based on a balance of cost measures and benefits received

The AMOSSHE Toolkit (AMOSSHE, 2011) provides a strategic framework for Student Services to make balanced judgments on their value for money. It ensures that expected stakeholder and service outcomes are identified and articulated at the outset of service planning and therefore become the drivers of service delivery. The AMOSSHE Toolkit then facilitates a 'rounded narrative approach' to evidence capture. It provides a framework whereby the service captures and gathers evidence of quantitative inputs e.g. staff resource/time; quantitative outputs e.g. number of student counselling sessions alongside qualitative outcome and impact evidence e.g. the difference a student counselling session made to an individual and its longer-term impact. For example, this could evidence how an intervention had helped a student client to remain on their programme and often how such an intervention has improved their emotional wellbeing and kept them 'safe'. This 'rounded narrative' thereby provides the evidence whereby an indicative, contextualized value for money judgment can be made.

Case Studies

Case Study 1 University Library Services 'Investing in You' Campaigns (2013/14 and 2014/2015)
University Library Services applied its Quality Model to underpin the key strategic aim of improving our National Student Survey score (Question 16: Learning Resources 'The library resources and services are good enough for my needs.' (HEFCE, 2015) by successfully raising awareness of the University's extra investment in information resources. It was also our aim to generate a compelling evidence-base to demonstrate to the University Executive student awareness of this investment; the value they placed upon it; the outcomes it would bring, and the impact it would have. A further aim was to lever additional investment in information resources for a second year running. The result was a 5% increase in NSS score (over the years 2014 and 2015) and repeated extra investment from the University Executive in 2014/2015.

FIGURE 5: ULS CASE STUDY 'INVESTING IN YOU CAMPAIGN'

STEP 1 — IDENTIFY EXPECTED OUTCOMES

IMPROVE NSS SCORE FOR Q16
NSS Q16 — Improve National Student Survey (NSS) score: Q16

DEMONSTRATE RETURN ON INVESTMENT
£250,000 — Extra investment (2013 & 2014) in core texts, wider reading & e-books

REDUCE NEGATIVE COMMENTS
Reduce negative 'learning resources' comments

INVESTMENT AWARENESS students are aware of extra investment in collections
DEFINE & COMMUNICATE TERM 'LEARNING RESOURCES' as used in NSS Q16
CREATE R.O.I. EVIDENCE BASE additional evidence base independant of NSS results
FACILITATE LEVERAGE evidence assists leverage for future additional investment

STEP 2 — DESIGN OUTCOME BASED SERVICES

Planned Investment
LIAISON TEAM BUY MORE: £ — core texts, wider reading, e-books

LAUNCH NEW READING LIST SERVICE
My Module Resources — My Module Resources new reading list service launched

STEP 3 — ARTICULATE EXPECTED OUTCOMES
VIA BESPOKE MOTION GRAPHIC — motion graphic articulates extra investment messages & expected outcomes of extra investment
Delivered by flash-mobs at final year lectures, campus roadshows & social media

STEP 4 — DELIVER SERVICE TO MEET EXPECTED OUTCOMES
Deliver the services you designed at step 2
MORE CORE TEXTS, WIDER READING, E-BOOKS AND LAUNCH MY MODULE RESOURCES

STEP 5 — CUSTOMER REFLECTS ON ACTUAL OUTCOME
AT CAMPUS ROADSHOWS
Library staff host multiple 'share & win' roadshows around campus. Customers invited to feedback via cards shared on 'shareometer'

STEP 6 — CAPTURE EVIDENCE OF ACTUAL OUTCOMES 'ROUNDED NARRATIVE'
QUANTITATIVE EVIDENCE CAPTURED
Investment pattern across Faculties Number of students noticing extra core texts, wider reading & e-books

QUALITATIVE EVIDENCE CAPTURED
Reflective free-text student observations regarding extra investment in learning resources and the impact this may have

Students most aware of extra investment in core texts in 2014 and e-books in 2015- directly reflect spending strategy

STEP 7 — PACKAGE POWERFULLY AND SHARE OUTCOMES
DATA, EVIDENCE & FINDINGS RECORDED AND PRESENTED **WITHIN** INFOGRAPHIC
Investing in Your Success 2015
https://magic.piktochart.com/output/6462634-investing-in-your-success-2015

R.O.I
Q16 NSS SCORE IMPROVED + 5% ACROSS TWO YEARS
NEGATIVE 'LEARNING RESOURCES' COMMENTS REDUCED
SUCCESSFUL LEVERAGE FOR EXTRA INVESTMENT
RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Case Study 2 University Counselling Service mental health support provision study (2014/2015)

The AMOSSHE Toolkit model (AMOSSHE, 2011) was applied to the Student Counselling Service. Our aim was to demonstrate the value and impact of the service, its value for money, and to lever additional staffing resource in order to extend mental health support provision. The evidence gathered as a result of this value for money study was a contributing factor in the University Executive allocating additional staffing resource, which resulted in extended student mental health provision.

FIGURE 6: CASE STUDY 'STUDENT COUNSELLING SERVICE'

INPUTS quantitative

3 staff FTE providing student Counselling service

£44 PER HOUR — £44 estimated cost per hour based only on direct support provided

total estimated costs not including staff Counselling cost:

Staffing & Costs

465 direct referrals to the service

£116,657

IMPACTS quantitative

45% — 45% of all Counselling referrals self referred to the service

89% — 89% of all appointments offered were attended

11% — Only 11% of sessions were not attended

Attendance Impact

96% STAYING ON AT UNI
96% of students told us Counselling impacted upon them staying at University - for 20% most significant factor

87% BETTER ACADEMIC WORK
87% of students felt Counselling supported them to do better in their academic work - for 15% most significant factor

94% POSITIVE OVERALL IMPACT ON UNI EXPERIENCE
94% of students told us Counselling had positively impacted upon overall University experience - for 15% most significant factor

95% ENHANCED EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS
95% of students told us Counselling had enhanced their employability skills - for 21% most significant factor

Based on feedback forms returned (no. 96 - 21%)

OUTPUTS quantitative

72% **Attendance Rate**

240 estimated hours spent supporting staff

52 estimated hours spent seeing students in crisis

1947: total number of counselling sessions offered

1409: total number of counselling sessions attended

395 estimated hours sent seeing students outside of counselling: est. 350 + 45

2634 SUPPORT HRS

4: average number of sessions attended

Support Hours

IMPACTS qualitative

"Before Counselling I felt a lot of issues were swamping me but now I feel I can take issues with a new approach. I don't think I would be here writing this if it wasn't for their help. Thank you."

Conclusions

A value, outcome and impact-centered performance model now drives service culture, planning and delivery in Student and Learning Support, Sunderland. The transferable, defining principle of outcome-centered service delivery has inspired both Library and Student Services to design strategic approaches to harnessing qualitative evidence as a core service asset that adds context and value to our quantitative data in the form of a 'rounded-narrative'. The resulting agile-evidence base enables us to demonstrate to our customers the benefits and outcomes they can expect our services to bring about, and to ensure that our stakeholders fully understand the value our customers place upon our services; the contribution we make to strategic objectives, our value for money and the longer-term impact our services have upon customers and the wider University.

References

AMOSSHE Value and Impact Toolkit (2011) Available at: amosshe.org.uk (accessed: 20th August 2015)

Barber, M. Donnelly, K. and Rizvi, S. (2013) *An avalanche is coming: Higher education and the revolution ahead*. IPPR. Available at: http://www.ippr.org (accessed 20th August 2015)

Cox, B.L. and Jantti, M.H. (2012) 'Capturing business intelligence required for targeted marketing, demonstrating value, and driving process improvement'. *Library and Information Science Research*, 34 (4) pp. 308-316

Grieves, K. and Halpin, M. (2014) 'Developing a library quality model at University of Sunderland Library Services'. *Performance Management and Metrics*, 15 (1/2) pp. 50-57

Grieves, K. (2010) *How do you like your eggs in the morning?: A simple 7 step toolkit for creating strategic marketing plans that really work.* University of Sunderland. Available at: http://sure.sunderland.ac.uk/id/eprint/3069 (accessed: 20th August 2015)

HEFCE: National Student Survey (2015) Available at: hefce.ac.uk (accessed: 20th August, 2015)

Hosseini-Ara, M. and Jones, R. (2013) 'Overcoming our habits and learning to measure impact.' *Computers in Libraries*, 33 (5)

Jantti, M. (2014), 'Aspiring to excellence: maximizing data to sustain, shift and reshape a library for the future', *Library Assessment Conference, Association of Research Libraries*, Seattle, United States, pp. 1-9

Killick, S. (2014) *Applying a performance measurement to safeguard budgets: qualitative and quantitative measurement of electronic journal packages.* Available at: http://dspace.lib.cranfield.ac.uk/handle/1826/8657 (accessed: 20 August, 2014)

Kotler, P. and Armstrong, G. (2009) *Principles of Marketing.*
13th Ed. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2009

Poll, R. (2012) 'Can we quantify the library's influence? Creating an ISO standard for impact assessment.' *Performance Measurement and Metrics*, 13(2) pp.121-130

Pinterest/UniOfSunLib Available at: http://pinterest.com/uniofsunlib (accessed: 20 August, 2015)