

Introducing the FIRST Values Framework: Enhancing Outreach, Marketing, and Engagement Through Empathic Design

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Abstract: This article introduces the FIRST Values Framework, a conceptual marketing thinking tool designed to foster empathy in library marketing by aligning strategies with core values and community needs. The framework enhances user-centered design and engagement efforts through five values: fellow-feeling, identification, responsiveness, self-awareness, and thoughtfulness. The literature discusses the significance of empathy in libraries, empathetic marketing, relationship marketing, and incorporating empathy into staff training for service design, highlighting the essential need for empathic connections in library services. The article discusses the integration of empathy across different contexts by briefly comparing the FIRST Values Framework with existing models like design thinking and human-centered design. Practical steps for implementing the framework in libraries are provided, ensuring marketing and outreach efforts are empathetic, user-centered, and impactful.

Keywords: empathy, library marketing, outreach, user-centered design, empathic design, FIRST Values Framework, user engagement, communication

Introduction

Libraries provide services and programs to heterogeneous communities with distinct needs, values, and challenges. This diversity underscores the necessity of inclusive library marketing. In library marketing, empathic design involves deeply understanding users' diverse needs and challenges to create comprehensive marketing campaigns and initiatives. The article is relevant to librarians, library professionals, administrators, and marketing professionals involved in developing and implementing marketing strategies in diverse library settings.

This article delves into integrating empathic design into library marketing through the FIRST Values Framework (Dantus, 2024), which can be applied to outreach, user engagement, and user experience efforts. The FIRST Values Framework is a conceptual marketing thinking tool that fosters empathy in library marketing by guiding the development of strategies aligned with the community's core values and needs. The FIRST Values Framework prioritizes empathy by putting the user first through five core values: fellow-feeling, identification, responsiveness, self-awareness, and thoughtfulness (Dantus, 2024).

Fellow-feeling emphasizes empathy and understanding towards users, identification involves understanding user demographics and motivations, responsiveness focuses on proactive communication and feedback, self-

awareness addresses the library's strengths and limitations, and thoughtfulness considers the broader impact of marketing efforts on users and stakeholders (Dantus, 2024). The FIRST Values Framework is represented by its five core values, each serving a distinct role in developing empathic marketing solutions. Fellow-feeling involves cultivating a shared experience with users, identification requires understanding user needs deeply, responsiveness entails adapting services based on feedback, self-awareness includes reflecting on the library's practices and biases, and thoughtfulness ensures that marketing decisions consider their impact on all stakeholders.

Literature Review

Empathy, at its core, involves the ability to understand others' perspectives and respond with compassion and understanding. Miller and Wallis (2011) state that empathy is "the ability to understand and share the feelings of others" (p. 122). Wiseman (1996), a nursing scholar and clinical professor from the United Kingdom, outlines the "Four Elements of Empathy": seeing the world through another person's eyes, appreciating them as people, understanding how they feel, and then letting them know that you understand. As a central concept in psychology, philosophy, and the humanistic and social sciences (Stueber, 2019), empathy can be integral to understanding users' needs in library settings. Empathy is the key to

understanding users' viewpoints and requirements in visual communication and user-centered design (Kouprie & Visser, 2009).

Lupton (2017) explains that empathy involves seeing the world through the user's eyes and understanding their emotions and perspectives. Education, experience, and practice can foster empathy, making it a key component of effective marketing strategies (Miller, 2019). While empathy is an innate ability, psychologists note that some people are born with it more than others, but anyone can learn to empathize more effectively with practice (Miller, 2019). Empathy is fundamental for building interpersonal connections, as it cultivates understanding, compassion, and meaningful relationships among individuals, making it a crucial skill for effective communication and rapport (Phillips, 2017; Rao, 2018; Tellez & González-Tobón, 2019).

Empathy in Libraries

Empathy is an essential part of library services in academic, school, and public libraries, improving communication, promoting tolerance, and adapting services to community needs. Within the field of library and information sciences (LIS), empathy is integral to the reference exchange between library staff and users (Pionke & Graham, 2021). Empathy in libraries can be broken down into three categories: (1) affective empathy, the ability to understand another person's emotions without being directly emotionally affected (Stueber, 2019); (2) cognitive empathy, the ability to understand

another person's perspective or mental state through conscious thought and reasoning (Wiseman, 1996); and (3) intuitive empathy, the immediate, automatic understanding of another person's emotional state without deliberate conscious thought (Miller, 2019).

Empathy helps with building relationships with library users in public services. Miller & Wallis (2011) provide an interdisciplinary literature review of the role of empathy in the information and knowledge professions. They show that empathy allows library professionals to connect with people at their level, develop trust, and aid in developing rapport with users. Empathy fosters effective communication between library staff and users, with a distinction between intuitive empathy, the immediate understanding of others' emotions, and cognitive empathy, the ability to understand others' perspectives through conscious thought and reasoning (Birdi et al., 2008).

Klare et al. (2014) illustrate that libraries are places where personal connections should be valued above all else. They have a compelling argument for the importance of empathy in library marketing: "feel first, think second" (p. 1). School libraries can foster empathy through initiatives like The Human Library, where people serve as "living books" to challenge prejudices (Brown, 2016, p. 4). Reading fiction has been linked to increased empathy, suggesting academic libraries should value their fiction collections (Rowe, 2018). Through empathic listening to patrons, libraries can understand the community's needs

and use this information to develop programs and services (Carillo-Sotomayor, 2024).

Marketing and Outreach in Libraries

Marketing and outreach in libraries are essential strategies focused on increasing awareness and engaging diverse audiences with library services, resources, and events. In the library context, marketing refers to the strategies and activities employed and involves a deliberate set of activities to foster a constructive and responsive exchange between the library and its actual or potential users (Shontz et al., 2004). Outreach efforts or activities aim to increase awareness of library services, resources, and programs among diverse user groups, including those who may not typically use the library (Reitz, 2017). Additionally, outreach efforts refer to the proactive measures that libraries take to engage with and serve their communities beyond the physical library space (Fraser-Arnott, 2023). A combination of these efforts helps libraries stay relevant and engaged with their communities, whether in academic, public, or specialized libraries.

The effectiveness of marketing initiatives is contingent upon a wide understanding of the diverse needs and values of the library's user community. Marketing and outreach in libraries are multifaceted efforts that require creativity, strategic planning, and adaptability. Effective outreach can significantly enhance the visibility and use of library services, despite

challenges such as limited resources. Effective library marketing involves understanding user needs and preferences. This understanding helps create targeted campaigns that effectively communicate the unique value and benefits of the library's offerings, fostering meaningful connections with users. Outreach marketing has been highly effective in promoting library services, but librarians often face challenges like limited time and funding (Clark, 2021).

Outreach initiatives vary widely, with libraries employing various creative and innovative strategies tailored to their specific contexts and audiences. For example, post-event promotion is valuable for continued engagement and proving the impact of outreach activities, which includes using content from events and assessment data to highlight success (Lafazan & Kiebler, 2017). In public libraries, by utilizing programming to address the needs of the communities served, library outreach activities aim to promote library use and thereby create a good image (Moahi, 2019).

Creating a well-defined marketing plan and yearly schedule assists libraries in coordinating outreach activities with their strategic objectives and maintaining strong community connections (Hackett & Kline, 2023). Strategic planning, such as developing a structured marketing plan and annual schedule, helps libraries align outreach activities with their strategic goals and stay connected with their communities (Hackett & Kline, 2023).

By employing diverse strategies, engaging in post-promotion, and targeting specific user groups, libraries can foster stronger connections with their communities and better fulfill their missions. Furthermore, crafting marketing or advertising campaigns that target specific user groups and employ precise language to promote services can effectively reach and engage diverse audiences. Benedetti (2017) emphasizes the significance of a “user-centered vocabulary” in marketing library services through focus groups and surveys of undergraduate and graduate students (p. 218). The study revealed that participants were unfamiliar with terms like “reference desk.” and that implementing a user-centered vocabulary could help libraries better market their services and resources to their target audience (p. 217).

Libraries often design outreach programs for specific user groups, such as graduate students in professional programs; for example, Munro (2017) used the marketing model of the “seven touches” to increase engagement. Successful outreach often involves collaboration with other departments and community groups, fostering a culture of inclusivity and support for diverse audiences. A culture of “yes” at the University of Nebraska at Omaha Libraries has led to successful partnerships with other university services, expanding the library’s reach into the university community (Owens & Bishop, 2018). Library outreach programs can effectively address public needs and promote library services beyond traditional onsite services. Hosting off-site programs

or partnering with local organizations can help libraries reach underserved populations and foster more significant community engagement beyond the physical library space (Smith & Mercer, 2015).

Empathetic and Relationship Marketing in Libraries

Empathetic and relationship marketing in libraries focuses on understanding and meeting patrons' emotional needs to build long-term connections and improve service quality. The focus of relationship marketing in libraries is on building and keeping positive relationships with users through communication, shared values, and targeted promotions (Adeogun, 2022), while empathetic marketing addresses the emotional needs of students to alleviate library anxiety and enhance their experience (Girton, 2018; Girton et al., 2019). Relationship marketing focuses on building long-term relationships with customers, emphasizing trust and commitment (Adeogun, 2022). In contrast, empathetic marketing aims to address users' core emotional needs, providing a personalized and emotionally resonant experience (Girton, 2018; Girton et al., 2019).

Empathetic marketing strategies foster connections with potential and existing users (Girton et al., 2019). Utilizing Mark Ingwer's definition of empathetic marketing, Girton et al. (2019) used empathetic marketing to develop campaigns and materials in each of their individual libraries, which involved addressing the core emotional needs of users, such as the need for

security, control, self-esteem, recognition, growth, and belonging. In an earlier case study of distance student outreach, Girton (2018) found that empathetic marketing significantly alleviates library anxiety among distance students by proactively addressing their emotional needs and displaying how library staff and services can offer support; this approach cultivates a sense of belonging within the user community (Girton et al., 2019).

The cornerstone of empathetic marketing is catering to core human emotional needs, including control, self-expression, growth, recognition, belonging, and care (Girton et al., 2019). By prioritizing these fundamental aspects, libraries transform their service presentations, making them more compelling and pertinent to student populations (Girton et al., 2019).

Furthermore, fostering collaboration between library staff and users creates an environment conducive to knowledge exchange, deepening comprehension of users' diverse backgrounds and needs (Adeogun, 2022). Empathetic marketing in libraries involves understanding users' emotional needs, indicating whether library services can meet those needs (Girton, 2018), and focusing on building relationships and customer loyalty through personalized interactions (Adeogun, 2022).

User Engagement in Libraries

User engagement in libraries, especially through digital and social media platforms, is critical for improving service delivery and promoting community

interaction. User engagement in libraries pertains to users' interaction, involvement, and participation with library services, resources, and programs (Tiffen & England, 2011). User engagement in libraries is significantly influenced by the type of content shared on social media, the adoption of consumer engagement practices, and the quality of interaction used by digital platforms.

Libraries effectively use social media to promote services and events and create participatory programs such as exhibits, engaging topics, and community building (Zou et al., 2015, 2020). For example, posts about community news, emotionally inspiring messages, and upcoming events elicit high user engagement, especially when images or videos are included (Joo et al., 2018). Libraries adopting user engagement activities, such as enthusiasm, enjoyment, attention, absorption, sharing, learning, and endorsing, can enhance users' cognitive, affective, and behavioral engagement (Twum et al., 2022). There is a strong correlation between user engagement and user satisfaction in digital library contexts, with engaged users more likely to be satisfied with library services (Masrek et al., 2018).

Co-Creation and Service Design in Libraries

In response to changing user expectations and in order to avoid user dissatisfaction in libraries, two strategies are (1) adopting service design methods from the commercial sector, as suggested by de Jong (2014) and (2)

co-creation, as suggested by Islam et al. (2015). Value co-creation is a service-oriented process where value is jointly created by both providers and customers, contrasting traditional goods-dominant logic (Islam et al., 2015). It involves bidirectional interaction, integrating resources, and focusing on provider, customer, and joint spheres for service innovation (Islam et al., 2015).

Co-creation is a collaborative process where organizations and stakeholders, including customers, employees, and partners, work together to create value, innovate, and solve problems (Lupton, 2017). Co-creation in library services is an emerging approach that involves users in the design and development of library services. Co-creation in libraries looks at the traditional divide between “producers” and “consumers” of services, suggesting that neither can create appropriate services alone. Instead, services should be co-created together (Lystbæk et al., 2019, p. 5). In addition, in a case study about an academic library, Islam et al. (2015) redefined their role in the digital environment and created responsive services using the value co-creation framework.

Co-creation in libraries is driven by collaborative knowledge sharing and solution creation, highlighting that everyone can contribute creatively with the right tools and knowledge (Storey, 2015). For example, when planning new services, libraries can involve community members in brainstorming sessions

to ensure that the outcomes meet the needs and expectations of all participants. Involving community members in brainstorming sessions ensures that outcomes meet the needs and expectations of all participants, fostering a sense of ownership within the user community. Service design in libraries involves planning and organizing library resources, staff, and processes to improve the service quality and interaction between the library and its users.

The primary purpose of service design is to develop an exceptionally efficient service system comprising a collection of services that a business offers (de Jong, 2014). An effectively designed service system integrates an organization's different services whenever feasible, to the greatest extent, within practical limits. According to de Jong (2014), service designers aim to achieve "efficiency, client focus, and seamlessness" when building "a service and service system" into their organization (p. 139). Additionally, service design involves planning and organizing library resources, staff, and processes to improve the quality and interaction between the library and its users (Luca & Ulyannikova, 2020). Libraries are reimagining their services to meet user needs, using design thinking methods to build empathy and understand user perspectives (Luca & Ulyannikova, 2020).

Empathic Design

Empathic design, a user-centered approach, centers on understanding and addressing users' needs and emotions to improve their interactions and experiences. Empathic design is considered co-creation as well (Lupton, 2017). Empathic design is “about understanding people’s psychological and emotional needs” (Landwehr, 2007, p. 1). The five steps in empathic design are observation; capturing data; reflection and interpretation of the data; brainstorming, or ideating solutions; and creating potential prototypes and testing solutions (Leonard & Rayport, 1997).

The empathic design process is highly effective when it considers the user’s distinct needs, emotions, and behaviors. This approach fosters meaningful interactions and experiences by addressing user-specific requirements. In a systematic review of empathic design, Tellez and González-Tobón (2019) highlight the significant value of empathic design, particularly in the initial exploratory stages of the design process. Challenges include the risk of losing objectivity (the empathy trap) and the uncertainty of the process (Tellez & González-Tobón, 2019). Critics argue that commercial applications of empathy can commodify it, focusing more on profit than genuine human connection (Tellez & González-Tobón, 2019). Balancing empathy with an objective understanding of the problem and informed design perspectives ensures that solutions are emotionally resonant and effectively meet user needs.

According to Tellez and González-Tobón (2019), empathic design harmonizes rationality and emotion, encompassing both intuitive empathy and cognitive empathy. It integrates the objective observation of behaviors with subjective interpretations of users' thoughts, feelings, and aspirations (Tellez & González-Tobón, 2019). In other words, empathic design involves putting oneself in users' shoes and designing with their needs in mind. Empathic designers immerse themselves in users' worlds, facilitating user participation and balancing user insights with their own creativity and vision (Tellez & González-Tobón, 2019).

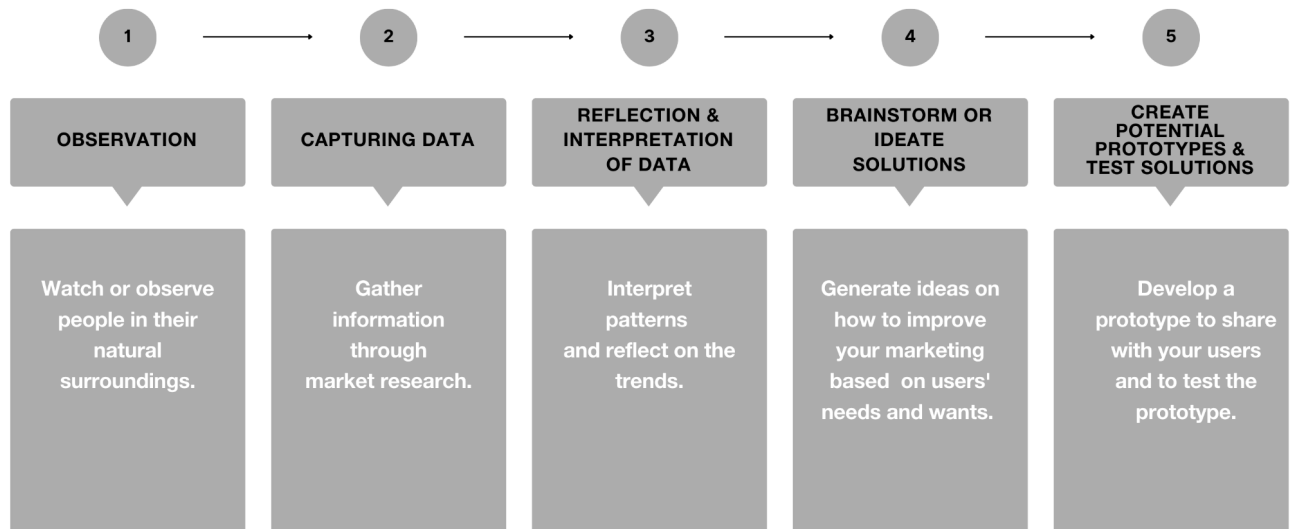
Essential skills for designing with empathy include open-mindedness, self-awareness, meticulous observation, and the ability to switch between empathizing and analyzing (Tellez & González-Tobón, 2019). Key techniques in empathic design include understanding users through direct observation and immersion, engaging users with activities like empathy probes through self-documentation, and simulating user experiences with prototypes such as personas, journey maps, and empathy maps to gain insights (Tellez & González-Tobón, 2019).

In libraries, the use of the empathic design process can provide valuable insights into the reasons behind users' engagement or lack thereof with library services to evaluate programs and resources (Perrault & Levesque, 2012). In an article by Perrault and Levesque (2012), they encouraged school librarians to

employ empathic design to enable the development of solutions that effectively address users' needs that they may not yet understand (Perrault & Levesque, 2012). The empathic design process is a cost-effective, user-centered strategy that can generate innovative changes and benefit all users (Perrault & Levesque, 2012, p. 17).

Figure 1

The Empathic Design Process



Note. The Empathic Design Process. From “Empathy by Design: Empathy-Driven Marketing for Libraries” by S. Dantus. Copyright 2024 by ACRL (Association of College & Research Libraries) Publishing.

The FIRST Values Framework: A Library Marketing Conceptual Framework

According to Larsen and Adu (2021), writing about a conceptual framework requires addressing several key components:

the meaning of the selected theory or concepts, representation of the selected theory and/or concepts, connection of the selected theory to the study and/or concepts, utilization of the framework in the study, and the contribution of the selected theory and/or concepts. (pp. 136-138)

This section will investigate the FIRST Values Framework in the context of library marketing following the guidelines by Larsen and Adu (2021) for writing about a conceptual framework.

Meaning of the FIRST Values Framework

The FIRST Values Framework exemplifies an approach that prioritizes empathy and puts the user first through five core values: fellow-feeling, identification, responsiveness, self-awareness, and thoughtfulness (Dantus, 2024). Fellow-feeling emphasizes empathy and understanding towards users; identification involves understanding user demographics and motivations; responsiveness focuses on proactive communication and feedback; self-awareness addresses the library's strengths and limitations; and thoughtfulness considers the broader impact of marketing efforts on users and stakeholders.

Empathic Design Frameworks and Models

Researchers have proposed frameworks and models to support empathic design before. Empathic design as a design method has been well documented and explored in various fields since the 1990s (Leonard & Rayport, 1997), including design, business, technology, and, most recently, in education (Baaki & Tracey, 2022). Notably, Kouprie and Visser's (2009) "Four Phases of Empathy in Design" outline a structured process for designers to immerse themselves in the user's experience.

The notion of empathic design, focused on understanding and responding to users' wants, feelings, and experiences, was thoroughly studied and defined in Kouprie and Visser's (2009) "Four Phases of Empathy in Design" to include psychological components. This paradigm emphasizes the collaborative process between the designer and the user at various stages of comprehension. The stages represent a dynamic relationship between the designer and the user, emphasizing that empathy requires both cognitive and affective efforts. By making each phase explicit, the framework helps designers understand and apply empathetic strategies to their ideas in a systematic manner.

In educational settings, empathic design is employed to create learning environments and tools that cater to the cognitive and emotional needs of learners. For instance, Tracey and Hutchinson (2019) discuss how empathic design can be used to imagine the cognitive and emotional experiences of

learners, leading to more meaningful educational deliverables. They emphasize that empathic design helps educators and instructional designers to create materials and environments that are more engaging and effective.

Further, empathic design research by Baaki and Tracey (2022) highlights the application of empathic design in instructional design, focusing on how understanding the emotional and cognitive experiences of learners can enhance the development of educational materials. They argue that empathic design is crucial for creating educational tools that not only meet learners' needs but also foster a deeper connection and engagement with the content through the use of Kouprie and Visser's (2009) Four Phases of Empathy.

Representation of the FIRST Values Framework

Applying empathic design principles to library marketing through the FIRST Values Framework may provide a structured approach to developing user-centered marketing strategies (Dantus, 2024). The FIRST Values Framework integrates emotional connections and responsiveness, making it particularly suitable for library marketing. These five core values align with empathic design principles, and each approach is intended to be implemented as a step-by-step thinking tool to develop an empathic library marketing solution.

The value of *fellow-feeling* focuses on empathy, compassion, and understanding towards users. This corresponds to the observation step, which

involves developing deep connections by actively listening to users' needs and observing their interactions. This aligns with the first step of empathic design, observation, which focuses on developing deep connections by observing users in their environment and actively listening to their needs. For example, this could involve librarians and staff spending time in different areas of the library to observe how patrons interact with the space and resources. The observer might notice that students frequently struggle to find quiet study areas during exam periods.

The value of *identification* involves creating meaningful connections with users by understanding their demographics, interests, and motivations. This corresponds to the second step, capturing data, which involves gathering detailed information about users. *Identification* involves creating meaningful connections with users through content that resonates with their needs and interests. Knowing users' backgrounds, interests, and reasons helps libraries customize messages to create a sense of belonging and loyalty. This approach extends beyond empathy, prompting actions based on users' needs and motivations (Dantus, 2024).

The value of *responsiveness* emphasizes proactive communication and feedback, both online and in person. Responsiveness is about analyzing data to understand user trends and quickly adjusting to meet various user needs. *Responsiveness* involves proactively communicating with users and quickly and

accurately addressing their feedback. Maintaining regular contact through various channels and adapting marketing strategies to meet diverse user needs allows libraries to make users feel heard and valued, thus enhancing satisfaction and engagement.

The value of *self-awareness* requires understanding the strengths and limitations of the library, but it is divided into three parts: awareness of the library, awareness of the community, and awareness of the library staff. This corresponds to the brainstorming solutions step, which helps to generate a wide range of ideas for improving resources, reflect on current practices and services, and align them with user data to create genuine and effective solutions. *Self-awareness* involves understanding the library's strengths and weaknesses, as well as the needs and motivations of the community it serves. This awareness helps libraries craft genuine messages that address user needs while acknowledging their limitations. It also requires recognizing personal biases and ensuring fair and inclusive marketing strategies.

Finally, the value of *thoughtfulness* is based on the impact of marketing efforts on external users, such as the community, and on internal stakeholders, such as administrators and staff. This aligns with the prototyping and testing step, which involves creating and testing prototypes, gathering feedback, and refining solutions to ensure that the library's efforts add value and address the needs of all stakeholders. *Thoughtfulness* emphasizes

the importance of considering the impact of marketing efforts on users, communities, and stakeholders. It involves creating “solutions,” such as marketing campaigns that enrich the community, rather than focusing solely on promotional gains. Thoughtfully addressing the needs of all stakeholders enables libraries to develop solutions that positively affect the community.

Connection of the FIRST Values Framework to Library Marketing

Empathic design principles have been integrated into various design methodologies, such as human-centered design and design thinking. These methodologies prioritize empathy as a core component, aiming to understand users’ latent needs and behaviors in order to create solutions that are not only functional but also emotionally resonant (Battarbee et al., 2014; Leonard & Rayport, 1997). The FIRST Values Framework connects to library marketing by providing a structured approach to developing user-centered marketing strategies. Unlike frameworks such as design thinking or human-centered design, the framework integrates emotional connections and responsiveness, making it particularly suitable for library marketing. The FIRST Values Framework builds on existing empathic design principles and aligns with emphasizing the importance of empathy and user-centric approaches in marketing libraries.

Table 1

The Empathic Design Connection with the FIRST Values Framework

Empathic Design Step	Description	FIRST Values Step	Description
Observation	Develop deep connections by observing users in their environment.	Fellow-feeling	Empathy and understanding for users. This value emphasizes compassion and empathy, fostering a deep connection with users through active listening and observation.
Capturing Data	Collect detailed information about users.	Identification	Creating meaningful connections with users. This involves understanding users' demographics, interests, and motivations to tailor messages that foster a sense of belonging and loyalty.
Reflection and Interpretation	Analyze data to uncover patterns and trends.	Responsiveness	Proactive communication and feedback. By analyzing user data and feedback, libraries can adapt and respond quickly to meet diverse user needs, enhancing satisfaction and engagement.
Brainstorming Solutions	Generate a wide range of ideas for improving resources.	Self-awareness	Understanding library's strengths and limitations. This involves reflecting on current practices and aligning them with user data to create genuine and effective solutions.
Prototyping and Testing	Create and test prototypes, gather feedback, and refine solutions.	Thoughtfulness	Considering the impact on all stakeholders. Thoughtfulness ensures that the library's marketing efforts and service designs add value and resonate with the community, addressing the diverse needs of all stakeholders, including users, staff, and community partners, to create a comprehensive and inclusive library experience.

Note. This table provides the alignment between the steps of the Empathic Design process and the corresponding values in the FIRST Values Framework, illustrating how these two frameworks integrate to enhance library services and user engagement.

Connection of the FIRST Values Framework and Existing Models

Empathy has emerged as a cornerstone or foundation for creating meaningful user experiences in the evolving landscape of user-centered design and design-thinking models in the evolving landscape of user-centered design. The concept of empathic design, which focuses on understanding and addressing users' needs, emotions, and experiences, has been extensively explored and formalized in various frameworks to integrate a psychological component. Building on the foundational principles of empathic design, the FIRST Values Framework extends these concepts into library marketing.

The FIRST Values Framework, when compared to other design models, shows the universality and adaptability of empathic principles, enhancing user experiences across diverse contexts. The FIRST Values Framework stands out from traditional user research and service design models by prioritizing empathy and user-centered principles within the empathic design process. The framework uses an empathetic marketing lens to foster deep emotional connections and responsiveness to user needs, a feature not often emphasized in other methods.

Design thinking is a user-centered approach that involves five phases: empathy, definition, ideation, prototyping, and testing (Brown, 2008). While it prioritizes user empathy, it primarily focuses on innovation and problem solving through iterative design. In contrast, the FIRST Values Framework goes beyond functional usability by embedding empathy into every interaction, fostering deep emotional connections with users, especially through fellow-feeling, identification, and thoughtfulness. Additionally, the FIRST Values Framework places a stronger emphasis on responsiveness based on user feedback, ensuring that user feedback is actively incorporated into library marketing efforts.

Human-centered design (HCD) also emphasizes empathy and user involvement, structured around the phases of inspiration, ideation, and implementation (IDEO.org, 2015). However, HCD focuses more on generating solutions that meet users' needs within a structured design process. The FIRST Values Framework differentiates itself by incorporating specific emotional and psychological dimensions such as self-awareness and thoughtfulness. These elements ensure that library marketing and other efforts are not only effective but also emotionally resonant.

The Framework for Empathy in Design presented by Kouprie and Visser (2009) provides a similarly structured process consisting of four phases: discovery, immersion, connection, and detachment. This framework

emphasizes that empathy in design involves a designer stepping into the life of the user, engaging deeply to gain understanding, and then stepping out with insights that inform the design process. Kouprie and Visser's (2009) framework is broad, applicable to various design disciplines, and focuses on the designer's immersive experience with the user. The FIRST Values Framework, on the other hand, is tailored to library marketing and emphasizes empathy through the lens of the emotional resonance, integrating empathic principles with practical steps for engaging with and understanding library users to enhance empathy for those users.

Service Design Thinking focuses on creating user-centered services through user-centeredness, co-creation, sequencing, evidencing, and holistic thinking (Luca & Ulyannikova, 2020). While this approach aligns with the FIRST Values Framework's holistic view of empathy and the user perspective, it uniquely integrates values such as fellow-feeling and responsiveness. This ensures that library marketing is driven by empathy and meaningful connections, enhancing user engagement through personalized experiences and proactive communication.

Lean UX emphasizes minimizing waste and maximizing learning through iterative design and rapid experimentation (Gothelf, 2013). It focuses on agile and lean methodologies, often at the expense of deeper emotional engagement (Gothelf, 2013). In contrast, the FIRST Values Framework focuses

on empathy and user-centeredness to make marketing and service design both efficient and emotionally impactful.

Utilization of the Framework

The FIRST Values Framework is utilized to design marketing strategies for different types of libraries. For example, in an academic library, the framework can be applied through a series of strategic steps. The library staff organized online forums for graduate students and faculty to share research experiences, gaining insights into researchers' needs and challenges, fostering empathy, and creating a sense of shared experience (fellow-feeling). To deeply understand and personify the needs, perspectives, and pain points of the users, the library staff employed design tools such as journey mapping. These tools helped in developing a clear picture of the target audience, enabling the creation of more effective and targeted marketing campaigns (identification).

A feedback system was implemented to gather real-time input on research support services. The feedback, collected through surveys, suggestion boxes, and focus groups, allowed the library to adjust services based on user input, improving service effectiveness (responsiveness). Assessments of the library meetings were conducted for library staff to explore how their perceptions might differ from the experiences of researchers (self-awareness). These workshops led to training in empathetic communication techniques, which were reflected in marketing campaigns (thoughtfulness).

The library crafted thoughtful and personalized messages promoting research support services across different disciplines. These messages, designed to resonate with the diverse needs of researchers, increased engagement and utilization of the services. The detailed scenarios illustrate the implementation and the potential benefits for designing library marketing strategies or solutions and explore the application of the FIRST Values Framework within various library contexts, such as academic, public, and special libraries.

Library marketing strategies have traditionally emphasized promoting services and resources to their users. However, integrating empathic design principles represents a novel and emerging approach within the library marketing field. The FIRST Values Framework exemplifies this methodology by prioritizing empathy and user-centric principles. This framework underscores the importance of understanding and addressing library users' needs, perspectives, and experiences through a systematic, step-by-step process. The detailed scenarios illustrate the implementation and the potential benefits for designing library marketing strategies or solutions and explore the practical application of the FIRST Values Framework within various library contexts, specifically academic, public, and special libraries.

Scenario: First-Generation College Student Support in an Academic Library

The FIRST Values Framework was employed in an academic library to support first-generation college students and promote digital resources. The library staff conducted direct observations and informal interactions to gather initial insights, for example, observing student behaviors and interactions in library spaces and attending first-generation college student orientations or tabling events. The staff conducted surveys and interviews to identify specific needs and pain points to help identify shared challenges and needs (fellow-feelings).

The staff also created an empathy map for online resources needed by first-generation students, which provided a visual representation of the students' experiences, frustrations, and desires (identification). First-generation students also sought resources such as academic tutoring, mentorship programs, writing assistance, financial aid information, and workshops on study skills and time management. To further enhance responsiveness, a multi-faceted feedback system was implemented to gather real-time input on library services. This feedback system included online surveys, suggestion boxes placed strategically around the library, and regular focus group sessions with students. The online surveys were designed to be quick and easy to complete, asking students about their satisfaction with library services and asking for suggestions for improvement.

Suggestion boxes allowed students to provide anonymous feedback at any time, and focus groups offered an opportunity for more in-depth discussions about their needs and experiences. This comprehensive approach allowed for adjustments based on feedback, improving the student experience and promoting lesser-known study areas (responsiveness). Self-assessment workshops for library staff were also conducted to explore how staff beliefs might differ from student experiences. These workshops led to training in empathetic communication techniques, which were reflected in marketing campaigns (self-awareness).

To address the expressed needs of first-generation students, the library implemented a comprehensive marketing solution that focused on several strategies. The library developed targeted marketing campaigns to promote the specific resources desired by first-generation students. This included creating informative brochures, flyers, and social media posts highlighting academic tutoring, mentorship programs, writing assistance, financial aid information, and workshops on study skills and time management using library resources. Additionally, a dedicated section on the library's website was created to serve as a one-stop resource guide for first-generation students. This guide included information about available resources, how to access them, and upcoming workshops and events.

The library partnered with academic departments, student support services, and financial aid offices to promote and integrate these resources into existing student support frameworks for first-generation college students. This collaborative approach ensured that students were aware of the available resources and how to access them. The library also organized regular engagement events such as open houses, resource fairs, and Q&A sessions specifically for first-generation students. These events provided opportunities for students to learn about available resources, meet library staff, and ask questions in a supportive environment.

Personalized emails and messages were sent to first-generation students through their support services staff, welcoming them to the library and providing tailored information about the resources available to them. These communications were designed to be supportive and encouraging, reinforcing the library's commitment to their success. The library produced engaging visual and multimedia content, including videos and infographics, to promote the resources in an easy-to-understand manner. These materials were shared on the resource guide, social media channels, and as a follow-up to orientation sessions to capture students' attention and interest.

The feedback system was continuously monitored and analyzed to gather insights on the effectiveness of the marketing strategies. Adjustments were made based on student feedback to ensure the marketing efforts

remained relevant and impactful. The library's implementation of the FIRST Values Framework in these initiatives led to enhanced services and better support for first-generation college students, highlighting the framework's effectiveness in meeting user needs and fostering a supportive academic environment. The thoughtful approach, aligned with a deep understanding of first-generation college student needs, led to more personalized and impactful library services and tangible improvements in services and enhanced support for first-generation college students.

Scenario: Research Services for a Small-to-Medium-Sized Academic Library

The FIRST Values Framework was employed by an academic library to promote its research services to faculty and enhance their engagement with library resources. The library staff organized an online open forum and session where faculty could share their research experiences. These sessions provided insights into the needs and challenges faced by researchers, fostering empathy and a sense of shared experience (fellow-feeling). To deeply understand and personify the needs, perspectives, and pain points of the users, the library staff identified key personas among students and faculty who were heavy users of research services. This process helped in developing targeted communications that emphasized how the library's services could specifically benefit this group (identification).

Feedback was implemented to collect suggestions on improving research support services to enhance responsiveness. This feedback was gathered through the post-online forum surveys, suggestion boxes, and focus group discussions, allowing the library to make necessary adjustments based on user input, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of the services (responsiveness). Self-assessments were conducted to identify areas where the library could better support researchers. These assessments included simple but effective strategies such as self-reflection surveys, one-on-one feedback sessions with supervisors, and reviewing user feedback to identify recurring themes. Additionally, the assessments led to staff training in research support and empathetic communication, which were then reflected in the library's marketing campaigns (self-awareness). To promote research support services across different disciplines, the library developed thoughtful and personalized messages designed to resonate with the diverse needs of graduate students and faculty researchers (thoughtfulness).

Personalized emails were sent to graduate students and faculty, highlighting specific research support services based on their college and department areas. For example, these emails included messages such as "Need Help with Your Research?" Using feedback, engaging posts on social media platforms highlighted successful research projects supported by the library and promoted upcoming workshops and resources. Short videos featuring

testimonials from successful faculty researchers and highlights of the library's support services were created and shared on the library's website and social media channels. Personalized invitations to workshops were sent to faculty lists, encouraging them to attend workshops and events tailored to their research needs. Implementing these marketing solutions enhanced research support services and improved engagement from graduate students and faculty.

Scenario: Engaging Senior Citizens in a Public Library

The public library organized community meetings and focus groups to better understand the interests, needs, and concerns of local senior citizens. These discussions created a sense of shared understanding and built trust between the library and its older adult users (fellow-feelings). To deeply explore the daily lives, preferences, and pain points of senior patrons, the library used a simple yet effective design tool: comment cards. Placed strategically throughout the library, these cards allowed seniors to provide quick, anonymous feedback on their experiences and suggestions for improvement. This low-stakes approach provided valuable insights without requiring significant time or resources (identification). Suggestion boxes and online surveys gave seniors opportunities to provide ongoing feedback on library services. The library used this input to continuously improve and adapt its offerings, ensuring they remained relevant and valuable (responsiveness).

Through cultural competency training and self-assessments, library staff identified their own biases and blind spots when engaging with older adults. This informed adjustments to customer service approaches and marketing materials (self-awareness).

The library's marketing strategy included personalized invitations, newsletters, and testimonials that resonated with senior citizens. Thoughtful distribution of information at community centers and healthcare facilities made the library's services easily accessible (thoughtfulness). The expected outcomes and benefits were increased senior participation and satisfaction with library programs, strengthened relationships between the library and the older adult community, and a reputation as a trusted resource that meets the evolving needs of local seniors.

Scenario: Attracting Families With Young Children to a Special Library

A special library focused on science and technology hosted family-oriented events and story times to foster a sense of shared experience and community among parents and children (fellow feeling). Using a low-stakes design tool such as feedback postcards, the library gained insights into the daily routines, needs, and pain points of families with young children. After events and programs, parents were asked to fill out simple, anonymous postcards with their thoughts and suggestions. This easy and low-pressure

method provided useful feedback for tailoring services and marketing approaches (identification).

Feedback from parents, such as surveys and suggestion boxes, allowed the library to gather input from families and make responsive adjustments to programming and resources (responsiveness). Reflecting on current family-oriented services helped the library find out the areas for improvement, leading to targeted staff training in family engagement and empathetic communication (self-awareness). The library's marketing strategy included family-oriented newsletters, engaging social media content, and strategically placed posters and flyers to effectively reach and appeal to parents with young children. The library's website featured a dedicated section with interactive elements to enhance the user experience (thoughtfulness).

The expected outcomes are increased participation and engagement of families with young children, stronger connections between the library and the local community, and a reputation as a welcoming and valuable resource for families seeking educational and enriching experiences. Future considerations could include collaborating with local schools, daycares, and community organizations to align library marketing with family needs and priorities. Continuous monitoring and adjustment of marketing strategies based on ongoing user feedback and changing trends in the target demographics ensured the library marketing solutions remained relevant and effective.

Scenario: Supporting Employee Professional Development in a Hospital Library

In a hospital library, to support professional development, the library held one-on-one interviews with employees to understand their career goals and learning needs (fellow-feeling). To deeply understand and find specific needs and pain points, the library conducted surveys (identification). An email feedback system was implemented to gather real-time input on professional development resources. This allowed the librarians to make necessary adjustments based on employee feedback, thereby improving satisfaction and service quality (responsiveness). Self-assessment training was conducted for library staff to explore how their perceptions might differ from employee experiences. These workshops led to training in empathetic communication techniques, which were reflected in marketing campaigns (self-awareness).

This process led to the development of targeted campaigns highlighting resources for skill building and career advancement. In addition, the insights were used to create marketing materials emphasizing the library's role in helping employees achieve their goals. Personalized email messages promoting professional development resources and considering diverse career paths were crafted to increase engagement across different departments. The personalized messages highlighted the library's commitment to supporting employees' career growth and development (thoughtfulness). Increased use of

professional development resources, improved employee satisfaction with the library's services, and enhanced career advancement opportunities for employees thereby fostered a more skilled and motivated workforce for the corporation.

Scenario: Enhancing Remote Access to Resources in a Corporate Library

To enhance remote access to resources, the corporate library conducted virtual focus groups to understand remote employees' challenges (fellow-feeling). The library used design tools such as journey mapping to identify key personas among remote employees. This process helped develop targeted campaigns that emphasized the unique value of remote services (identification). A survey was carried out to collect suggestions on improving remote access. This allowed for adjustments based on feedback, enhancing the effectiveness of the library's remote services (responsiveness).

Conducting self-assessments helped the library identify areas for improvement in providing remote services. These assessments led to targeted staff training in remote service provision and empathetic communication, which were incorporated into marketing campaigns (self-awareness). These insights were used to create marketing solutions that highlighted the library's support for remote employees. The library created targeted communication strategies promoting remote access to resources, considering the diverse needs and time zones of remote employees.

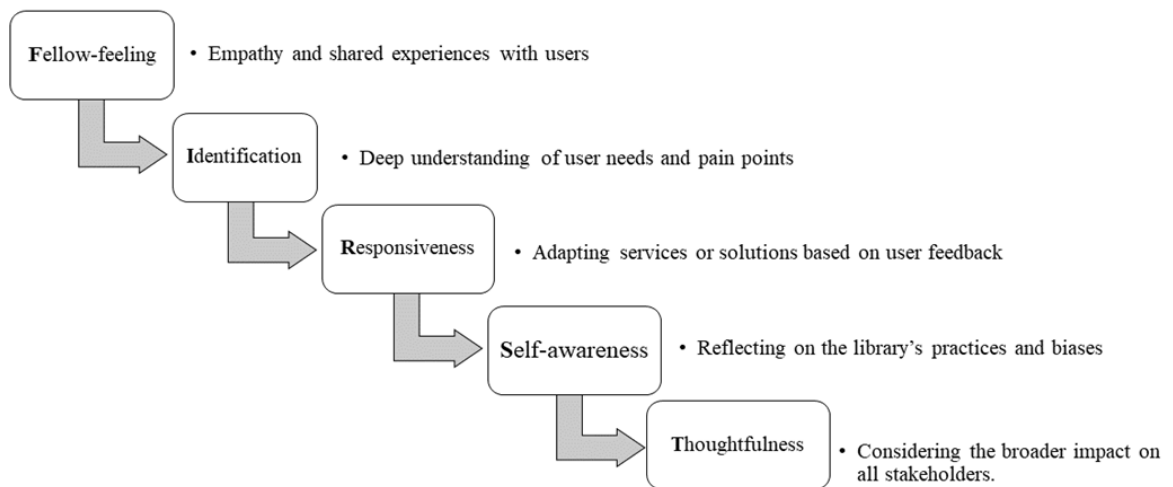
These messages were designed to increase engagement and ensure that remote employees felt supported and connected to the library's resources (thoughtfulness). As a result, the marketing solutions increased satisfaction and engagement among remote employees, improved access to valuable resources, and fostered stronger connections with the library, creating a more inclusive and supportive corporate environment.

Implementing the FIRST Values Framework in Practice

The FIRST Values Framework is designed to enhance user engagement in libraries by incorporating empathy and user-centered principles into every aspect of library services, marketing, and outreach. Each value of the framework uniquely contributes to improved engagement, fostering a profound connection between the library and its users. Implementing these practical steps enables libraries to effectively integrate the FIRST Values Framework, ensuring their marketing, outreach, user engagement, and service design efforts are empathetic, user-centered, and impactful.

Figure 2

The FIRST Values Framework for Empathic Library Marketing



Note. This a visual representation of the FIRST Values Framework for Empathic Library Marketing. Each core value is illustrated with a brief description to highlight its role in developing empathic services or marketing solutions.

Fellow-feeling

The fellow-feeling value emphasizes empathy, understanding, and compassion for library users. Libraries can cultivate a sense of empathy and understanding by actively listening to users' needs, concerns, and feedback. To integrate the core value of fellow-feeling, libraries should conduct regular feedback sessions where users can share their experiences, needs, and concerns. Key questions include: What are my users feeling? What might they be feeling in the future? How can I design based on their feelings? Conducting regular community meetings or online forums can gather valuable user input.

Additionally, organizing empathy training workshops and role-playing scenarios for staff can help develop a better understanding of user perspectives. Programs and services tailored to address users' emotional and psychological needs, such as support groups, can further deepen emotional connections with the library.

Identification

This value involves creating meaningful connections with users through content that resonates with their specific needs and interests. Libraries can collect detailed demographic and interest data to develop comprehensive user personas using surveys, social media analytics, and library usage data. The data can be synthesized into personas, and empathy maps and journey maps can help guide tailored communication, such as personalized newsletters with reading recommendations and event invites. Hosting community-building events, such as book clubs or cultural festivals, fosters a sense of belonging and loyalty among users. Key questions include: How can I identify with my users? What do we have in common? What do they need from me or from us?

Responsiveness

This value requires proactive communication and current feedback. Libraries should employ multiple feedback mechanisms, including suggestions boxes, online forms, and social media channels. Setting up a feedback review process to analyze and respond to user feedback promptly is essential.

Regularly reviewing user feedback and communicating actions taken through newsletters, social media, and library announcements builds transparency and trust, thereby keeping users engaged. Key questions include: What does my user need from me right now? How can I show them that I understand their needs? What kind of response will be most helpful?

Self-Awareness

This involves understanding the library's strengths and weaknesses, as well as the needs and motivations of the community it serves. Libraries can conduct quarterly self-assessment meetings or workshops to reflect on their practices, strengths, and areas for improvement. Training staff to recognize and address personal and institutional biases ensures fair and inclusive marketing strategies. Aligning marketing messages and services with the library's mission and community priorities ensures they genuinely address user needs. Key questions include: Am I feeling empathy for my users? Or am I feeling something else? What might be getting in the way of my empathy? How can I manage my own emotions or biases so that they do not interfere with my work?

Thoughtfulness

This value emphasizes considering the broader impact of marketing efforts on users, communities, and stakeholders. Libraries should design marketing campaigns that add value to the community, focusing on positive

impacts rather than merely promoting services. For instance, campaigns that highlight user success stories and the positive impact of library services can foster community ties. Before implementing a new program or service, conducting needs assessments can help evaluate potential effects on different user groups. Partnering with local organizations to offer joint programs, such as job training or health workshops, can further strengthen the community's connection to the library. Key questions include: Is this solution thoughtful? What could I do to make it more thoughtful? How will this solution impact my users? What are the potential risks of this solution?

Conclusion: Contribution of the FIRST Values Framework

The FIRST Values Framework contributes to library marketing by offering a unique approach that prioritizes emotional resonance and user empathy and exemplifies the empathic design methodology by prioritizing empathy and user-centric principles in library marketing. However, integrating empathic design principles represents a novel and emerging approach within the library marketing field. Unlike other frameworks, it emphasizes a step-by-step process that integrates user feedback and self-awareness, making it a comprehensive tool for developing impactful marketing strategies or solutions.

If libraries were to adopt the FIRST Values Framework and incorporate empathic design principles into their marketing strategies, they would likely

see a transformation in user engagement and satisfaction. This integration might lead to libraries becoming more empathetic and responsive to the needs of their communities. The systematic, step-by-step approach of the FIRST Values Framework could ensure that marketing efforts are deeply connected to user feedback and self-awareness, potentially resulting in more meaningful and personalized interactions.

Should libraries consistently apply the fellow-feeling value, they may foster a deeper understanding and connection with their users through regular feedback sessions and empathy training for staff. Using the identification value, such as developing detailed user personas, libraries could create tailored communications that resonate more effectively with diverse user groups. The responsiveness value, through proactive communication and prompt feedback, might build trust and transparency, encouraging greater user participation. The self-awareness value may help libraries recognize and address biases, leading to more inclusive and genuine marketing messages.

The thoughtful value in marketing strategies or solutions provides value and examines the larger impact on all stakeholders. It has the potential to improve community ties and enhance the library's role as an essential resource in the community. Implementing these strategies could transform libraries into engaging spaces that exceed community expectations, fostering a

stronger sense of belonging and support among users, ensuring their continued importance in community fabric.

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