



Special Interest Subgroup: Group Proposal

Mercian Marketing and Communications Group

Background

In early 2017 Birmingham City University Library and Learning Resources underwent a restructure with a number of new posts created including that of Communications Coordinator. Enquiries were sent out to fellow Mercian institutions to establish if there was any interest in establishing a Community of Practice, in regards to marketing and communication activities. This led to an initial meeting to establish the potential for future cooperation among institutions within similar roles. Representatives from BCU, Aston University, Nottingham and Nottingham Trent attended.

The next stage was to take the idea to a wider audience in the form of a workshop at the Mercian 'New For You' conference in September 2018. The concept of the Community of Practice was introduced with the aim of gathering information from attendees to help guide the future direction and purpose for any group. The workshop was very well attended with much enthusiasm shown for the formal creation of such a group.

The first meeting for the group was held at Aston on 5th December 2018 with the aim of discussing what the remit of the SIG might be, as well as establishing next steps in the formation and future operation of the group. The meeting was well attended. Alongside the instigating members from BCU, Nottingham Trent and Aston, were representatives from Wolverhampton, Leicester, Worcester, Coventry and DMU. The Mercian Collaboration's Development Officer Gaz Johnson also attended to offer guidance and advice in the creation of any SIG moving forward.

Group Remit/ Outline Terms of Reference

The purpose of the group is to share good practice, experience and knowledge around marketing and communications practice (M&C) with other practitioners in a friendly, supportive and collaborative environment. The group intends to:

- Investigate and share current M&C practices and frameworks within Mercian Collaboration member organisations.
- Collaboratively seek solutions to shared problems.
- Recognise value in diversity of approaches and take advantage of the varied experience and backgrounds of the membership base.



How will we do this?

We will engage a range of approaches which may include, but are not confined to:

- Primary group co-ordination via a Jiscmail mailing list (mercian-marketing-group@jiscmail).
- Quarterly meetings forming the core basis of the group activity, with scope for specific offshoot groups (e.g. task and finish groups) who collaborate and report back to the main group.
- Utilising digital platform/s (such as Google Drive) for sharing minutes/meeting notes and useful resources such as: style guides, comms plan templates, calendars, toolkits and tools.
- Setting tasks and potentially competitions to focus on specific issues/goals/problems and share the results amongst the group.
- Presentations of good practice, such as successful campaigns, to share experience, insights and inspire group discussion; and also demonstrations of problems and challenges faced by group members, for the purpose of collaborative problem solving.
- Skills sharing, such as social media and analytics.
- Social Media as an extension of the group's activities including engagement with wider audiences to broaden reach of group activities and helping to keep potential and existing members informed.
- Presentations and workshops at conferences
- Invitations to external speakers/experts with emphasis on practicalities and working towards shared goals/tasks.

Relationship to Strategic Aims

From our perspective, the strategic aims of the Mercian Collaboration and the aims of the proposed Marketing and Communications Group share many commonalities. Both are built around cooperation, sharing knowledge and ideas in a supportive environment for the benefit of the members and their respective organisations in the wider region.

We value the skills and experience of our current membership but also recognise the need for external awareness in a group concerned with such a dynamic and fast-moving area in Marketing and Communications.

We feel that such a group would fit naturally into the wider structure and would hopefully be able to enhance and contribute to the development of the Mercian Collaboration moving forward.



Proposed Membership

After the most recent meeting on 5th December, an initial core group of organisers volunteered to take active roles in the initial organisation and administration of the group.

The membership of the group will be composed of those involved with Marketing and Communications within Mercian member organisations, especially those already expressing interest in the SIG. However due to the fast-paced nature of change we hope to organise events which will be attractive to a diverse range of attendees, reflecting the similarly diverse interests and activities of Mercian member organisations.

Governance & Committee

Members from the core group will take up the following organisational roles (or variations of) to provide structure and focus to the group. These roles would be allocated through mutual agreement at the first post-approval meeting by member delegates present. The envisaged term of office for these posts will be the standard two-year term.

Sponsor

A sponsor will be allocated from the Mercian Steering Group to provide guidance and advice, as well as a channel to the Collaboration's ruling body.

Chair

To lead in the facilitation of meetings, establishing structure of meetings and formalising decisions made. Prioritising and approving decisions moving forward.

Vice-Chair

To assist Chair in facilitation and to stand in for Chair in case of absence. This role may be flexible in according with the needs of group. Reporting back to chair and secretary.

Secretary

Supporting chair and vice-chair ensuring smooth functioning of the group including helping to organise and minute meetings with the subsequent storage and sharing of the necessary documents.



Next Steps

- Communicating the group's proposed terms of reference to the membership.
- Election of the above organisational roles, via mutual acclaim at the next at the first meeting after approval.

Subject to approval from the Board, the group hopes to formally announce its existence to those who have already attended and expressed interest in the meetings arranged so far and to inform them of any schedules for future meetings along with the way these will operate. The group will liaise with the Development Officer to ensure effective promotion and visibility across the Collaboration.

A subsequent series of these is likely to be first held in June, then September and December.

The group will aim to meet on a quarterly basis with scope for members to arrange meetings amongst themselves to explore related issues. The outcome of which must be reported back and shared with the wider group.

The group core committee will also work with the Development Officer to establish a section of the Collaboration's website to record their remit, activities and representative membership.

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Notes

The Directors Board meets twice annually (March/October), and submissions for new groups will be considered at these meetings. Ideally documents are required for scrutiny by the Collaboration's Directors no later than 1 week before the meeting. See the Mercian website for forthcoming meeting dates.

Submit this document to mercianlibrariescollaboration@gmail.com

As per the Mercian Collaboration's open access policy, this document may be made publicly available following group approval.