Assessing the Strategic Credibility of Special Collections and Archives Departments

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Strategic Credibility

Definition:
“Strategic credibility is defined as how others view the company’s overall corporate strategy and its strategic planning capability.”

Higgins and Differnback (1989)

Benefits:
- Improved relations with stakeholders
- Better morale of employees
- More goal focused employees
- Attracting talented people motivated by the strategy

Strategic Credibility Factors

- Demonstrated performance
- Capability to strategize
- Communication to stakeholders
- Credibility of organizational leadership

Higgins (2002)

Key Findings and Highlights

- **Demonstrated performance**
  - No Special Collections/Archives shared annual reports, impact stories, statistics, or assessment information online.

- **Capability to Strategize**
  - 65% of Special Collections/Archives do not have easily accessible mission statements online.
  - Often mission is indirectly linked and thus “hidden” from stakeholders in Collection Policy, About pages, or within PDF documents.

- **Communication to Stakeholders**
  - Most Special Collections/Archives state WHAT they do (collect, preserve) but not WHY (learning, research).
  - Choice of language not clear to stakeholders (canned, repository, types of value)

Special Collections/Archives Common Mission Themes

"Are academic libraries presenting their mission statements online? – Kuchi (2006)

- 73% Within 1 click of Archives main page
- 18% Within 2 clicks of Archives main page
- 0% Within 3 clicks of Archives main page
- 65% Archives directly linked from the library main page
- 1% Mission statement directly stated on Archives main page

Common Aligned Themes in Mission Comparisons

- 42% - No alignment (13)
- 29% - 1 common theme (9)
- 13% - 2 common themes (4)
- 10% - 3 common themes (3)
- 6% - 4+ common themes (2)

Top Aligned Themes:
- Research (7) | Collecting Scope (7) | Audience (6)
- Teaching (4) | Faith/Religion (4) | Learning (3)

College/University Mission Themes

Other types of value communicated through websites

- **Instructional Services**
  - Aligns with university teaching missions
  - Example: Willamette, UW, UO

- **Targeting Stakeholders**
  - Alumni, student groups
  - Example: WWU, Whitman, OHSU

- **Advancing Institutional Mission**
  - Land grant, university, library
  - Example: OSU, WSU

- **Types of Learning**
  - Emphasis on experiential
  - Example: OSU, Linfield

Methodology

- Examined members of the Orbis Cascade Alliance college/university mission statements for themes
- Examined Orbis Cascade Alliance members’ Special Collections/Archives mission statements
- Negotiated common themes (how well aligned)
- Judged position, access to mission statements on each website