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MARKETING Treasures

Ideas and Insights into Promoting Library & Information Services

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Plan Your Marketing Into The New Year!

With a new year looming, it's time to dust off that old marketing plan and get in gear for the new year. What?! You don't have a marketing plan? **Marketing Treasures** rides to the rescue with what you need to put it all together.

First of all, what goes into the marketing plan? Start with a statement of the Marketing Mix: Product, Price, Package, Placement, Promotion. You need to determine each of these as they relate to your library. How do you package your products to make them attractive to library users? What are the characteristics of your products—and what are their brand names? What is your pricing strategy? If you're a fee-for-service organization, price is an integral part of doing business. If not, your budget is your price, and it's what you have to justify to your management. Where do you place your products and services so people can get them? Do you run a drive-in, fast-food type of information center? Or are you taking orders electronically? Promotion is the outreach part of your plan. It spells out all the different techniques that you employ to tell your marketplace about your products and services—and convince them to "buy" them.

Research, Research, Research

Before you can pull together a marketing plan for your library, you have to identify a few of the players and tools available.

Who are your customers? If you're part of a larger organization, obviously they're the staff of the organization. But don't stop there. Who else calls in for help? Who are the stakeholders? Do professional groups or other libraries access your resources?

Define your resources: staff, materials, information, electronic communications and physical plant. Which receive the most use? Which are ready for retirement? Which are underutilized or overworked? What are the most efficient uses of resources and personnel?

Ideally, by now you should know your customers, have identified their needs in your surveys and customer data gathering, and have matched those needs with your resources. But we don't live in an ideal world, and you'll have to work on those mismatches to come up with a good marketing plan.

"What do your customers think of the library? What are their perceptions? That feedback is critical to your marketing plan."

What do your customers think of the library? What are their perceptions? That feedback is critical to your marketing plan. If you don't know, it's time to survey your customer base and find out what they believe they are getting or not getting for their money. Finally, who is competing against you? If you're the only library serving a parent organization, you may think you don't have competitors, but look around. How about the Internet? The intranet? Other local libraries? Self-styled "experts" in various departments? You may be losing customers to other information sources you didn't even know about. Be sure to ask for that information in your survey!

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Pearls of Wisdom

With holiday parties coming up, use drink coasters printed with your library's logo. Distribute them to other divisions, clients and friends as a holiday favor and to spread the library message around the company. Don't limit your imprint to just standard library information. These call for clip art, cartoons or fancy borders—anything that will help make them noticeable and memorable. Printed coasters are available from Craft Corporation, 718-417-1177.

A durable bookmark is a long-lasting marketing tool. Why use paper when you can send out inexpensive plastic or vinyl bookmarks that will remind your customers about you for months? Put your logo, contact information and a cheery quote on each bookmark. Plastic bookmarks are available in white. Vinyl comes in white, red, blue, green, yellow, ivory, black, or metallic silver or gold. A bright color will catch the eye on a crowded desk, even if peeking out of the top of a book, and your customers won't have to reach for their phone files to get hold of you. Contact Colony Specialty Printing at 301-662-5790 or fax 301-620-7136 for prices.

Notebooks are still a staple for busy people and you can give them out as holiday gifts that will last throughout the year. Clients First offers journal books, spiral bound notebooks in a variety of sizes, seminar notepads and pocket-sized pads. You'll get your money's worth of promotion as well. You can have the cover imprinted or request a classy treatment such as a die-cut window or embossing on the cover. If people are likely to tear out pages and scatter them about, you can have a "phantom" imprint on each filler page, with your library logo or contact information. Call Clients First at 800-634-0040 and check out the web site at <www.clientsfirst.com>

Look around offices and notice that even with all the electronic reminders, people are still using magnets to post notes on filing cabinets. Go to your local office supply store and buy laser or ink-jet business cards and magnetic business card mounts. Print your own contact message, a library quote or a bright picture on the card, attach it to a magnetic backing, and send to your customers along with your holiday cards.



People still send postcards and you can turn them into a marketing opportunity by enclosing a pre-stamped postcard with your written materials and asking customers to mail them to someone else who would benefit from your services. Leave at least half of one side blank for the address and stamp. A library picture or clip art image makes a great cover side, and you can put contact information, hours, specialties, and staff names on the back. Include your return address, and you have a ready-to-mail promotional item. Postcard papers are available at many office supply stores, or you can print the cards on 100 lb stock and cut to size.

Have you ordered your holiday greeting cards yet? If not, we've found some winners in Hallmark Business Expressions and The Myron Collection. Both catalogs have great traditional cards, intriguing die-cuts, cartoons and calendar cards. Hallmark goes a few extra miles and includes cards for all kinds of occasions: birthdays, congratulations, motivational, thank you, anniversary, and retirement. Both companies offer a variety of imprinting options, custom messages and gold foil stamping. Order soon for the holidays and keep the catalogs around for special occasions throughout the year. Hallmark's web site is <hbe.hallmark.com> and the toll-free number is 800-404-0081. Myron can be called at 201-843-6796 or contacted by fax at 201-843-8390. ■

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Missing issues must be reported within 3 months of issue date. Missing issues requested after this time will be supplied at the regular back-issue rate.

Clip art used in this issue:

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Putting It Together

Now that you know the elements at hand, it's time to look forward and determine your marketing objectives—what you want to do and how to convey the information.

It's time to select your image. With survey information at one hand and resource information at the other, decide what you want your customers to visualize when they think of you. Is that their current perception? If not, do some brainstorming and figure out the image you want to project—then live up to it.

One of the oldest marketing maxims is “make every feature into a benefit.” As you identify what your library can do for customers, turn around and describe each item from the customer's point of view—how it will help the customer solve a problem, do a job more efficiently, or get necessary support. For example, if you offer a current awareness service, describe it to the customers as “up-to-the-minute intelligence about our competitors, our market and our opportunities.” Remember, when describing the benefits to your customer, speak the customer's language and sell excitement.

Your customers naturally fall into several groups, which are traditionally referred to as “target markets.” Take time to define those groups, determine which products and services they use, and whether you will deliver the same level of service to all groups. It may not be worth your while to offer personalized services to infrequent users or the full range of services to customers who routinely only request one or two services. Instead, find ways to meet their needs with pre-packaged products. For ideas on sensible limitations on service, refer to our article “Overworked, Understaffed? Don't Stop Marketing” in the March, 1997, issue of SLA's **Information Outlook** or visit our web site at <www.chrisolson.com/tickledpink.html> to read a copy.

Once you've completed these steps, you have the first part of the marketing plan under control: your objectives, market and image.

The Nitty-Gritty Details

It's time to work out exactly how you are going to implement your marketing plan.

Which media are you going to use? This deci-

“One of the oldest marketing maxims is “make every feature into a benefit.”

“Marketing should take place according to a schedule, not just in response to a new product or service launch.”

sion determines your schedule and budget. “Free” media like the corporate intranet will play a big role, but don't be penny wise and pound foolish. If you're going to convey a coherent library image, you'll have to have paper goods such as stationery, brochures and report covers. Remember, you want customers to know who produced that good material and who to call for the next project. If you're going to produce a video or computer presentation, that's going to involve direct costs and staff time.

What's your marketing budget? If you don't have one, write it. Creative time, printing costs, etc. all go in as line items. Be realistic. Find out ahead of time what 1000 invitations or 5000 brochures will cost you. Factor in staff time as well. If a staffer is working on a talk to a civic group or preparing a web site, that's marketing time, not work time, and should be budgeted accordingly.

Schedule Your Marketing Campaigns

Marketing should take place according to a schedule, not just in response to a new product or service launch. Tie segments of your campaign to professional events: National Library Week, Banned Books Week, and major library association conferences. If a staffer attends ALA or SLA, plan a report to management or a special newsletter issue as a marketing tool. Bill Gates won't speak at SLA every year, but even regional conferences can supply you with news and services your customers want to know about. Be creative with other important calendar dates. Valentine's Day is a good time to show why people should love your library; pick July 4 to celebrate independence from ignorance; the first day of spring can be a day to highlight library growth; Labor Day reminders can tell your customers how hard you're working for them; Columbus Day is a good day to discover new library resources.

The point is that you need to market frequently and dependably. Repetition may seem dull to you, but it's the heart of marketing, so plan to contact all your customers at least quarterly with eye-catching, news-filled communications. This can be a newsletter, a web page update or presentations to customer groups. But be sure you're out there and visible at regular intervals throughout the year.

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When you're scheduling your regular marketing effort, don't overlook the unexpected. Take time now to figure out how you'll handle special news alerts. Email, newsletter special editions, open houses or web page banners are all good ways to get a hot story out to your customers. Apple Computer recently did a good job of this. On Monday, November 10, visitors to Apple's web site were greeted with the tantalizing message, "Think different. Really different." and were directed to come back after 12 noon, pacific standard time. That kind of announcement on a high-volume site was similar to the old teaser on billboards, "Watch this space." A banner on the corporate home page and other frequently used sites could do the same for you.

Mining the Media

Where are you going to trumpet your important messages? Many libraries are using both electronic and print media, and in some cases the quantity of outlets threatens to get out of control. So step back a moment and look at a couple of preliminary steps before you commit words to paper or web. Do you have a slogan? A logo? If not, you don't have a way to tie all your communications to the same source. It's time to write a slogan, design a logo or hire someone to assist you.

Do you have a vision or mission statement? If not, take the time to develop one that clearly states what your library is about and why you are there. If you can't articulate that in a sentence or two, you can't define what you're marketing and you need to go back and look at exactly what it is that you do. Once the logo, slogan and mission statement are in place, you're ready to look at the media.

If you have a web page, either on an intranet or on the Internet, look at it alongside your paper products. Do they all look as if they come from the same source? If not, give them the same look, one which reflects your chosen image. Check your links. Are you linked to and from all important departments? Are all your links up-to-date?

If you are relying on written communications like newsletters and fliers, make sure they're getting out to all your customers. Go over your distribution list and make sure no one's missing. Consider "point of purchase" distribution; put the newsletter in the cafeteria, the credit union, at the ATM machine, as well as in the library.



"Don't overlook the best marketing resource you have: your library staff."

Train Your Staff in Marketing

Don't overlook the best marketing resource you have: your library staff. They should be able to look at every customer transaction as a marketing opportunity. Take time to teach them to:

- Ask if there's anything else they can do
- Mention library products and services which might meet the customer's needs
- Stay alert and make note of any new information service they can offer
- Always put complete library contact information on any product they deliver

If library staffers are doing presentations to management, customer groups or outside organizations, have them practice their presentation in front of the library staff. This can be a great training opportunity for both the presenter and the audience and a wonderful time to brainstorm about how to embed marketing messages in training and informational presentations.

"...go out there and promote that wonderful library that's sitting outside your door!"

We don't pretend that this article gives you everything you need to know about marketing plans. There are plenty of good books and guides on the subject which you can pick up at your nearest library. The point of this article is to freshen your approach and get you motivated. So pat yourself on the back—you're thinking about marketing! Now don't lose that momentum. Get a pencil or keyboard and begin drafting your thoughts and ideas. If you're missing a marketing plan ingredient, identify how you can get it. Outline your marketing calendar. Get the materials together and ready. And then go out there and promote that wonderful library that's sitting outside your door! ■

Worth Its Weight in Gold

Editor's Note: Marketing Treasures originally came with sheets of library clip art and this column provided ideas on how to use the graphics. The clip art images from Marketing Treasures are now available from www.LibraryClipArt.com.

Cocoa and Cookies. It's a cold, dreary day and your thoughts are turning to a hot cup of cocoa—and so are ours. You can use this image on top of your library's holiday wish list, as a little snack for Santa. Invitations to the holiday open house will look more inviting with cookies on the front.

Paper Horn. If you have exciting news to spread about a new library resource or service, look no further than our New Year's party staple, the whistle horn. Memos, newsletters, and web sites are all good spots for this attention-getter.

Moon and Stars. Cyberspace never looked so inviting. Our banner is open for whatever you want to include, from the name of your cybrarian to the newest database on disc.

Hunting Horn. Trumpet new information sources, herald a new web site, or announce your new email address with our horn.

Holiday Star. Information is central to enlightenment. Use one of our stars to enlighten your customers about your library's information treasures. If you're launching a new product or service, or training end-users on a new database, placing our stars on the memos will help carry your message.

Candle. We're shedding more light on those short winter days with our candle image. Use this image to highlight "bright ideas" on your web page or newsletter, on invitations, on thank-you notes (to that "bright spot" in your life), or to announce your holiday schedule.

New Year's Baby. Our 1998 baby is already surfing the infobahn. Use this image to introduce the changes you're making for the new year or to invite customers to "test drive" new library resources.

Holiday Border. Are your bright words sitting alone on a bare page? Put a border around them by repeating our border collage. Use it on nametags, memos, or to highlight a box on your web page. ■



Promotion Gems

Cartoons Attract Attention

Have you ever read **The New Yorker** in a waiting room? You probably flipped through its pictures before settling down to read an article. After all, a good cartoon is fun. That's something the folks who produce the "...for Dummies" books know. There's a scattering of cartoons throughout the books to lighten up the information overload. Where could your communications use a good cartoon? Does your newsletter need a little comic relief? Could your web page benefit from a couple of laughs? Does your notepad look too bare? Do you need livelier nametags for the open house? Those are perfect places for cartoons.

If you have a cartoonist on the staff, count yourself lucky. If not, maybe two staffers can collaborate—one coming up with the picture and the other with a punch line. That's the way it was done at **The New Yorker**, and it can work well for you. If you don't have a cartoonist in the library, look for talent elsewhere in your organization.

Remember your audience when you select cartoons. Inside jokes about Melvil Dewey or AACR2 won't fly with the non-library folks. Instead, focus on their work environment and have a little fun with their jobs: R & D, human resources, marketing, or strategic planning. Play with your company's product line or chief business. Joke about those things which are the bane of everyone's existence some days: balky computers, lame LANs, dilatory couriers, junk mail, and obnoxious customers. A good laugh at any of those can take the edge off a bad day.

If you simply can't think of cartoons of your own, or don't have an artist on staff, there's a great source for library cartoons you can pick up for your intranet, newsletter or web site. Shop at <www.toonworld.com> for computer cartoons, holiday cartoons and custom cartoons.

Or you can purchase Cliptoons by Brad Veley. You get 20 cartoons on a disk for \$34.95. Contact Newsletter Resources at (800) 264-6305.

Another resource is **Cartooning For The Librarian** by Donald B. Cleveland (Neal-Schuman, 1992, ISBN 1-55570-102-7 \$32.50). The book includes step-by-step instructions for the novice and ideas on all kinds of places to use cartoons. ■

Sparkling Reviews

Leveraging the Corporate Brand by James Gregory. NTC/Contemporary Publishing Co., 1997 ISBN0-88442-3444-3. \$44.95

“Brand” refers to an organization’s reputation in the marketplace—for their products, services, customer services, financial performance. The concept of brand has received recent attention from marketers as being a viable component of a marketing strategy since they figured out that brands can be managed and, more importantly, a well-established brand can contribute to an organization’s worth and to the bottomline. And that’s where this book steps into the picture.

James Gregory established his reputation as a corporate image guru with his book **Marketing the Corporate Image**. In his new branding book he expands his first book’s premise that well-managed image and communications is essential to total organization success and shows how it impacts the return on investment and how to measure that impact.

In the first part of this book, you will find unique insights into how to use objective quantitative methods to measure and leverage the value of an organization’s name and how to use corporate branding programs to maximize the bottomline financial impact of advertising and communications activities. Using charts and imagination, Mr. Gregory takes readers through the process of how to analyze the impact communications has on an organization.

His premise and approach seem reasonable, but this reader sensed that to make the whole ensemble work right, you’d have to be working with a large communications budget and an organization that had all its management data on hand. Of course, it wouldn’t hurt to hire Mr. Gregory to interpret the data for you.

This book is a lightweight marketing management read. It offers perspectives you won’t find anywhere else. It’s emphasis on the importance of “brand” is noteworthy, but the impact measurements seem a little shaky. At least a third of the book is devoted to examples of communications programs which serve to illustrate points—and bulk-up the book. If you didn’t read the author’s first book, you should! You can skip this second book. There are better books on the subject, which will be reviewed in future issues of **Marketing Treasures**. ■

Pantone refers to the color system Pantone Matching System (PMS) used by printers and graphic designers to indicate color choices. Specifying a PMS color means that the ink color will be based on a color formula that is standardized.

A “screen” is a printing term and process. It means ink is applied against a “screen” to reduce the amount of ink that goes on paper—the higher the screen percentage, the more ink.

Treasure Tips

Dark Colors Are Viable Options to Black Ink!

Over the years **Marketing Treasures** has pointed out that black is not the only dark color you can use in printing your promotion materials. To add visual interest you should try other colors in the darker range—greens, purples, blues, reds, browns, grays—all these colors have dark variations that can be used for printing readable type. And now **Marketing Treasures** is going to show you it’s true.

Over the next several issues of **Marketing Treasures** we’re going to demonstrate how darker colors which sometimes look almost black, can offer you color variations that you may be overlooking when working with designers on your printed promotion materials. But first you need to know that the “black” you have been seeing on our newsletter really isn’t black, it’s Pantone 433—a very dark gray. That’s because true black would be too visually harsh against the pale cream paper and red accents. Now that you have the background knowledge for comparing dark colors to the regular **Marketing Treasures** “black,” let’s move forward.

In keeping with the holiday season, our first dark color is one with a green tint to it, Pantone 5605. As you can see it’s a very dark green. By screening the color (see sidebar for definition) different shades of green can be achieved, to the point that a printed piece can look like it’s been printed in several colors. Here are two screens of our green:



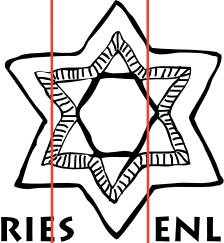
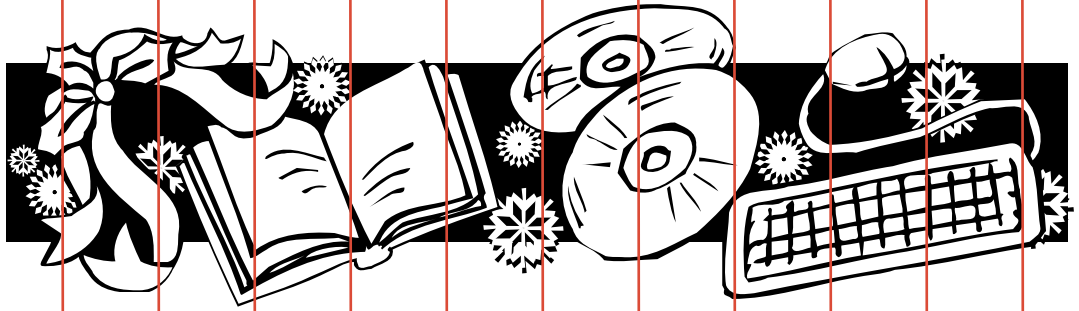
30% screen



70% screen

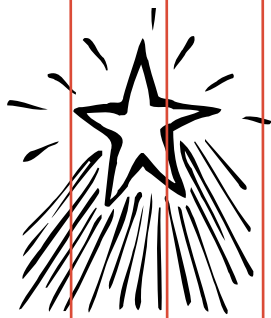
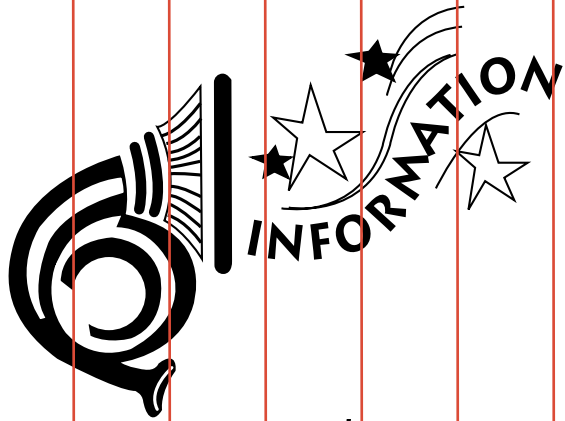
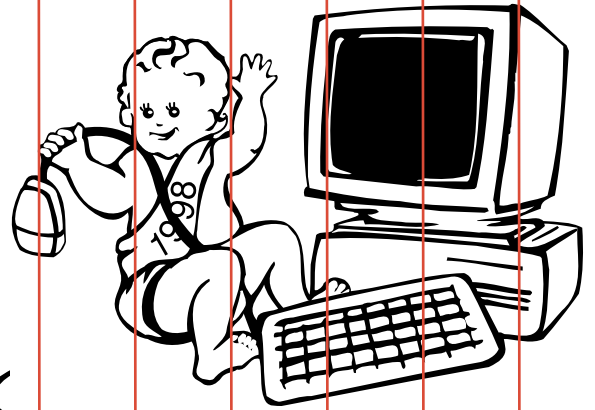
To help you evaluate inks colors **Marketing Treasures** will be printed on white paper during our color tests. This is because the cream color of the paper impacts the final printed ink color. In this case, the green would appear more yellow than it really is.

So, do you find the green as readable as our normal dark gray? Do you like the secondary colors you can achieve with screens? If so, make a note of this color for your next promotion piece. ■



LIBRARIES

ENLIGHTEN



**LIBRARIES
ENLIGHTEN**

