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MARKETING *Treasures*

Ideas and Insights into Promoting Library & Information Services

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The End Users Are Coming—And You're More Important Than Ever!

Are end users a threat to the librarian's job? **Marketing Treasures** surveyed subscribers of several library listservs, and we found that while there are varying opinions about the practicality of end user searching, there is a marketing strategy for everyone.

Database vendors are actively courting end users by providing more intuitive interfaces, direct marketing, tie-in products such as Dialog's Knowledge Index, and specialty databases. As more people become computer-literate, companies are implementing intranets. If your organization is bringing an intranet online to carry email, information resource-sharing won't be far behind. Ultimately, that means end-user searching is in your future.

Sun Microsystems Embraces End-User Searching

Cynthia Hill, at SunLibrary, Sun Microsystems, is an enthusiastic fan of end-user searching. Sun has implemented an intranet that offers desktop access to major full-text databases, CD-ROM resources, and a gateway to the Internet itself. Scott McNeely, Sun's CEO, believes in giving people the resources they require to get the job done. While that philosophy applies to the entire corporate culture, it has special relevance to information access by end users.

"Librarians are the identifiers, evaluators and selectors of core information sources..."

You might think that the direct access of end users to information resources would diminish the librarian's job, but it doesn't. Traditional library values are alive and well in the electronic environment and librarians' special skills are more necessary than ever to keep information flowing in an orderly and timely fashion.

Collection Development

"Librarians are the identifiers, evaluators and selectors of core information sources," says Cindy, and given the rapidly changing face of electronic sources, collection development is busier than ever. At SunLibrary, the evaluation of existing resources and identification of new resources is based on the kinds of questions the librarians are asked and on feedback from the end users themselves. SunLibrary is able to receive feedback from vendors as well, in the form of statistics on how many people are being locked out of databases. This knowledge helps the library determine how many more concurrent licenses they should activate.

New resources are constantly being reviewed and beta tested, to see if they meet research needs at Sun. Databases are distributed to targeted end users, who participate in the selection process with their feedback and assessments. The librarians bring together all these responses and select the most useful sources. Sun librarians are trained to evaluating content, organization and ease of access of materials, and their expertise makes the difference in providing Sun with good electronic information sources.

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Pearls of Wisdom

Giving holiday gifts? Pack them in customized bags carrying your library logo or a special library message. Bright colors and bold graphics will let your clients know who to thank before they look at the card, and folks who pass your client's desk will see a reminder of your library and its services.

A good place to shop for those gifts is a museum store or catalog. Classy designs, interesting gadgets and original art are all available. A nice change from the ordinary line of business-related gifts, museum store purchases also benefit a good cause. It doesn't have to be leather (or look like it) to be a good business gift.

Do you send out holiday cards? This year, include your new web site URL to spread the word that you've arrived on the Internet. Don't forget to include full access information on every card you send. Better yet, tuck a rolodex card into the envelope with your phone number, email address and web page URL.

Fee-based online services are a new Internet business venture. What are they about? Take a look at the Electronic Library <<http://www.elibrary.com/>> and NlightN <<http://www.nlightn.com/>>. They offer access to databases at lower rates than the big vendors. If you have developed in-house databases, this may be a future marketing opportunity to explore.



Everyone has calorie-laden, high-cholesterol, and frequently high-alcohol holiday parties. Host a wellness open house after the holidays, offering light, healthful snacks and a chance to start

keeping those New Year's resolutions about healthy living. Mulled cider or herbal teas can warm your visitors without excess calories. Ask your local hospital or health plan for flyers with nutrition and exercise hints. And while everyone is thinking good thoughts about health, promote services that keep your clients' businesses healthy. Let them know that your library is energetic, focused, and well able to meet their research needs—a lean, mean information machine.

Is your library included in employee training packages? Make sure your materials stand

out with library logos on every page and a distinctive folder directing employees to you for help. It's not enough to be in front of the room during training classes. Be a continuing presence with access information and handouts that employees can take back to their offices. Study aids imprinted with the library logo and phone number stay on desks for months, so order some notepads, pens, highlighters, pencils, or carrying bags to remind people to contact you first.

Fee-based information services—the time will come when you will need to raise your prices. How do you market higher prices for the same products and services? Take a look at October's **Sales and Marketing Management** magazine. The article "Springing a Price Hike without Startling Clients" provides important pointers, including giving adequate notice (one to two months), supporting your price increase with relevant facts, and announcing your new rates in a sales call rather than a memo. As always, take a look from your clients' point of view. Given good reasons and courteous communication, most clients will accept a price increase.

Business-to-business yellow pages are now online. Are you listed? To check them out, take a look at Yellow Pages Online <<http://www.ypo.com>> and Nynex's BigYellow <<http://bigyellow.com>>. Save yourself (and your clients) hours of searching and let your mouse do the walking. ■

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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: Cover art: This issue's clip art sheet: pages 2 and 4, Olson's Library Clip Art, Vol 3; page 5, This issue's clip art sheet.

End Users...continued from page 1**Bibliographic Instruction**

Once resources are selected, librarians participate actively in training. Sun employees from all over the world are brought to SunUniversity for instruction. As a part of SunUniversity, the library gets plenty of walk-in visits. Librarians serve as troubleshooters and provide backup research services for students. And once employees are trained on an information system, SunLibrary uses the corporate intranet to inform them of new developments and search tips.

Employees sign up for internal listservs—known as aliases—so that they can receive information relevant to their jobs. The library distributes continuing training materials, reminders, and updates to targeted groups via these listservs. This type of focused communication is a powerful marketing tool because it limits “junk email” while delivering important and timely information to end users, and those users know that this vital information comes from the library.

The Research Desk

Libraries are service organizations, and SunLibrary is constantly involved in both in-person and remote service. End users aren't librarians, and sometimes they need help with difficult research needs. “We get complex questions so we work in partnership with the requestor.” Sun's librarians ask requestors which resources they have tried and review search strategies. Then, “We take the search to the next level.”

By providing research tools to the end users, they can do the initial searching. This is especially helpful since most of SunLibrary's clients are in different time zones. Then, they can work with a research librarians to dig deeper into information sources.

Cindy believes that database vendors underestimate end users. “Vendors think end users are naive and want one-button searches. Sun's searchers are sophisticated.” She finds that nontechnical employees learn the basics of boolean searching and quickly become proficient at searching online. Software engineers and other computer experts are even more capable of making good use of databases and the Internet. This greatly expands the universe

of resources that Sun can make available to end users.

Like most of us, Sun's end users would like to see more aggregation of online resources. The fragmentation of online databases, rather than consolidation under the auspices of companies like Dialog, means that end users and librarians need to be able to work with many different interfaces. This is, of course, a great opportunity for information professionals to take center stage—to show off their competencies and share their secrets—and that is what SunLibrary does.

Library Marketing

SunLibrary doesn't rest on its laurels. There's a constant effort to maintain visibility on the company intranet and in the training program. Students at SunUniversity get library tours and an orientation to the company's information services.

SunLibrary's web page is frequently redesigned and updated monthly to keep employees current on the latest resources. They're working on a radio spot as well—a verbal message that can be played by clicking on a web page icon. Sun's CEO already participates in a monthly interview, available on the intranet, and the library is inspired to follow the example.

SunLibrary doesn't neglect print resources either. Flyers available in the library provide additional information about resources, and they are faxed as needed to Sun offices around the world. The library maintains a physical as well as a virtual presence in the company to make sure its clients know how to get help fast.

When End Users Aren't Searching

Some librarians who responded to our question told us that their clients are not doing much searching on their own, for a variety of good reasons. Highly paid professionals and executives can spend their time more profitably doing their jobs and delegating the research to assistants and librarians. Some libraries are located in organizations staffed by technophobes or in worksites that don't offer computer support for end-user searching. In many cases, the speed and expertise offered by specialized searchers are crucial

“End users aren't librarians, and sometimes they need help with difficult research needs.”

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for getting complete information within tight deadlines. That's another case in which information professionals can serve research needs better than less experienced end users.

For an established library, it's an easy sell. If you do your job well, do it on time, and make sure you claim full credit for the work you do. Be proactive about attending meetings and keeping the organization's employees informed about new resources, intelligence, regulations, and business trends.

If your company has an intranet primarily for email and file transfers, check our recommendations in this year's July/August issue of **Marketing Treasures** for ways to increase your market share. Use professional association marketing tool kits, as we suggested in our last issue, to spread the word about your skills and resources. If you're a regular **Marketing Treasures** reader, you already have ideas and resources at your fingertips for promoting the products and services of your library.

Helping Web Surfers

But even libraries that still have most of the database search responsibilities may be helping clients deal with the Internet. This is where your skills at organizing information come in handy. A regularly updated index of useful web sites can save company employees a lot of time. If librarians are perceived as guides through the confusing outer reaches of the Internet, that's another marketing statement: We know our way around the latest information resources.

Selling Your Importance to Upper Management

Whether you do most of the research for your organization or end users do most of their own, you must still establish your value with the parent organization. That can be a challenge. You have to market to both the clients and to management. If clients are doing their own searching, could the librarian's job be in peril? Intuitively, a lot of people would say "yes." Unless the librarian is visibly involved in training, acquiring resources, organizing information, and opening the gateways to online resources, upper management may come to believe that librarians are no longer relevant to the information process.

"If in today's society information is seen more and more as a commodity having value, what price those who provide this information?"

Kevin Adams

"We're taking our core competencies into the digital age." Cindy Hill

Kevin Adams, Librarian of the Institute of Environmental Science & Research in Christchurch, New Zealand, says, "If in today's society information is seen more and more as a commodity having value, what price those who provide this information?" A good question. How would you answer it? How would your clients? How would your managers?

As companies rely more on electronic information sources and end-user searching, be aggressive about taking your rightful place in the center of the process. Don't wait to be asked to help find information resources—get on committees and task forces and contribute right along with the technical experts. The best computer system in the world is useless if it holds erroneous or incomplete information. The most competent end user can't find the right answers on the wrong database. You're the information expert—get into the process at the beginning and be involved at every stage.

A key to proving your value to upper management and clients is to be a constant, reliable, visible member of the information access team. Most of the tasks discussed in this article are familiar to librarians and are merely being applied in a new setting. As Cindy Hill says, "We're taking our core competencies into the digital age." ■

(editor's note: As we put this issue to bed, Cindy Hill has informed us that SunLibrary has begun referring to their "end users" as "information users." Perhaps this is something to consider at your own library.)



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.

This issue of **Marketing Treasures** includes your new clip art sheet. The sheet presents original artwork in camera-ready form. These images are also available as EPS graphic files on 3.5" PC and Macintosh computer disks.

Holiday Candle. Our holiday candle comes in three flavors—for general, medical and law libraries. Knowledge enlightens! Use this theme on posters, newsletters, memos and holiday decorations. Light up someone's life with search results delivered in a holiday folder—cheery colors and glowing images can brighten dark winter days.

Punch Bowl. Punch up your marketing with a holiday punchbowl and a reminder that the information you provide makes the difference in producing a stellar report, presentation, or market analysis. Use this graphic on napkins, nametags, bookmarks or posters at your holiday open house—to accent the importance of the library all year long.

Angel. We offer our version of the ubiquitous Raphael cherub. The angel will be right at home at your reference desk or search station, or on nametags or t-shirts. Even angels have off days, but your clients can have their information needs answered with the library's divine intervention and heavenly resourcefulness.

Snowy Computer. Midwesterners will feel right at home using our computer with snowflake accents; soon a lot of other people will be coping with winter weather as well. If you send out a quarterly newsletter, here's a way to visually identify the winter issue. Use this image to let folks know that your electronic resources produce bright, sparkling facts and blizzards of information.

Library Stamp. We offer our version of a library stamp. We originally conceived the idea for library direct mail materials (newsletters, flyers, etc.), but this stamp could be used other ways too. Here's an idea. Print the graphic out on small labels so you have "real" stamps and sponsor a "frequent user" promotion: "Get 25 stamps on your Frequent User Card and be eligible for a giveaway drawing during National Library Week."

Icons. We're including six more library icons. Use them to draw attention to an item in a memo, to fill a little space in your newsletter, or to identify a flyer as a library product. ■

Promotion Gems

"Don't unpack: ninety percent of everything on the Web isn't even worth the time to download." Dylan Tweney's comment in this month's **PC World** can't possibly apply to YOUR web page! Can it?

Web sites are such a vital marketing tool that you need to review yours constantly to make sure that it invites viewing and lead people to the information they need. Don't scare away the novice or time-pressed searcher with irrelevant and complex graphics and obscure links.

Are your web page links getting out of control? Can a new visitor to any page in your site make sense of where to go for information? If not, it's time to exercise those library skills and develop a web site index or map.

Take the viewpoint of an outside visitor arriving at your web site for the first time. Why is the visitor here? What is he or she looking for? If you're a library, no doubt the visitor is after some specific information. Make sure links to your hours, phone numbers, OPAC and special services are easy to recognize. A colorful icon may be eye-catching, but if it isn't immediately identifiable to a first-time visitor, it needs to have a caption.

If you have links to many sites, take a look at one of the following web sites for ideas on how to organize them.

<http://www.gmarketing.com/map.html>

<http://www.designmgt.org/siteindex.html>

The Art Class offers site analysis and makeovers at its graphics and design site. You'll also find some good ideas, frequently useful conversations, and critiques of web page design.

<http://www.ultranet.com/~hixdave/>

And, read "Searching Is My Business" by Dylan Tweney, **PC World**, December '96, pp. 182-196. This article is an excellent introduction to 17 search engines and a number of software packages that simplify Internet searching, at least a little. ■



We left the banner blank so you can use your own words. This graphic would make a nice holiday flyer nameplate, gift tags, or "Here's the Information You Requested notes."

Sparkling Reviews

101 Ways to Captivate a Business Audience. Sue Gaulke. AMACOM. 1997. ISBN 0-8144-7920-0. \$15.95

Do you make presentations? Whether this is your first or your fiftieth, ponder the wisdom in Sue Gaulke's short, practical book. Her punchy writing and specific hints take you through the entire process of planning and delivering presentations.

The 14 chapters fall into four sections: Steak (message content: "know your stuff"), Sizzle (humor, anecdotes, audience participation: "be interesting"), and Style (delivery, personality: "be enthusiastic") cover the basics of presentations. Part four, Standing Ovations: Quick Tips and Resources, reviews some of the highlights and gives you first-aid techniques for rescuing a faltering presentation.

This book is packed with practical tips, from what to wear to how to cope with equipment failures and when to tell jokes. Sue Gaulke is a communications trainer, and she developed the method presented in the book from her own experience, including observing in audiences what they best respond to. Are you surprised that audiences were more interested in Sizzle and Style than in content? If you've ever sat through a boring presentation about an important subject, you'll know why Sizzle and Style are critical to communication.

To turn on the audience, get in sync with them. Gaulke has carefully studied audience reactions and gives specific recommendations on preparing your presentation, prescribing "Sizzle every 6 minutes," and finishing up with a memorable summary. Audiences are like ice skating judges—they're impressed by brilliance and remember the end of a program better than its beginning.

And what if you lose your audience? Gaulke explains how to adjust to your audience's mood and response, giving specifics on what to change to reengage the audience. These techniques alone are worth the price of the book.

101 Ways to Captivate a Business Audience is easy to read and, if anything, overorganized. There's a table of contents, a list of the 101 points, an index, and a master checklist. You can't get lost, and you can learn a lot about presentations. ■

Treasure Tips

Change is good—as long as people still know that the library is a great information source. For newsletters, brochures, memos and flyers, use the bright holiday colors and gold or silver accents, but keep your standard nameplate, typeface, logo and overall design. Like the little black dress, library materials can benefit from accessories and be decorated for the season, but they shouldn't be rendered unrecognizable.

The symbols of the season are available everywhere on stickers. Add some stars, snowflakes, snowmen, ribbons, candles, angels, dreidels, wreaths or evergreens to the front page to brighten up your papers. Your email messages can pick up the theme with winter graphics or seasonal quotations.

Deliver reports with a colorful accent ribbon or with a candy cane tucked into the binder. The colors outdoors can be dull and the weather may be dismal—brighten up your products and spread a little cheer along with priceless information.

Readability really counts. As the baby boomers grow older and acquire bifocals, they're getting fussier about what they look at and won't bother straining to read tiny print or low-contrast pages. Smudgy print and translucent paper also make documents hard to read. Trendy color combinations may look good in a sample, but make sure the print is distinguishable from the background color or pattern. With the huge number of available fonts, sophisticated spacing and kerning options, economical high-quality printers, and good-quality papers available, there's no excuse for a hard-to-read page. Be as careful about clarity as you are about content. Remember, your readers aren't getting any younger, even if they still claim to be under 35.

And while you're checking your publications for readability, make sure that the printers at all research stations are producing adequately clear and large print. You may need to reset the defaults and select larger, clearer fonts for the everyday tasks of printing references. While this isn't a direct marketing tactic, attention to detail and high-quality products of all kinds send positive messages about your library's capabilities. ■

"Audiences are like ice skating judges—they're impressed by brilliance and remember the end of a program better than its beginning."

