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MARKETING *Treasures*

Ideas and Insights into Promoting Library & Information Services

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New Product Launch at the Nevada State Library and Archives

It's the new year. Is it time for a new library product? If you're feeling that creative urge and want to produce something new, something unique, something unprecedented in library circles—or just something that will meet a pressing need—read on.

Eileen Kessler of the Nevada State Library and Archives generously shared her organization's experience with designing, producing and marketing a new product—one which met a compelling need for a select group of clients and grew to serve a larger community as well.

Define the need and the product

Nevada is one of only seven states which has a biennial legislature and lawmakers are only paid for sixty days of the session. You can certainly begin to picture the information needs of these semiprofessional politicians. Beyond the routine requests for background on pending legislation, lawmakers need status information on individual bills and help on the mechanics of lawmaking.

Enter the Nevada State Library and Archives. These two entities served the state government and its citizens and were charged with giving comprehensive public access to government information. The two were merged in 1985. The mission statement is:

“The Nevada State Library and Archives (NSLA) serves government, business, libraries and citizens of the state by providing a full range of information services, including: reference and research; archival and records management; library planning and development; blind and physically disabled programs; and development of state information policy to ensure public access to government information in all formats.”

Nevada had established a Law Division of the State Library and a Legislative Counsel Bureau to serve research needs for the legislature, but there was still a gap in quick updates on pending legislation and services which would transcend the barriers.

To fill the gap, Joan Kirschner, Government Documents Librarian, started the Legislative Hotline in 1975. Its humble beginnings were a phone line into the State Library to answer questions from other libraries when they couldn't wait for a mailed response. Two librarians staffed the phone the first couple of years and a service was born.

A pilot project

One way to explore a new product is to produce a pilot, just as television shows do. Once you've defined your product and its target audience, try it out on a selected segment of the target population. If they like it, find out why. If not, you may have misunderstood the need; it's time to regroup and review. Go back to your clients and do a comprehensive reference interview so you can understand exactly

“One way to explore a new product is to produce a pilot, just as television shows do.”

Pearls of Wisdom

Let your customers see themselves in your advertising—literally. Printers have mylar-coated papers in various weights that reflect like a mirror. Print a message like “Are you your own worst enemy?” or “Who is our most important customer?” across the bottom of the page, and customers can reflect on your ad. Write your text and contact information on the plain paper back of the page. Use mylar-coated cardstock for postcards. Ask a printer to show you mylar paper samples. If you use a silvery mylar paper, you have a mirror-like ad. If you use a colored mylar, you can talk about “rose-colored glasses,” or some other color concept in your ad copy.

Multimedia presentations need not be a major production any more. Inmedia's Slides & Sound Plus lets you combine images, sound effects, transitions and video clips into a slick, professional package to take on the road when you're marketing, training or just explaining. Quickly update, edit, or customize a presentation and let sound and movement set your work apart from the standard slide show. You can download a trial version of the prize-winning software program directly from <www.inmediapresents.com> or purchase the software for under \$70. Call 888-5-SLIDES for retailer locations.

Sometimes a glowing award is overpowered by a heavy frame. Instead, let it “float” between sheets of clear Lucite. A.M.S. Industries' Lucite Sandwich frames come in many styles and sizes. The small frames turn a business card into a paperweight. Larger frames come with stands so they can be displayed on desks and show your message from both the front and the back. And there are Lucite frames to post on the wall, as well. The frames will hold pages from business card sizes to posters and come in a variety of shapes for different needs. Use Lucite Sandwiches to hold recognition awards for your staff or a classy promotion for your library. Call A.M.S. Industries at 813-960-8351 for a catalog.

We're willing to bet that most of your customers would appreciate a clip-on travel reading light. Imprinted with your library name, the battery-powered lights are great for travellers and handy at home. Even when your customers are far away, you can still be shedding light on the subject for them. Call Nelson Marketing at 800-982-9159 for the catalog.

Brightly colored cloisonne or enamel pins can carry a long-lasting marketing message. Maxwell Medals & Awards offers pins in any shape you want. They can reproduce your logo's shape or print your message on a round or rectangular standard pin. For special events, custom-cast pins in gold, silver or bronze are an award-winning idea. These lapel pins can festoon a banner, a hat or a tie just as well as they can perk up a suit lapel. Call 800-331-1383 or visit Maxwell's web site: <www.maxmedals.com>

Your intrepid publisher has been snooping around the office supply store, and found the materials to implement an idea shown to her by a reader 12 months ago. 3M is now making Personal Organizer Accessories featuring their Post-it notes. They have put their notes into thin pack dispensers with adhesive backing on the dispenser. You can place the dispenser anywhere—notebooks, reports, catalogs—and have instant access to little yellow sticky notes. No more carrying around Post-it note pads. Think of the possibilities. You can stick these dispensers in the bibliographies, reports, online printouts that you give your customers. We're going to find out if you can get names/logos printed on the dispensers. But for now, look for these organizers 3M # 673LP3 and # 673LP4 in your office supply store. They make great companions to yellow highlighters and pen giveaways.

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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: Feeling a little stressed? I thought you would like the graphic on the front page header. All images in this issue are from the Bizworld collection from Dynamic Graphics Artworks.

New Product Launch... *continued from page 1*

what's missing and what needs to be changed. Focus groups are a great tool for this kind of problem-solving.

When you have your product ready for prime time, don't rest on your laurels. This is the time for an aggressive marketing effort. Make sure that every member of the target audience receives several notifications of the new products that meets their unique needs. This is a great time for promotional items, a new-product party, and banners all over your web site and the parent organization's site. Generate excitement in as many creative ways as you can. You're announcing the birth of your baby.

The baby grows up

Like any new baby, the new product is likely to have growth spurts that can be disconcerting and demand quick, creative thinking. Nevada's Legislative Hotline started as a modest sideline to a standard reference service, but word quickly got out and within two years the Hotline was fielding more than 3,500 questions during the legislative session. NSLA's response was to obtain grant funds for more staff to handle the extra work. The Hotline also moved out of the State Library and into the State Legislature Building to be more accessible.

When you're developing and operating an evolving, growing product or service, it's easy to put marketing in the background. Don't give in to that temptation. This is the time to have a consistent look and message so that your product's identity is established, even as it grows.

Just as proud parents show off their kids, you can show off your product by putting it in the forefront of your standard marketing effort. Give it a name, a logo, and a good slogan and include it in your other marketing materials, such as your brochure, newsletter and web site.

Nevada's Legislative Hotline soon grew out of its cramped quarters in the Message Center and moved into the Bill Room. There it has a visible, physical presence. Staffers work two-hour shifts from 8am-5pm during the legislative session. A toll-free number makes access easy from anywhere in the state. In 1995, the service fielded more than 16,500 questions and requests for material. And, as Eileen Kessler writes, "The 'good will' and name recognition value of this service to NSLA is incalculable."

The mature product

Some new products enjoy a long, stable maturity, highly effective and well-known to all their clients. If this can be maintained by a regular, planned marketing campaign, that's great. Just be sure to contact every client regularly with a reminder that you're still there and still offering that valuable service. Your first goal here is to keep your current clients and your second goal should be to generate more business through good word-of-mouth and carefully targeted marketing. Contacts with new employees, announcements of enhancements to your product, and regular mentions in your newsletter and on your web site can help keep people aware of the product.

"When you're developing and operating a volatile, changing, growing product or service, it's easy to leave marketing in the background. Don't give in to that temptation."

But sometimes there's a mid-life crisis. Nevada's Legislative Hotline suddenly found itself in the electronic age. All legislators were equipped with laptop computers, the Internet carried Nevada's legislative web site <leg.state.nv.us>, and, as always happens during computer introductions, anything that could possibly go wrong with the system did. The Legislative Hotline staff wondered, "Would this make the Hotline's role in the legislative process obsolete?"

Change or die

The Legislative Hotline's staff quickly responded with training, alternatives and action. Laura Witschi, the head of NSLA's Reference Services, quickly learned all she could about the new legislative web site and realized the critical importance of training on the new system for all librarians and support staff.

They were among the first to become proficient with the new system.

Yet another training need quickly appeared. Legislators were suddenly using new media and equipment, often with little prior experience with computers and the Internet. NSLA stepped in with training brochures and assistance for the legislators, the press, and the public. Anyone who has lived through a computer system introduction knows that the fastest word to get around is about whom to call for help. The Legislative Hotline staff were positioned to get a lot of word-of-mouth business and ready to take advantage of it.



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New Product Launch...*continued from page 3*

Resourceful Hotline staffers offered print alternatives to electronic information when the system crashed and while bugs were worked out. People who walked through the heavily-traveled main corridor of the Legislature's first floor saw the Hotline's banner in the window of the Bill Room—a compelling invitation to come in for help, information, and support.

Direct requests to the Hotline dropped to about 11,000 during the 1997 session, but the quality of responses increased. Staffers spent more time with callers. As other libraries have experienced, access to electronic sources can make end-users hungry for more detailed information and, again, the librarians are the ones who can meet those needs. The Legislative Hotline's twenty-year record and physical presence in the Legislature Building brought in plenty of repeat business. The value they added to their services helped spread the news that they are more important than ever.

Prepare for the future

Here's what Eileen Kessler says about the Hotline's future: "To ensure that NSLA continues to be a provider of this valuable service into the 21st century, it will be necessary to continually monitor changing technologies and to exploit opportunities to provide new value-added services to public, state government and legislator alike. This is the time to strategize and to strengthen our position and services in anticipation of the next session." When an information product gets old, it's time to review it, rejuvenate it, and reissue it.

As the product changes, so do the marketing needs. If you revise and reissue a valuable product, bring the marketing into line with a new look, a bridge to your faithful repeat clients, and a campaign to bring in even more new business. Mail the new brochure to potential clients, send promotional reminders to your old friends, and take advantage of the newest media and link your site to others as the Legislative Hotline has done with <www.clan.lib.nv.us/docs/NSLA/SERVICES/ref-hot.htm>.

Products have a life cycle which are as dynamic as the changes in information media and content. You need to stay on your toes both with the product and with the marketing message. Be ready to take advantage of every need your product meets and be equally ready to tell po-

tential customers about your product—your old friend may be entirely new to them. ■

Thanks to Eileen Kessler for sharing the Nevada State Library and Archives experience with our readers.

Inside Treasure

Put Your Marketing To The Test

When it comes to a library's marketing program, few librarians know what to expect. "How can we evaluate our marketing program? How will our investment translate into increased usage and visibility?" Although the questions seem to hit the target, they actually miss the mark when it comes to marketing.

Marketing is not a method for increasing sales or even making sales. The primary goal of marketing is to create customers, either other businesses or people who decide that it's in their best interest to purchase/utilize to your services. In other words, the goal of marketing is to **set the stage**.

To expand this concept further, **the mission of marketing is to establish an environment in which the customer appreciates the benefits of doing business with your library, and your organization discovers how it can contribute to the customer's success.**

As strange as it may seem, marketing has nothing to do with selling. Instead, it has everything to do with creating the circumstances that make the sale of your product the next logical appropriate step. Marketing helps to establish a climate in which your library staff can excel in its efforts..

Within this context, what should you expect from your marketing efforts? Here are seven tangible ways to evaluate a marketing program.

1. The successful marketing program differentiates information service from the competition. One of the most serious criticisms that can be leveled against a library is to suggest that it looks like every other information service and has no unique identity.

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"No matter how you refer to the people using your services, be they clients, patrons or customers, they are buying your services and you need to market to them. Put your marketing to the test!"

Put Your Marketing to the Test...

continued from page 4

Stop for a moment and think like a customer. If there's no reason for selecting one supplier over another, then the lowest price becomes the reason behind a buying/usage decision.

Far too often, organizations literally steal from each other when it comes to their marketing. Their messages all sound alike and their brochures all look alike. They use the same photos, the same words and, usually, even the same design approach. In addition, they clone their promotional programs from competitors.

And yes, all libraries have competitors. Whether it's the bookstore in the mall, the filing squirrel down the hall, or the information service company knocking on your management's door, libraries have competitors.

In order to get the customer's attention, your library must set itself apart from the competition. Being a "look-alike" places your information services at a competitive disadvantage.

2. An effective marketing program keeps information services in the minds of customers and prospects. It's easy to forget how the decision making process operates at each level of every business. It goes something like this: when a need arises, whoever comes to mind first gets the order.

Of course, we want to believe that our customers always think of us when they need what the library offers, but if the truth be known, they're using items or services you offer from your competitors. Your problem is that when customers need information, they may be failing to think of your library.

A primary component in marketing is to make a serious effort to stay in the customer's mind at all times. Creating marketing activities and programs that raise your visibility and reinforce awareness are essential elements of good marketing. If you're going to roll out the red carpet for your customers, let them know about it—again and again.



“It's easy to forget how the decision making process operates at each level of every business. It goes something like this: when a need arises, whoever comes to mind first gets the order.”

3. An effective marketing program will give the library a strong hold on the marketplace.

There are several ways to express the idea of market position: being perceived as the acknowledged leader in the field is an essential requirement for attracting customers today. In order to be accurately perceived by customers and prospects, careful and thorough effort is required to plan, shape and continually foster a consistent image.

Too many librarians hold the view that “doing a good job” is all that's necessary in order to get and keep business. If this were true, then why are so many libraries being downsized or the work being outsourced? Your library needs to maintain its visual and brand name image and the messages that go along with it.

4. An effective marketing program will communicate a library's expertise and knowledge.

“Here's what we can do for you.” These words are heard every year at budget time and, almost without exception, what follows is the price. Unfortunately, this approach reduces doing business to trying to balance yourself while sitting on a one-legged stool. When that one leg is price, it's easy to fall off!

Ironically, far too many libraries fail to recognize and dramatize or highlight their unique characteristics. This is a major mistake since it's a library's special qualities that make it attractive to both current and potential customers. Today, perhaps more than at any other time, information services capabilities should be communicated. This isn't just listing the new books it has in the reading room or the number of computer terminals on the internet. The best way to differentiate your library is through the knowledge you communicate to your customers and your effort to help them succeed.

5. An effective marketing program will give a library a long-term orientation.

Many libraries seem to suffer from what can best be described as “The McDonald's Syndrome.” In just a few words, “the quicker the better” has been the dominant business philosophy. Librarians and others seem compelled to think in terms of a week, a month—at the most a quarter or maybe a year.

One of the functions of a marketing program is to keep us thinking farther down the road

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Put Your Marketing to the Test...

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to focus on making sure we're in business for many tomorrows. Use the marketing tools we discuss in **Marketing Treasures** to plan ahead for the long run.

6. An effective marketing program will be customer-oriented. Although Librarians describe in great detail how much they care about their customers, its sometimes clear that the "customers" they are talking about are themselves, not the people who require the information services.

The customer (the one who authorizes the budget, pays taxes) is apparently irrelevant. To illustrate the point, consider a brochure which was obviously the centerpiece of an organization's marketing activities. There were just three headings on the first page:

- Our goals
- Our approach
- Our experience

Is it possible to use this brochure? Absolutely—but not to sell. Instead it would make an effective orientation document for new employees. It accurately portrays the organization's story **from its viewpoint**, but it totally fails to communicate the message that it understands its customers and their information needs. A library's marketing brochure must make certain that the messages are directed to customers and address their needs.

In today's world of vision and mission statements it's easy to rely on those statements to be the focal point of your library brochure. Okay, put the statements in writing, but be sure to communicate how your vision and mission will help your potential and current customers. Stay focused on benefit statements!

7. An effective marketing program will be a vital force in customer retention. There is usually so much concern for getting new business that maintaining and expanding existing business is easily forgotten.

It's a mistake to harbor the notion that marketing has only to do with picking the fruit off the tree. It has much more to do with caring for the fruit that has been picked to make sure it doesn't spoil.

Although it's not widely discussed, customers leave because they feel ignored, insignificant and forgotten. When this happens, they seek

new relationships in order to re-ignite their value.

A routine gets established that fails to keep the fire alive. The eyes of a professional marketer never leave current customers because the goal is to strengthen the relationship and the bond that exists between them.

By asking the right questions, it's relatively easy to determine whether or not a marketing program is on track. If marketing is carefully planned and effectively implemented, then a library can and should expect positive results.

This article by John R. Graham has been adapted for Marketing Treasures. John is the author of the book, Magnet Marketing: The Ultimate Strategy for Attracting and Holding Customers. ■

"The best way to differentiate your business is through the knowledge you communicate to your customers and your effort to help them succeed."



You never know... where you'll find a marketing idea! The other night while at a restaurant we found ourselves entertained while reading the menu. Unlike most restaurant menus which list food and prices (yawn!), the menu we were reading told a story. Sure, it gave us the food and pricing options, but intermingled were interesting tales about the restaurant and the local wildlife of ducks, geese, and blue crabs. (the restaurant was on the Chesapeake Bay) It was a fascinating blend of menu information, story-telling, and clever graphics.

We thought this menu example might spark an idea for a whimsical brochure for National Library Week. And for libraries in corporate cultures where lighthearted imagination is discouraged, perhaps a brochure that tells the story of computers, your company history, or industry tale might be appropriate, all the while telling people about your library's information

Our dark color in this issue is purple, Pantone 2627. Here are two screens of our purple. If you're a new reader, go to the Nov/Dec 97 Treasure Tips article to learn about our dark color demonstration.



30% screen



70% screen

"The eyes of a professional marketer never leave current customers because the goal is to strengthen the relationship and the bond that exists between them."

Worth Its Weight in Gold

Dingbat Doin's

What are all those funny symbols in the type-face called dingbats or wingdings? And what are they good for? For one thing, they contain great commands. Instead of just using a conventional bullet symbol you can...

 point to what needs to be done

make a check-list 

 solicit a vote

 be a star

 ask someone to write

or call  

 or just hurry on over

send a letter 

take a note

  cut on the dotted line

“set off some text”

Of course with Valentine's day just around the corner, you can express your love with dingbats.



Or end your poem with a heart. 

 And then there are all those cool snowflakes!
   

So you don't have to be a graphic artist to put images in your communications. Just use your imagination and some dingbats/wingdings! ■

Promotion Gems

National Library Week Themes

National Library Week (NLW) is April 19 - 25th this year. If your days are like ours, time just flies by and before you know it, the event is here. We thought we would jumpstart your thinking about NLW celebrations this year.

"Prairie-dogging" is one of the hot new words of the year, according to the **Washington Post**. It refers to people who work in cubicles and pop up to look out once in a while. If your customers are working in a prairie dog town, invite them to "get out of the box" and come to the library for an open house. The more boxed in they feel, the wider your library horizons should look. Send invitations in little boxes, and then make your library look as spacious as possible. Emphasize your staff's world-wide reach. Highlight your newest and farthest-reaching resources. A globe hanging in a fishnet proclaims "world wide web." Tourism posters can give you an international look. Screen shots of foreign-language web sites underline the message—we'll go anywhere for you. And rather than serving the standard office snack fare, bring in exotic international foods.

If you're still bearing the proud name of "Library", consider "Library = Liberty" as your theme and show off the many ways your research and analysis services liberate people in the organization to work better informed. If you have numbers on how much time and money your library services have saved your organization, post them proudly on your web site and circulate them in the newsletter. Pull out some of those July 4 decorations, use a red/white/blue color scheme, and put (virtual) fireworks on your communications.

"Knowledge at hand" can emphasize your quick research response, current awareness service, intranet accessibility and all-around handiness with knowledge management. If your responsibilities include training and technical support for your corporate information systems, promote that as yet another "helping hand" you give your customers. Invite folks in for a "hands-on" library tour or post a virtual tour on your web site.

We'll feature National Library Week clip art using these themes in our next issue of **Marketing Treasures**. ■

Sparkling Reviews

Marketing Straight to the Heart. Barry Feig. AMACOM. New York. 1997. ISBN 0-81444-0355-7. \$24.95

“Over intellectualizing your product features can be a deadly marketing flaw.” Does that set you back on your heels? After all, we’re promoting data, information and knowledge products, not Beanie Babies. Keep reading.

Marketing Straight to the Heart points out that we’re marketing to people who have feelings as well as reason, and finding the right marketing approach means targeting the whole person, not just his or her mind. “Smart service marketers bond with customers. They make them feel comfortable and gain their trust.” This Feig calls “share of heart”—the emotional appeal of a product or service. The marketing recipe is 1/4 reality and 3/4 perception—the emotional, holistic response to your marketing campaign.

How do you develop “share of heart” in a library marketing environment? Feig identifies 15 hot buttons to push when you want a positive consumer response. Not all of them apply to library customers, but some of them are very familiar: the excitement of discovery, need for belonging, time-saving, getting the best that’s available, and being the best you can be. In a competitive, information-driven corporate environment, knowledge and information provide those benefits to your customers. As rational as your work is, you know that ultimately much of your customer loyalty comes down to trust, and trust comes from the heart.

After this unorthodox beginning, Feig walks readers through the conventional marketing process, always emphasizing the emotional hooks that belong to the “share of heart” approach, beginning with the mission statement and covering marketing strategy, product introduction, the marketing mix, advertising and brand identity. Feig doesn’t assume readers know all about marketing and makes this book a one-stop shopping opportunity to learn a new marketing approach and apply it throughout the entire marketing process.

This is a good book for reviewing what you think you already know about marketing, or give it to someone who needs some marketing insight. ■

Treasure Tips

Hard-working Bookmarks

Post-it notes and their sticky clones often do the lion’s share of work as bookmarks but they’re not good for the books. Type can be lifted off pages by that mild adhesive on the back of the notes and pulling a sticky off a thin page can tear the paper.

The Library Staff at the law firm of Reed Smith Shaw & McClay LLP came up with a good solution which provides bookmarks, copy requests and library marketing—all on one page. Pads of bookmarks go out to all offices in the firm. There’s a space at the top for copy requests, a reminder to return the book to the library and an eye-catching library graphic, printed in black on a cream paper.

No doubt the folks running the copiers appreciate using a standardized copy request form rather than having to decipher little notes randomly scattered on stickies and loose bits of paper in books.

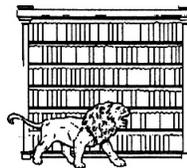
This classy idea can be customized for any type of library. An elegant symmetrical layout suits the formal culture of a large law firm. Bright colors and fun fonts might work as well for another type of organization. Remember:

- keep it simple and uncluttered, with lots of space for notes and copy requests
- choose a color that stands out on a cluttered desk
- include library contact information: email, phone number, and URL so customers can easily reach you.

DUPLICATING,
PLEASE COPY PAGES

_____ to _____
from

*Please return
to Library*



Reed Smith Shaw & McClay

Pair this with a “safe copying” campaign to remind your customers about how to protect books while they copy, and you’ll generate an educational library marketing opportunity. ■

Thanks to the staff at Reed Smith Shaw & McClay LLP for sharing this idea with our readers.