

MARKETING

Treasures

The newsletter that helps librarians market the services of their libraries and information centers.

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Your Library's Sales Force

As organizations find it increasingly difficult to support the costs of library services on overhead, more librarians find themselves entering the chilly waters of fee-based information services, with its shifting sands of opportunities and constant challenge to stay afloat.

Managing a library business in a cost-recovery mode implies that your library's very existence and growth depends on the "sales" made by your library staff – your sales force. While the initial stages of implementing a fee-based information service concentrate on pricing, product packaging, service definition, delivery, and advertising, soon afterwards a library business manager will recognize the role staff members play in determining the success of the library business. The words "self-motivated", "service-oriented", and "customer-driven" become important personnel attributes.

Unfortunately for librarians, the curricula of most library schools do not include sales management strategies. A pity, because being able to select and motivate a sales force has merits that many library managers, whether they manage fee-based services or not, would find worthwhile knowing. If you're not convinced that your library staff is a "sales force", consider this: Every member of the library staff that comes in contact with library customers – the telephone receptionist, a circulation clerk, an online database specialist, a book shelver, the reference librarians – influences how a customer perceives the products and services of your library and contributes to a customer's decisions about whether it is worth buying a service from your library again. And your editor believes that anyone who has the opportunity to exert such influence on a customer is a salesperson – whether formally acknowledged as such or not.

If you currently manage a fee-based information service or are contemplating starting one, the follow-

ing insights into the responsibilities of salespeople should help you identify individuals who can initiate and support a loyal customer base for your library business. Those readers who have no immediate plans for managing a fee-based service should find that the following insights help their personnel management strategies for building and maintaining a service-oriented library.

Customer Needs. By listening, observing, and understanding non-verbal communication and asking the right questions, a good salesperson can let customers find their own reasons for buying a service or product. The role of a good library salesperson is to act as a consultant to the customer, showing an interest in solving a customer's problem.

This is not too different from the "reference interview" process we all learned in library school. But a good salesperson takes the interview process a step beyond simply answering the immediate question. A salesperson will "advise" customers on the full range of library services that will best meet the customers' needs. The customers then sell themselves on requiring (buying) certain library services. By assuming a consultant role, the salesperson doesn't need to adopt a high-pressure sales approach. Most librarians will be able to adopt comfortably the consultant sales technique. The key is not to stop at answering the question, but to learn enough about the customers' needs to be able to relate additional library services to those needs, advising of their availability and appropriateness.

Prospecting. In many libraries, when customers stop calling or dropping by the library, the staff will "take advantage" of the lull by catching up on clerical work or a pet indexing project. In a fee-based environment, unless sales projections have already been attained, a lull in business strikes fear into the heart of a business manager. When "business is slow" the sales force is expected to be prospecting, trying to identify potential

Continued on page 3

Pearls of Wisdom

The American Library Association (ALA) has developed materials to accompany the upcoming October PBS TV series, "Race to Save the Planet". The 10-part series covers global environmental problems and workable solutions. This may be a great public relations opportunity for drawing attention to the alternatives to storing information on paper, to your library's recycling efforts, to your organization's concern about environmental issues, etc. To receive a package of library tie-in materials to the PBS series, write to ALA, Video & Special Projects, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. The kit includes clip art, a poster, and ideas for library programs. Special libraries may want to contact the local public libraries (and vice versa) to share resources.

Also available from ALA is the new book *Great Promotion Ideas V: JCD Library Public Relations Award Winners and Notables 1988 and 1989*. This book describes the winning entries for the John Cotton Dana Public Relations Award. To place an order, contact the ALA Order Department at 312/944-6780, or write to ALA Publishing Services (see ALA address above).

Newsletter editors might like to review *Outstanding Newsletter Designs: 65 Model Publications From Around the World*, compiled by Polly Pattison et. al. Its 44 color pages present photographs of actual newsletters, ranging from simple to complex newsletter layout designs, accompanied by concise, insightful

commentary. Copies are available by sending \$11 to Polly Pattison, 5092 Kingscross Road, Westminster, CA 92683. Price includes postage; prepayment is required.

Savage Information Services has developed a helpful service for online database searchers. Their new *Custom Online Guide* service is designed to present only the vendor systems and databases that are accessible by your library. Libraries who like to share their database resource list with customers should find this new service a real time-saver, especially since the service includes quarterly updates. For additional information, contact Savage Information Services, 2510 West 237th Street, Suite 200, Torrance, CA 90505, or phone 213/530-4747.

Managers of fee-based libraries may be interested in reviewing the quarterly newsletter of the ALA Fee-Based Information Service Centers in Academic Libraries entitled *Fiscal Facts*. While it is written primarily for academic fee-based services, others may find its ideas and features helpful for their operations too. For a copy of the most recent issue put your request in writing to Suzanne Ward, Manager, Technical Information Service, Management Library, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907.

Fifty minutes is all you need to review the videos published by Crisp Publications. Developed around a popular management book title, these videos summarize a book's major concepts in a video tape format supported by individual self-study books. For a catalog of over 70 titles, including sales training and entrepreneurship, write to Crisp Publications Inc., Department V1, 95 First Street, Los Altos, CA 94022, or phone 415/949-4888.

Speaking of winners, the Cargill Information Center received a John Cotton Dana Award for their library orientation video program. It's excellent! Copies of the video may be borrowed from the SLA Information Resource Center. Contact the SLA/IRC at 1700 18th Street, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20009, or phone 202/234-4700. (And congratulations to Julia Peterson and staff for a job well done!)

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Back issues and samples are available at \$9.00 for U.S. and Canada. Overseas orders add \$1.50. Cost of sample issues will be applied to first subscription order. Additional binders are available at \$4.50 per binder.

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 price.

Your Library's Sales Force *Continued from page 1*

customers and providing follow-up service to current customers. Prospects could be customers who haven't bought any services or products in over six months, or they could be potential customers who responded to an advertisement. Current customers are also considered to be prospects for additional library products or services. So when the phone stops ringing, and your library business hasn't met its monthly sales projections, it's time to "get some irons in the fire".

Marketing Intelligence. Successful sales organizations have a mechanism for collecting and analyzing information about customer trends, competitor activities, and market conditions. Your editor has worked in an organization that required written reports be filed after every visit or phone conversation with a customer or prospect. These reports were shared with product managers and other sales staff. Making sure that the sales staff is alert to business opportunities and threats helps a manager steer a library business in the right direction.

Communicating with Buyers. Many times the person who needs and requests the information services of your library, does not have the authority to make the purchase decision. A buyer, the person who writes the purchase orders, controls the ultimate decision. For this reason, it is important for a salesperson to know who has ultimate purchasing power, and to treat that person like a customer. The buyer needs to be convinced that the features of your library services – price, product, delivery, service – are worth the cost. Knowing the buyer can sometimes be the difference between a sale and no sale.

Provide Service. When customers buy your library services, they are purchasing three things: 1) the product or service itself and what it will do for them; 2) the library's reputation; and 3) the services of the salesperson. Because the majority of a library's offerings are services, personal interaction with a customer, number 3, is an extremely important aspect of the sale. Your library's sales force should be constantly looking for ways to ensure customer satisfaction. Better packaging, faster delivery, additional pricing options, convenient ordering, and improved

products are just some of the service attributes that should constantly be monitored for customer satisfaction and enhancement suggestions. Pursuing a sales policy of "following up on a sale" can ensure that your sales force stays in touch with library customers and increases the probability of repeat sales.

Implement Promotions. Whenever your library embarks on promotion campaigns, it is the responsibility of the sales force to inform regular customers and prospects of the special opportunities. Such promotions could be limited-time offers featuring price reductions, new product introductions, or a two-for-one deal. Good sales people take advantage of a promotion to gain the confidence of customers by demonstrating that they have the customers' best interest in mind. As a customer there's nothing worse than reading about a special price promotion that your salesperson didn't bother to tell you about!

Support Advertising. Make sure the sales force is aware of advertising campaigns so they can personify your advertising message. The purpose of an advertising campaign is to draw in new prospects that the sales force can approach and turn into customers. If you decide to attract prospects with a message of "Answers to Your Questions in 15 Minutes or You Get the Information Free", the sales force must be educated to the advertising campaign and its parameters – or, in this case, you might be giving away a lot of information for free! By the way, if you're looking for advertising ideas that emphasize service, watch the advertising campaigns of other service companies – fast food chains, hotels, airlines, banks, hospitals. Observe how the campaigns are implemented and notice how the sales staff are rewarded for meeting the promised service levels.

The preceding list of sales force responsibilities are basic job functions. Your library business may require additional tasks. To be a good salesperson an individual needs to be outgoing, confident, self-motivated, organized, opportunity-oriented, and knowledgeable. Some of these characteristics can be learned, others are personality traits. Not everyone is cut out to be a salesperson. This is particularly important to realize if

Your Library's Sales Force *Continued from page 3*

your library business has or will be using existing staff members for the sales force. The traits of a good salesperson don't always parallel the traits of a good librarian. Library business managers need to be sensitive to this potential personnel problem. At the same time, don't prejudge your staff members as to whether they'll make good sales people or not. You may be surprised who might shine on the phone!

At some point the dreaded sales technique of "cold calls" is brought up in most sales force management conversations. A cold call is a call from a salesperson to a potential customer without an invitation or any indication that the customer might be interested in buying. This is the toughest sales technique. Even seasoned sales people dislike cold calls. And who wouldn't—cold calls are fraught with rejection—a blow to anyone's ego. So be kind to your library staff, and dispel the fear of cold calls by identifying potential customer prospects with advertising campaigns that request potential customers to send in reply cards to receive further information. That way, your sales force can at least start the conversation with "you indicated an interest in our library services", and the prospect will have some knowledge and inclination to respond positively. (This is why it's important that the sales force knows about your latest advertising campaigns!)

Managing a sales force is a personnel challenge for which there is a plethora of literature. Selecting the right people, providing the best training, orchestrating the optimum motivation program—these and other considerations are constantly being addressed in the business and sales management literature. For additional insights on managing a sales force in your library business, your editor suggests scanning the literature and the self-help motivation books found in local bookstores and public libraries. Journals such as *Harvard Business Review*, *Sales and Marketing Management*, and the *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management* will help, along with textbooks used in undergraduate courses on retail sales management.

This article is based on your editor's presentation at the recent Special Libraries Association Conference in Pittsburgh where she participated in a panel discussion on "Developing Fee-Based Services". A tape of the session is available from National Audio Video Transcripts, 4465 Washington St., Denver, CO 80216 1/800/373-2952. Ask for tape # 4.

Items of Interest

Marketing Swap and Shop. Your editor risked her life to bring back samples from the SLA Swap and Shop session. (This is not an exaggeration as anyone who was there will testify!) A new *1990 Marketing Treasures Sample Promotion Notebook* has been compiled with samples of the promotion materials from the Swap and Shop. *Marketing Treasures* readers are invited to borrow the notebook for a two-week period. We will invoice you for shipping. Send your written request to the *Marketing Treasures* office. Requests will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

By the way, if you were at the Swap & Shop and have any thoughts on how it can be organized at next year's conference, let Barbara Spiegelman know (she's this year's Chairperson for the SLA Marketing Section). This is not a criticism of this year's program—they did a wonderful job of pulling together a good cross section of materials—but the Swap & Shop has grown to be so popular that it's an impossible crowd control problem. One idea is to arrange for an exhibit booth, and display sample library promotion materials during the entire conference. People can review samples at their leisure and note the address of libraries with materials that interest them. What do you think? Readers who have worked with similar programs at other library conferences should feel free to make suggestions.

Which reminds me, if you are putting together your own promotion pieces and are using other materials as samples, make sure you don't copy the exact design or words, unless you get permission from the originating library. Many libraries pay to have their graphics and text written, and while copying is a form of flattery, it's also not legal. So be careful.

Call for Conference Attendee. I'm looking for someone who is interested in attending the Services Marketing Conference in October in Chicago (see Crystal Ball) and writing an article for a future issue of *Marketing Treasures*. Sorry, only readers who are local to the Chicago area (unless you are willing to pay for your own expenses) will be considered for this FREE conference invitation. Phone or write to me c/o *Marketing Treasures*.

Worth Its Weight in Gold

This issue of *Marketing Treasures* includes your new Cut & Paste clip-art sheet. The sheet includes original artwork in camera-ready form. If you would like previously published clip-art sheets, ask for the Cut & Paste Clip-Art Order Form. It shows all the clip-art sheets that have appeared in *Marketing Treasures*.

Top-Rated Information Services . . . Use the power of suggestion to your advantage with a "thumbs up" for information services.

You're # 1 With Us! Let your best and/or most important customers know that you value their business. You could reproduce this artwork on yellow paper, cut into circles, and glued to blue ribbons. The "Blue Ribbon Awards" could form the backbone of a "Library Customer Recognition Week" or a "We Value Our Library Customers" campaign. Hand out your blue ribbon awards with all the library products and services that leave the library that week. Blue ribbons would also make nice bookmarks.

Time Is Money . . . With the right accompanying text, this image could be the visual foundation for a dynamite display ad or it could serve as an introductory slide to a library orientation session.

Why Paw Through a Stack of Books . . . This clip-art image should help deliver the message that the library's computer resources can make life easier.

Telephone. Here are several telephone images that you can use to symbolize telephone reference services in your newsletter or brochure.

Information Resource Center. This might make a nice logo for a newsletter masthead or library stationery. If you don't like the background texture, you can change it by carefully clipping out the "I"s and placing them against a background pattern you prefer.

Rush Service. This image should help your customers to remember that RUSH delivery services are available. If you don't offer RUSH service, then you could always use the race car image to visualize a campaign of "Race Over To The Library Today For . . .".

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.

Promotion Gems

The recent Special Libraries Association conference in Pittsburgh offered a number of excellent programs aimed at marketing topics. Your editor bought audio cassette tapes of these sessions and is prepared to loan them to *Marketing Treasures'* readers as she finishes listening to the tapes herself. If you would like to borrow any of the following tapes, send to the *Marketing Treasures* office a self-addressed label, along with \$1.00 per tape for shipping, and the tape will be mailed to you first class, for a two-week loan. Tapes available for loan are described below. For purchasing information, see the end note to the cover article on page 4.

Creative Positioning. Barbie Keiser and Denise Lipkovich are the speakers with Holly Bussey as moderator. This is a great session on the process of introducing library products to a target market. The session is interactive. The audience was divided into two groups, an organization's librarian and the target market. A creative positioning strategy for the library's product was developed using a step-by-step approach. The audio is very good; most of the audience's questions are repeated by the session speakers.

Resource Management: Using Marketing Planning to Make the Most of Limited Resources. Arlene Farber Sirkin, speaker, with Jeanne Bohlen, moderator. This is another interactive session that presents the basic concepts of marketing planning. The speaker moves around a lot on this tape, so there are distracting noises and many of the audience's comments and questions are not repeated. Still, it's a good overview of many questions and concerns that should be addressed in planning a marketing effort.

Marketing Library Services: Where to Begin and How to Succeed. Linda McAleer, Geoff Worton, Barbara Spiegelman, Bill Jenkins, speakers, with Liz Bibby, moderator. This session addressed the theory and the application of the marketing process and offers something for everyone. *What is Marketing?* Linda McAleer; *Where To Begin: Using Survey Research to Analyze Your Market and Access Its Needs.* Geoff Worton; *The Role of Promotion Within the Marketing Process.* Barbara Spiegelman; and *Successful Promotion Techniques* Bill Jenkins.

Sparkling Reviews

Organizing Special Events and Conferences: A Practical Guide for Busy Volunteers and Staff. Darcy Devney. Pineapple Press, PO Drawer 16008, Sarasota, Florida 34239, 1990. ISBN: 0-910923-63-9. \$16.95

This book is a comprehensive, step-by-step guide to event planning and management. It approaches its topic in a practical, how-to manner that any librarian will appreciate – especially one who has to plan open houses, exhibits, contests, debates, fundraisers, meetings, buffets, award ceremonies – you name it, this book will help you live through the event.

Besides providing schedules, checklists of things to do, models, and sample forms and worksheets, readers will find lots of ideas for programs and helpful hints from other event managers. The contents are divided into logical sections, such as Planning and Logistics, which focuses on the nuts-and-bolts aspects of putting an event together. Publicity and Registration provides help in designing posters, writing press releases, and keeping track of registration. The last section on programming and food includes tips on menu plan-

ning and quantity shopping. The appendices list resources – agencies, periodicals, and publications – that can provide additional tips.

Anyone who is responsible for planning an event will find this book a valuable resource. *Marketing Treasures* readers who plan to celebrate National Library Week or the opening of a new library and who have no experience in organizing such events should definitely acquire this book! For \$16.95, even experienced planners will find it a worthwhile investment.

Orchids to everyone who stopped by the Chris Olson & Associates exhibit booth at the SLA Conference. It was great to see everyone and hear about your latest marketing achievements!

Remember, under every clip-art image you will find the name and point size of the type we used. If you decide to add or replace words, your typesetter or designer should be able to use this information to match his or her type with what you see in the clip-art.

The Crystal Ball

August 8 - 10 "Practical Marketing Research". Seminar in New York offered by the Burke Institute. Contact 800/544-7373.

August 28 "Designing with Desktop Publishing". One day seminar offered by Business & Professional Research Institute in Philadelphia. Contact: 203/331-9888.

September 6 "Writing & Designing Successful Promotional Materials". Seminar offered by Clemson University in Greensboro, NC. Contact: 803/656-2667.

September 10 "Demystifying Marketing Strategies". Seminar by Chris Olson for the NY/NJ Chapter of the Medical Library Association. In New York City. Contact: Richard Faraino 212/340-5397.

September 11 "Scared Speechless". Workshop by Kaycee Hale in Washington, D.C. Contact: Leigh Watson Healy 800/225-6055.

September 15 "The Information Broker's Seminar". Offered by Sue Ruggie in Los Angeles. Contact: 415/649-9743.

September 23 - 26 Marketing Research Conference in Chicago. Sponsored by the American Marketing Association. Contact: 312/648-0536.

September 26 "Library Expressions of Excellence". Presentation by Kaycee Hale for the Missouri Library Association. In Kansas City, MO. Contact: Fred Raithe 800/325-0131.

September 27 - 28 "Focus Groups: An Introduction". Seminar in Boston offered by the Burke Institute. Contact: 800/544-7373.

October 1 - 2 "Marketing Strategy and Planning". Seminar in Chapel Hill offered by the University of North Carolina Business School. Contact: 919/962-9630.

October 6 "The Information Broker's Seminar". Offered by Sue Ruggie in Boston. Contact: 415/649-9743.

October 11 "Library Leadership in Action". Presentation by Kaycee Hale at the West Virginia Library Association meeting in Charleston. Contact: Tom Brown 304/384-3115.

October 12 "Mainstreaming the Special Library". Seminar by Alice Warner for Special Libraries Association in Sacramento, CA. Contact: Joy Learner 202/234-4700.

October 20 "The Information Broker's Seminar". Offered by Sue Ruggie in Chicago. Contact: 415/649-9743.

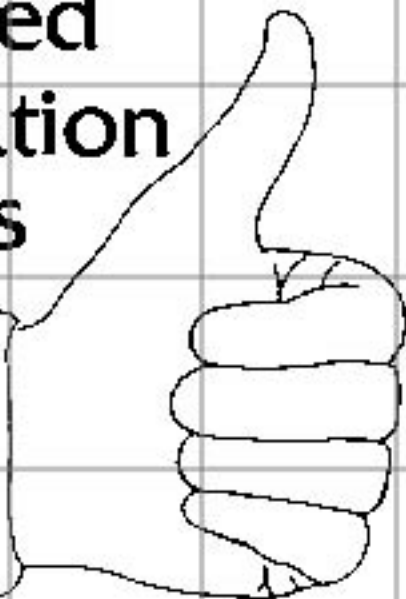
October 21 - 24 Services Marketing Conference sponsored by the American Marketing Association in Chicago. Contact: 312/648-0536.

October 23 - 24 "Effective Image Management", "Professional Performance Through Personal Projection". Presentations by Kaycee Hale at the Michigan Library Association meeting in Grand Rapids. Contact: Marianne Gessner 517/644-6615.

October 26 "Mainstreaming the Special Library". Seminar by Alice Warner for Special Libraries Association in Princeton, NJ. Contact: Joy Learner 202/234-4700.

Top-rated Information Services

At the Library



Fi 12 Quadrant: 36 pt



TIME IS MONEY.

*Let the experts
find the
information
you need.*

CALL THE LIBRARY

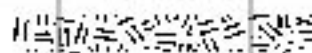
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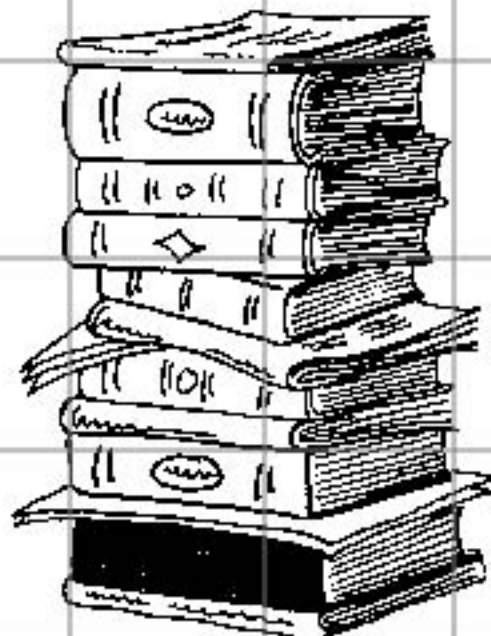
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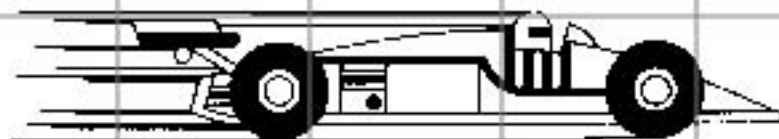


Why paw through a stack of books . . .



Ask the Library to conduct a computer search for you today!

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RUSH SERVICE

Available upon request.

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	Issue	Page		Issue	Page
Establishing library identity.....	3	3	Promotional Materials		
.....	4	4	American Library Association (ALA) Kits.....	3	5
.....	5	5	.....	6	2
Fee-based services, audio tape.....	6	4	Acquisitions lists as promotional piece.....	4	4
Fee-based services, newsletter.....	6	2	.....	5	5
Fee-based services, role of library staff.....	6	1	American Hospital Association kit.....	3	5
Interactive orientation program.....	2	2	Annual reports as communications pieces.....	2	1
Introducing new products.....	5	5	Bookmarks.....	5	3
.....	6	5	Brochures.....	1	1
Marketing challenges.....	5	2	Bulletin boards.....	3	1-6
Marketing process.....	4	6	.....	6	5
.....	6	5	Demonstrations.....	5	3
Marketing research situations.....	4	2	Design of, clip art.....	4	2
.....	5	5	.....	6	2
Marketing research techniques, statistics in.....	3	6	Design of color.....	2	6
Materials.....	2	2	.....	3	1
.....	3	2	.....	5	5
.....	4	4	Design of, graphs and charts.....	3	2
Materials, videotapes.....	3	2	Design of, logos.....	3	3
.....	4	2	.....	4	4
.....	6	2	.....	5	3
Media coverage.....	2	2	.....	5	4
Overseas marketing.....	5	6	.....	5	5
Personal-sales management in libraries.....	6	1	.....	6	5
Product life-cycle.....	4	1	Direct mail.....	2	2
Promotional campaigns.....	6	6	.....	5	3
Public relations.....	1	2	Event planning.....	6	6
.....	1	6	Flyers.....	4	5
.....	3	2	.....	5	5
.....	5	1	Gift/prize items.....	1	2
.....	5	6	.....	3	5
Resource management and marketing			.....	4	5
planning.....	6	5	.....	5	3
Service-quality standards.....	5	1	Graphic devices in presentations.....	3	2
Strategic planning.....	5	6	IRS Employee Clipsheet.....	3	2
Training books on videotape.....	6	2	Letterhead stationery.....	1	2
			.....	5	2
Recommended readings			.....	5	4
Chicago Manual of Style, 13th ed.....	1	2	Library name treatment.....	5	5
Delivering Quality Service.....	5	1	National Library Week.....	1	2
Designer's Guide to Typography.....	4	2	.....	3	5
Graphic Design Cookbook.....	2	6	.....	5	2
Great Promotion Ideas V.....	6	2	.....	5	3
Handbook of Direct Response Production.....	2	2	Newsletters.....	3	2
Information Marketing Handbook.....	5	6	.....	4	4
Marketing: A Planned Approach . . . (Video).....	2	2	.....	6	2
.....	4	6	Pathfinder services promotion.....	5	2
"The Marketing Research Encyclopedia".....	4	2	Periodical list covers.....	3	3
Organizing Special Events.....	6	6	Posters.....	3	5
Outstanding Newsletter Designs.....	6	2	.....	5	3
Public Relations for Librarians.....	1	6	.....	5	4
Statistics for Library Decision Making.....	3	6	.....	6	2
"Strategies for Success".....	5	2	Special Libraries Association (SLA) kit.....	3	5
Winning Ideas from Winning Schools.....	3	2	Table of contents services promotion.....	5	2
			1990 Marketing Treasures Sample		
Printing			Promotion Notebook.....	6	4
Gang printing.....	1	5			
Letterhead stationery.....	5	2			
Photocopying.....	3	4			