

# MARKETING *Treasures*

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## Other Perspectives: Select Reviews of Recent Marketing Literature

This month, *Marketing Treasures* reviews four articles published in business and marketing periodicals during the past year. We hope that the different concepts in these articles will help broaden your marketing outlook, and that you will find new ideas and inspiration through their particular emphases and focuses.

### Marketing Plans 101

A recent article in *Nation's Business* presents "A Marketing Plan You Can Design." This guide is appropriate for someone who has been reading about marketing, agrees with its principles, but has yet to begin marketing. At a mere two magazine pages long, this is the perfect way to get your feet wet, guided through the essentials of marketing.

The first step, list your options, combines information gathering and brainstorming. Talk to everyone about how you can improve your business, eliminating no possibilities. Talk to customers, staff, and colleagues, visit other libraries, read trade journals, attend conventions, trade shows, and library association meetings.

Step two continues the information gathering process, suggesting that you look at your library with client-colored glasses. Call your reference desk with a question, get on a routing list, order a bibliography. Speak with your clients to understand why they use your services. You might think it's because of the in-depth analysis, whereas your users might be drawn to your straight-forward presentation of facts, or graphics that they crib for their own reports.

Next, study your markets. Use a combination of client surveys and in-depth interviews. Then segment your market, breaking it up into groups such as "upper management on deadline," or "support staff for the legal department." Rank these segments according to their needs for your services: greatest, moderate, slight, none. Plan to concentrate your resources on those who most need your services.

The next step: observe your competition. This can be enlightening for an organization library, which may assume it has no competition. Ask yourself: when a client does not come to you, where does he go? The public library? The office expert? The secretary down the hall with her own file of information? Is ignorance your competition? Ask yourself why someone would consult these other sources, and how you can get them to use yours instead.

Next comes the most creative part of the plan—matching options with markets. Pull out the list of options you made earlier. Write down the ten with the greatest potential for success. Then examine the market segments with the greatest need for your services and match them to the options. This will provide you with targeted marketing strategies to pursue. From these strategies, write a marketing plan. The author advises keeping it short and simple, suggesting a length of five to ten pages. Your plan might include a description of your current markets, plans for increasing use by those markets and a list of possible markets into which you can expand, a description of current products and services, suggestions for improving products and services, the costs of implementing those suggestions, and a timetable for implementing them, along with specific marketing goals.

Finally, review the plan. Test its effectiveness and appropriateness with short and long term goals. Include, as part of the plan, a schedule for regular review of its effectiveness. If something doesn't work, fix it, change it, redirect it. A marketing plan is not workable if it can't change to meet the realities of your workplace and your markets.

### The Employee as Pitchman: Advertising Spokespersons From Within

Citing the examples of David Thomas speaking for his Wendy's hamburger chain and Marlene Wei speaking for the Four Seasons hotel chain where she works as a house-

## Pearls of Wisdom

Are small businesses part of your business? The American Library Association's "Small Business, Big Challenge," is an 83-page booklet written to help corporate librarians meet the challenge of providing information services to small business. Topics covered include "A Practical Guide to Developing the Business Plan," "The Creative Use of Small Reference Sources," and "Marketing the Library to Small Business." To obtain a copy, call 800/545-2433, press 7.

Turn library patrons into walking billboards. When you provide custom printed bags to help carry information materials, your patrons will tote your message as they travel the halls of your firm, company, or hospital. One source for bags—Chiswick Trading, Inc. Call 800/225-8708.

Add excitement and interest to your library promotion program by inviting an author to speak. Consider the advice of Marcia Purcell of Random House, and Mary Shapiro of Baker & Taylor as offered at the Library Public Relations Council May meeting entitled "The Author Connection."

- Plan far in advance
- Put your request in writing with lots of details
- Describe your library and its accommodations, including seating and AV capability.
- Request several author choices in order of preference (make sure they write for the publisher)
- Be up front about the expenses you can cover
- Let the publisher know if you can sell books
- Consider requesting a lesser-known or first-time writer
- Consult the publisher's fall catalog for the cities that particular authors are touring
- Promise only the publicity you can deliver
- Get in touch with the author's publicist

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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 price.

Turn flyers into posters, posters into billboards. Scan Graphics produces computer generated four-color blow ups for large-scale promotions. Call them about trade show backdrops, van and truck signs, banners, decals, and more. Phone 708/392-9679 or fax 708/392-3989.

Circle Thursday, May 12 on your 1994 calendar. That's the date that Hardy R. Franklin, the new president of the ALA has scheduled a national teleconference on customer service and libraries. Hardy's emphasis on the importance of customer service was made clear in his inaugural address, "Customer Service: The Heart of a Library." Copies of the address are available free from the ALA. Call 800/545-2433, ext. 3275. For information on the teleconference, contact Peggy Barber at 800/545-2433. ext. 3229.

Pizza smudges on your pages? Pleas against dog ears falling on deaf ears? Take a lesson from Indiana University Libraries, 1993 winners of a special John Cotton Dana award for their public relations program on preservation awareness. The backbone of their program was a series of bookmarks, book bags, copy card holders, posters and table tents designed by the university's graphic arts students. The graphics focus on the letter "P" as the emblem of the Preservation Program theme. For the illustrations of dog ears, the P's are drawn dog eared. Some P's are forced to bear paper clips while others are marred by glass rings. For samples of these clever graphics and a price list, write to Lorraine Olley, Head, Preservation Department, Main Library EO50, Indiana University Libraries, Bloomington, IN 47405.

The University of Kentucky took a different approach to informing their public of preservation problems during Preservation Awareness Month. For one of their programs they set up a long display case in the library with different types of library materials spread out its full length. Then they toured the library for trash. The two hour tour yielded enough trash, food, and bugs to cover the library materials in the display case. It was an effective display that caught everyone's eye and brought attention to a serious problem. Thanks to Becky Ryder, Preservation Librarian for U of K for sharing this idea with your editor.

Searching for greeting cards to celebrate this holiday season with clients and colleagues? Call HandShake at 800/634-2134. They offer a 40% discount on greeting cards ordered through December 1. For information and advice about holiday gift-giving, consult the Promotion Gems column on page 5 of this issue of *Marketing Treasures*.

## Perspectives continued from page 1

keeper, authors of the article titled "Using Employees as Advertising Spokespersons" point out that appropriate spokespeople range from the chief executive officer to the lowest level employee. Potential spokespersons are divided into three categories: CEO or senior management official, front-office employee, and back-office worker. This article examines the relative effectiveness of these three types as advertising spokespersons.

Advertising spokesperson studies stress credibility of the spokesperson, and credibility is found in those with expertise and trustworthiness, with expertise weighing in with greater importance.

Cognitive response theory offers a key to understanding the positive effect of a credible spokesperson. According to this theory, when exposed to a persuasive communication, "People rehearse thoughts based on the communication and on their own attitudes. It is these thoughts, rather than the message itself, that determine attitudes and behavioral intentions. In general, exposure to a high credibility source encourages thoughts supportive of the message or source (e. g. support arguments, source bolstering), whereas a low credibility source facilitates thoughts counter to the message or source (e.g. counterarguments, source derogation)."

Here's the lowdown on each type. The CEO wins points on expertise and, due to his position, limitation of negative thoughts. The front-office employee is received much in the same way. Respondents grant them expertise, due to their primary interactions with users. The back-office employee is less common in advertising, but experts suggest that, particularly in the service industry, it is advantageous to show the back-office employee, to stress that there is even more being done for the customer than is readily apparent.

The article describes a study comparing these three types of employee spokesperson, and, under the conditions of this study, the front-office spokesperson is the best in terms of cognitive responses.

Consider this study next time you wish to add interest and credibility to your next promotional campaign. Enliven posters with a quote and picture from the chief librarian, a reference desk staffer, or book shelvees.

### **From Controversy To Cooperation**

In "How I Turned a Critical Public into Useful Consultants," Peter T. Johnson tells the story of taking a job as the

head of a public utility mired in opposition and controversy. While *Marketing Treasures* hopes nothing as dramatic will happen to your library (angry citizens actually aimed their rifles at utility workers) this article can serve as a blueprint if you are taking a new job in a bad situation, are preparing to overhaul your library into a responsive part of your organization, if there is low morale among your staff, or if the library has a poor image within your organization.

Johnson admits that, at first, with his private sector background, he wanted to avoid his critics. He writes of his faith in his fellow decision makers, and explains that they always were careful to explain to the public the reasoning behind their decisions. But, as it turned out, those very explanations added to the problem.

Making decisions and then explaining them (what Johnson calls the "father-knows-best approach") angered the very people he hoped his explanations would reassure. As relations with the public disintegrated into lawsuits and angry threats, Johnson took the daring and uncertain step of inviting the public to truly join him in making decisions. But things were at such a dangerous pass, to promise participation and deliver only a token voice would prove disastrous. Conscientiously taking steps to ensure his opponents a real voice in the decision process, Johnson learned that everyone benefited from a shared policy-making system. "By listening to people's concerns and soliciting their advice on how to reconcile vast differences of opinion and conflicting needs," Johnson writes, "our operations did not come to a screeching halt. On the contrary, by involving the public in the decision-making process itself, we gained authority and legitimacy, avoided costly lawsuits and political challenges, and arrived at creative solutions to seemingly intractable problems. Overall, our policy-making improved."

Here are a few suggestions for making such a plan work:

- Meet with as many people, individually and in groups, as possible. Identify their problems, hear their concerns and suggestions, answer their questions honestly.
- Understand that some people have already been involved in pseudo-open-door policies. These will be a struggle for you. Meet with them after you have already cooperated with less jaded members of your community. Be prepared for distrust and resistance.

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- Train your staff, from the highest level to the lowest, to work with the public. This requires both a change in attitude and the development of practical skills. In Johnson's case, public involvement was added to the performance requirements of management positions, and people who performed well received recognition and bonuses. Public involvement plans were drawn up for all major decisions and employees were required to learn how to organize and conduct public meetings, how to listen in volatile situations, and how to improve communication skills.

Johnson's story is a success, and libraries in difficult situations can learn a lot from it, as well as walk away newly inspired and grateful that only a proverbial rifle will be aimed at their heads.

### On The Shoulders of Giants

Are you planning to introduce a new product or improve an existing one? Interested in upgrading the quality of your services or lowering costs? Learn a lesson from companies like Xerox, Ford Motor and AT&T. Learn to benchmark.

"How To Steal The Best Ideas Around," describes benchmarking as "the art of finding out, in a perfectly legal and aboveboard way, how others do something better than you do so you can imitate—and perhaps improve upon—their techniques." A car company might identify the best features available in the cars of its competitors, a manufacturer might study the accounts payable systems in similar plants for greater cost-efficiency, a retailer might examine the layout of a store whose sales greatly outpace his own. By taking the best ideas and methods of comparable enterprises as your starting point, benchmarkers catapult to the top, standing on the shoulders of giants.

While some might think benchmarking is a euphemism for industrial espionage, its widespread use and cooperation even among competitors show it to be a legitimate practice. Organizations in very close competition share information anonymously through a benchmarking group. But for the most part, successful companies enjoy talking about their success, and even a successful organization profits from the strengths of others.

Librarians in particular are in an optimal position to share information. Few are in direct competition with one another. Those who are can easily bypass their competitors and benchmark a library in a slightly different field. In addition, library benchmark information has great trans-

ferability. The differences between legal, academic, and medical libraries are not as great as the differences between law firms, universities, and hospitals. Not only do librarians have great benchmarking opportunities, they also have strong benchmarking motivations. While large companies have a lot of money at stake, and savings could mean millions of dollars, libraries often have small budgets, and benchmarking can enable them to develop a product or service that they would otherwise have to do without. Benchmarking can prove the bulk of your market research for developing a new service. Identify three libraries that already have such a service. Benchmark the most successful aspects of each. Then begin research to customize it for your clients.

If you have a problem that seems insurmountable—chronic unhappiness with the reference desk, a staff that is perpetually perceived as inapproachable, or materials unnecessarily damaged through careless use, pick up the phone. Call your colleagues in libraries similar to yours, and for a fresh perspective, call one or two in different set-ups. Why reinvent the wheel? Everyday and throughout the years, libraries have faced problems and challenges similar to yours. Take their best answers as a starting point for your own solutions.

### Bibliography

Feinglass, Arthur, "A Marketing Plan You Can Design," *Nation's Business*, May 1993, p. 42.

Johnson, Peter T. "How I Turned A Critical Public into Useful Consultants," *Harvard Business Review*, January-February 1993, p. 56.

Main, Jeremy, "How To Steal The Best Ideas Around," *Fortune*, October 19, 1992, p. 102.

Stephens, Nancy and Faranda, William T. "Using Employees as Advertising Spokespersons," *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 7 No. 2. 1993, p. 36.

On a completely different note—did you read the article in the November 1st issue of *Business Week* (pages 36-38) "Off and Running on the Data Highway"? It has occurred to your editor that the Internet may not evolve to be the "information superhighway" for the public—and this article reinforces my suspicions. The recent deals in the cable and telephone industries may create an electronic highway for the masses that puts information exchange—a la libraries—in the background. So while you gear up to offer Internet-based services, keep an eye on the communications industry. You may have to make some overnight adjustments in your promotion plans and service offerings to keep your library in the forefront. In other words, don't put all your eggs in one data highway basket. Thanks to Peggy Carr for the "heads-up" on the *Business Week* article.

## Worth Its Weight in Gold

As promised in the July/August issue, *Marketing Treasures* reviewed video tapes produced by the National Library of Medicine and NASA for their usefulness in helping librarians market to upper management and boards of trustees.

### **National Library of Medicine—Information Stat: Rx for Hospital Quality Teleconference**

The opening segment of this video presents the Director of the National Library of Medicine (NLM), Donald Lindberg, MD, addressing the value of information services to the medical community. The video is at its best when doctors discuss the benefits of the library. At its worst, librarians read haltingly from a teleprompter.

#### Highlights:

- The Chief of the Surgical Staff at Biloxi V.A. Medical Center discusses the librarian's role in developing an educational program for his entire staff.
- The segment on the Rochester study which measured the effect of information on treatment decisions and outcome. Inspired librarians could introduce an in-house version of this study.
- A moving story in which a patient whose life was saved by medical information turns out to be a medical librarian.
- A critical incident study review, describing the full range of incidents in which health care professionals use Medline searches, covering Medline effects on patient outcome, hospital policy and quality assurance.
- The segment "The Hospital Library as Corporate Information Center," which details the need for information in the areas of service development, equipment acquisition, medical supply purchases and personnel. It is also full of examples of how administrators call on the library to help them improve the financial bottom line.

Various portions are excellent to tape and incorporate into a presentation. With twenty-four segments to choose from, there is something for most presentation strategy. To borrow a copy, call the National Library of Medicine at 800/338-7657.

### **NASA's STI Program: Managing a Universe of Information**

The good news: this video is exciting, fast paced, and short enough to keep a viewer's interest. The bad news: it's basically an infomercial for NASA's Scientific and Technical Information Services. Astute librarians will study its format for their own presentations. Its focus on information as a means of saving time and money is particularly worthwhile. For a copy, call 301/621-0390.

## Promotion Gems

Don't wait until December to start thinking about the holidays. In a recent unpublished article entitled "Advertising Impact: Using the Power of Promotional Gifts" Ellen Daly of The Bankette Company discussed the plusses and pitfalls of organizational gift-giving. This column features highlights of that article.

- Why do promotional products work? Consider a neighbor bringing a plate of cookies to your house. This introduces stress to the relationship, which will not be eased until you return the favor. The same is true with a dinner invitation. "From the moment the invitation is received, we're busy planning how to reciprocate," Daly writes. Remember the concept of reciprocation when planning gifts for regular and potential clients.
- Gifts help your business by creating positive perception, reinforcing the buying decision, strengthening relationships, stimulating interest, and separating your company from the competition.
- Don't give because you feel you must. Cheap gifts such as pens, pencils, calendars, key holders, and coffee mugs are often used when giving is merely obligatory. The lack of value of the gift will be interpreted as a lack of valuing its recipient. Better not to give at all.
- Make sure that you incorporate gifts to customers and perspective clients into your marketing plan. A recent article in *Sales & Marketing Management* points out that "Customer gifts can say a lot about what you think of your clients and should be designed to improve the way they think about your company."
- If times are tight and you're scaling back your Holiday list, consider the following candidates for your list:
  - Clients who sent thank you notes for last year's gifts
  - Clients who mentioned the gifts to your salespeople
  - Employees who seemed excited by their gifts (think twice before giving to some but not all employees)
  - Prospects that are close to coming aboard
  - Customers with pending deals that need just an extra push to cement them.

Here are a few suppliers of corporate gifts to get you started:

The Bankette Company 800/659-0069  
Godiva Direct 800/338-6629  
Montblanc USA 800/995-4810  
Sharper Image 800/344-4444

See the September 1993 issue of *Sales & Marketing Management*, pp. 107-110 "Tis the Season" for further resources and discussions on gift giving.

## Sparkling Reviews

*Marketing & Libraries DO Mix.* The State Library of Ohio and H. Baird Tenney, et. al. The State Library of Ohio. Columbus, OH. 1993. \$16.00 (The State Library of Ohio, 65 S. Front St., Columbus, OH 43266-0334; 614/644-7061)

After briefly making the point of its title, this book, subtitled "A Handbook for Libraries & Information Centers," sets out to live up to its promise. In the tradition of the true handbook, it best serves those who embark on the marketing process with this book at hand. This is not a book for browsers. It contains few fun comments, exciting insights or groundbreaking information. It is a book for those serious about developing and implementing a marketing plan, containing solid advice and thorough coverage of all aspects of library marketing for every type of library.

The first section of the book gives an overview of marketing, reviews marketing basics, and pleads the case that librarians must market. The second section plunges into the marketing plan, dividing it into six parts: self-assessment, market definition, product planning, product creation, selling, and what the authors call "closing the loop"—developing a system to make the plan a part of everyday library life.

Part three examines different types of libraries: corporate, academic, government, institution, law, medical, public, and school. These sections are written with a helpful understanding of the issues and problems of each type.

The bulk of the book is contained in the appendices. The most helpful appendix contains surveys used in library market research that the publishers have gained permission for readers to reuse with or without alterations.

It is clear that this book was written in a no-nonsense style for the librarian who is ready to begin the business of marketing. Its emphasis on product planning as the most critical aspect of marketing shows its commitment to helping libraries do the real work of marketing, rather than the flashier work of promotion and public relations that are the emphasis of so many books.

If you're ready to get down to the nitty-gritty of marketing and undertake the task of implementing a true marketing plan instead of picking and choosing pieces of one, this is a helpful, instructive book that will take you step-by-step through a very important process.

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Here's an observation: in the Autumn 1993 special issue of *Fortune*, 1994 Information Technology Guide, libraries and the information services that they offer aren't mentioned once. Your editor could find no references to libraries in the articles, let alone an advertisement proclaiming how librarians use technology to deliver the information that everyone seeks. And here we are as a profession trying to promote ourselves . . . seems like we missed an opportunity to improve our image. Well, all is not lost. If they have a 1994 issue, maybe they'll have a 1995 issue . . .

## The Crystal Ball

November 17 "Grammar, Usage and Business Writing Skills." A one-day seminar offered by SkillPath, Inc. in Sarasota, Fl. Contact: 800/873-7545.

November 17 "Newsletters from A to Z." A one-day seminar presented by Lou Williams Seminars in San Francisco. Contact: 800/837-7123.

November 18 "Designing with Desktop Publishing." A one-day seminar offered by the Business & Professional Research Institute in Minneapolis, MN. Contact: 802/757-2714.

November 18 "Creating Effective Brochures." A one-day course offered by EEI in Alexandria, Va. Contact: 703/683-7453.

November 19 "Design for Desktop Publishing . . . an Advanced Perspective." A one-day seminar presented by Lou Williams Seminars in Santa Fe, NM. Contact: 800/837-7123.

November 23 "Writing & Designing Successful Promotional Materials." A one-day seminar sponsored by the Performance Seminar Group in Hartford, CT. Contact: 802/757-2714.

December 2 "Writing & Designing Successful Promotional Materials." A one-day seminar sponsored by the Performance Seminar Group in Chicago. Contact: 802/757-2714.

December 10 "The Newsletter Institute." A one-day seminar offered by the Newsletter Institute in the Bridgewater Mall area, NJ. Contact: 404-850-1181.

December 14 "The Designing Editor." A one-day course offered by EEI in Alexandria, Va. Contact: 703/683-7453.