

MARKETING *Treasures*

TM

Vol. 7 No. 6 July/August 1994

Overcoming Marketing Struggles

For many *Marketing Treasures* readers, marketing is a challenging puzzle that demands talents different from those we normally use in our work. Usually we welcome the chance to set our minds to this creative challenge. But at other times, marketing can be a struggle.

Almost all *Marketing Treasures* readers have overcome the most basic struggle—against the internal warnings that it is not appropriate for a librarian to run around touting the information center's wares. But many also face external battles, struggling to find the resources to undertake marketing activities or the time to plan and execute them. Some information center managers are stretched to their limit and can't take on new business. To them, marketing seems counterproductive. A few librarians, working with parent organizations facing dire circumstances, have been told not to market, in order to freeze (and eventually shrink) library expenses and usage.

Marketing Treasures recently interviewed several librarians faced with these struggles. "We were asked to keep our center low key," a librarian fighting this last type of battle told us. "Management said, 'You're there, but keep it quiet.'" Others interviewed said their high hopes for marketing fell as they began to see that their vibrant visions for the information center were in direct contrast with upper management's plans for sending the library in a more and more limited direction. Many spoke of the familiar battles of downsizing and tightening budgets.

If your struggle is against limited time and money, or if your information center's resources are stretched to bursting, this article will examine some options for you to pursue. For those facing a parent organization that's contemplating limiting or even dismantling the library, we'll review some subtle aspects of marketing. In so doing, we hope to help readers develop the marketing mind that directs almost every element of the business of running a library towards a marketing goal.

The Four Struggles

Of the four struggles, we'd choose too little money any day. Ideas are free, and marketing moments continually present themselves. The principle to bear in mind: When you do spend money, examine what you're buying to see if it can support your marketing plan. Granted, you won't be producing fancy brochures. But it doesn't cost any more to print an eye-catching fax cover sheet than it does to print a plain one. An already budgeted acquisitions list should be designed to draw users to the library, not just serve as a record of library holdings. If you don't have enough money to photocopy flyers advertising a new database service, pick up the phone. Not only will you promote the database, you'll also have the chance to personalize your message with every call.

Librarians struggling against too little time face a trickier obstacle than those battling too little money. Although librarians can devise many marketing activities that take little or no additional time from their busy day, planning those activities does require an investment of time. Although librarians can plan while commuting or eating lunch, or waiting for an appointment, librarians often have even those minutes earmarked for thinking through other issues. Harried librarians may rightfully covet those minutes for much needed relaxation, and be unable to devote any additional time to thinking about work. Librarians in this situation might review their calendar to find just a small block of time in the next few weeks to review their marketing options. An hour's thought can fuel marketing efforts for several months.

If you can spare that hour, the principle for your planning is analogous to that of the budget-strapped: Examine everything you spend time on to see if it can serve a marketing function. As long as you're sending out printed communications, they should clearly display your logo. Customer service should strive for the highest levels of professionalism and helpfulness; this requires no substantial investment of time. If you're producing a mailing, capitalize on your efforts by circulating it to the broadest possible audience.

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Pearls of Wisdom

Statistics presented in narrative form can be a burden to readers. To cite statistics that don't elicit yawns, take a hint from the always popular *Harper's Index*. Present information in lists, not paragraphs. Then, instead of using sentences, use concise sentence fragments. Describe the item, then follow with the number. For example: Average number of online searches performed each day: 63. With this tactic, you can present a much longer group of statistics while preserving readers' attention. As a bonus, you might be motivated by the Harper's index to scatter a few esoteric facts among the statistics you plan to cite.

"Capture spontaneous hand gestures to make your point" is not just a good idea. It's also an article in the July 1994 edition of the newsletter *Editor's Workshop* by author/photographer Phil Douglas. Douglas points out a simple yet effective principle that will make any newsletter photograph more effective. Instead of following the lead of the commercial photographer by posing your subjects, use the photojournalist's method for avoiding awkward, stiff, and disingenuous pictures: Shoot photographs of people while they are actually working, discussing, or explaining. Focus on catching them in action. To see how eloquently gestures reveal the personalities of photo subjects, just pick up a newspaper and look at the hands. "So much of what people are," says Douglas, "is reflected through spontaneous hand gestures."

Are you considering using color to enliven a presentation or draw attention to a flyer? If you have neither the budget nor the required volume to justify conventional printing, consider color copying, now available at many copy

shops and office supply stores. And if you don't have a color printer for creating the original, and can't beg, borrow, or steal one from a colleague, just take your diskette with you and for a small fee, many of these shops will put a color printer at your disposal to produce your original.

Capitalize on the guilty parents' syndrome this Halloween. Distribute trick-or-treat bags bearing your information center name and message (up to five lines) to anxious parents wondering how they'll explain the quality time deficit this month. Call the McGruff Specialty Products Office, a division of the National Crime Prevention Council (you know them best through their mascot McGruff, the crime dog). They're offering Halloween bags with a plain or reflective surface. Each order includes a bonus — either a stuffed McGruff or a pair of McGruff coffee mugs. During the month of October, distribute books and journals in these bags. Enclose folded bags with routine mailings. To round out your campaign, raffle off the bonus mugs or McGruffs on Halloween day. For more information, call 518/842-4388.

The time has come for us to heed our own words. You know, the words that urge you to brighten your smile, spiff up your product offering...yes, it's time for *Marketing Treasures* to receive a complete makeover. We've been talking to you, our readers, to determine what you liked and disliked about the newsletter and clip art. And we've taken your words to heart. The September/October issue (vol. 8, no.1) will not only sport a new look, but also a new approach to our coverage of marketing topics—including invited authors from the various types of libraries to discuss marketing issues specific to their situations. We're excited about the rejuvenated *Marketing Treasures*, and we think you'll be delighted. So watch your mailbox for the next issue to arrive in early October.

Speaking of new...starting with the Nov/December issue we will be offering our clip art images on 3.5 Mac and PC computer disks. We're treating the computer images as a separate subscription to *Marketing Treasures*. Now you can receive our clip art as encapsulated Postscript (EPS) computer graphic files. For *Marketing Treasures'* subscribers the cost is \$24.00. Non-subscribers to the newsletter can get the clip art on disk for \$36.00. To make things easier, we have figured out how many clip art sheets remain on your subscription and how much it would cost to receive these graphics on computer disk. This cost has been entered on a pre-printed invoice included with this issue of *Marketing Treasures*. If you want to start receiving the clip art on disk, just send us a check. If not, ignore it. There's an insert sheet with this issue of *Marketing Treasures* that gives details. If your copy is missing the sheet, call our office and we'll fax it to you.

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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.

Struggles

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If you have time beyond the hour to plan, aim to develop projects that not only are quick, but that ultimately save time. A library with a high volume of quick reference calls can circulate a monthly list of the most frequently asked questions and their answers. This provides a service, acts as an advertisement, and frees reference staff to work on other projects. Another timesaver: If you're still hand-addressing envelopes because you haven't set up your labelmaking program, budget the time—you'll benefit in professionalism and time savings when you automate.

If you can identify with those stretched too thin to handle additional business, we consider this good news. Your library is well used. Your immediate marketing issue is the very fact of being overused and understaffed. In this situation you'll mainly be marketing to upper management (See "Selling to Upper Management" in Vol. 6 No. 6). Librarians encountering this struggle should consider charge-back services and outsourcing. An additional marketing consideration is to make sure that your clients understand the value of the library services you are providing. Remind them at every turn. Take the time to identify how and by how much you are contributing to the organization's bottom line.

The fourth struggle is not so easily overcome. When upper management instructs the information center to keep quiet about its services, it may be time to start quietly sending out your resume. If circulating your c.v. seems the best course, then marketing will not find a place on your to-do list (except to market yourself). But if you're committed to the library and the organization it serves, abandoning marketing will only make a bad situation worse.

What would you do if upper management said no to marketing? Respect their decision, letting the library shrink and your career suffocate within its daily diminishing parameters? Or develop a subtle marketing plan that embodies all aspects of marketing, minus an overt promotional campaign? A hard decision for some—it is, after all, their library, their call to make. But less difficult for others, particularly those who firmly believe in the library's bottom-line contributions to the organization. And granted—it is their business. But it's your career.

Of course, most *Marketing Treasures* readers won't face this struggle. But exploring the options available to librarians facing such a situation can help you market with a minimum of time and money, and ensure that you don't overlook fundamental marketing strategies.

As marketing texts emphasize, marketing is more than promotion. Librarians trying to market on the quiet learn a valuable lesson when they switch to efforts that forgo promotional schemes. All librarians should examine their marketing plans to make sure they do not ignore the crucial underpinnings of a successful marketing strategy that exist in addition to promotion. Consider consulting the management strategy book reviewed on page 6, and integrate the following ideas into your "quiet marketing" plans.

Elements of the Plan

Look. Improving the look of your library, staff, and materials is often the most dramatic change you can make. If your staff members look like volunteers who have stopped by to lend a hand, support will be hard to come by. But push them towards more professional dress, and support will be more forthcoming. Examine your cover sheets, memos, and routing slips. If you're photocopying from smudged originals, it's time to update your set. Remember, image is everything.

Customer Service. Most libraries pass this daily test with flying colors. However, we all have our off days. An occasional pep talk will keep staff from falling into bad customer service habits. Catching employees in the act of providing good service and praising them for it takes little time and no money, and strengthens their resolve to repeat their performance.

Products. Creating information products changes an intangible service into a material item. Turning information, knowledge, and research talent into products focuses your service plan and crystallizes your marketing effort. Two excellent sources for library product development are the recent ALA video teleseminar, "Achieving Breakthrough Service in Libraries" (reviewed in Vol. 7 No. 5) and *Marketing & Libraries DO Mix* (reviewed in Vol. 7 No. 1).

Presentations. If you count interpersonal and communication skills among your strengths, take every opportunity to present library information formally. Two popular opportunities: new employee orientation and the introduction of new technology and services. The key to successful presentations? Formulate client-appropriate scenarios that illustrate specific occasions when the target client should call on the information center. When potential clients understand clearly how information will make their jobs easier, calling the library is a simple choice.

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Struggles

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Double Duty from Printed Items. If you're spending money to print (or even photocopy), remember to include a sales message. Memo pads can list the three most popular online databases, envelopes can bear the library slogan, and routing slips can announce new titles.

Visibility. A worthy goal: Whenever clients use information from the library, someone casually walking past their desks should know its origin. Clear use of logos and consistent adherence to graphics standards will bring you closer to this goal. Libraries also gain visibility by feeding stories to the company newsletter and sending congratulatory after-project memos to staff and clients (carbon copying them to managers throughout the organization). Librarians seeking visibility respond to compliments and thank yous with concrete requests for word-of-mouth promotion: "I'm glad you thought our research was accurate and our analysis to the point. When you get the chance, we'd appreciate it if you'd let your colleagues know."

Phone marketing. Call your five best customers—one each day for a week. Ask them if they're happy with your most recent work. Launch into a casual sales pitch—"Anything on the horizon we should know about? Would you like us to pencil you in?" Even if this yields no immediate business, it reminds customers that you're interested in their success.

The Marketing-Oriented Mind

These elements, though important, are by no means exhaustive. Adapting some or all of them to your marketing plan will help you fight your battles, and keep the unkindest cuts far from your budget. As you implement them, habituate yourself to evaluating every minute of your day and every part of your library, and every task you undertake for its marketing potential.

This evaluation will lead to the development of the most important tool: the marketing mind. For a librarian with a marketing mind, compliments become potential testimonials, complaints become important tools to help improve services, and offbeat requests turn into opportunities to develop new products. For a librarian with a marketing-oriented mind, any client encounter is a chance to showcase the library and win or extend customer loyalty.

Promotion Gems

This year SLA Swap & Shop judges awarded prizes in four categories. Southern Progress won the Solo Librarians: Newsletter category, Purdue University took the Consultants prize, and GE Investments won for Medium-Large Libraries: Brochures and also emerged as the Overall Best of Show prizewinner.

Entries ran the gamut from top-class, professionally produced pieces to work that seemed thrown together haphazardly with little regard for message or style. From this range of quality, *Marketing Treasures* has assembled a list of Dos and Don'ts, all derived from 1994 Swap & Shop contest entries.

Do:

- Do include your organization's name on your piece—it adds coherence, shows team spirit, and might win a few brownie points.
- Do publish your acquisition list (outside of your newsletter) as a marketing tool in its own right, taking hints for design, wording, and layout from sales catalogs.
- Do find an objective pair of eyes outside of the library to give an opinion on the readability of your of promotion materials. See if those eyes can occasionally be drafted to give a final proofread to important materials.
- Do use the hyphenation option in your page layout and word processing software. Avoid "white rivers" running through your text.
- Do exercise discrimination when justifying text. Ragged right is easier to read.
- Do adopt a positive tone when writing about library services. Among lead judge, Chris Olson's commentary notes is Knoll Pharmaceuticals' brochure entry. They headlined their list of library staff "Let Us Introduce Ourselves." This simple phrase turns a perfunctory list into a friendly greeting, indicative of the positive, inviting attitude libraries strive to project.
- Do use your imagination when writing headlines and copy. A good headline will draw the reader's interest. Consider GE Investments' winning headlines: "Information Fuels Success in the Investment World," "Meeting the Information Challenge," "Breaking with Tradition," "Creating a Paperless Information Resource," "Experienced Searchers Using Precise Tools," and "Gaining Services,"

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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 Cut & Paste Clip Art Sheet. The sheet presents 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*.

Dog and Hoop. Let your clients know: "We'll jump through hoops for you!" This graphic will brighten up any page—from a memo pad to a full-size poster.

Riding on the Information Superhighway. This user-friendly information "i" is on top of the world—and the information superhighway. Use him to encourage reluctant clients to "come aboard the information superhighway," and to assure the already enthusiastic that you're riding along with them. This graphic will complement any campaign featuring new technology or services related to our expanding global communications network.

Gambling Forbidden. Warning to all clients: "Don't take a chance: Call The Library." Work this design into your logo. Use it on notepads and in flyers and ads.

Signpost. "At a Crossroads?" your sign can ask. Encourage potential clients to choose information over guesswork. A quick call can set them on the right path.

Mailbag. Ideal for your newsletter's "To The Editor" column. This image will also enliven delivery labels.

Get A Grip. This pair of pliers invites you to ask readers: "Is finding information like pulling teeth?" The more squeamish might prefer the headline: "Get a Grip! . . . On the Information You Need." Either version is perfect for ads in company newsletters, bookmarks, notepads, and flyers. Those with no fear of dentists might enlarge this image to poster size.

Stepping Feet. Encourage clients to "Take These Steps To Your Library" or let them know that the information center is "A Step in the Right Direction."

Information Abstract. Try this woodcut-style illustration on a bookmark, as part of your newsletter's banner, or at the top of your letterhead.

Starting with the Nov/Dec issue, clip art images will be available on computer diskette. See Pearls of Wisdom for details.

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"Resources," "Mission Statement," and "Awards and Honors," and National Recognition." Contrast these with the standard "then ask yourself which text you'd rather read.

Don't:

- Don't let flecked paper interfere with readability. Pay attention to the flecks' influence on punctuation and typeface (some flecks look like commas, others can convert your sans-serif typeface into an irregular serif).
- Don't omit the library's name, location, address, phone number, and e-mail address from your piece.
- Don't include acquisition lists in newsletters. Newsletters are public relations pieces.
- Don't go wild with typefaces. The purchase of a decorative typeface does not obligate the buyer to use it. Scrutinize promotion materials with an eye for readability.
- Don't forget to spellcheck (first by computer, then with the naked eye) your final piece. The judges saw lots of typos and errors—even in headlines.
- Don't "borrow" artwork or text from someone else's materials without permission. Such works are protected under copyright laws. We know of more than one instance when a heavy "borrower" was ordered (by the courts) to stop distributing these materials. Play it safe by being original.

For those who'd like to conduct their own examination and create a personalized do and don't list, all entries from the competition are in this year's *Marketing Treasures* Swap & Shop notebook. Contact Chris Olson & Associates via fax, phone, U.S. mail, or e-mail to reserve your place on the borrowers' list. Chris Olson & Associates lends the notebook on a first come, first served basis. Borrowers will be billed only for postage.

This year's show was coordinated by Kathy Kramer, Corilee Christou, and Gail Stahl of Mead Data Central. Ann Talcott, Gloria Dinnerman, Barbara Fletcher, and Chris Olson judged the show. Sponsor Mead Data Central provided the award monies and plaques.

Stay tuned for next year's competition guidelines and schedule. As soon as they're determined, *Marketing Treasures* will let you know.

Sparkling Reviews

Strategy Formulation and Implementation. Fifth edition. Arthur A. Thompson, Jr. and A. J. Strickland, III. Richard D. Irwin, Inc., Homewood, IL. 1992. ISBN:0-256-09718. Sixth Edition scheduled for September 30 publication.

Strategy Formulation and Implementation is a general business textbook that guides managers through planning for the near and distant future, and explains how to carry out those plans. Although they do not specifically address marketing strategy, most chapters can easily be adapted to marketing scenarios. Those that can't may be skipped without consequence. And although it's a textbook, and therefore denser than many works reviewed in this column, this book wins high marks for readability. In addition to presenting clear, lively writing, authors Thompson and Strickland spice up their message with examples from well-known, real-life corporations.

Each chapter begins with a few quotations. Resonating strongly with the cover story of this issue of *Marketing Treasures*, are "Management's job is not to see the

company as it is . . . but as it can become" (John W. Teets, CEO of Greyhound Corp.) and "You've got to come up with a plan. You can't wish things will get better" (John F. Welch, CEO of General Electric).

Chapters applicable to marketing include "Company Situation Analysis," "Strategy and Competitive Advantage," and "Matching Strategy to the Situation." Among the more helpful sections are "Tests of a Winning Strategy," "Building Core Competencies," and "Exerting Strategic Leadership."

The book ends with nearly 150 pages of "Readings in Strategic Management." Though some of these readings are helpful in presenting the overarching issues of management strategy, it's tempting to think that the authors chose them to contrast unfavorably with their own more practical, compelling chapters.

Library managers ready to chart a course for the future and eager to steer their libraries through that course will increase their odds for success with a careful reading of this book.

The Crystal Ball

August 29-September 2 "Strategic Marketing Planning." A five-day seminar given by The Michigan Business School at The University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, MI. Contact: 313/763-1000.

September 12 "Creating Effective Brochures." A one-day workshop offered by EEI in Alexandria, VA. Contact: 703/683-7453.

September 15-16 "Low-Cost Multimedia." A two-day seminar given by Seminars in Usable Design in Atlanta, GA. Also given October 6-7 in Seattle, WA. Contact: 303/234-0123.

September 24 "Information Broker's Seminar." A one-day seminar offered

by The Information Professionals Institute in New York, NY. Also offered October 27 in San Francisco, CA. Contact: 713/537-8344.

September 26 "Design for Newsletters." A one-day workshop offered by EEI in Alexandria, VA. Contact: 703/683-7453.

September 27-28 "Effective Newsletter Editing." A two-day workshop offered by EEI in Alexandria, VA. Contact: 703/683-7453.

October 6-8 "Frontiers in Services." A three-day conference sponsored by the American Marketing Association and the Center for Services Marketing, Owen Graduate School of Management, Vanderbilt University at Nashville, TN. Contact: 615/322-2534.

October 19-20 "Kotler on Marketing: Winning Through Value-Oriented Marketing." A two-day forum presented by the American Management Association in Chicago, IL. Also December 5-6 in Toronto, Canada. Contact: 800/262-9699 or 518/891-0065.

October 19-20 "Proactivity in Information Management: Effective Tools and Techniques." A two-day workshop featuring talks on various marketing topics. Chris Olson to speak about strategic planning. Promises to be an excellent idea exchange forum. Hosted by the Defense Technical Information Center in Orlando, FL. Contact: 703/274-6728.

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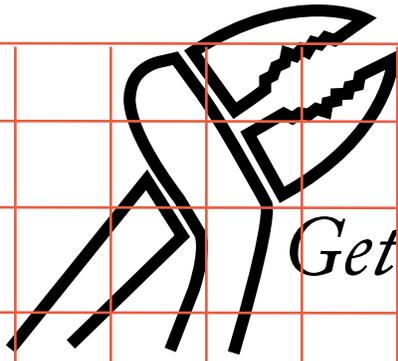
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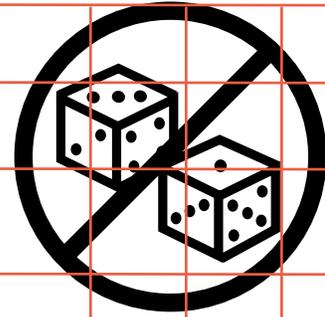
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Signs, as promotional tools	4	1			
Space, use of white	6	2			
Special Libraries Association (SLA)	4	2			
Tote bags	1	2			

Recommended Reading & Viewing

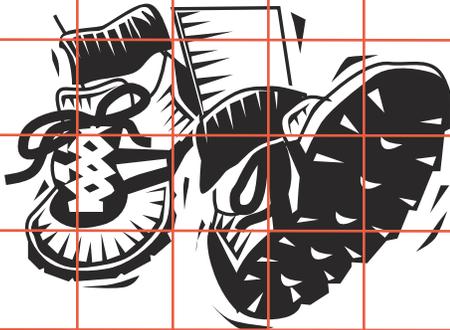
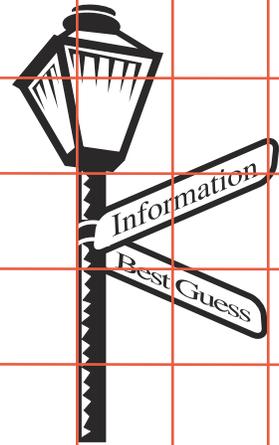
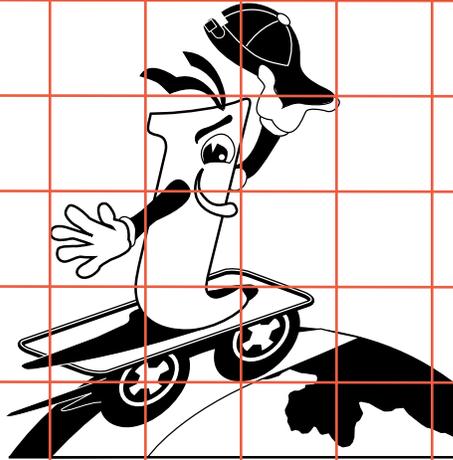
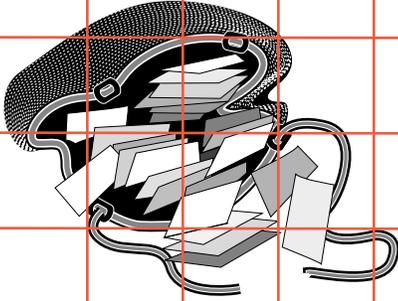
“Advertising Impact,” <i>Sales & Marketing Management</i>	1	5
<i>Disability Resources Monthly</i> newsletter.....	3	2



Get A Grip . . .



Don't Take A Chance



Take These Essential Steps...



**We Jump
Through
Hoops**

