MARKETING Treasures

™

Videos Strike Up the Band and Take the Library On the Road

Imagine comparing two descriptions made of an elephant by a blindfolded individual — the first description from the trunk to the mid-section, the second from the midsection to the tail! Both descriptions would accurately portray a "piece" of the animal, but very little of the picture would be similar. Someone reading those two **very** different descriptions would probably not realize they were detailing the same animal, because the two sectors vary so much.

This article reviews two very different sides of the "information services elephant." Two prize-winning library/information centers have provided **Marketing Treasures** with copies of their promotional videos. One center is the Library Media Center of Triton Regional High School in Runnemede, NJ, the other is the Information Center of Cargill Corporate Headquarters in Minneapolis, MN.

Both videos are excellent productions be-cause they are precisely attuned to their target audiences. The audiences are so vastly different — incoming high school freshmen, and corporate professionals — that there is little similarity between the two videos. Both are very effective and could be appreciated by any information professional.

"Triton Regional High School Library Media Center's (LMC) video was the recipient of a 1995 John Cotton Dana Library Public Relations Award."

Welcome to the LMC

Triton Regional High School Library Media Center's (LMC) video was the recipient of a 1995 John Cotton Dana Library Public Relations Award. The ten-minute video was pro-duced in-house with no cost to the library. No outside professionals were used on this pro-duction. The script was written and produced by LMC staff members, using equipment and materials available within the school.

The purpose of the video is to provide basic information students need in order to make the most of the LMC. Basics such as when the LMC is open and how to check out a book are explained. With the audience for this video being incoming high school freshmen, the video had to address the task of keeping students' attention long enough to impart the core information about the LMC. The video effectively uses techniques that appeal to a student population.

This "rappin' tour" of the LMC in entirely done in rap music lyrics, interspersed with a catchy refrain sung by three female students —"LMC, it's good for you and it's good for me!" The tour begins with students entering the LMC, and shows the viewer the many services they can use within the LMC. Varied shots of students using the available com-puters and software, the audiovisual equip-ment, the personal reading collections, the automated card catalog, etc., help to keep the audience attentive.

The video is shown during freshman orien-tation, answers questions the students could have, such as: "How do you come to the

Pearls of Wisdom

When trying to judge for your promotional materials, the appropriateness and effectiveness of type, think in terms of color to help get a handle on your choices. Robin Williams, in **How to Spec Type**, warns us against a "gray" page, in which line after line of type reigns uninterrupted by oases of white space and anchors of more solid print. One trick to determine the "color" of your page: squint to look at it, so that you can see the page but can't make out the words on it. If it looks like a single, undifferentiated mass, it's probably too gray. Elements you can use to escape from the curse of gray and add color to your page include headlines and subheads, typefaces of varying weights, and pull quotes. But, beware of overuse of these techniques. A hodgepodge of "color" can turn the page back to gray.

Most people begin in the upper right corner area when reading a brochure. Their attention usually stays on the right hand side. If you want to move their eyes, consider that the eye will be drawn to things that are out of place, of a different color, or have a prominent size. The eye normally travels from dark areas to light areas, from large objects to smaller ones, and from bright areas to dull ones. When creating your next brochure, keep these things in mind so people will read the entire brochure, not just the right hand side.

Looking for a product that targets members of upper management who don't often use the information center? Consider getting copies of their upcoming travel schedules and order travel kits for the cities they visit. A source for such kits is City Skylines. We have received travel kits for library conference cities, and have been impressed with the amount and quality of information in each kit—including the current issue of the city magazine, a high quality street-indexed city map, and local "things to do" brochures. Very handy! For more information, call The J. L. Bauman Company: 810/855-9209.

Did you know the ampersand (&) is a popular shortcut with classical roots? Invented by a Roman secretary seeking an abbreviation for "et" (meaning "and" in Latin), the two letters were combined to make the symbol we use today. According to the Board Report, "the word, ampersand, comes from the phrase '&, by itself, becomes and' . . . or as they originally were stated

'& per se and' (which came to be pronounced 'ampersand')." Graphic designers frequently use the ampersand as a decorative element in designs where "and" is called for. Most typefaces have a unique ampersand symbol that can stand by itself or be used in conjunction with other typefaces.

We've learned to peruse the mail carefully because you never can tell when something is going to come along that will save you time and money, or be wonderfully creative.

This month we came across a product that promises to become a popular item in this office—and maybe yours—erasable labels for computer disks, videos, and audio cassettes. These things really work! The labels have a glossy surface, but when marked with a special pen, don't smear, and when "erased" with a special eraser, don't smudge or leave a mark. And you can write right over the erased part without any problems. I can't tell you how many layers of labels some of our computer disks have on them.

Staedtler's Lumolabels (the computer diskette labels) come packaged with 18 erasable labels, an eraser and a black pen. Priced at $4.98 per package you may never have to scratch out or overlay another label again! (And if you share disks and your other party doesn't have an eraser, they can erase the label with alcohol.) For the name and location of your nearest distributor, call the Staedtler Customer Service folks: 800/800-3691. ■

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LMC?" What is in the LMC's collection? How are the books arranged? What school clubs assist the LMC? Who are the staff and what services do they provide? What computers and software are in the LMC for student use?

The rap lyrics used in the video are very clever, and pertinent information is reinforced through printed words on the screen so it's not lost in the fast-paced tempo. Followup sessions with students show that they retain the information.

Special effects such as computer-generated graphics, as well as cameo shots of school staff are creatively used throughout the video. Excellent editing pulls together the pieces to an entertaining yet informative product

In addition to achieving its goal of informing freshmen, this video has also made the school faculty and staff much more aware of the LMC. The video drew applause from attendees when it was shown at the school's faculty meeting. Creators, Althea Vail and Joe Costello have been very gratified by the positive response received from their peers.

Cargill's Information Center Manages Knowledge

Cargill is an international merchandiser and processor of agricultural, financial, and industrial commodities with offices in 60 countries, and supported by 72,000 employees. With customers spread around the world, getting the word out about information services is a challenge. "Cargill's Information Center Manages Knowledge" video gives a concise, explicit description of how that's accomplished.

The audience for this 15-minute video is Cargill's professional employees. The format is one of direct information dissemination, using interviews, computer graphics and narration with appropriate subtle background music. The theme of the video is how the information center and it's professional staff can be your knowledge and information partner.

Cargill's Information Center employs information experts who are focused on determining and meeting their customers' information needs. The services provided by these experts are many and varied and run the gamut

from serving on project teams, to researching current market trends, to doing patent searches. The information center serves Cargill's employees around the world, and the information experts work as partners with Cargill's managers worldwide.

As the video stresses the excellent service and services of the information center, the viewer is treated to beautiful shots of the facility, some of the worldwide Cargill corporate office locations, highlights of the information experts' resources, and a variety of interviews with very satisfied customer/employees. The glowing testimonials of Cargill professionals who have used the information center are an effective way to encourage other employees to avail themselves of the information assets of the information center.

The commitment of Cargill to advance their business goals by accessing knowledge is obvious. The video highlights the information center's state-of-the-art resources which include over 1,000 databases, 30,000 books, over 1,000 journals, over 2,000 marketing studies, and annual reports on all public U.S. and international companies. The information center also houses Cargill's internal corporate archives.

The professional quality of this video is outstanding. The piece is fine-tuned and engaging even for the busiest executive. It is a very convincing promotion piece not only for Cargill's information services, but also for the corporate value and benefits of a customer-focused, well-staffed, well-equipped information facility.

Julia Peterson, Cargill's Assistant Vice President, and Director of the Information Center, artfully employed the help of Cargill's information experts, and a professional script writer and production company to clearly illustrate those elusive concepts behind a successful information center. While the video budget settled down at approximately $26,000, including multiple copies in various formats, Julia plans to get extra mileage on the monies spent by using some of the images from the video in forthcoming brochures and a CD ROM package.

How They Stack Up

In reviewing these two diverse videos, it becomes clear that either or both could be used

Inside Treasure

Outsourcing: Opportunity or Threat?

The following article is adapted from a presentation made by Chris Olson to attendees of the INEX '95 conference in Washington DC, September 29, 1995.

Recent library closings and outsourcing of library services to contractors has many librarians in a state of semi-panic. As the "information age" matures, more and more nontraditional information providers will arrive on the scene, ready to take advantage of marketplace opportunities. Not surprisingly, contractors are viewed by many librarians as competitors and threats to the well-being of libraries.

But wait a minute. Here's a thought—maybe contracting out library services isn't such a bad idea. Perhaps there's a place in your library for a contractor to assume responsibility for services with which your staff temporarily needs assistance. It's done in other businesses all the time, why not libraries?

How do you know when to treat a contractor or an outsourcing firm as an opportunity or threat? And how does that impact your marketing strategies?

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis.

Strategic planners use a variety of analysis tools to evaluate their organizations marketplace position and to develop marketing strategies. One of the popular analysis techniques is SWOT, an easy-to-use tool for getting a quick overview of an organization's strategic situation. A SWOT analysis points out how well an organization's internal capabilities (its strengths and weaknesses) and its external situation (opportunities and threats) fit and compare against one another. Obviously, an organization's strengths should outweigh its weaknesses by a substantial margin if it's to enjoy any level of success in the marketplace.

You can also consider SWOT to be a strategic balance sheet where strengths are competitive assets and weaknesses are competitive liabilities. Either way, SWOT is a convenient analysis tool that can help librarians evaluate how they should consider contractors, and how they should react.

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A typical SWOT analysis is set up in a grid format. This makes it easier to visualize and to make direct comparisons. Each block in the grid holds its own list of items that are identified for each SWOT component, i.e., a list of strengths, a list of weaknesses, and so on. The list entries should be concise and to the point, in order to facilitate comparisons.

SWOT Analysis

Potential Internal Strengths	Potential Internal Weaknesses
Potential External Opportunities	Potential External Threats

And what entries would a library have? The following paragraphs provide a number of examples that might be listed for a typical library. This is not being presented as an exhaustive list—each library would have its own, unique to their situation—but these examples should provide some insight into what a SWOT analysis covers. We begin with an analysis of a library's internal assets and liabilities. And we conclude with an examination of the marketplace conditions, or a library's external environment.

Potential Internal Strengths

A strength is something that a library does well or a characteristic that gives it an important capability. A strength can be a skill, a competence, a valuable resource, or a capability that gives the library a distinct advantage in the marketplace.

Key core competencies, or something that the library does especially well in comparison to its competitors is an important asset, and can empower a library to build a competitive advantage in the marketplace. Other potential strengths can include having a favorable client position where clients actively like and support your library. Libraries can enjoy cost advantages such as special discounts, a staff with outstanding experience, knowledge, and superior technical skills, management that has proven itself , active product innovation, and well executed marketing strategies. All of these strengths, taken by themselves or collectively, will help a library's competitive position. Obviously, the more strengths, the stronger the position.

Potential Internal Weaknesses

Every organization has its share of weaknesses. The trick is to limit weaknesses to reduce competitive vulnerability. A weakness

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is something an organization lacks or does poorly (in comparison to others). While it is never easy to list weaknesses, you have to be honest here, not defensive. The intent of this exercise is to help you identify a successful library management strategy in your marketplace, which may or may not include outsourcing.

A library with no clear strategic vision can count itself as having a major internal weakness. Without a clear vision it cannot position itself in the marketplace nor can it generate clear messages, permitting clients to become confused and susceptible to competitor overtures.

Other weakness can include obsolete facilities, a poor track record with clients leading to an overall weak market image. Faced with this dilemma a library with management having little or no marketing skills should be sure to list this lack of skills as a serious weakness. Higher overall costs, internal operating problems, and a product line that is too narrow for the marketplace or focuses on target markets too small to support the products are other weaknesses that could undermine a library's viability in the marketplace.

Potential External Opportunities

Opportunities offer attractive situations that help an organization to prosper and to ward off threats from competitors. External opportunities for libraries can mean serving additional clients within an existing market or perhaps entering a new market to increase the client base. This may mean going outside of your immediate user community either physically or demographically, to expand your marketplace.

Another opportunity could be to expand your existing product line and diversify library products and services. Changes in local or federal laws can also impact libraries, presenting new opportunities to persue.

If your library finds itself in a marketplace of complacent competitors, count that as a important opportunity that should be acted upon immediately. And if your library is in a fast growing market, then that too, is an opportunity that should not be missed.

Potential External Threats

Often factors in an organization's external environment pose threats that can impact its well-being—or its very existence. The emer-

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gence of cheaper technologies, a competitor's introduction of a new or better product, or the entry of a new competitor can threaten an organization and require it to initiate a defensive strategy.

Libraries can be threatened by lower cost competitors and changing client needs. As witnessed in the book industry during the last decade, an increase in substitute products (i.e., printed indexes versus online databases versus CD ROM versus Internet resources) can pose a serious threat to organizations not prepared to embrace new technology.

A slowdown or stagnation in market growth, shifting business cycles, and adverse demographics are external threats with the potential to run a library out of business. These and other threats need to be recognized early on so that effective counter-strategies can be implemented.

Defense…Offense…

If by now you think a SWOT analysis is starting to sound more like you should have a SWAT team, you're not too far off base. Strategic analysis leads to drawing conclusions, and developing and implementing the defensive and offensive strategies best suited for the situation at hand.

Here are some pertinent questions to consider after compiling your lists.

1. Does your library have any internal strengths or core competencies an attractive strategy can be built around?

2. Does the library's weaknesses make it competitively vulnerable and how do those weaknesses prevent the library from taking advantage of opportunities.

3. Which opportunities does the library have the skills and resources to pursue with a real chance of success?

4. What threats should library management be worried about most and what strategic moves should be considered for a good defense?

In order to do an accurate job with a SWOT analysis you need information—about your market, your customers, your library, the environment in which you manage a library, and

Outsourcing… *continued from page 5*

your current and prospective competitors. As with all business management functions, conducting a SWOT analysis is not a one-time activity to be dusted off every five years. While the actual analysis may be done on a 12-18 month basis depending on marketplace volatility, the activities supporting the analysis—information gathering and processing—are constant. A proactive library continues these activities so that trends can be predicted and strategies altered to take advantage of sudden opportunities and defend against threats.

The results of a SWOT analysis and its follow-up activities impact an organization's marketing plans. When you consider the components of the marketing mix—product/service, price, placement/distribution, promotion and public relations—it should become apparent how a SWOT analysis will determine if your library marketing plans feature the introduction of a new service, a price cut, or a visibility campaign.

Outsourcing and Contractors

So where and how does outsourcing and contractors fit into this picture? And do contractors present opportunities or threats? If you're like most members of my audience at INEX '95, you'll be saying that contractors are competitors and they represent a threat to libraries. Are they really?

Let's pretend that your library has higher than average costs for maintaining an archival records management function for your organization. This is due in part to the high cost of floor space and the purchase of supplies that are unique to maintaining archival records. Because of low volume, your library is unable to purchase supplies at a discount, and use off-site space. Does it make sense to continue in-house maintenance of this function if there are others in the marketplace that can do the job just as efficiently but at a lower cost and off-site?

Now granted this is a simplistic example, but it illustrates the point that there are times when hiring a contractor or outsourcing a function can help reduce internal weaknesses, freeing up resources to take advantage of opportunities that will strengthen a library's position.

What about using a contractor as an asset? Let's pretend your user community is growing by leaps and bounds, and increasingly requires

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subject expertise outside the current profile your staff covers. A rapidly growing marketplace is an opportunity to be recognized. Hiring contractors with the subject profiles you need can help you take advantage of the opportunity. Or your can outsource information requests in certain subject areas. Both of these tactics permit you to expand services without committing large amounts of resources. If the subject profiles shift, it will be easy to bring in new experts to meet the shift. If marketplace demands stabilize, then you have given yourself the needed time to measure and determine exactly what your library needs to continue providing these services in-house.

Considering an outsourcing firm as a potential partner for an opportunity may seem foreign, but it can be a wise move. If your library is not prepared to expand services, reduce costs, improve usage convenience, or take advantage of other potential external opportunities, then partnering with an outside organziation makes sense. By not partnering, you risk missing the window of opportunity and weakening your marketplace position, allowing your library to become vulnerable. Your potential partners can become threats — because they see an opportunity for themselves.

This is not to say that your author believes that all contractors and outsourcing activities should always be viewed as opportunities. Indeed, there are plenty of times when they are competitive threats, and should be treated accordingly. Closely examining a competitor's offering will help you identify defensive actions to be carried out in your marketing plans. And don't forget that once you have implemented your defensive moves, you must actively distinguish your library's services from your competitor's with loud and frequent differentiation messages. This will help to strengthen your image and position in the marketplace.

Get Out of the Office

None of these activities can be done alone in your office. You need to actively inquire and follow information providers in your marketplace—both on a regional and national level. Recent library news describe library services being outsourced to various companies. What do you know about those companies? Do they offer your library an opportunity or do they present a threat? It's time to figure it out and act accordingly! ◼

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as an example for any information center's effort to produce a video of their facility's services. Both are comfortably brief and have unique qualities that could be blended into a lighthearted, yet concise and sophisticated promotional piece. Of course, the style would be determined by the corporate culture. A more serious, straightforward format could be used even in the Public Library sector, if the purpose was to attract customers from Chamber of Commerce meetings, for example. On the other hand, special libraries could try a lighthearted, trendy approach as a shocking change of pace geared toward incoming twenty-something professionals.

The use of a video to inform potential customers of the information center's services is very efficient. A video is not only an educational resource, it can also serve as a marketing tool. A concise, well-produced video can inform groups of your services within 15-30 minutes. This is a comfortable format for a short presentation, using a few moments for introductory and closing comments. A video could become the foundation of a brief presentation suitable for a variety of settings, from management meetings to community groups.

Review both of these excellent videos, and you will be entertained, informed, and maybe even inspired with some creative ideas for promoting your unique piece of the information service elephant!

The Triton High School video can be borrowed from the American Library Association Headquarters Library. Telephone 800-545-2433, ext. 2159. The Cargill video will be released in early 1996. **Marketing Treasures** will print ordering information as soon as it is available. ■

Promotion Gems

Using Low-Cost Stickers for High-Return Visibility

Browse through an office supply store or direct mail paper supply catalog and you'll see packages of pre-cut stickers made from sheets of different colored papers and foil that you can print on using your laser printer. The convenience of producing tailored stickers on your laser printer should not be lost in your marketing efforts. Stickers can deliver a message and make a visual impact where other mediums may not work.

For example, if someone just ordered an online search, you can affix a sticker to the search cover sheet with your phone number on it that says "Call me if you have any questions." If you provided the search with same-day service, remind your customers of your speedy service with a sticker. You can even encourage additional, related information requests by promoting other library products, such as continuous topical tracking services.

Designing and printing stickers is easy with the availability of different sticker shapes and bright colors. Before purchasing the stickers, evaluate your objectives. Do you want to make an announcement, emphasize a point, or draw attention to an important piece of information? Rather than limiting yourself to plain white labels with black ink, use colored sticker paper to draw attention.

Consider the impact that different shapes will have on your message. Stickers come in the traditional circles, squares, and rectangles. They also come in starbursts, five-pointed stars, and triangles. Of course, you can also purchase uncut sheets of the sticker paper and cut out your own shapes.

Some sticker do's and dont"s: Don't get carried away with the copy on the sticker—make it short and to the point. Don't crowd the words onto a sticker. Use a typeface that's easy to read and emphasizes your message. Test your sticker design on plain paper before printing the actual stickers. Cut out the shape and apply it. You'd be surprised how different a sticker looks as a shape once it's been separated from a full sheet of paper.

Like bumper stickers, self-printed stickers offer a low-cost approach to increasing visibility ■

Sparkling Reviews

Strategic Market Management. Fourth Edition. David A. Aaker. John Wiley & Sons, New York, NY. 1995 ISBN: 0-471-30956-7 $40.95

To support this month's article on strategic analysis, we recommend this book by a well-known author in marketing circles. Mr. Aaker has a well-deserved reputation for writing clear, well-conceived textbooks in a range of marketing topics. This book is no exception.

Presented as a textbook for marketing seniors or MBA candidates, the book is an excellent synthesis of the most important concepts in the field of strategy. This reviewer found the book's compactness to be one of it's most endearing qualities. The author presents strategies without going into exhaustive examples—which for some authors seems to be a great way to add bulk to a book without adding substance.

No, here is an author on which you can rely to address the topic without fanfare. This is a solid text that promotes management with a long-term perspective, and stresses that marketing be integrated throughout the organization.

Divided into five parts, the book begins with an introduction to many of the concepts, methods and strategy alternatives later covered in the book, providing an excellent foundation for later discussions. The second part is devoted to external analysis—including customer, competitor, market and environmental analyses. The third part moves on to internal analysis, setting the reader up for a presentation of SCA (sustainable competitive advantages—critical to long term success) in the fourth part. The fifth, and final part brings everything together, including a chapter on how the organizational components interact with strategy, and how to develop a formal planning system.

If you want to take a strong look at strategic marketing management, then this is an excellent place to start. Yes, this is a book with the look and feel of a graduate level text. To some that may be daunting. You may not remember everything on the first pass, but you'll have an excellent point of reference to check and to build upon. ■

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Creating a Clip Art Library

If you've been receiving **Marketing Treasures** clip art on computer disk, then during the past year you've received 24 different images ranging from footsteps to a sprinting rabbit. How do you keep track of these diverse images, as well as other graphics you've been "collecting?" May we suggest cataloging them into a browsable database.

Now, don't freak out at the mention of "cataloging". It's not that bad. And, like any good librarian knows, a well constructed catalog will save you time.

Let's start with some image management programs: Adobe Fetch, Kudo Image Browser, PFS: Power Album, ImagePals. The programs range in price from $40 - $150. All of these programs will help you build a "library" of images indexed with keywords.

When we sat down to organize our graphics—over 1,000 images—we started at the beginning, creating broad categories for collections. For example, some of our categories were animals, books, people, symbols. The idea was to identify convenient groupings that would accommodate future acquisitions as well as what we currently owned. Then we went through our images and assigned them to our collections or "libraries."

Categorizing images by content, color, style, angle, background, and company worked for us. Of course there were some images that landed in a couple of categories, but duplicating the occasional image didn't bother us.

Take These Essential Steps...

The next step was applying keywords. This is where your library skills pay off—or get in the way, if you over do it. We applied at least three words to each graphic, for starters. Later, as we used the database, we thought of other words that we added to our keyword list.

We have our database "libraries" loaded on an external 1GB hard drive. Regardless of the original format (CD ROM, diskette etc.) all graphics are indexed. Once we locate the desired image, we retrieve the original, copy it, and begin work.

If you want contact information for the software packages mentioned in this article, call our office and we'll fax you the information. 410/647-6708. ■