MARKETING *Treasures*

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Business-to-Business Marketing for Libraries

In the last issue of Marketing Treasures, *I identified an approach to library marketing that I considered to be an unexplored perspective. If libraries can be regarded as businesses that target other businesses (law firms, medical practices, retailers, manufacturers, research organizations, etc.), whether external or internal to the parent organization, then the techniques and practices of business-to-business marketing can be applied to bolster library marketing programs. I asked Suzanne Moseman, our new contributing writer and editor, to explore this concept for your consideration. I think this article will give you ideas that can freshen your library's marketing programs. Chris Olson, Publisher*

One of the most important areas of marketing in today's economy is business-to-business marketing. From telephone book producers to office suppliers, the trend is for businesses to target other businesses with their services and products. Where do libraries fit into this picture? Libraries, whether corporate, legal, medical, nonprofit, public, or academic, **are** businesses. As such they have clients—individuals and organizations—that can be regarded as "businesses" too.

Identifying Your Business Clients

First of all, who are these business clients, and what do they do? There's a fairly straightforward answer for special libraries: the primary client is the parent organization. Parent organizations may be in the business of providing legal defense, medical care, research,

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management services—any or more of a whole range of "businesses." Individual divisions within a parent organization can also be seen as separate businesses in many contexts—with as different needs, perspectives, and goals as marketing, research and law. Some libraries operated by professional organizations serve many businesses as either a primary library or a supplemental resource center. Fee-based library services work for a vast variety of businesses that do not have their own libraries. Public and academic libraries offer support and services to community businesses and local information brokers.

Take a moment to look at your clients. What businesses are represented by your regular library users? Have you ever surveyed your clients to determine which ones represent businesses? If not, this may be the time to start, so that you have a clearer picture of who is using your resources and your services.

Once you know your clients and the business they are in, analyze the type of businesses they represent. For example, if your library operates in a hospital setting, there will be clients with business interests in hospital management, financial investment, personnel resources, and community outreach. Business clients in research firms have different information needs than business clients in law firms. What are you doing to meet the various kinds of needs you can identify? Retailers are interested in demographics, new business development departments needs to know about legal and financial resources, manufacturers are

Pearls of Wisdom

Would you like to add color to small batches of printed materials without going to a printer? There is a way! Letraset USA makes a tool called the Letraset ColorWand. This small, hand-held device contains an electrical heating element which is used with a small rubber pad to transfer heat through a strip of colored paper, transferring the color onto a document!

Now you can easily add flourishes of silver and gold (or any of the 72 other colors available) to certificates and awards, report covers, brochures, invitations, cards, and announcements. The combinations are infinite, the possibilities as wild as your imagination. To find out more about the ColorWand and receive a catalog with a full range of preprinted promotion materials, including certificates, call Baudville at 800/728-0888.

It's time to strut your stuff at the upcoming library conferences this summer. The SLA Swap & Shop at the June Annual Conference in Boston will again award significant prize monies to first and second places. Everyone who attends the meeting and submits a voting ballot will receive a free mug. Send 2 copies of your entries to Gloria Dinermann, the Library Co-Op, Inc., 3840 Park Ave., Edison, NJ. 08820. For more information, e-mail: trudyk@panix.com.

The ALA annual conference Swap and Shop will be held on Sunday, July 7 from 11a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in New York City. This is the annual display and giveaway sponsored by the Library Administration & Management Association (LAMA) Public Relations Section. Participants are encouraged to send 100 to 300 copies of their materials to: '96 Swap & Shop, c/o The New York Public Library, Shipping Dept, 521 W. 43rd St., New York, NY 10036-4396. For more information contact Charlie Hansen at 810/232-7111, ext 204, or e-mail: chansen@genesee.freenet.org.

So, how are your mailing lists these days? Are they up-to-date? Do they capture the sales profile data you need to keep your information business running in the black? What? You don't use mailing lists? Not even to announce new products or services? Maybe you know it as a distribution list or circulation database. Regardless of the name, mailing lists are critical to the success of any marketing program. A mailing list should be more than a list of names. Whether kept electronically or on paper, your mailing list should be managed as a database and should include purchasing or usage information that can be used to create subsets of customers with desirable characteristics for targeted mailings. While it may require resources to maintain such lists, being able to identify a small group of customers with a high interest in a specific topic or service will reduce mailing costs while yielding a higher return on your promotion investment.

The feature article in the last issue of **Marketing Treasures** reviewed marketing resources of interest on the Internet's World Wide Web. To that list we would like to add the WEB site <http://www.dis.strath.ac.uk/people/sheila/marketing/index.html>. Titled "Marketing Library and Information Services," this site is maintained by Sheila Webber, an instructor in the Department of Information Science at the University of Strathclyde. Her site currently provides a brief overview of marketing concepts, compiled with libraries in mind, naturally. You may want to visit to pick up some ideas.

The Special Libraries Association and LEXIS-NEXIS are cosponsoring a new distance learning program titled "Getting What You Want: Developing a Marketing Strategy." Scheduled for April 18th from 1:30 P.M. to 3:30 P.M. (EST), the program promises four experts who will examine and discuss marketing tools and techniques. The program will be broadcast to 8 sites in the United States, Canada, and United Kingdom. For information, contact Tracy Lofty at SLA at 202/234-4700, ext. 649, or send e-mail to tracy@sla.org. ■

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looking for trends relating to their products, research and development needs to be up-to-date on research in related fields. All types of businesses and business interests need access to regulatory information.

New Business Clients

Identifying and tracking new business clients can be challenging, but these moves develop an important component in a business-to-business marketing strategy: the ability to increase sales to new clients who have entered the target market. A source of new clients for academic-based fee-for-service libraries as well as public libraries is new businesses moving into the community. These new-comers can be located in the business section of your local newspaper, through chamber of commerce listings, business networking meetings, and civic associations. Welcome them into the area with a brochure or information packet that highlights your services.

For special libraries, new employees to the parent organization can represent new business. Unfortunately, sometimes special library staff are the last to know about new company employees, or they are unable to get names and telephone numbers from the personnel office. If that is the case, keep in touch with the folks who supply office furnishings and telephone listings. Or talk to the person assigning e-mail addresses and request a weekly or monthly update. Pay a call on the new employee with a list in hand of your services, phone extensions, e-mail addresses and staff members names. New employees are typically happy to see a friendly face and will feel that they have an "in" with the company if they know the information resource people by name. If a personal visit isn't feasible, send a welcome package or a welcoming e-mail message.

The Reference Interview

In library school, we all learned that stated information needs aren't always the same as real information needs. A good reference interview is often the difference between a frustrated client and a satisfied one. Extended reference interviews with business clients can help you determine which services and products you should actively promote.

This may be the time to visit or call business clients and ask, "How can my library serve

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you better?" Take a look at the mission statements, and long-range plans of the businesses and project teams you serve, and extract information needs from these documents. Ask your clients what needs they anticipate for the next several years, and help them clarify what they really need to know given your own understanding of their missions and plans. Managers and entrepreneurs aren't professional researchers; they may have only a vague idea of their information needs and the pro-active librarian can open windows of opportunity to meet a business's true information needs. But you don't know if you don't ask—and if you don't read up on their jobs.

Is there an business development task force in your local government or chamber of commerce? Or in your organization? Perhaps within each project team? Look at the long-range plans of your business development clients and the types of businesses and work they are bringing into your area or organization. Economic development planners also have information needs; interview them and offer the library's resources to help them.

Library Services

Libraries define themselves by the valuable services they provide. Prompt, accurate, and complete reference service is the hallmark of a good library. Service businesses need to be proactive. Information providers should anticipate the needs of their clients, not merely react to needs when they are brought to the library's attention. Anticipating others' needs requires imagination, intuition, and research in the areas that are becoming more important to your business clientele.

What are the trends facing businesses, and how do you track them? Special libraries will naturally focus on the areas their parent organizations serve—manufacturing, research, legal defense, medical care, or government. Public and academic libraries may find this task more difficult, because they have to cover a wider topical spectrum. However, general business magazines, management gurus, and marketing trend-spotters keep abreast of changes in society. It's asking a lot of over-burdened librarians, already swamped with work and demands on their time, to anticipate information needs of the future, but keeping an ear to the ground will help you anticipate

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raids on your resources and budget. If you know the coming trends, you can tailor—and streamline—your services to emerging needs.

Consider the services you now offer and think of how you can improve them. Can you go beyond basic reference service and offer analysis of the data you collect? Are there common, recurrent research requests that can be prepackaged and then customized for a particular client's needs? Do you offer a clipping service to regular clients, or maintain files of news items that pertain to common reference questions?

Library Products

Libraries are more than services. They also provide important products to business clients. Do your clients know which products you carry, whether in the form of books, cassettes, periodicals, databases, or microforms? Are there pointers that will lead a client from the book on the shelf to a related database, cassette, or clipping file?

Can the business client who walks into your library quickly find a guide to the resources serving his or her particular interest? If your reference librarians are busy (and whose are not?), are there other guides that can help new clients find what they are looking for?

Many public libraries have a business reference center to help clients find what they need quickly. When new products come into your business center, how are they publicized? How promptly do you get the word out when a new business reference arrives?

Road Maps to Your Library's Information Highways and Byways

Library collections are not as easy to use as they once were. The variety of information media can be confusing and frustrating, especially for clients who are pressed for time. A perfect solution: single-sheet guides to the resources in your library that relate to a particular field or business activity. Show your clients the variety of resources you have in areas such as financial services, large industries, marketing, business law, or management, and tailor your resource selection to their business or industry niche. Make sure that you highlight resources in all the different media. Let clients know that you have books on tape as well as on the shelf, direct them to the

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indexes and the databases that best cover the topics they need, and let them know about magazines, conferences, and associations related to their information needs.

Marketing to Counter the Competition

Libraries have to compete in a tough market. The number of competitors is multiplying, The Internet is rapidly becoming one of your major competitors. People are searching the net from the comfort of their offices, and believe that they, or their webmeisters, can find the information they need without resorting to libraries. It may be a matter of survival in the competitive climate of today to market the skills, services, and products that libraries can offer. Your competition is focusing on businesses and eroding your client base. This will be reflected in lower library utilization and, eventually, in budget cutting. Librarians know that end users cannot do the research job of a professional, but how can they get that word out? By actively marketing themselves with the same techniques used by other businesses.

Repetition is key to effective marketing. Get your message out many times, so that it sticks in the potential client's mind. Snag their interest to get them in the door, then keep them in with superior value. Public service announcements will bring business clients into public and academic libraries for tax forms or regulatory information. Use the opportunity to hold their interest with well-designed research aids.

In your promotion materials, don't just list the features, products, and services you provide— point out the benefits that clients will receive. For example, document delivery saves the client time. The analysis you compile of a competitor's product is more current than analyses already in print because you have access to online databases.

Show your clients that human intelligence stands behind your services. Add value to raw data by organizing it in the format most useful to the client. Add pertinent annotations to a bibliography. Offer to update your client on new developments when you deliver an article.

And when you add value to a product, be sure your client knows the true worth of your work. Take your cue from the automobile association AAA. People pay an annual fee to AAA

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for travel services and roadside assistance. One of the benefits of membership is the receipt upon request of "free" city and state tour books. But when AAA sends you a free tour book, its retail value of $10 is marked on the cover. That value indication goes a long way towards reassuring members that they are "getting their money's worth" from their yearly dues. When you shop at a superstore, the receipt shows you how much money you have saved over suggested retail prices. Let your clients know how much time and money goes into your services and products. You are the experienced and efficient online searcher; you have saved your client the hours and dollars that he or she would have otherwise spent in learning the system and searching inefficiently. Your collection of periodicals saves the client hundreds or thousands of dollars in subscription costs. Your access to other libraries expands the actual resources in your collection.

In a climate of budget cutting and layoffs, businesses that market themselves effectively can capture the elusive dollars and grow. Those who neglect marketing will suffer. Try thinking like a business person. Think of your library as a business targeting other businesses, and marketing your products and services effectively and professionally will become second nature. ■

Inside Treasure

Web Design Tips

So you've decided to create and maintain a site on the World Wide Web or your organization's Intranet. There are plenty of books, newsletters and online guides to help you create your masterpiece. But as with the development of printed materials, there are design and layout potholes that need to be avoided if your work is to win repeat visits from information highway travelers. When designing Web pages, keep the following points in mind:

• **Use system palette colors whenever possible.** Custom colors slow down the screen draw of a page. Using the system's colors and limiting number of colors used to 16, will result in a smaller file size and quicker image load.

Marketing Techniques from Business

Examples of successful business-to-business marketing implementations are plentiful. Take your cues from them. Here are a few proven techniques to get you started:

- Advertise in the business-to-business yellow pages to let your target market know that you are a primary information source. If you're in an organization, get a full page ad inserted into your company's telephone book.

- Keep a list of your business clients and local business organizations, and notify them of every new business-related product or service your library provides. (See our tip for mailing lists in this month's Pearls of Wisdom.)

- Promote your library with pens, notepads, magnets, cups—anything that will stay in front of your customers' eyes.

- Offer business or Rolodex cards at the circulation and reference desks. Insert them into library product packages such as database search results, bibliographies, and competitor profiles. Spread the word about the library in a form most business people use.

- Compile samples of your products—annotated bibliographies, research and analysis reports, clipping services—distribute the samples with promotional flyers and order forms.

- Present promotional spots on public access television. Your local high school or community college television production class could produce the spot inexpensively.

- Establish a presence on the Internet (or your company's Intranet) and then advertise the site. Make it a one-stop-shopping site.

- Post signs in your company and inside the library featuring your newest information resources.

- Speak at civic organizations and company meetings about the way your library uses the newest in electronic media. Do demonstrations. Take samples, business cards and flyers.

- Send press releases to the news media and your firm's public relations office about research through the Internet, and promote your experience and cost-effective search capabilities.

- Become a personal shopper. Like the professionals in the retail stores who keep your size, color, and style preferences, keep a database file of your clients, and call them when new information about one of their interests comes in. You can generate a healthy repeat business with this technique. ■

Web Design Tips... *continued from page 5*

• **Avoid high-resolution images.** Few machines can display images greater than 92 pixels per inch (72 pixels for Macs). High-resolution images only increase transmission time.

• **Don't make your pages oversized.** Most monitors can't display anything wider than 640 pixels. Rather than requiring people to scroll back and forth in order to read your page, design the page for a 640 x 480 monitor.

• **Interlace your graphics.** Netscape displays interlaced images on the screen more quickly, albeit at first fuzzily. As the transmission continues, the image receives more defining information, until finally the full document and image is received. This approach prevents a visitor from having to stare at a blank screen while your images load.

• **Provide links to your home page on every other page that follows.** Visitors should always be able to return quickly to your home page, no matter how far down the site hierarchy they have gone.

• **Make your pages legible.** Don't use colors that clash or that are difficult to read on a monitor. And stay away from busy and assertive backgrounds. Backgrounds are supposed to be just that—in the background. If yours makes the page difficult to read, get rid of it!

• **Don't misuse typefaces.** Trying to read the main body of a page is impossible when it's set in 9-point, italicized type. Then there's the page that shouts with its bold, 14-point typeface copy. Be sensitive to how the type looks on the monitor. Remember that on a computer screen, serif faces don't have the ease-of-reading advantage they have on paper. Stay with clean, sans serif faces that are easy on the eyes.

• **Try to have a purpose for every item on your page.** Don't clutter your page with items just because they are "cool." Be sure that graphics are appropriate for the message.

• **Keep your page and design well organized.** Before you begin your pages, sketch out a "wiring diagram" showing the hierarchy of the pages, what each page will contain, and what links to what. Augment the diagram with thumbnail sketches of how you want to lay out each page, using all the elements that are to be included. ■

Interlaced graphics are images saved in the GIF89a format. To create an interlaced graphic use the Photoshop GIF89a Export plug-in or the shareware GraphicConverter by Thorsten Lemke. For a copy, go to (http://www.jumbo.com/).

Worth Its Weight in Gold

A recent survey of communication professionals conducted by 3M reports that 96 percent of respondents have seen someone fall asleep in a meeting, and about 29 percent have fallen asleep themselves in a meeting! It seems that with the advent of Total Quality Management and Teamwork in recent years, meetings have become a daily occurrence for many folks in business. Keeping meetings effective and productive is sometimes a real challenge. Here are some tips offered by the survey respondents.

Get out of the office. Respondents clearly preferred off-site meetings. If you can't get out of the office, at least get out of your office—it's not conducive to creativity (according to 40 percent of respondents). "Off-site retreat centers" and "corner booth in a piano bar" ranked as top outside-the-office choices.

Chemistry counts. Attendees can have the greatest impact on a meeting's creativity—moreso than the subject being discussed, according to nearly half of respondents. Four to six people is considered ideal for a meeting. Try to limit groups to eight.

Make it fun; make it funny. For stimulating creativity in meetings, nearly two-thirds of survey respondents said humor was their favorite tool .

The right stuff. Comfortable chairs and the right equipment were important to survey respondents. Lack of easel paper, tape, and working markers are sources of gripes.

Set the stage for success. Prepare ahead of time, and if possible, distribute background information to participants prior to the meeting.

Meetings can be a waste of time. Not only should you keep meetings effective and productive, but you should consider whether each meeting is necessary in the first place. A study of U.S. executives revealed that they spend an average of 288 hours a year attending meetings they view as unnecessary! ■

Promotion Gems

NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK
APRIL 14–20, 1996

The theme of this year's observance will once again be "Libraries Change Lives" with the additional tagline: "Call. Visit. Log on." The new focus is intended to stress the important role of librarians in making information technology available to people. The American Library Association (ALA) is encouraging libraries to highlight how people are benefiting from computers, access to the Internet, and other information technology at libraries.

Some tools to get you started on your promotion of this special week are being provided by ALA. Here are some quotable quotes to write an article or to build a presentation around.

• "Americans can't wait for equity on the information superhighway. All people must have access to this important new technology."

• "Libraries are our nation's information infrastructure."

• "Libraries are the public's on-ramp to the information superhighway. And librarians are the navigators."

• "Librarians put the human face on cyberspace. They are there to help."

• "If you don't have a computer or don't know how to use one, who are you going to call? The library!"

• "Students must be prepared to live and work in the era of electronic information."

If you need promotion materials to enhance your celebration, ALA's Fall Graphics Catalog offers posters, bookmarks, T-shirts, and totebags bearing the words "Libraries Change Lives. Call. Visit. Log on."

The Special Libraries Association has a free marketing kit that you can get for the asking. It includes camera-ready graphics, articles that can be adapted, and program ideas. Fax your request to SLA at 202/265-9315 and ask for the ISLD kit. While the kit is designed for members, other librarians may ask for free kits too.

Unfortunately, the American Association of Law Libraries is not offering any special NLW materials this year. Medical librarians can go to their Highsmith catalog to select from an attractive assortment of pencils, balloons, invitations, and computer paper to promote National Library Week. They are also selling two attractive brochures appropriate for medical libraries, titled "The Healing Team: Physicians and Librarians Working Together" and "Helping with Healing: Consult Your Medical Librarian." The same slogans are also available on T-shirts, posters, buttons, and bookmarks.

The ALA is encouraging all libraries to promote access to the information superhighway with a special program on April 16, "Log on @ the Library Day." The purpose of the event is to focus on the library's role in making access to the information superhighway possible. Librarians can use this opportunity to show customers how much information is readily available online. This is a great chance to increase your library's visibility in the community or organization.

For more information on Highsmith products mentioned call 800/558-2110. For the ALA items call ALA at 312/280-5044 or 5040. The latest issue of the ALA **PR Activity Report** (Vol 9, No. 4) January 1996, is devoted to promoting libraries during NLW. Copies may be obtained from the ALA Public Information office at 312/944-6780. ∎

Go For It! To focus attention on how technology is helping libraries change lives, ALA will award an Encarta 96 Encyclopedia Multimedia CD-ROM compliments of Microsoft to every library that submits a story, editorial, column or interview carried by nonlibrary media—newspaper, magazine, newsletter, radio or TV—about how the pubic is benefiting from computers, access to the Internet and other information technology at the library.

A grand prize (complete Microsoft CD ROM Library worth $1,300) will be awarded for the best placement. The top 10 entries will receive a Microsoft Reference Library.

All types of libraries are eligible to enter. Placements must appear after January 1, 1996, in nonlibrary media. Copies of articles or tapes should be submitted by May 10th to the ALA Public Information Office along with a letter documenting how the placement originated and contact information for the library. For more information contact the ALA Public Information Office at 312/280-5044 or 5041. Fax 312/944-8620. E-mail: pio@ala.org.

Sparkling Reviews

Consultative Selling. Fifth Edition. Mack Hanan. AMACOM. New York. 1995. ISBN 0-8144-0303-4. $24.95

Mack Hanan's original **Consultative Selling,** first written in 1970, changed the way sales representatives view themselves and their products. The Arthur Miller road warrior of yesteryear, who focused on selling a product or service, has been supplanted by the new generation sales consultant. Successful account managers now focus on increasing customer profit margins, so that, in turn, their own supplier business can grow. In this scenario, the sales person is no longer a vendor but a partner with the customer whose profits the sales representative seeks to improve.

Librarians and resource managers can benefit from Mr. Hanan's perspective by becoming more proactive in tailoring and marketing the services they offer. By seeing themselves as partners to the hospital, law firm, community, or the organization they serve—thereby sharing an awareness of their customers' needs and goals—librarians will find opportunities to render service and increase library visibility.

Partnering means:
- Heightening the visibility of the services you offer
- Increasing knowledge about the services you provide
- Seeking the opportunity to add value
- Getting increased recognition from customers

Most of all, partnering requires that you get to know your customers and then seek to meet their needs. In other words, if you know what a customer is going to do with the information requested, you can customize your services to optimize the customer's product. Ultimately, delivering added value via your services to each customer's product is the surest way to ensure survival and growth in today's competitive environment.

Hanan's book is targeted to high-end business sales representatives. But don't think a sales book isn't for you. In this era of library closings and down-sizing, a sales book may provide the insights you need to "sell" your library successfully. This book should give you ideas on how to improve the position of your services and products. ◼

Biography

Using Rules (lines) Creatively

How many times have you separated two paragraphs of text with a line? In graphic design terms you were separating the text with a rule. Rules are lines, which when used creatively, can give your publication an elegant look.

Rules can be used alone or in combination with one another. Combination rules usually consist of two parallel rules; one thin and one thick. For example, you may use a longer thin rule, with a shorter thick rule placed on top. Experiment by positioning the thick rule at different places along the thin rule. Each new position changes the feel and look of the design.

The uses of combination rules are endless. If you need to create formal headers in a publication, set a rule above each header. For a table of contents, you may place a combination rule, with a shorter thick line centered above a thin line, above the page number. Then follow through with this design element on each page. Because of their formal feel, combination rules can also grace the top and bottom of invitations, announcements, and proclamations.

You are cordially invited

Creating combination rules in layout programs such as PageMaker and QuarkXpress consists of drawing each rule in the thickness you choose. Then grab the thicker line and position it above or below the thin line.

Word processing program users can create combination rules by using the Borders command. Create two empty paragraphs by hitting the Return key twice. Select the first paragraph and give it a bottom border. Adjust the length of the line with paragraph indents.

Select the second paragraph and give it a thick top border. To make the lines fit snugly together, select single line spacing. If there is still space between the rules, you may need to enter a negative number in the line spacing box. If your computer program features a leading (exact line spacing) adjustment, reduce the number until the rules print correctly.

Mastering the technical aspects of rule creation may take some practice. But once accomplished, combination rules can add a new visual style to your printed materials. ◼