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Marketing of Library and Information Services

Darlene E. Weingand
Issue Editor

University of Illinois
Graduate School of Library and Information Science
Marketing of Library and Information Services

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Introduction

Darlene E. Weingand

When I received the invitation to edit an issue of Library Trends that would focus on marketing library services, I was both pleased and excited. I have been writing, speaking, and teaching on this topic for many years, and my conviction that marketing is essential to effective library management—and ultimately to the ability of libraries to successfully move into the next century—has grown with every passing year. I believe that the decision by Library Trends to devote an issue to marketing is a significant affirmation of the relevance of marketing to our field.

There has never been a time in the history of the world when more change—moving at an unprecedented rate of speed—is fracturing and reassembling the models by which people think, work, communicate, and behave. It is a time when great strides in technological development are matched by equally unsettling movement in the social fabric. Jobs and careers are pertinent to human activity in one moment—and are overtaken by obsolescence and new work requirements in the next. The needs of populations are under constant revision and the resultant human needs are ever evolving. It is a stressful and challenging time to be alive.

Libraries have historically kept pace with change by playing "catch-up." No one has ever accused library personnel of being disinterested or unwilling to respond to the demands of their customers, but the notion of focusing on the customer and identifying and meeting community needs is only now emerging in library management circles. The translation of marketing principles and...
strategies from the profit-centered private sector into the nonprofit institutional setting (where most libraries are situated) is relatively recent. However, if libraries are to "survive" (a question often postulated these days) or to "thrive" (a better attitude), the complete spectrum of marketing approaches is essential to the managerial toolbox.

This Library Trends issue on "Marketing Library Services" covers this broad spectrum. Beginning with an overview to the theme that presents the argument for using marketing strategies, this issue also looks at the components of the "marketing mix," marketing efforts in specific library settings, and how practice already uses elements of marketing; the issue concludes with an examination of marketing trends. It is hoped that presenting the profile of marketing in this way will help to strengthen the resolve of those library managers who are presently consciously—or unconsciously—utilizing marketing approaches. Perhaps of even more importance is the goal to intrigue readers who have never considered marketing as any more than public relations or publicity with the concept that marketing is a complex and interrelational set of activities that joins with planning efforts to truly make the library the core of whatever community it serves.

Preparing for the New Millennium: The Case for Using Marketing Strategies

The opening article sets the stage for the issue by setting forth the principles of marketing in the context of social and technological change and economic retrenchment—and the need to focus on the customer or client. Darlene E. Weingand defines marketing in the broadest sense, beginning with the question: "Why Marketing?" She looks at the convergence of marketing and planning processes as a natural partnership and then proceeds to move step-by-step through the sequence of essential phases: forming the planning team; conducting a marketing audit; defining the library's market; developing goals, objectives, and actions; developing products that meet community needs; identifying the costs for each product; determining channels of distribution; promoting and communicating; and, finally, evaluating the entire effort. The article concludes by looking toward the future with a customer orientation.

Perspectives on Elements of the Marketing Mix

The various elements of the marketing mix can be examined individually. Prior to this examination, Diane Tobin Johnson focuses on the customer and potential customer as the appropriate framework within which the elements of marketing can effectively operate. She
discusses organizational objectives, the various orientations toward marketing, and the implications of increased customer focus.

Laura Cram examines the marketing audit as the establishment of a base of information from which to strategically plan. She emphasizes that looking around at the community should yield answers to the questions: Who is served? and What has an impact? Turning the audit inward, she discusses how the library can review its existing services, resources, image, and staff utilization. Questions to be answered include: What is the customer's point of view? Is the structure understood? Are staff prepared for change? and What other resources must be audited? Analyzing the findings from the audit is the next step involving developing what Cram calls a SWOT analysis (evaluates strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) and seeking answers to the question: What barriers are in place? Finally, she points the reader to the next step: preparing the plan.

While the marketing audit seeks data that present a "snapshot in time"—what the external and internal environments look like today—there is also a need to identify future trends to inform the process. John V. Nichols muses about the library of the future and how futurists attempt to adapt to changing conditions. He brings in thoughts from Roszak's *The Cult of Information*, Wurman's *Information Anxiety*, and Darnton's article on "Toward a History of Reading." Areas of future trends are then explored, including financial and technological trends. Finally, he incorporates future trends into the planning/marketing process by discussing environmental scanning and scenario building.

Martha E. Catt looks at the development of goals and objectives, again using the customer's point of view as the prime mover. She creates an analogy using the 1994 Olympic Winter Games and the successful winning of a gold medal. She looks at challenge, commitment, planning, training, execution, and the goal (of the gold), and finishing first. Creating goals and objectives is seen as a journey to be enjoyed.

The library's product is the next element to be discussed, and Mary C. Bushing looks at the concept of product in terms of excellence. Grounding her discussion in the need for establishing a mission and role(s) for the library, she lays a foundation for understanding marketing. She seeks to establish congruence between library operations and marketing practice, while looking carefully at examples of library products. Product excellence is presented as the primary benchmark for product development.

A critical element in the marketing mix is "price"—the analysis of what products really cost and the relationship between that cost and customer demand. Darlene E. Weingand asks not only, "What do
products/services cost?" but also, "How do we know?" She recommends that the program budget be used as the foundation for cost analysis and discusses cost-finding methodology. The ratio between cost and demand is presented in terms of three questions: What is the competition? What is the involvement of the target market? and How complex are the information-gathering and decision-making processes? She establishes a three-dimensional model of pricing that adds effort, psychic, and waiting costs to the identified production costs. Information technology considerations are also added, as they are changing the ways that costs and benefits are generated. Finally, the budget presentation is addressed in terms of effective and appropriate communication strategies.

Distribution is the next marketing element to be presented but with a technological spin. Kenneth E. Dowlin looks at distribution in an electronic environment—with a subtitle of "Will there be libraries as we know them in the Internet world?" He introduces the Internet as a global cultural phenomenon and identifies areas of possible change for libraries. Library issues to be considered include roles, facilities and staffing, technology for access and delivery, and funding sources. He proposes three broad themes for the library—community, connectivity, and collaboration—and discusses them in detail.

Promotion, too commonly viewed as what marketing is all about, is actually the final element in the marketing mix, and involves communication between the library and its target markets. Kelly Krieg-Sigman looks at promotion in the public library setting and asks a series of questions: Why promote? What is being promoted/communicated? Does it need to be promoted? How much promotion needs to be done? What's the best way to promote/communicate? The article concludes with a discussion of potential pitfalls.

MARKETING CONNECTIONS

Beyond the marketing mix, there are special connections that need to be acknowledged. Peter G. Hamon examines marketing in the light of the political environment. He views understanding political processes as a necessary first step, with understanding and marketing the library's products as step two. He sees learning to use the political process effectively as the final step, bringing the more theoretical aspects of how and why political processes operate and the design and marketing of products through those processes into a more realistic arena. He proposes seven strategies to reach this final goal.

What about the connection between marketing and what is already being done in libraries? Duncan Smith argues that librarians are already adding value to information exchanges and, through the
use of case studies, provides examples of how this is being accomplished. He regards marketing as more than textbook material and suggests that it is a stance and an attitude aimed toward meeting the needs of users.

The library users that concern Barbara Dimick are children and young adults, and she looks at marketing within a specific application to youth services. She discusses market segmentation within the youth market and stresses the use of market research. Positioning the library within the minds of its users is an important strategy, and she asks the question, “How do you know what your customers need and want?” She concludes the article by looking at the marketing mix, the marketing audit, and the relationships among mission, roles, and markets—all within the context of youth services.

Special libraries have developed a unique market niche vis-à-vis their very specialized customer base, and Janet E. Powers looks at marketing within the special library environment. Because special libraries operate within the culture of the parent organization, their relationship to target markets appears to be more straightforward. Yet, special libraries are also libraries and, therefore, tend to straddle both the institutional culture and the culture of librarianship. Powers begins by discussing the marketing plan and proceeds to suggest several steps: define the organization; define external forces, including threats and opportunities; conduct a marketing audit; formulate a marketing strategy; implement action plans; and conduct evaluation.

Finally, Linda M. Gorchels looks at the difference between service marketing and product marketing in the sense of intangibility versus tangibility. She explores some of the trends in service marketing related to vision, change, and marketing tactics. The need for a market-driven culture is stressed, including the use of training and incentives in making the transition and creating a nurturing organizational climate. She concludes with comments on new service development, segmentation, database marketing, and promotion in reference to the service sector.

This issue begins with a presentation of marketing in the broad view, continues on to discuss the various elements of the marketing mix, looks at various linkages among marketing and certain special target markets and situations, and concludes with another broad assessment of library marketing—this time, as part of the service economy. The reader may question why evaluation is mentioned here and there but does not have a specific article directed to this very important function. Evaluation is, indeed, essential to the successful marketing effort. Both formative (monitoring) evaluation and summary (final) evaluation must be incorporated into the planning/marketing process. However, since library literature contains numerous
excellent articles and books on evaluation, this editor chose to focus this issue on specific library-related marketing concepts. The reader is cautioned, however, to be sure to include both types of evaluation when designing the library's marketing plan.

Marketing is more than a management tool, more than an administrative approach, and much more than another series of things that staff "have to do." This issue strives to make marketing both appealing and accessible to the reader. As library staffs ponder the new century, it is imperative that marketing be in the forefront of their consciousness on a daily basis. Today's world is a society of convenience, technology, and customer service. Libraries must operate within their community's culture and respond to the expectations that society—and customers—place upon them. Marketing is not the answer to all problems nor the harbinger of all opportunities. Marketing can be, however, the torch to light the way of libraries into the new millennium.
Preparing for the New Millennium:
The Case for Using Marketing Strategies

DARLENE E. WEINGAND

ABSTRACT

The new millennium is approaching and libraries must develop creative problem-solving strategies if they are not only to survive but also to thrive. Societal change, technological development, and economic retrenchment all pose significant challenges for libraries. This article proposes that the former positive and comfortable attitude toward libraries no longer holds, and that marketing must be added to the managerial toolbox so that libraries can become client-centered and client-focused institutions. As an overview to this Library Trends theme issue on marketing, this article presents marketing components in the context of a customer orientation.

INTRODUCTION

How can the use of marketing principles improve the management of libraries? How can marketing help library staff to serve their clients more effectively? Is marketing a trend in a long series of trends that may be popular today but fade into history tomorrow? What is the point of expending staff time and energy on yet another learning endeavor? These are serious questions—questions that will be addressed by this article and by those that follow in this issue of Library Trends.

When considering a group of questions, the underlying question is always the one that begins with why. In this case, why marketing? This is the philosophical underpinning that must be answered if other questions are to have meaning. It is important that this question...
be asked, particularly in the light of current writing in the popular press. Verity (1994) states that "the Information Revolution is reaching critical mass. At its core is the accelerating shift from material information media—including paper, photographic film, videotape, and modeling clay—to computer-based simulations of those media. By no means are paper or books or libraries going to disappear completely. But their traditional presence and significance in our culture, and the degree to which they've informed our concepts of self, identity, and consciousness, seem poised to fade as seemingly cheaper, less polluting, more flexible, and more attention-grabbing digital media come to the fore" (p. 12). If the library is not only to survive but thrive as the twenty-first century dawns, the "why" question is of paramount importance.

WHY MARKETING?

Historically, the library—whether public, academic, school, or special—has been regarded as a "good thing." From the early days of subscription libraries, when people joined into collaborative groups that could afford in common what individuals could not, libraries have enjoyed a positive and comfortable relationship with users. However, such a relaxed interaction is difficult to sustain in a time of economic retrenchment, social change, and technological innovation. When these forces are tugging at financial stability and the social fabric, funders learn quickly to analyze where monies are being spent and what types of expenditures will provide the most perceived benefit. Yesterday's library support falters in the cold light of today's fiscal pragmatism. How can today's library successfully rethink its position and adapt its operations to function effectively in this new environment? The answer lies in effective use of marketing strategies.

Marketing can be viewed as a process of exchange and a way to foster the partnership between the library and its community. Kotler (1988) states that, "[f]or exchange to take place, [there are] five conditions [that] must be satisfied:

1. There are at least two parties.
2. Each party has something that might be of value to the other party.
3. Each party is capable of communication and delivery.
4. Each party is free to accept or reject the offer.
5. Each party believes it is appropriate or desirable to deal with the other party. (p. 6)

If a partnership is to be successful, both partners must believe that the relationship has balance and equity. Therefore, if the library and its community are to be partners, both need to perceive that they are
deriving a benefit from the exchange of goods and services. Crompton and Lamb (1986) assert that: "Citizens don't buy programs or services; they buy the expectation of benefits" (p. 10). This perception of mutual benefit is essential to sustaining the partnership for the long term. If it is absent, or the balance is regarded as unequal, then the partnership is in jeopardy. The consequences can range anywhere from declining support to outright termination of the relationship.

In order to nurture the partnership between the library and its community, marketing strategies can be an effective tool. Marketing comprises a series of activities that begin with identifying the needs of the community (those individuals and groups that form the library's service area) and end with communication back to the community about the library's response to those needs. In between, a spectrum of planning and marketing efforts carries the entire process forward.

However, Kotler and Andreasen (1987) contend that: "A first requirement for effective, successful marketing in any organization is that the organization have a clear, deeply ingrained appreciation for what marketing is and what it can do for the organization" (p. 35). In the following discussion, the spectrum of efforts will be introduced in an effort to foster that sense of appreciation. Other articles in this issue will explore them in more detail.

THE CONVERGENCE AND PLANNING OF MARKETING

One of the essential components to the overall marketing process is planning. Weingand (1987) states that: "There is an appropriateness about the convergence of the marketing and planning processes....Either of these two processes, while having intrinsic value, is incomplete without the other in the sense that each amplifies the power of the other and provides a wholeness of purpose and application" (p. 16). An assumption must undergird the overall operation—all decisions are written in sand and not stone. This assumption also must be applied to the library's mission statement, for analysis of the library's external and internal environments may indicate that different roles—and hence, a different mission—may be appropriate.

The rationale for incorporating formal planning into the marketing process lies in the need for making decisions within an organized frame that has been developed logically over a period of time with input from stakeholders—"as opposed to reactive coping with existing and emerging crises" (Area Library Service Authorities and Indiana State Library, 1989-90, p. 12). As the rate of change accelerates, the insistent clamor of problem situations can become deafening, desensitizing management to any activity beyond the immediate. Demand and urgency combine to postpone any thought
of tomorrow. However, it is this very existence of crisis that presents a dramatic reason for infusing the planning process into managerial responsibility. In addition to being a powerful managerial tool in the event of impending crisis, this blending of planning and other managerial functions can be a strong deterrent to the evolution of a crisis. When advance thought and analysis is routine, problems are less likely to grow to crisis proportions.

Planning and marketing, in this merged form, can be considered a framework upon which to hang thoughts, ideas, and decisions. The complementary and systematic processes of marketing and planning, when merged, provide a strong and comprehensive structure with which to support the various decision and implementation activities. The schematic for this structure can be found in Figure 1.

This schematic provides further explication of how the two systems fit together in practical terms. The clear areas represent elements of the planning process; the shaded areas represent elements of the marketing process. To follow this diagram through, it should be noted that the processes move sometimes in a single direction and, at times, in several directions. The following sequence is illustrated in the diagram:

- A community analysis of the library's external environment is conducted.
- An assessment of the library's strengths and weaknesses (internal environment) is made. (The data from these two assessments become the marketing audit.)
- Following the marketing audit, the organizational mission is determined.
- Once the mission (and appropriate roles) are determined, the goals for the time period are established (e.g., one year for the short-range or operational plan; five years for the long-range/strategic plan).
- An analysis of trends is made (a futures screen).
- Measurable objectives are developed that will move the library toward its goals.
- Products (collection, services, programs) are designed in conjunction with the objectives.
- Analysis of price (cost to produce each product) is made to determine product priorities.
- Action plans for each objective are designed.
- Distribution channels (place) are designed in conjunction with the planned actions.
- The actions are implemented.
- Promotion/communication techniques are designed to implement the actions.
Figure 1. The combined planning and marketing systems. Adapted from Figure 2.1 in Weingand (1994, p. 15).
A final or summary evaluation and updating is made of all goals, objectives, and priorities. (Note: A process evaluation monitors progress toward the goals throughout the operation of the merged systems.)

It is important to emphasize once again that integration of the elements of the two processes, as illustrated in the schematic, provides a more reasonable and consistent approach to the marketing and planning efforts than either system employed independently. Weingand (1994) asserts that the elements flow together easily and naturally, allowing a synchronized response to "where to go" and "how to get there" questions.

The success rate of each system is directly dependent upon the success rate of the other. Marketing without planning is an exercise; planning without marketing is a formality. The relationship is somewhat analogous to that of theory and practice. Planning sets the conceptual framework; marketing implements the planning directives and creates an environment conducive to an effective exchange process. (p. 14)

**Step One: The Planning Team**

This marketing/planning structure actually begins (although not depicted on the schematic) with the creation of a planning team, a working group composed of stakeholders (representatives of those groups who will be affected by the decisions to come). The team should consist of members of both the internal and external environments, such as the library staff (including the director), policymakers, funders, and representatives from the library's various client groups.

Rochell (1981) stresses that here is a very real need for libraries to involve representatives from all levels of the community, as well as all levels of staff, in examining current status and assessing needs (p. 23). Although community and staff input is frequently sought in typical data gathering, it is less common for such representation to be the composition of the planning group. Long-range benefits can accrue when those to be affected by decisions have been part of the making of those decisions. Those planning groups that include this range of involvement not only contribute diverse perspectives but also develop a sense of "ownership" that may endow the final decision-making with an atmosphere of cooperation and consensus building.

Once the planning team is formed, there needs to be consideration of the planning cycle or how often the process comes full circle and begins to repeat. Under normal environmental conditions, a planning team can expect to work with small circles within a larger circle—individual operational year planning (typically tied to the budget
development process) within the larger context of a five-year rolling horizon long-range plan (always extending five years into the future). Each year, as a new operational planning effort begins, the long-range plan is reviewed and revised as necessary. Therefore, the long-range plan forever extends five years into the future. Under unusual circumstances, such as a major funding alteration or significant community change, the planning timetable may need to be reviewed—particularly in terms of gathering new environmental data.

**Step Two: The Marketing Audit**

Environments, both internal and external, need to be routinely examined. Kotler (1982) defines the marketing audit as a "comprehensive, systematic, independent, and periodic examination of an organization's marketing environment, objectives, strategies, activities, with a view of determining problem areas and opportunities and recommending a plan of action" (p. 185). A marketing audit covers both the external assessment of client needs and the attempt to understand community systems. In addition to this analysis of the external environment, the marketing audit also analyzes the internal circumstances of the library—identifying strengths, limitations, and present practice. By looking both outward and inward, the entire environment of the library is examined.

In terms of the library's internal environment, a profile of strengths and limitations should be made—including the library's planning objectives, strategies, activities, and resources (human, fiscal, and physical). Consideration should also be given to organizational climate, communication patterns, organizational structure, and whatever elements of marketing practice are currently in place.

When analyzing the external environment, Weingand (1994) suggests that the following elements may be appraised:

- **Demographics:** What are the attributes of the community in terms of population, age, gender, educational background, income, employment, and so forth?
- **Geography:** What constitutes the physical landscape, climate, and other physical attributes?
- **Sociology and Psychology:** Who are the individuals and groups comprising the target markets? What are their preferences and biases? What are the social patterns? How do members of the community behave under different sets of circumstances or levels of stress? Can probable behavior be anticipated? Where is the power in the community and how does it flow?
- **Economics:** What is the overall fiscal health of the community? What major businesses/industries are presently in place or about to leave or enter the community? What is the current climate for business and growth?
Technology: What hardware do members of the community presently own or plan to purchase? What is the status of cable television, satellite dishes, computer networks? What use does the business (including farm) community make of different technologies?

Politics: What is the library's relationship to funding sources, both public and private? How does political power flow; how does it relate to societal power? What kinds of lobbying/maneuvering have been done in the past? What worked and what did not?

Culture: What intellectual and artistic activity is present in the community? Are there gaps that the library should attempt to fill? What cooperative ventures could be proposed?

Competition: What agencies, businesses, vendors, organizations, or individuals provide similar products to those offered by the library? What areas of possible cooperation exist? Where do areas of duplication exist? (If the library cannot do it better, faster, or cheaper—and if the market cannot support both the library and the competing agency in this endeavor—then the library should consider reallocation its efforts into more effective pursuits.) (pp. 20-21)

Weingand (1994) states that "certain fundamental points should be considered before a marketing audit is initiated":

1. As with the planning process, analysis of the environment is not an occasional activity. It must be ongoing so that trends and changing characteristics are detected.

2. It is important that environmental analysis be a collaborative effort among library staff, board members, and representatives of the target markets in the community. It is a learning opportunity for all who are involved and establishes a common base from which they may be working together to merge the library into the mainstream of community life. There may be surprises in the data which will alter perceptions of the realities of population demographics, perceived needs, and attitudes toward the library. These surprises will require possible adjustments in expectations, service emphases, and marketing strategies. It is vital that all constituent groups, both internal and external, be involved at the process level, and not simply as recipients of a final report.

3. As analysis allows the spotlight to fall on those portions of the community that are unserved, an imperative next step involves outreach efforts that are specifically targeted to those groups. As stated earlier (and often), a major benefit of routine planning and analysis is the monitoring capability that will assess the effectiveness of such outreach efforts. There is a symbiotic relationship between environmental analysis and outreach; maximum effect occurs when these two efforts interact. Although the analysis can admirably sketch in general terms, library service succeeds or falters in terms of its ability to respond to individual human beings with unique perceptions and needs.
4. Change is omnipresent. At no point during the analysis can the data be regarded as static or the coordinate planning be regarded as a rigid progression. Even as the environment is being analyzed, the community is in a state of flux, reacting to political, economic, and social influences. The marketing audit provides snapshots, nothing more. It must be recognized that the task is at once eminently necessary and never completed. This observation is not meant to be discouraging. Rather, it points out the dynamics in which the public library operates. The challenge is to aggressively and positively seek out the avenues for intersection with the community. (pp. 21-22)

Furthermore, the audit should also develop a "futures screen" which identifies trends and projections in both external and internal environments in order to develop contingency plans that will relate to alternative future scenarios. The futures screen places considerable emphasis on securing all available data on what "may be" in the next five years (and beyond); objectives can then be developed to reflect that informed projection. This typically will mandate three parallel sets of objectives for each goal: (1) an extended set, which assumes an economic climate similar to the present year; (2) a worst case set, in which objectives are written to respond to a worsening economic picture; and (3) a blue sky set, in which possible windfalls and economic upturns are spent in advance.

Strategies for Collecting Primary Source Data

There are several roads into the external environment that may be traveled; no single method is ideal and each library must decide the most appropriate strategy for assessing the local situation. Once secondary source information—that information that has already been collected by other organizations or units—has been exhausted and the planning team has identified gaps in information that need to be addressed, it is both timely and appropriate to consider one or more of the following options. Sampling methodology is generally used to establish an $n$ (number to be surveyed) of reasonable size. Many elementary books of statistics provide both instruction on sampling procedures and a table of random numbers to use as a base.

The Telephone Survey. The telephone survey is one of the easiest methods to use. Once a sampling pattern is established, the local telephone book can be used as the source of names to be called. However, this imposes a bias that must be acknowledged since unlisted numbers are not part of the population to be sampled. A more valid method involves using the computer to randomly generate telephone numbers; many colleges or universities have research labs which are equipped to provide this service.
The questionnaire used in the telephone survey is only as useful as the questions it asks. Before the questionnaire is written, the library administration must determine what it wants to know. Only data required to aid in decision-making should be sought; the temptation to throw in questions because "it would be interesting to know" should be strenuously avoided.

The Mail Survey. This method differs from the telephone survey in the language used and the structure of the responses. The questions are a bit more formal since there is no opportunity for questioning the client's intent—which is possible during the one-on-one interchange of the telephone interview.

The Interview. Another approach entirely is the in-person interview of library users (in the library), general community (in person, outside the library), or both. This method is staff time-intensive in that a designated and trained staff member (paid or unpaid) conducts each in-depth interview, but the opportunity for individualized information gathering can have unique benefits. Many attitudes and perceptions may emerge that would not have surfaced in a simple questionnaire format.

The Focus Group. An expansion of the interview is the focus group. Using a trained facilitator, a small group of invited participants (with knowledge, experience, or interest in predetermined areas) is gathered to explore needs and options. No interview schedule of questions is prepared; rather, the facilitator begins with broad general questions and leads the group to focus more and more tightly on specifics as the exercise progresses. This method can be extremely helpful when charting future directions and gathering data for decision-making.

The Community Meeting. The community meeting is not suggested as a means to reach the indifferent or the nonuser. Participants in such a meeting or hearing should be regarded as "interested parties" since they have made the effort to attend.

It should be noted that a combination of these methods may be effective. It is the individual library administration's decision as to what seems both reasonable and appropriate to the local situation. In summary, in order to analyze the library's environments, assets, and limitations, a four-step process is indicated:

1. Determine what elements will be covered: consider depth of coverage, resources available to conduct the audit, and planning team/staff expectations of anticipated outcomes.
2. Develop procedures for collecting data and monitoring the process.
3. Collect and analyze the data: utilize secondary sources first and supplement with primary source data collection where necessary.
4. Prepare reports and presentations of the results: use both written and oral forms, incorporating summaries and graphics.

**Step Three: Defining the Library’s Market**

Once environmental data have been gathered through the marketing audit, the library's mission will need to be reassessed. Although every library, regardless of type, has a staff who hold a concept of what that library's mission should be, it is not uncommon for the new data to suggest that the mission and roles which are in place (even if only informally articulated) are no longer totally relevant to community needs. This, of course, is one of the implicit side-effects of seeking community input—and the library must be prepared to respond to what is learned.

The mission is the library's statement of what it is about—e.g., what clients are to be served, what products are within its purview, what delivery systems shall be employed, and to what intent. It is brief—no more than a paragraph or two—and explains the library's philosophy of operation vis-à-vis the community. While written with a reasonably broad brush, it does not make sweeping generalizations or global statements; rather, it states what will and will not be done in the context of community needs and available resources.

In addition to defining the library's market in the mission statement, it is important to recognize that the overall market is made up of many segments. Market segmentation—the process of dividing customers into groups with unique characteristics and needs—is also necessary to appropriate market definition. All customers (present and potential) can be divided into categories, each of which may require different kinds of service and support. The same overall community population can be separated by age, location, profession, department, technical competence, and any other characteristic that may help define service requirements—leading to complex interrelated groups of customers (Tenney, et al., 1993, p. 13). The revised mission statement and proposed segmentation of the overall market lend substance and form to the process which is to follow: the development of goals, objectives, and action statements.

**Step Four: Developing Goals, Objectives, and Actions**

Goals can be defined as statements of purpose or intent which are written in global terms. Based on this definition, it can be seen that goals, while fluid, are reasonably constant; at the same time, well-written goals frequently adapt well to changing situations. They may or may not be fully attainable (e.g., when would one achieve “effective information service”?), but they serve as a focus for directed
activity. In terms of library management, goals are prime movers for library policy, together with the established mission statement. In addition, it is from the goals that practical and measurable objectives can be extrapolated—objectives which serve as the road map for library operations.

Objectives are also statements of purpose or intent but are written in language that is both measurable and attainable, and which move the library toward a stated goal. If "effective information service" is a goal, a related objective might be: "To create a CD-ROM network by May 1996." Objectives are tools; what is more important, they are tools that can respond to changing environmental conditions. The development of parallel sets of contingency objectives (see the discussion under "Future Screens" below) creates working documents that can be referred to as conditions change. These alternative sets provide thoughtfully considered decisions regarding foreseen—but not yet real—scenarios. Moreover, the very existence of alternative objectives maintains the proactive state and, no matter how severe the crisis, the potential waste of a reactive response is pre-empted.

The development of action statements is the final step in the developmental phase of the planning process. Each objective, in order to be accomplished, requires a series of completed actions. These actions are both concrete and detailed, usually listed in sequential order. Like objectives, they are measurable, contain a time line, and denote who is responsible for their completion. In other words, action statements provide the working outline of specific tasks which must be executed before the objective is realized.

**The Future Screens**

It is imperative that future screens—consideration of alternative futures—are injected into the planning process. It is not unusual that, when an analysis of the community is done, the concern is centered on the present with little or no thought of what rapid change might dictate. It is the responsibility of the planning team to become knowledgeable about trends and probabilities that may have an impact upon library operations and to use this information as a screen through which the collected data are passed.

Once analysis of trends has helped to determine library goals, another future screen can drop into place. This screen filters goals statements through alternative scenarios (or descriptions of possibilities). Alternative sets of objectives are written so that the library continues to work toward established goals, regardless of possible community changes. Three situations should be addressed: (1) conditions
In the case of funding alone, these three vastly different scenario possibilities might prompt objectives that would be very different. Further, time is a significant variable here; projections for one year can be far more detailed and probable than projections for five years. Yet, both must be made—both one- and five-year plans must be constructed if effective proactive planning is to occur. The result of considering trends when developing objectives is the creation of multiple sets of measurable objectives for each goal. In summary, the process of planning for change has every probability of achieving the desired relationship of mutual benefit between the library and the community. It is to this end that planning for change aspires.

The discussion of a marketing approach to management, as merged with the planning process, now turns to look at the library's programs and services (products), costs (price), distribution (place), and communication (promotion). These are the "four Ps" that were originally proposed by Kotler (1982, pp. 287-395). The sum of these Ps, plus the process components of the marketing audit and evaluation, enables the library manager to successfully blend today's operations with tomorrow's opportunities.

STEP FIVE: DEVELOPING PRODUCTS THAT MEET COMMUNITY NEEDS

Once the needs of the library's community have been identified through the marketing audit, it is time to look carefully at the library's products. What are products? The concept of product has emerged from the profit sector and describes those items which are developed by a commercial enterprise and then offered for sale. When the term is applied to library operations, it is admittedly a transplant. "However, there are similarities that make the conversion reasonable" (Weingand, 1994):

- in both sectors, there is intended interaction between producer and consumer.
- the word "product" is derived from "producer," and the library does produce a range of services.
- the desired interaction is grounded in an exchange of commodities. In the profit sector, the exchange involves items or services that are offered for purchase; in the nonprofit sector, the exchange involves items or services that are supported by tax monies, contributions, or other support. (p. 132)

The library's products can be arranged within the three-dimensional structure of product mix, product line, and product item. Examples of library products can be arranged as follows:
Product Mix
Product Line #1. Collection
- Product Items: Books, periodicals, videos and films, audio recordings

Product Line #2. Services
- Product Items: Circulation, interloan, online searches, reference service

Product Line #3. Programs
- Product Items: Bibliographic instruction, displays, lectures

This arrangement puts the various library products into context: individual product items are collected into product lines that express commonality of purpose, and the totality of product lines form the overall product mix offered by the library to the community. The library provides a range of products/services to its community, including the collection, reference/information service, hours during which there is access to the collection and professional expertise, bibliographic instruction and other programming, and so forth. Some of the library's products are traditional and have been in existence for many years. Other products have been developed more recently, such as online searching, microcomputers for in-library use, and databases on CD-ROM, to name a few.

Expansion and Contraction

In this time of rapid change, it becomes increasingly important that library managers and staff continually assess the products currently being offered in light of community needs, developing technologies, and societal shifts. Too often the library's products remain the same with additions during times when money is available—no real analysis of product timeliness and effectiveness is routinely done.

There is a time for a product to emerge: it will develop and enjoy a peak time, there will be an inevitable decline due to changing conditions, and, finally, there must come a time of phase out. In libraries, this life cycle may be interrupted during the decline phase because of staff reluctance to part with traditional services, and products may "hang on" long past the point of real effectiveness. Therefore, it is crucial that products be regularly evaluated during the annual planning cycle and library staff need to become comfortable with the concept of a normal product life cycle. Figure 2 lists criteria that may help the process of assessing both present products and ideas for potential products.

Once this evaluation of each present and potential product is completed, those products appearing to be the most appropriate to the library's goals and objectives must also be reassessed in light of
**Information Agency Operations:**
- Compatible with agency efforts–really our business
- Would not require interruption of present activities
- General know-how available
- Ability to meet client service requirements

**Potential Market:**
- Market size and location
- Market share [present and potential]
- Diversity–needed by several target markets?
- Market growth assured
- Stability in declining budget years
- Foothold in a new field, area

**Marketability:**
- Degree of competition [present and potential]
- Estimated cost vs. competition
- Have qualified personnel
- Ease of promotability
- Suitability of existing distribution channels
- Originality of product
- Life expectancy of demand
- Client loyalty

**Production:**
- Feasibility of product
- Adequacy of technical capability
- Development cost
- Adequacy of production capability
- Materials availability
- Staff availability
- Facilities: equipment / space available
- Service support available
- Storage availability

**Budget:**
- Effective return on investment
- Capital availability
- Payback period

Figure 2. Screening for product ideas. Adapted from Table 8.1 in Weingand (1987, pp. 67-68).
cost and demand. This, however, is not possible until the cost to produce each product is calculated.

**Step Six: Identifying the Costs for Each Product**

Kotler’s “price” designation is often confused with charging a fee for service. However, while fees may be part of the picture for some product items, the primary interpretation of “price” should be cost—the cost to produce each product item. There is no way to fully assess a product without knowledge of the cost that is involved in producing and distributing that product.

How can these cost factors be identified? Every business—and the library should be considered a business—has both direct and indirect costs. Direct costs are those items that can be attributed to specific products, while indirect costs cover factors that relate to the library’s total operations. Examples of direct costs include: rental of space or equipment; salaries of personnel hired to work specifically with a particular product; and supplies purchased in support of that product.

Conversely, indirect costs are those factors which are difficult to assign to individual products because they support several (or all) products and include such items as: the operation of buildings and equipment, such as rent, heat, light, maintenance, and depreciation; supplies from existing stores normally kept in stock; salaries of permanent library personnel; and supplemental services, such as municipal or institutional purchasing, billing, printing, and so forth.

Direct costs can be apportioned to each product in a relatively straightforward manner since these represent cost elements that are directly incurred as each product is developed. However, indirect costs require special attention and formulas such as those found in *Cost Finding for Public Libraries* (1985) can be used to perform the calculations. Weingand (1994) suggests a shortcut that may be used in the attempt to allocate indirect costs which is a calculation based on (regular) staff time. When the time each regular staff member spends on each product is calculated and weighted according to staff salary, the sum of time spent by the entire staff on each product can be reformulated into a percentage. For each product, that percentage can be applied to each of the library’s indirect costs and the resultant figures inserted into the program budget. (p. 138)

The Importance of Program Budgeting

The breakdown and arrangement of costs by program (or product) is known as a Program Budget. There are good reasons to create a program budget, including:

- the ability to assess different products by comparing costs;
• the ability to demonstrate exactly how the money will be spent;
• the ability to document what products might decline or be eliminated if funding were reduced; and
• the ability to illustrate what products could be provided to the community if sufficient additional monies were to become available.

While it is more time-consuming to develop a program budget than a basic line item budget, the time is well spent. Furthermore, the sum of each category (such as personnel) in a program budget can quickly be worked into the line item structure, should that be required by the funding authority. The ideal situation is when the library manager presents both types of budgets at the annual budget hearing, with the program budget serving as the basis for the presentation.

No business would present a product for sale without knowing what the costs were, yet libraries have blissfully operated for many years without having this information. While libraries have had budgets, they have typically been of the line item variety, and the costs for each product have not been known. This has made decision-making regarding what products to offer, which ones to downsize, and which ones to eliminate virtually a subjective exercise.

There is another aspect to examine when deciding which products to offer, even when information from the marketing audit and relative cost factors are known. This aspect is demand. A proposed product may be very cost effective and may be well suited to meeting an identified need, yet the reality of demand must be considered. A trial period for a new product can be put in place in order to determine whether appropriate demand will be forthcoming.

It is not an easy matter to decide which products should be offered. With adequate information available, however, the library manager can make informed and objective decisions—and make them in the context of the planning process. Without the necessary cost data, vital information would be lacking and subsequent decisions less well-informed.

**Step Seven: Determining Channels of Distribution**

The next component of the “Ps” to directly affect product decision-making relates to how each product will connect with the target clients. Kotler refers to distribution as “place”—a term that is relatively straightforward when the product is available through a single location. The concept of place becomes more complex when there are multiple access points, including both physical sites and other alternative delivery systems. Therefore, it is necessary to examine “place” in the context of product distribution and channels of connection.
between products and clients—with an emphasis on access. When access is held out as the driving goal, objectives and actions can be developed that will move the library toward providing distribution channels that meet client needs in terms of both time and point of use convenience. There are obvious costs connected to distribution and access, and specific judgments will need to be made as to which channel(s) within a range of alternatives will be selected for each product.

There are nine decision factors that are concerned with the distribution decision flow from initial product determinations through the entire life cycle of the product (Weingand, 1987). With access as the decision frame, these nine factors need to be included in the ongoing discussion and evaluation process.

**Factor #1: Quality of Service**

Distribution must be viewed as an integral part of each product, for a product that cannot be used is of very little value. This interdependence of product and distribution can be observed in several use measures: the nature of the information output (level of accuracy, language, appropriateness, and so on), the format in which the product is available (audio, print, visual, person-to-person, program, etc.), the type of access (building, electronic, mail, and so on), and the speed of obtaining the desired information.

**Factor #2: Time, Convenience, and Resource Allocation**

The barrage of sensory images and daily demands that besiege every person during every day creates an environment in which time and convenience needs are almost tangible. Client perception of product excellence will be strongly influenced by the personal time that must be expended to secure needed information. This time element can be defined as the time expended by staff in the process of providing information, the time expended in overcoming physical distance between client and product, and as the real time that service is available to the client.

**Factor #3: Priorities and Planning**

When a framework of marketing is established to guide the planning process and the setting of priorities, the spotlight becomes focused on the client. It is important that clients become "stakeholders" in the entire process; by involving representatives from the various target market groups at every stage, there is continual informing of the process by clients, and access considerations can be updated as client needs change.

**Factor #4: Human Resource Intermediaries**

Access can also be addressed through cooperative arrangements and ventures between the library and other agencies or organizations.
These collaborations can expand the effectiveness of both participating agencies and decrease areas of duplication. In terms of accountability and political savvy, cooperation is definitely to be valued in today’s information age.

Factor #5: Number and Location of Outlets
The word “outlet” is used here in a general sense, as a descriptor for buildings, a small office with a computer workstation, or an electronic linkage. The emphasis is on a facility that serves as the access point between the client and the needed information. Client convenience, as determined by the marketing audit, must be the guiding factor. Both existing and potential service outlets should be considered at regular intervals in conjunction with planning process deliberations.

Factor #6: Technological Delivery and Formats
The rate of technological development is accelerating so rapidly that new possibilities for distribution are continually entering the marketplace. Today’s world includes cable television, interactive video, computer networks, teleconferencing, broadcasting systems, satellite transmission, facsimile transmission, videotex, and many combinations and permutations of these technologies. New information formats are also continually emerging in the arenas of audio, video, and optical technologies, to name a few. These formats offer expanding possibilities for clients with special learning styles and needs and are also basic to the storage and retrieval of information.

Factor #7: Innovation and Change
All these factors co-exist within a milieu of change and the need for innovative responses to change. The library manager who would remain part of the information mainstream must learn to be proactive in the distribution of information and to be personally receptive to a changing world.

Factor #8: The Finite Life Cycle
This concept not only applies to products, but to all aspects of the marketing mix, including cost, distribution, and promotion. All components of the mix have applications that are “born” in response to client needs; they have a peak period of effectiveness, decline, and ultimately must give way to more appropriate applications. This natural ebb and flow is likely to pick up speed as change accelerates.

Factor #9: Positioning
There are two levels of positioning: (1) identifying the market niche for the library within the broad range of information providers, and (2) developing distributed products that also have a unique market share among the many possible competitors for client attention (pp. 98-107).
These nine factors are integral to distribution decision-making and should be carefully examined as the library strives to develop creative and flexible approaches to information service. Placing the library’s products in the marketplace is a complex endeavor; however, when client needs are primary in both distribution design and implementation, the library is likely to be prepared to effectively relate to tomorrow’s world.

**Step Eight: Promotion and Communication**

Marketing is too frequently defined in language that actually means “promotion,” the fourth “P”. However, such an approach is very much in error, as promotion is that set of activities which are set in motion once all other marketing and planning components (other than final evaluation) have been completed. The actual definition for “promotion” is “communication”—communicating to the community and to present and potential clients that the library has identified community needs and has developed both cost-effective products and methods of distribution that respond to those needs.

There are several basic components to the communication transaction that need to be recognized: the sender who encodes the message, the message itself, the media or channel(s) through which the message is transmitted, the receiver who collects the message and decodes it, and the receiver’s response as given through feedback to the sender.

If this communication model is to be used effectively in promoting the library’s products, the target market(s) need to be clearly identified so that appropriate message content, message style, and media can be selected. It is also essential that a feedback loop be built into the process so that the audience’s response to the message can be ascertained.

There are various aspects of promotion that can be considered as the library manager prepares to select appropriate strategies for each individual product. One or several aspects may be incorporated in a promotional effort. As with the other components of the marketing mix, the focus must be on the target client group(s) if the message is to reach those for which it is intended. Promotional aspects include:

- **Public Relations (PR).** This aspect incorporates the overall interaction between the library and its current and potential clients. Public relations influences perception, attitude, and opinion by transmitting information concerning the benefits of using the present and/or proposed products. Interpersonal contact is a primary ingredient of public relations, for even the most excellent series of product ideas cannot be implemented without human
action and interaction. The relationship between the library and
its public is a cumulative one, with trust and mutual respect building
time.

- **Publicity.** When news coverage of the library’s affairs is secured
at little or no cost, this is considered publicity. Included in the
repertoire of possible publicity efforts are press releases, newsletters,
columns in local newspapers, media interviews, bookmarks, posters,
and displays.

- **Advertising.** When publicity is paid for, it is generally considered
to be advertising. Promotion in this form frequently needs to be
more sophisticated and expensive than other types in order to
compete with “slick” advertisements. While advertising has not
traditionally been a common mode of promotion for libraries, there
certainly could be times when it would be the most appropriate
vehicle.

- **Incentives.** Another aspect of the promotional package can be
effectively used in the product market testing phase, when client
attention needs to be drawn to a potential product—e.g., a new
online searching service with coupons distributed for free searches;
an extended loan period for videocassettes; a free demonstration;
and so forth.

- **Atmospherics.** Critical to promotional efforts and integral to public
relations, atmospherics include such elements as the ambience and
environment of the distribution channels whether physical sites
or electronic connections.

While integral to overall good management, marketing strategies
cannot be successful without the monitoring and final analysis
elements that are part of the controlling function of management.

**THE FINAL STEP: EVALUATION**

Evaluation is an integral component of the planning process;
it is also a complement to marketing. Both formative (monitoring)
and summary (final assessment) evaluation are required if marketing
and planning are to be effective and meaningful management func-
tions. The time spent at the front end of the process—during which
assessment is made of what information is actually needed for adequate
evaluation to take place—saves frustration and wasted energy farther
into the process. Appropriate data collection should always be
correlated to the desired outcome and must be linked directly to the
question, What do we need/want to know to make informed and
intelligent decisions?

In this era of accountability, tied as it is to shrinking dollars
and expanding needs, the requirement of hard data substantiation
is becoming an absolute mandate. Evidence presented in quantitative as well as qualitative terms makes comparisons possible—between a library and other libraries of comparable size and activity and between present and past performance. The issue for library managers and staff no longer is whether or not to become involved in evaluation but rather to what end and to what degree. There is little margin within the complexities of a changing world for the luxury of experimentation without carefully reasoned rationale. Human resources need to be conserved and nourished, with energies expended in directions offering the greatest potential for positive results. The craving for data to document the status and excellence of library service is very real. Accountability demands it and survival depends on it; the pursuit of centrality in community life cannot exist without it.

The results may or may not be to the library staff’s liking; the possibility of proven inefficiency and ineffectiveness certainly exists. This possibility only makes measurement more important, allowing detected inadequacies to be corrected rapidly. Further, the data may indicate that certain actions need to be taken that may not be popular with some staff—such as expanded or weekend hours, change of lunch hours, and so forth. But it is essential that such changes do take place in order to maintain credibility with the community.

CONCLUSION: LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Kotler and Andreasen (1987) state that:

The starting point for an effective marketing strategy is the proper orientation toward the marketing function. Historically, marketing has passed through four stages: a product orientation stage, a production orientation stage, a selling orientation stage, and finally, today’s customer orientation stage. The first three stages are characterized by management putting the organization’s own needs and desires at the center of the strategic process. It is only when management realizes that it is the customer who truly determines the long-run success of any strategy that the [library]...can join the ranks of the sophisticated marketing strategists typically found in the private sector. (p. 64)

It is this customer orientation—that focus on the community—that will ultimately make the difference in the library’s effort to become central to the community served. While the marketing and planning strategies presented here are useful tools, they remain tools and not magic talismans. The library that will move successfully into the next century, and not fall victim to the sentiments expressed earlier by Verity, will be the library that truly develops a client focus and plans with the customer in mind. While existing resources, including staff preferences, are important considerations, they must be viewed through the perspective of customer service. When the knowledge and skills
of staff are framed within the attitude of client need as being of primary importance, these marketing strategies can have significant impact.

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Focus on the Library Customer: Revelation, Revolution, or Redundancy?

DIANE TOBIN JOHNSON

ABSTRACT
Librarians experience some unease with marketing's focus on the customer in spite of the centrality of a user focus in defining the profession. By examining different organizational objectives for libraries, the choices librarians make about customer focus and orientation toward marketing become clearer. Ideas from the relatively new field of social marketing reveal the social cause/message heart of some organizational objectives and suggest that adopting a customer orientation toward marketing may not be the best fit for some libraries.

INTRODUCTION
Poet Linda Pastan (1982) muses: "What we want is never simple" (pp. 98-99). Her statement may best be appreciated in a society where what we want never seems absent. Daily opinion polls, letters to the editor, talk shows, e-mail, and numerous other channels distribute freely what people like, what they think, what they want. Within that context, any additional deliberate emphasis placed on probing the needs, wants, and perceptions people hold can appear to be somewhat absurd. Yet that is exactly what marketing experts invite library and information professionals to do as they emphasize focus on the customer and potential customer (Kotler & Andreasen, 1991).

The invitation falls on conditioned ears. Weingand (1987) states: "The theories of marketing have not been widely embraced by
practitioners in the information professions” (p. 5). Why? Library and information professionals typically act from a substantive value base which includes an underlying belief in a basic human need for information (de la Pena McCook, 1993, p. 1). The enactment of the library's service is built upon not just what customers want at a given moment but what professionals have determined customers need for the long term. Moreover, many library and information professionals have considerable experience with what customers are able to say about what they want (Katz, 1992). Such experience suggests that people frequently do not ask for what they really want (even if one consciously sets aside the issue of what they really need). So the request to librarians to study what customers need, want, and perceive can provoke a vague sense of unease. It seems to place professional judgment and commitment at the periphery rather than at the center of library work. It appears to put more stock than may be warranted in a customer's ability to define what is wanted and needed.

This sense of unease needs our collective attention; it should not be disregarded or attributed to wrongheadedness. Librarians choose the degree to which focus on the customer is implemented in their libraries. For example, being client centered and customer driven is forecast as a core competency for special librarians (Ojala, 1993). The marketing approach, including focus on customers, has been argued in public library literature and after-hours conference gatherings for the past fifteen years. Much of the debate has focused on collection development (Baker, 1993). “Give 'em what they want,” argues Rawlinson (1981, p. 2188). Others argue equally strenuously for giving them what they need (Hamilton, 1987). Academic and school librarians, until recently cocooned in the comparative luxury of collections centered on curricula, have demurred. Collection issues, however, are not the only operational area for determining degrees of customer focus. As all libraries consider the implications of decentralized collections and the impacts of new technologies, the process of increased focus on customers comes to include designing technical interfaces, managing on-site and virtual library operations, hiring consultative personnel, and many other aspects of library and community development.

Although consensus regarding the degree to which focus on the customer should be implemented in libraries may not be possible, the topic is still worthy of discussion. Over the next few years, librarians will face significant amounts of social change in the academic, corporate, and civic communities they serve. New opportunities for collaboration will arise. The time is right to attempt to achieve some clarity concerning various foci on customers and why they exist by looking at the organizational objectives libraries
have, the orientations toward marketing librarians seem to hold, and
the implications that may flow from an increased focus on customers.
Such clarity will enable professionals to consciously choose specific
objectives, orientations, and degrees of customer focus in order to
increase the effectiveness of libraries and librarians.

**Organizational Objectives**

The processes of preserving, organizing, and assuring access to
information are imbued with the presence of the potential customer.
This infusion provides historical definition, but it also plays a critical
role in the discussion of the future of libraries. In 1991, the Council
of the American Library Association challenged the profession to
think about who would be information providers in the twenty-first
century and what roles those professionals might play. In her response,
de la Pena McCook (1993) writes:

> Holding the user central to activities and technologies that
> surround refinements of information storage and retrieval is the
> single driving motivation that will serve to preserve the profes-
> sional and ethical orientations rooted in the tenets of librarian-
> ship. Understanding the needs of the user for information and
> activating this understanding characterize the conceptual frame-
> work of the library and information profession. (p. 4)

If it is true that what characterizes libraries most deeply is
"holding the user central" and that this characterization will preserve
the profession into the twenty-first century, it should be a small matter
to append that language to generalized library mission statements
and get on with the task at hand. Eventually, however, someone will
want to know how well libraries are "holding the user central." A
measure of effectiveness will be required.

At that point, a variety of definitions of effectiveness will be
apparent; intriguing differences in organizational objectives will
begin to emerge. This variety may include input-output definitions,
total quality management (TQM) benchmarks, entrepreneurial
bottom lines, and community alignment with various library "roles,"
to name a few. Each definition of effectiveness assumes a different
process operating with the customer and varying degrees of customer
involvement with service design and improvement.

Dervin (1985) asserts that most libraries infer effectiveness by
looking at the movement of materials and services. This input-output
definition of effectiveness assumes that what is in the system has
intrinsic value and is useful to the customer. It matches the customer
to the offerings of the system and evaluates based on the number
of matches. In contrast, Dervin's design of a sense-making approach
centers on the context experienced by the customer. Since the context
is not often experienced in system terms, evaluation is based in customer terms. For example, Dervin's work allows customers to explain that they seek and find levels of emotional support in libraries.

Shaughnessy (1993) proposes a model for total quality management designed around several factors involved in satisfaction with information seeking, including some user-centered factors (such as the objective of the user, the impact of the service, and the ultimate value assigned to the service) and some system-centered factors (such as signage, friendliness of staff, policies, delays, and so on). His emphasis on performance measurement necessarily frames evaluation of both product and process from the vantage point of the customer.

In their discussion of the situation facing traditional academic library administrators serving students from entrepreneurial non-traditional institutions, Garten and Hartwell (1994) emphasize the heightened service expectations of nontraditional students as well as the intricacies of contracting for or bartering services between institutions. The premium placed on discretionary time by adult students and the necessity for costing services exchanged or purchased require an approach to evaluation which allows the customer (end-user or entrepreneurial institution) to justify investment.

Finally, in surveying public library patrons in three metropolitan areas, D'Elia and Rodger (1994) report that most public library visits can be explained, and potential public library priorities confirmed, within the framework of standard public library roles (see McClure et al., 1987), but that significant differences exist between library and patron interpretation of some roles. Their work suggests that those seeking to evaluate library services by building a public understanding of library effectiveness have yet another approach to customer involvement. Childers and Van House (1993) expand the public library role-setting process by offering an effectiveness model using stakeholders to evaluate inputs, outputs, processes, and various aspects of community fit. They thoroughly discuss the concept of library effectiveness and ways to communicate it. They offer a single model but support the idea that library services can be effectively assessed using different models.

These few examples begin to illustrate a variety of ways of defining library effectiveness. They indicate a variety of organizational objectives which hold the user central in different ways. It is apparent that the way in which focus on the customer is implemented in an organization is a matter of choice, a matter of philosophy, policy, and practice. Once the organization's objectives are clear, management and staff adopt an orientation toward marketing which defines what part customers will play in service design and improvement.
Orientations Toward Marketing

The heart of the marketing philosophy is the emphasis on voluntary exchanges of values in support of organizational objectives (Kotler & Andreasen, 1991). Exchanges of value are defined as acts to obtain something that is desired from someone by offering something in return (Kotler & Armstrong, 1989), a relationship of mutual benefit (Weingand, 1987). Parents who wish their children to have the benefits of storytime, give up time and effort driving around looking for a parking place and other perceived costs to achieve that desired benefit. The professor who wishes to establish credibility in a field, gives up time, effort, potential loss of self-esteem, and other perceived costs to learn to use new online resources. Fine (1990) describes four types of social price or payment beyond money that are part of exchange relationships: time, effort, lifestyle (networks of relationships, habits of behavior), and psyche (self-esteem, pride, identity, self-assertion, control, privacy, freedom from fear). Using the marketing approach, librarians analyze, adjust, plan, and assess such perceived costs and benefits in order to construct and manage beneficial exchange relationships with customers, potential customers, and other target audiences.

This process of working to achieve beneficial exchange relationships differs from organization to organization based on differences in organizational objectives. As objectives vary, so do orientations toward marketing in general and toward the customer in particular. If an organization's objective centers on its product, the exchange relationship is basically one where the organization takes the full responsibility of providing something wonderful and the customer chooses the service based on belief in the organization. If an organization's objective centers on efficient production, the organization proves its worthiness as a resource manager and the customer chooses the service over competitors' services based on perceptions of that proof. If an organization's objective centers on sales, the organization creatively and persistently woos the customer and the customer chooses the service based on the persuasiveness of that appeal. In each of these three orientations, ways of constructing beneficial exchange relationships are meant to bring the customer to the service. Each presumes organizational objectives which effectively address customer needs and wants. The work of the marketer begins with certain givens already determined by the organization and the challenge is to work with the customer until those givens are accepted as a viable part of the sought after exchange.

If the organization's objective is centered in customer satisfaction, management and staff adopt a customer or marketing orientation. This orientation differs fundamentally from those discussed earlier.
A customer orientation toward marketing holds that success will come to that organization that best determines the perceptions, needs, and wants of target markets and satisfies them through the design, communication, pricing, and delivery of appropriate and competitively viable offerings. (Kotler, 1991, p. 43)

Librarians who adopt this orientation create their service from the ground up based on the perceptions, needs, and wants of the customer. Because the objective is satisfying the customer, there is no presumption of what would be best. The givens the librarian must work with are givens from the customer's point of view—for example, how much time is it appropriate to give up to get the service, what times of day the service should be available, and so on. The librarian's challenge in the customer-driven orientation is to shape the organization as much as possible to meet the needs and wants of the customer.

These definitions suggest that those organizations choosing a product, production, or sales orientation to marketing can be classified as organization centered rather than customer centered. Kotler and Andreasen (1991) carry this concept forward by suggesting that nonprofit organizations that are focused on themselves rather than their customers will display certain characteristics. They will see their services as inherently desirable, blame customer ignorance or lack of motivation when their services are not used, relegate research about customers to a minor role, tend to define marketing as promotion, and assume that they have no generic competition. With this dichotomy in use, it is easy to see how some libraries could be considered near-sighted and organization centered rather than customer centered.

This is the juncture at which the arguments about marketing intensify, perhaps needlessly. If one sees the choice of orientation toward marketing as closely related to choice of organizational objectives, organization centered orientations begin to make more sense. If librarians choose organizational objectives which hold the user central in more abstract ways—e.g., by anticipating generic needs for local history resources or instructional materials in the sciences—a sales marketing orientation may fit best. A sales orientation does not preclude an important role for research about the customer and customer response to the service. Successful wooing of the customer depends to a great extent on knowledge about what that customer perceives, wants, and needs.

Concepts of social marketing (Kotler & Roberto, 1989; Fine, 1990) may be of use in understanding how and why libraries choose a sales orientation rather than a customer orientation. Beginning in 1971, organizations concerned with causes (health care, environmental concerns, mental health, consumer protection) were identified as
adopting a sales-related orientation to marketing and this was subsequently dubbed social marketing. This approach uses some of the tools associated with marketing to advance social causes and ideas. Certainly, some libraries enter this category. Public library involvement in adult literacy, academic library involvement in information literacy, school library involvement in critical thinking—all are examples of libraries which could be identified as involved in types of social causes. Using a social marketing approach, these libraries interact with customers primarily persuasively. As they serve, they sell. What these libraries represent is not neutral; they are ideas in action. A number of libraries have successfully adapted social marketing techniques to reach target populations (for example, the New Americans Program at Queens Borough Public Library described by Chao, 1993). If libraries are selling as they serve, then they may as well do so efficiently. Whether they are customer-oriented in Kotler’s sense, this becomes peripheral to their purpose and certainly cannot adequately describe their effectiveness.

**IMPLICATIONS OF INCREASED CUSTOMER FOCUS**

At this point, it should be clear that the degree of customer focus enacted as part of a library’s overall operation is related to several factors and is negotiated as part of the process of choosing organizational objectives and orientations toward marketing. In this writer’s opinion, most libraries have an indistinct twin focus. They have a message related to a cause which they would like to see better accepted, and they have services which they would like to see better used. Librarians have difficulty consciously choosing and effectively using levels of customer focus because, to paraphrase Linda Pastan, what they want is not simple. If that is the case, the options are clear. Librarians can preserve the status quo and try to dispel the discomfort of holding multiple positions with multiple definitions of effectiveness. Or librarians can boldly face the complex organizational objectives reflective of their institutions, target populations and communities, and begin to negotiate focus on the customer as it fits within that context. They can admit that what they want is not simple and seek actively to clarify, for themselves and for their communities, what they want. If libraries choose the latter course, the work that marketing has done to define and operationalize customer focus will be invaluable.

**REFERENCES**


The Marketing Audit: Baseline for Action

Laura Cram

ABSTRACT
Most librarians do not appreciate that the only way for a service-based organization to succeed is to have a clear understanding of what services are in demand by the users and nonusers of the community. Customers not only appreciate, but challenge, providers who offer quality service. This article looks at the steps necessary to develop a solid base for planning, from the comprehensive community profile (including a competitive review) to the "perceived service quality," both from the point of view of customers and staff. Most managers do, indeed, know something about their communities, but discovering what makes it "live" the way it does is one of the more exciting aspects of the marketing audit. The value of knowing who and what is out there, as well as what strengths and weaknesses one's own agency and others have, will lay the groundwork for making decisions. Difficult questions regarding whether to focus on certain market niches where your strengths lie or whether to continue trying to serve everyone with the same level of adequacy become easier to consider. The SWOT analysis as a tool for evaluating specific data is examined: is it something to build on (strength), something to eliminate (weakness), something to anticipate (opportunity), or something to outmaneuver (threat)? Finally, barriers to effective diagnosis of the data are discussed.
THE MARKETING AUDIT: BASELINE FOR ACTION

Most information professionals today realize that changes in technology and social trends are overtaking them faster than they can be identified. The difficulty is that they often do not know what direction to take for fear that it will be a direction with no future. When economic growth provided a stable working environment, it was less important to take the right direction with the first step; they could always go back and try again if it did not turn out to be an appropriate action after all. The idiom of "practice makes perfect" seems less practical and affordable today, however, and there is growing pressure on making the right decisions every time one has to be made.

One of the changes in our society which has had a tremendous impact on libraries is the rapid growth of the service economy. Although most librarians would agree that their agencies are firmly placed within the service sector, many do not appreciate that the only way for a service-based organization to succeed is to have a clear understanding of what services are in demand by the users and nonusers of the community. Customers not only appreciate, but challenge, providers who offer quality service today. And yet, "because most libraries have no perceived competitors some provide a passive and reactive service to their clients. Libraries need to become proactive and create and capitalise on growth opportunities" (Paul, 1990, p. 65). To move in this direction, they need to acquire a better understanding of their role in, and the needs of, the community they serve.

Before someone knows the direction in which to head, however, libraries have to know where they are at present. They accomplish this by establishing a solid base of information from which to strategically plan. Crompton and Lamb (1986) argue that "[i]t is an unfortunate trait of human nature that we rarely engage in any action until under pressure to do so. Perhaps the major reason for lack of effective marketing planning in public agencies has been the lack of a catalyzing crisis. Growth can be managed on an ad hoc basis; retrenchment cannot" (p. 45). They go on to suggest that:

an examination of environmental forces enhances an agency's ability to be proactive by looking beyond the short term horizon and considering the impact of changing...conditions....Without an understanding of the potential impact of these forces, an agency is constantly forced to react to crises instead of anticipating shifts and formulating strategies to adapt to them. Good planning has been described as a two step process: first figure out what is inevitable, then find a way to take advantage of it. (p. 49)

The concept of taking advantage of the opportunities made possible by change is a marketing-oriented one; its traditional opposite
concept, that of insulating oneself from changes which are regarded as problems and focusing instead on doing better what has normally been done, is a product-oriented one:

Early marketing models focused on the product, often referred to as "how to make a better mousetrap". This approach, still evident in many libraries, is all about improving the product or service and being the most efficient supplier in the marketplace. [Theodore Levin's 1960 article, "Marketing Myopia"] actually turned the focus onto the customer to ask what benefits are there for the customer. If there are no benefits to the customer then no matter how good the product is, it will not sell. (Wright, 1994, p. 14)

Unless a manager can become excited by the challenge of keeping services in line with the changing expectations of clients, the time and energy which must be spent to adequately prepare for change will not be worthwhile.

DEFINITIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Before looking at methods of determining one's direction in the changing community, it is important to provide some definitions of terms used and assumptions in this article. "Strategic planning" is the formal, long-range planning process used to define and achieve the organization's mission, future directions, and customer base. A procedure within strategic planning is the "marketing audit," which Weingand (1987) defines as assessing client needs and understanding community patterns, while also examining internal factors within the information agency (information audit and situation audit are terms used in a similar manner) (p. 36). A subset of the audit is "community analysis," where community needs are explored, particularly looking at primary and secondary data to determine their current profile (Weingand, 1987, p. 36). Another subset is "environmental scanning," or the systematic process of "identifying hazards or opportunities in the outside world that may impact the organization," looking at assumptions and key changes in the external environment (Newsome & McInerney, 1990, p. 285). A "SWOT analysis" (standing for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) can be considered more of an end product of auditing, as it presents the internal strengths and weaknesses and the external opportunities and threats, aligning them in such a way as to facilitate proactive planning. Another term which is often used interchangeably with some of the above terms is "needs analysis." This concept, however, is more often defined as the determination of the need for an as yet undefined service to the specified community and is generally a reaction to a declared need (St. Clair, 1993, p. 756). As such, it does not fall within the scope of this article.
Additionally, as the marketing audit nears completion, it is imperative to assess the central four components of the marketing mix: the product, price, place, and promotion activities of the agency. As these components will be dealt with elsewhere in this issue of *Library Trends*, however, they will not be discussed here.

Several assumptions made in this article must also be made clear. One is that the customer's concern is a vital issue to be factored into the equation of why the information agency exists. Another is that no situation is static anymore, so planning for change has to be a constant activity for management. Third, what suits one library or information agency does not necessarily suit another. While data and ideas can certainly be borrowed, the strategies which will work in another community must be conceived with the addition of pertinent information from that unique community. And, finally, library and information professionals must be prepared to compete with others in similar areas of expertise in order to maintain a healthy service.

**GETTING STARTED**

There are certain common elements in the application of strategic planning steps and procedures, regardless of the type of "business" an organization may be in. The first step is usually to create a working group which will organize and carry out a major proportion of the planning to come. This planning committee will do several things initially. First, it will determine what elements will be covered and in what depth. A knowledge of the limitations of resources (including staff time) and the observed change in the community since the last audit will dictate this. It will also decide on the depth of presentation of the audit (Weingand, 1987, pp. 45-46). Second, it will set up a timeline, identify who will be responsible for outcomes, and determine an evaluative method of tracking the audit process so that it does not bog down in side issues. Finally, it will arrange for an analysis of the external environment within which the entity exists, including customers, suppliers, and competitors, concurrent with an analysis of its internal strengths and weaknesses. Analysis is the critical starting point of strategic thinking. Strategic thinking, however, is something for which many organizations find little time or energy. Yet it is a vital part of the group process which will help stakeholders consolidate commitment to new strategies. Without taking time to do strategic thinking, *diagnosis* of the analysis, which is the starting point of preparing for action, will also be incomplete and may well point the organization in the wrong direction.

When beginning this stage of strategic planning, it follows, therefore, that there should be several "premoves" that incorporate
thinking. Ideally, a first strategy would be to consider the options for the organization. What position would it be in if nothing were done differently for the next five years? Brainstorming and scenario building are effective tools not only for “seeing into” the future but also for bringing staff together and making them less anxious about change. A key to effective brainstorming is to encourage staff to separate themselves from the ideas; otherwise those whose ideas are rejected may feel hurt or slighted (Curzon, 1989, p. 52). In scenario building, the idea is to look at any factors operating outside of the organization and to project their consequences on the organization. Identification of high risk service areas, such as preschool story hours in a community whose schools are closing down due to a decrease in young families in the district, may make staff aware that creative alternatives are needed (for a look at some examples of scenarios, Jacob [1990] offers several [pp. 39-47]).

Once a picture is described of where the agency would be in five years, it is then time to consider where it would like to be in five years. If the picture is different, then strategic planning is necessary to negotiate the needed changes. Consider the situation, however, where the agency is very successful at the moment and content with its place in the external environment. Drucker (1990) suggests that this is the ideal time to implement change. “Refocus and change the organization when you are successful....When everybody says, ‘Don’t rock the boat. If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.’ At that point...is the very time to ask, ‘Can’t we do better?’ The best rule for improvement strategies is to put your efforts into your successes. Improve the areas of success, and change them” (pp. 66-77).

Another good move is to brush up on research techniques. Increasingly, the information profession is becoming active in quantifying both the input and the output of its efforts, and there are a number of sources available which make such quantification easier to accomplish. Documents such as A Planning Process for Public Libraries (Palmour et al., 1980), Planning and Role Setting for Public Libraries (McClure et al., 1987), and Output Measures for Public Libraries (Van House et al., 1987) provide standardized procedures for gathering quantitative data as well as other strategies for acquiring qualitative information.

Looking at research which has already been done may also help to provide insight into what clients want of services in general. For example, in a study of service quality in the United States, the five “principal dimensions” used for judging service were identified (Berry et al., 1990, p. 29). St. Clair (1993) has adapted these to the information service environment and has also adapted Carr's fifteen steps to customer satisfaction (pp. 69-73). Several research studies on reference
service in academic libraries were the subject of papers at an Australian Library and Information Association Conference: “Priorities for the Future” (1992). Westin and Finger’s (1991) U.S. national public opinion survey report on using the public library in the computer age presents useful data as well. McIntyre’s (1990) examination of Victoria’s public libraries and their service priorities provides data for a scenario which is likely to become all too real in Australia—i.e., that of charging, or even of tendering bids, for public services. Hales’s (1985) research into how the information needs of the aging should be met is especially useful, as increasingly many organizations’ clients are falling into that group. These are just a few examples of the myriad of research findings published which can provide useful background data to assist organizations as they prepare to plan.

Another useful premove prior to planning is to examine the organization’s mission statement, policies, goals and objectives, and its placement in the larger organization in order to determine its last known position. The aim is to arrive at an agreed understanding of the organization’s purpose and role in the community. There is little point in carrying out market or community research without knowing what it is the agency wishes to achieve and why. Thus it is necessary to determine what business the organization is really in. Traditionally, libraries have been concerned with the provision of information and educational and recreational services. Today, however, it might be said that they are in the information services industry, competing against such companies as electronic network providers, database vendors, information consultants, and corporations whose existence may be new or largely unknown to librarians. This means that managers not only have to take into account what the customers want, but also what others in the information services industry are doing. It also means understanding one’s own capabilities; if the agency cannot do a job properly, should it be trying to compete against others in that area?

Any “givens” should also be identified. These are elements which are not open to change and might include such things as corporate control and funding allocation. “Knowing that there is little control over factors important to your operation can be frustrating, but if this is an issue in your organization, it may help to explore what those limits actually are and whether you have any flexibility within the framework of that reality” (Espy, 1986, p. 30). It is also useful to identify these in order to avoid spending too much time getting caught up in wishful planning that might never result in any useful action.

Finally, it is advantageous to determine what individual and organizational assumptions there are in order to try to counteract
them while performing the marketing audit. This will help to avoid bias. It may become clear what these are when statements such as "But we've always done it this way" are aired.

Asking gentle but pointed questions about these assumptions may help to flush out irrational or outdated assumptions and subject them to closer scrutiny. Suggesting that a closer look be taken may initially be viewed as an act of heresy, but it may yield to a productive discussion. Even if the conclusion is to allow the sacred cow a long and happy life, recognizing this limitation is useful knowledge as you proceed with your plan. (Espy, 1986, p. 31)

We must not let resistance to change dictate our decisions. Past strengths may well be future weaknesses, so we cannot let success fool us when considering our future role in society. Thus even our assumptions of success must be open to scrutiny as we begin to plan.

Looking Around
The external environment yields a great deal of fascinating information, which has an impact on the service of any organization. Most managers do, indeed, know something about their communities, but discovering what makes it "live" the way it does is one of the more exciting aspects of the marketing audit. After determining the level of depth (e.g., time required) to probe, it is time to get all staff and planning committee members participating in the hunt for information for the community analysis.

Who is Served? Knowing who the stakeholders of the organization are is a good first step in the development of a community or agency service area profile. Stakeholders can be defined as those "who would be affected to varying degrees if you closed shop tomorrow...and who you can count on for funding, backing, and positive word of mouth" (Espy, 1986, p. 35). Examples might include friends, political groups, suppliers, employees, board members, corporate management, and other libraries' staff. Not only knowing who they are but also "their levels of influence and how each may politically, socially, or economically affect the library's operations, functions, and future plans" will assure that none is ignored and that sufficient resources are in place to effect good public relations with them (Bryson, 1990, p. 15). It is also valuable to get stakeholders involved in the planning process. In fact, it makes no sense to proceed with strategic planning without finding out what is in these people's minds. There must be a clear concept of the readiness of the organization's staff to undertake any activities which will eventually evolve from the process.

It is also important to identify the customers and potential customers at this early stage.
Good marketing begins with research into the expectations, preferences, and patterns of behaviour of the target client group. This should include the quantification of the total number of potential clients as well as existing ones. For libraries this translates into the patterns of recreation and information seeking of everyone in the target community. Only then is it possible to determine market potential, the existence of competition and strategies to meet the competition. (Wright, 1994, p. 14)

Demographic, psychographic, and motivational information about community members is all useful to the organization. Demographic factors include age, occupation, income level, language, household size, and educational level, and can be retrieved largely from census documents and government planning authorities. When considering these factors, it is vital to link them to each other as well. For example, knowing how many aging female members of racial language minorities there are in your service area could indicate special information needs. Psychographic, or lifestyle, information adds character to the statistics but is still quantifiable. It includes such things as interests, attitudes, and values and is usually compiled through self-administered surveys. With these data, one can determine, for example, a student's priorities on how he or she prefers to study or what levels of customer satisfaction are being achieved. Motivational factors are typically qualitative in nature and describe the driving forces within individuals. Everyone selects specific behaviors to achieve their goals. Identification of these goals can be useful when determining why someone might use one service over another or what benefits they derive from the services offered and is gathered typically from interviews and focus groups (Schiffman, 1987).

The focus group is an interesting and inexpensive method of letting group dynamics bring out many issues relevant to the service which might otherwise have remained hidden. Finding the answers to two questions in particular can show not only the customer's perception of the quality of service but can also provide suggestions for how to increase positive attitudes and awareness of that service. Those questions are simply, How are we doing? and How can we get better? (LeBoeuf, 1987, pp. 65-66).

Knowing the perceptions and attitudes of the customers regarding the service they receive can be extremely valuable when it comes to analyzing and diagnosing the data compiled throughout the marketing audit. Albrecht (1988) suggests that this information will "identify the characteristics of the service product that are most critical to its acceptance by the customer and... isolate characteristics that can form the basis for successful differentiation of your service product from others in the market" (p. 161). Additionally, the "perceived service quality" is linked to expectations and may be quite different
from the reality, which is observed from the staff side of the service
desk. Yet "how that person's expectations are met will determine
whether or not he or she will judge the information interaction
positively or negatively" (St. Clair, 1993, p. 30). In other words, the
agency may be providing exactly the service required by members
of a particular group, but unless they perceive that it is exactly what
they need and that they will benefit from an interaction with the
agency, the likelihood is that they will not even think of going to
that agency.

One example of the effect of perception as opposed to reality
is shown in a study by James (1983), who was attempting to determine
how students visualized the library when they were asked to draw
it from memory. Results of the maps showed that "[s]tudents were
not equally familiar with all parts of the library. Rooms were omitted
or represented by a door, a void and the implied legend, 'here be
dragons.' There were considerable internal variations in scale. When
these maps were compared with students' designation of areas of
most use...it tended to be these areas that had been magnified" (p. 23).

When asking community members to assist in the information-
gathering process, it is important to keep in mind that there "is
a large core of service which the public expects, revolving around
books, reference and research, and study space.... [I]n general, the
public lacks a fine sense of how libraries should proceed to provide
these materials and services, lacks any common expectation as to
how well services should be provided for them, and lacks a common
view of what other services should be provided" (Beckerman, 1990,
p. 58). This biased perception needs to be taken into account but
should not be dismissed.

What has an Impact? Once the membership of the community has
been defined, other environmental factors must be gathered. A Plan-
ning Process for Public Libraries (Palmour et al., 1980) and other
manuals suggest that these should include the growth and
development of the community, its government, business and
industry, communications, transportation, educational facilities,
climate and geography, recreational opportunities, cultural and
community activities, and other library and nonlibrary information
resources. Again, examining the mix of these factors is valuable—
e.g., the mix of business, manufacturing, farming, and service bases.
The required information is gathered from municipal planning
reports; business publications; interviews with community and
business leaders; annual reports; state, regional, and local planning
agencies; moving and observing throughout the community; local bulletin boards (electronic and otherwise); the local press; service organizations and clubs; and so on.

Obviously there are also national and global macro environmental factors which impact on society as a whole and over which there is no local control. To be aware of these factors which will impact upon all organizations will help not only in identifying trends but also in moderating the concerns and expectations of the planning group when examining local conditions. Certainly demographic details such as the general aging of the population are among the uncontrollable factors in some countries. National legislation, such as the Library Services and Construction Act, falls into the category of legislative macro analysis. The economy is another uncontrollable factor. Specifically, the rise in postage rates or the price of fuel to operate the bookmobile could have deleterious effects on an outreach service. “Notwithstanding the difficulties of economic forecasting, it is nonetheless an essential task to review the likely impact of the economy on society as a whole, on the industry which the organization operates in, on the organisation itself and its customers, competitors and suppliers” (Reed, 1992, p. 48). Keeping generally and reliably informed through press and business journals is, therefore, an important practice in environmental scanning.

Technological innovation is also an external factor which takes place on a global level and has a great effect on information agencies. For example, “[s]atellites and ISDN networks provide new dimensions for information transmission and video conferencing. Videotex, EDI facilities, and electronic mail offer opportunities for interlibrary loans and access to library collections. It may be that, in the future, remote access may become the preferred form of library usage. This has implications for library staff and buildings” (Bryson, 1990, p. 28). It is particularly important to be able to forecast trends in this area. On a primary level, however, reading computer as well as library journals, attending suitable conferences, and consulting with government or corporate officials in the information technology field will provide sufficient data to conduct environmental scanning for the marketing audit.

A final task which will be examined in the external environment is that of developing the competitive review. Every agency has competitors, even if they are genteel about it. Some would be obvious. For example, public libraries provide a variety of recreational material, which directly competes with the entertainment and recreational provisions of television, video games, movies, and the like. All information agencies see one of their roles as providing information for specific needs. Yet often their reference service, online
service, and other information services are largely unknown and unused by businesses. Information brokers are increasingly taking over in providing service to this client group and are thus an obvious threat to other information agencies. In an academic setting, competition would clearly come from the university's computer center. Both the university library and the computer center handle information required by their community members, although that information is manipulated in different ways by them. However, there are more subtle competitors, as well:

Libraries and academic computer centers are further impacted by other information stakeholders on campus, such as telecommunications services, administrative computing centers, and media centers. Boundaries among these agencies are blurring and relations among the competing information providers on campus may be more crucial to the library's longterm health than internal organizational changes in the library. A period of unsettling transition awaits those libraries that fail to clearly define their place in the campus information environment. (Martin, 1992, p. 77)

In order to determine who the competitors are, it is important that the organization has agreed on an understanding of what business it is in. Those agencies beyond the scope of this defined "business" need not be examined at great length. Looking at the obvious and the more subtle competitors, certain questions must be asked about each of them in order to complete the external environment analysis. Are they well entrenched and getting stronger, struggling and losing ground, or reorganizing themselves to fit more securely into a particular niche in the market? What are their goals and objectives? Are they risk takers or conservative followers? What is the quality of customer service, technology, and products provided? What is their image among the clientele which is in common with both agencies? What are their likely future strategies? Are there any actions you could take which might provoke their retaliation (Reed, 1992, p. 567)? "Where are the areas of duplication? Are there possibilities for cooperation? Finally, ...is there sufficient market to support both or all providers" (Weingand, 1987, p. 40)?

Increasingly, it is likely that most information agencies will find that there is not sufficient market to support all providers if all are attempting to serve the broad spectrum of the community well. The value of knowing who and what is out there, as well as what strengths and weaknesses one's own agency and others have, will lay the groundwork for making decisions. Difficult questions regarding whether to focus on certain market niches where your strengths lie, or whether to continue trying to serve everyone with the same level
of adequacy, become easier to consider. Can any competitors become
part of a cooperative network, so that the community is much better
served by a number of organizations who are each allowed to focus
on particular strategies? It might be worthwhile doing something
similar to what a group of librarians in Western Australia have been
doing to enhance cooperation levels. They are meeting together to
work out their marketing knowhow and strategies. "As librarians
we often operate in isolation....The main function of the group was
professional support through sharing information, knowledge,
experience and resources" (Ritchie, 1994, p. 14). The group is using
a packaged self-education marketing course produced by the
Australian Library and Information Association (Nicholson, 1993)
to assist them in their venture.

For an excellent selection of worksheets to assist planners in
the compilation and analysis of a community profile, see Turock
(1992). Once prepared, it can be regularly updated as appropriate.

Looking Inward

Having decided what it is the organization hopes to accomplish,
for whom, and in what environment, the next step in the marketing
audit is to review its existing services, resources, image, and staff
utilization to determine what refinements are necessary to place it
more securely on its future path. It is interesting to consider how
much is truly known about one’s own organization. Most impressions
are seen from very biased eyes. To begin an examination of its strengths
and weaknesses, a valuable exercise is to view the organization from
the point of view of the customer. How do our publics see us and
our competitors? What is the library’s public image?

What is the customer’s point of view?

Customer satisfaction is so important that you would think that
most businesses would have a well thought out strategy for
measuring it and putting this information to work....Yet very,
very few even try to obtain, measure, or regularly monitor what
the customer likes and dislikes about the job they do. It seems
ironic that in the information age, most businesses aren’t even
trying to obtain, measure or use some of the most valuable
information of all. (LeBoeuf, 1987, p. 66)

One way to obtain information on how customers view the service
they regularly receive is to put yourself in their shoes and approach
the library from the first point of contact (generally the street). How
ey easy is it to gain access to the parking lot? Are there lighting problems
at night or large ponds of rainwater at the entrance after a storm?
Is the door easy to open? Is there a staff member welcoming you
as you enter? Are there long lines at the OPACs? It is necessary to
keep reminding yourself of what you are looking for. Each time a
decision has to be made by a customer, such as "Is it safe to park my car here?" it is a "moment of truth" for them. If anything turns them away at this moment, the organization's image suffers. Someone once said that "you never get a second chance to make a good first impression." There are some valuable opportunities for changing that first impression for the better but only after first experiencing it through the eyes of the customer.

The same is true for the messages libraries traditionally emit. Historically, librarians have given the impression to the community that there are good books in the library and that it is a good thing to read. To many people, good books mean that there are boring books there, not the kind of books that they like to read. It certainly does not sound enticing, especially to a nonreader. What does a potential customer expect from the organization? Probably only a small subset of what that organization is capable of offering. It is difficult to change public impressions once they are entrenched, but an examination of the message from the customer's point of view can be a valuable exercise and will assist staff in developing an updated promotional message.

One other strategy for acquiring information on how potential and actual customers perceive the organization and its competitors is to ask them. Useful questions include: How well do we deliver what is promised? How often do we do things right on time? How accessible are we when you need to contact us? How helpful and polite are we? How well do we understand and try to meet special needs and requests? How would you rate the quality of our (and our competitor's) service? How willing would you be to recommend us? What parts of our service are most important to you (LeBoeuf, 1987, pp. 68-69)?

Is the Structure Understood? There are structural components of every aspect of service provision by the organization. Understanding how these relate to each other is important so that ramifications of any future decisions are recognized. Most obvious is the managerial structure, which coordinates how decisions are made, how policies are developed and adhered to, and how staff formally liaise with and communicate at each level of the structure. It may be that a fairly rigid hierarchical system is in place, with close supervision, strict adherence to rules, clear lines of formal communication to follow, and a centralized decision-making standard. The opposite managerial structure is participative, decentralized, supportive, and creative. Most are somewhere in between, which offers enough
flexibility to plan for change and carry it out effectively (Bryson, 1990, pp. 38-41). Other structures include: the technical structure, which controls the processes, techniques, equipment, and facilities; the financial structure, which looks at the services and functions performed and the comparative level of cost versus value of each; and the informal staffing structure, which incorporates elements of the working relationship such as leadership styles, politics, status, reward systems, and ideologies. This latter is often the most difficult to understand and use to the increased benefit of the organization.

As indicated earlier, understanding how the library is perceived by those in the external environment is just as important as the reality. Similarly, an understanding of the perceptions and attitudes about internal commitment, trust and supportiveness, communication channels, staffing patterns, and decision structures must be achieved. These elements are a part of the corporate culture, and understanding them will help to identify those factors on which top management has built the organizational structure. Corporate culture is difficult to define and to change but not impossible if the need is there to do so. "We must be able to create cultures of pride, climates of success" (Kanter, 1983, p. 129). Often the best way to understand some of the less obvious elements of the internal structure is to have someone from outside the organization look at it. If reported with sensitivity and care, vital information can be shared without anyone feeling persecuted or without trampling any of those sacred cows mentioned earlier. In the light of day, some of the more problematic situations may seem trivial and solve themselves.

_Are Staff Prepared for Change?_ The people in the organization can be seen as customers along with other stakeholders, users of the service, and potential clients. If staff are not sold on the value of the services they provide they will never be able to convince others of it. Albrecht (1988) suggests regularly monitoring the "quality of work life (QWL) defined in terms of the perceptions of the employees" (p. 169). If they believe that their job is worth doing, is safe and secure, and offers competent supervision, opportunities to learn and advance, adequate pay, a positive social climate, and a sense of justice and fair play, then a high QWL exists (p. 169). Of course, humans never feel that their needs are totally satisfied, and, in fact, the needs are constantly changing as the motivation to achieve those which have been met recedes.

Another important aspect of staff assessment is to recognize their expertise so that it can be put to proper use and not be squandered. Drucker and other management experts have emphasized that if you want people to perform in an organization, you have to use their
strengths and not emphasize their weaknesses. Abilities worth encouraging include those which engender better customer service—e.g., problem solving, good communication skills which includes active listening techniques and empathetic listening, and handling hostility. Other abilities to promote should relate to those trends and aspects of the community which have already been identified, not to mention specialized knowledge of sources and resources and service provision.

What Other Resources Must be Audited?

Other aspects of the internal environment which need to be assessed include finances and how adequate and secure are the suppliers and the operating budgets of the various departments or services. If opportunities in the external environment are identified, is there any possibility of taking advantage of them without devastating another valued service? Related to this concern is the knowledge of how funding authorities value the organization. What changes may be necessary in order to change not only their perception but also the reality of this value to them?

Also to be assessed is the technology and technical expertise available to the agency. It may not all be located within the structure of the agency itself but may, in fact, be part of the larger organization. The physical resources must be examined as well. The need is not only to identify what buildings, space, furnishings, and so on are available, but also to look at the information it holds (on paper or in machine-readable form), and what the collection's strengths are, and to assess the quality of those resources from the customer's point of view. There may indeed be fifty reader seats in the library, but if they are the most uncomfortable seats ever manufactured and no one ever sits in them, what is their worth? Comfort is an extremely valuable asset and relates to how the customer feels about the place as well as to the hardness of the chairs. A complete listing of services and programs will probably yield some surprises.

Finally, other internal factors, such as ongoing planning or marketing systems, and evaluative or control systems, including a range of output measures, should be examined. Questions to ask relating to planning systems include: Is planning reactive or proactive? Is it systematic and organized? How do marketing activities interact with other aspects of management? Are these interactions positive and supportive? Are plans related to forecasts or potential? Are objectives realistic and attainable? Questions regarding controls at every service and departmental level might be: Are control procedures known and adequate? Do controls enable ongoing analysis? Is there provision for a regular stream of information to update the community profile and to effectively distribute the information? Is
service provision adequate, as seen from using output measures such as circulation per capita, reference transaction, program attendance, and so on (Nicholson, 1993, p. 3.4; Weingand, 1987, p. 43)?

**Diagnosis and Presentation**

To date, the evaluation procedure has concentrated on the collection of information. It is now time to synthesize the findings from all of the earlier discussed activity and exercise some judgment in applying the evidence to the organization's current reality (Childers & Van House, 1993, p. 9). Interestingly, it is at this point that valuable information may be lost to the organization because of an inability to integrate "evaluation concepts and performance measures into a broader administrative context related to decision making and planning" (McClure, 1990, p. 17). Thus far, community analysis, environmental scanning, and examination of various internal input and output measures have provided valuable feedback. Some of the reasons why planning efforts fail to take advantage of the data are: the failure of staff to see what can be done about whatever the findings purport to show; their inability to convince the administrators that the information means anything; the predisposition of management to believe what they want to believe, regardless of the data; the lack of familiarity of staff with management uses of organizational data, creating an unfocused presentation; and staff belief that having this information will not make any difference in what is actually done in the library anyway (McClure, 1990, p. 26). To be able to understand and relate this new data to successful strategies requires a focused, creative, and open-minded planning team. If it is not successfully linked to strategies, there is danger of the evaluation becoming an end in itself and of the agency being engulfed by an "I told you so" attitude on the part of staff who believe that proper planning is a waste of time.

One useful method of presenting the data in a way that ensures evaluation is to perform a SWOT analysis. An evaluative decision must be made about each finding, even if it is to ultimately decide that the finding is irrelevant or an error. The SWOT analysis allows management to signify the decision's relevance to the organization: is it something to build on (strength), something to eliminate (weakness), something to anticipate (opportunity), or something to outmaneuver (threat)? A strength is a resource or capability an organization possesses to effectively achieve one or more of its objectives. It may be an outstanding health studies collection or a creative staff member. A weakness is a limitation, fault, or defect in the organization which will keep it from achieving one or more of its objectives. Examples might be limited opening hours or a status
quo-oriented staff. An opportunity is an attractive arena for activity in which the agency would enjoy a competitive advantage. It may be a trend or change in some community situation which indicates a demand for a service not previously or adequately provided such as remote access to an OPAC. A threat is an unfavorable situation in the agency’s external environment which is potentially damaging to it or to its current strategy. Examples, unfortunately, are plentiful and include cutbacks in funding, privatization of information provision, or amalgamation of council areas or universities (Bryson, 1990, pp. 48-49).

The most difficult aspect of conducting a SWOT analysis is recognizing that specific weaknesses are a part of any organization, and that identifying these weaknesses may put individuals in a defensive position either for themselves or for the status quo. For this reason, it has already been suggested that an outsider may be in a better position to identify and inform staff of their results from the internal analysis. At the University of South Australia, students in Library and Information Management have an opportunity to work in teams as outside observers and researchers for interested agencies. As well as carrying out some of the actual data retrieval for a particular agency—for example, surveying users on particular issues—they also conduct a sample marketing audit for the agency. One of their assignments is to prepare a SWOT analysis which, although necessarily limited in scope, does produce some useful correlations (see Figure 1 for an example of one team’s effort). In many situations, a correlation between a market opportunity and an internal strength would be identified. Smith and Saker (1992) suggest that an opportunity matched with a strength or strengths indicates planning for an attack strategy; an opportunity matched with a weakness indicates a need to reinforce the weakness to allow an attack strategy; a threat matched with a strength should lead to a defense strategy; and a threat matched with a weakness suggests that the weakness should be reinforced to allow a defense strategy (p. 12). There are, of course, other ways of looking at the results. Positioning strategies, such as market penetration (concentration on improving present products for present clients) or diversification (the marketing of new services to new clients), will become part of the final marketing plan.

Apart from a visual analysis of the internal and external environment, such as that afforded by a SWOT analysis set up in chart format, descriptive presentations of the findings are also valuable. Espy (1986) provides an example:

In addition, our geographic base has shifted; in the past three years, customers have increasingly come from Nexttown rather
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
<th>THREATS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly specialized and unique collection of materials for health studies</td>
<td>Cumbersome and inefficient manual systems/ Staff may lack expertise in technical services</td>
<td>Promote acquisition of computerised catalog</td>
<td>Alienation of users by technical difficulties in accessing collection/ Potential competition from other agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong management collective</td>
<td>Limited and insecure operating grants/ Inadequate funding/ Lack of continuity of staff because of short term appointments</td>
<td>Investigate more varied and stable sources of funding</td>
<td>Cuts in Education Department funding/ Conservative backlash with a change in government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualified teachers on staff/ Materials developed specifically for teaching</td>
<td>Low use rate of specialized teaching materials</td>
<td>Actively promote specialized education services/ Develop consultancy service to other library and information services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge, experience and commitment of staff to health issues, non-sexist and counter sexist education</td>
<td></td>
<td>Promote use of the Center through health studies courses at tertiary and secondary level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links not established and maintained with institutions/ Location of Center isolates it from other education facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td>Create school or institutional membership</td>
<td>Possible loss of autonomy through increased links with Education Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong support in the community at large and high loyalty of users</td>
<td>Center is short-staffed and more clerical support is needed / Relies heavily on volunteers, but skills are not fully utilized</td>
<td>Encourage participation by volunteers and develop and use their skills beyond basic clerical tasks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedicated staff provide friendly, personalized service to users</td>
<td></td>
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Figure 1. A SWOT Analysis (slightly modified) (Produced by Renee Amyot, Margaret Colmer, and Jeanne MacKenzie, for Management for Information Work 2. A marketing subject in the BA Library and Information Management, School of Communication and Information Studies, University of South Australia. The agency for which it was created has found it to be most useful.)
than Ourtown. Presently, only 31 percent reside in Ourtown. Our efforts last year at marketing our services in Ourtown yielded a brief but temporary rise in customers from that area; for two months, the service to those residents rose, but it then fell off to its original levels. (p. 79)

This type of presentation will appeal to certain members of staff and the management team, just as pie charts and quantitative descriptions will appeal to others. The aim of any presentation is to see more clearly what needs to be done, so a variety of presentation formats should be incorporated into the final package. If there is a deviation from anticipated results or an identified obstacle standing in the way of following an important trend, it must be clearly shown and accepted before any alternatives to these realities can be suggested (Withers & Vipperman, 1992, pp. 71-72).

**What Barriers are in Place?**

It is possible at this stage that some difficulties will arise. Areas of concern have been recorded by the planning team and can no longer be ignored. Further, elements of the information are about to be shared with a wider audience of stakeholders and upper management. It could easily hurt staff morale if problems which have been identified are not addressed. One thing that no service organization can afford is poor morale among staff, as it usually results in a poor attitude toward users (Coker, 1993, p. 30). One way to counteract this problem is by employing a positive team approach to encourage everyone to look for the opportunities arising from the marketing audit. “Membership on a team can be rejuvenating and inspirational. It can also raise the ante for individual performance. To let down the boss is bad, but to let down the team is often worse. Team participation can unleash one of the most potent of motivators—the respect of peers” (Berry et al., 1990, p. 33).

Implicit in the morale issue is the need to improve communication channels and make all of the information known. Hiding sensitive elements will only curtail the flow of communication. Peters (1992), in fact, argues that better communication is vital and demonstrates trust by showing a willingness to share virtually everything with everybody. He goes on to suggest that creating online databases that can be used across functional boundaries, or installing an “email ethos” where informal communication becomes the norm will help inspire the changing nature of organizational relationships (p. 122).

Other barriers to effective diagnosis of the data, as identified by Curzon (1989) and others, may be that there is insufficient data available to accurately predict the worth of a certain activity; politics puts too much pressure on the organization to allow for certain
changes to take place; managers may desire more and more information or time to wait and see what happens before acting, thus losing the opportunity they may have had to offer a unique service to the community; precedents are always going to affect decisionmaking; attitudes and values cannot be eliminated from the equation; a perceived threat puts everyone on the defensive without allowing for the chance to look for other opportunities; certain stakeholders disagree on fundamental issues with other stakeholders thus creating a stalemate; and humans will often react negatively to the prospect of learning to change by denying that there are any problems or by rejecting any proposals.

Another barrier, even at this stage of the planning process, relates to human foibles as well. It is easier to react to crises than to prepare to head them off through long-range planning.

Perhaps for that reason it is one of the most easily avoided activities in libraries since the needs of the institutions are more easily identified than the needs of users and the problems seem to be more immediate. This phenomenon of resistance exists despite the fact that overall organisational planning is a basic function from which all other actions should naturally emanate. Most of us continue to emphasise current operations at the expense of long range planning, content with reasoning that we are too busy with today's problems to worry about tomorrow's. (Stueart, 1986, p. 38)

Finally, White (1987) suggests that in times of declining resources "we are measured on the basis of budgets rather than results.... Because we are here to do 'good' and because we see our mission as a moral imperative rather than in more mundane down to earth terms, it may be precisely because we do not want to limit our objectives that we fail to tie them to the resources provided" (p. 198). This aspect of the corporate culture may be one of the most difficult attitude barriers to address, and yet, if the organization is to honestly assess the quality of its service, it must, indeed, link resources and goals along with the trends and issues within the community.

TOWARD THE NEXT STEP

The marketing audit is now complete, and questions can now be adequately answered in preparation for the next stage—preparing the plan. Such questions include: What are the agency's major strengths and weaknesses? Is it offering an appropriate mix of "products" for the customers/potential customers in the community? What is happening in the community that impacts on the agency? What services do users want that are not currently available? Which new services could or should be offered? What are the cost implications of service innovation? Are staff prepared to address any forthcoming
changes? What are the staff training implications of changes to services? A good final task at this stage, which should raise many more questions, is to go back to the scenario building/brainstorming activity and think about where the agency is placed in the environment and how well it operates there. What might the future hold and how can stakeholders initiate change to take advantage of the opportunities?

Robinson (1992), in discussing the Baltimore County Public Library system, stated that:

I would hope that change in public libraries is tending toward a recognition of serving the people.... At the BCPL, we have gone from being a traditional, collection oriented institution to that of a more service oriented institution....

We are starting with what works, and building our policies from that. We are letting the public we serve design the shoes for us to walk in, not the profession, not the library press, & most of all, not we ourselves. (pp. 43-44)

It is hoped that the most important result of the organization's analysis efforts will be an appreciation that it must build on its strengths, and that serving the individual is its raison d'etre. This understanding is vital before proceeding to the next step. "We can no longer afford to pay lip-service to our users as our future rests in their hands as well as ours" (Paul, 1990, p. 69).

REFERENCES


Using Future Trends to Inform Planning/Marketing

JOHN V. NICHOLS

ABSTRACT
This article explores the reasons for incorporating the identification of future trends of librarianship into library planning and marketing efforts. It reviews some key issues in the financial and technological areas and uses them to illustrate the way this information can affect planning decisions. Two techniques of incorporating future trends into planning are discussed—environmental scanning and alternative scenario building.

INTRODUCTION
Whenever one thinks of planning and marketing for public libraries, there are some key images that should come to mind to help direct the thinking about the future in library-planning efforts. The first image is from one of this author's favorite poems, "The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost (1964).

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;
Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,
And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.

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Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.
I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I —
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference. (p. 131)

The second image actually derives from a composite of images on evolution from the book *Ever Since Darwin: Reflections on Natural History* by Gould (1979). Those images can best be summarized by the following quote: “Extinction is the fate of most species, usually because they fail to adapt rapidly enough to changing conditions of climate or competition” (p. 90).

The last image is of a conference dinner in 1990. This author was at the annual convention of the World Futurist Society. While having dinner with a diverse group of people—a finance minister from Toronto; a management consultant from Washington, D.C.; an organic farmer from Hawaii; and some others—the dinner conversation turned to libraries. When it was discovered that this author was a library administrator, the consensus opinion of the dinner group was that libraries are dinosaurs and will soon disappear when everyone has home or office access to the information superhighway and all the information resources that will come through it. While trying to convince them that the economics of libraries still made them necessary even in a “wired society,” the group was not to be persuaded.

All of these images say some important things about planning and future trends. Frost’s poem is pertinent in many ways, but one of its more powerful messages is about time and the road not taken. There is a certain curiosity about opportunities lost. When fundamental change is occurring around us, the paths we choose may be critical for future survival for several reasons. One of them is the fact that we often do not have the time to change back to a more correct path. Sometimes the opportunity window may simply be closed.

Gould’s essays on evolution repeatedly convey the same message. Organisms which cannot change fast enough to cope with rapid environmental change or competition will become extinct. Social organizations often behave in ways similar to biological organisms. As the changes occurring around libraries seemingly accelerate, it is imperative that we carefully monitor the major trends that may affect us and evaluate appropriate strategies of adaptation.

If we do not heed the futurists and attempt to adapt, we are destined, like the dinosaur of the dinner table conversation, to become
extinct. And this was a disparate group of individuals that liked and used libraries and whose only commonality was an interest in the future.

Will the library become extinct, as many in our own profession now loudly wonder? Will we travel down the wrong roads and be unable to recover and take the right path(s) for the library to thrive in the twenty-first century? How we view future trends and position our institutions in relation to these trends may have a lot to do with the answers to those questions.

**Some Recently Random Thoughts on the Future and Past**

During the past few years, a number of things in the literature stand out in terms of their messages to those planning the "library of the future."

*The Public Library: The Missing Link of the Information Age*

In his book, *The Cult of Information*, Roszak (1986) has a chapter entitled, "The Public Library: The Missing Link of the Information Age." The chapter represents one of the better musings on the role of the public library in an information age. If Roszak had his way, it would be a central role.

He begins by saying: "It is a curious fact that the contemporary discussion of information so rarely touches upon the library. Yet America's city, county, and state libraries represent the best-developed reference and reading service available to the general public" (p. 172).

Roszak speculates as to why. It could be because, in the eyes of computer enthusiasts, we are so connected with print-on-paper that we lose their interest in libraries. It may be that the computer industry sees the library as such a small element of their projected sales of computers that they have no interest in libraries (we may actually be seen as a threat to sales). And he even wonders if it is not the fact that the library, which stereotypically has the image of being a female workplace, causes it to suffer when the high tech computer world seems to be governed by masculine forces (p. 172).

All of this is very interesting and, to some extent, true, but Roszak (1986) is closer to the truth when he says about the help he has always received from librarians: "It is help I have long taken for granted as a teacher and writer, so readily available and convenient to use that one may not even register its value" (p. 173).

This seems to be the perennial problem of libraries. In spite of incredible success in attracting usage, our budgets are still cut. And we rarely win out in head to head budget competition with other local services. If we were in business, we would be rolling in dollars.
While director of the public library in Helena, Montana, this author had an interesting, but not unique, experience for librarians. This was during the Carter years and the Department of Energy was experimenting with what was called the Energy Extension Service (EES). It was loosely modeled after the county extension service (a successful technology transfer program that librarians should pay more attention to).

The purpose of the EES was to transfer the knowledge gained through government and private research in alternative energy technologies to the general public. The hope was that it would result in greater energy conservation. What a novel idea.

This author first learned about this from some friends who worked for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for the state of Montana. They had asked this author to review a proposal from the state library to receive a grant from Montana's share of EES funds. The critique was not only well received, but there was encouragement to also submit a proposal. Lewis and Clark Library did just that, and we received a statewide contract, with the DNR, to coordinate and promote the use of information on alternative energy technologies with all the state's public libraries.

The interesting part of this story is that only two states in the United States used the existing public library system in these efforts. All other forty-eight states established toll-free hotlines, walk-in store front offices in cities, and so on.

We ran a very successful program that ended up having a lasting effect on all the public libraries in Montana long after the toll-free hotlines and storefronts were closed. The point is very simple. Libraries are rarely thought of as central players when anyone—even government—is planning to distribute information to the public.

Roszak (1986) goes on to point out a number of very valid reasons why librarians and libraries should be integrally involved as the “missing link” of the information age:

the librarians had access to many more databases than I could afford to rent...their use of the databases was far more expert than mine could ever be...and [b]y virtue of their training and experience, they knew when not to use the computer....

Here, then, in the libraries of the nation, we have an existing network spread across the society, stationed in almost every neighborhood, and in the charge of experienced people who have always honored a strong ethic of public service. If the equipment for computerized reference facilities were concentrated in local libraries or, better still for reasons of economy, if every local library were linked to a generously funded regional reference center, this would be the fastest and cheapest way for the general public to gain open access to whatever benefits the Information Age may have to offer. (pp. 174-75)
Roszak may consider us the missing link of the Information Age, but as long as forty-eight states can establish programs to disseminate information on alternative energy technologies and fail to consider using the existing public library network as a means of doing that, we have a long way to go to become central to the Information Age. It is imperative that we understand the essential values that we can bring to the table of national, state, and local debate about the new information superhighway and the role of libraries.

**Information Anxiety**

One of the best books on a serious problem of the Information Age is *Information Anxiety* by Wurman (1989). Wurman has written one of the best treatises on information overload. It is a must read for librarians because we do our share of contributing to information anxiety rather than helping to alleviate it, and easing this anxiety may present us with one of the greatest opportunities for the twenty-first century.

Wurman says: “Information anxiety is produced by the ever-widening gap between what we understand and what we think we should understand. Information anxiety is the black hole between data and knowledge. It happens when information doesn’t tell us what we want or need to know” (p. 34).

There are a number of marvelous quotes spread throughout the book (many in the margins—you have to see this book as well as read it) that help explain why information anxiety is such a growing problem:

A weekday edition of the *New York Times* contains more information than the average person was likely to come across in a lifetime in seventeenth-century England. (p. 32)

More new information has been produced in the last 30 years than in the previous 5,000. About 1,000 books are published internationally every day, and the total of all printed knowledge doubles every eight years. (Large quoted in Wurman, 1989, p. 35)

Wurman goes on to point out that, as we are confronted with increasing amounts of information, we are increasingly unable to cope with it. “The glut has begun to obscure the radical distinctions between data and information, between facts and knowledge....And the more images with which we are confronted, the more distorted is our view of the world” (p. 37). In an age when we are inundated with more and more information, it is rather ironic, but entirely understandable, why we seem to understand less as a society.

Wurman (1989) turns to the definition of information as: “the action of informing; communication of instructive knowledge.” That definition began to change with World War II:
when it came into vogue to use "information" as a technological term to define anything that was sent over an electronic or mechanical channel....Information anxiety has proliferated with the ambiguity of the word "information"....Much of what we assume to be information is actually just data or worse....So the great information age is really an explosion of non-information; it is an explosion of data. (p. 58)

Wurman also cites a definition from Shannon and Weaver in their landmark treatise, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*: "information is that which reduces uncertainty" (in Wurman, 1989, p. 39). When any of us look at the proliferation of information around us and the increasing and varied means of accessing it, do we honestly believe people are better informed? Do they have greater understanding of the complex issues of our times? Is there more or less wisdom in the world today?

**Three types of businesses that deal with the dissemination of information are described in Wurman's (1989) book.**

[The] transmission business (what most of the information superhighway hype is all about); the storage business in which there are many publishing and database companies operable already; and the understanding business—concerned with the bridge between data and knowledge. There are few businesses devoted to it, yet....We need understanding businesses devoted to making information accessible and comprehensible. (pp. 49-50)

Here, in the understanding business, lies perhaps one of the great opportunities for libraries of the future. There is one other relevant aspect of Wurman's book for this article. He holds three principles close to his heart. They guide his efforts in his new publishing company and other endeavors. They are: "(1) learning to accept your ignorance, (2) paying more attention to the question than the answer, and (3) never being afraid to go in the opposite direction to find a solution" (p. 47). As we confront a rapidly changing future for libraries, these are excellent guiding principles for librarians as we plan for the future of libraries.

**Toward a History of Reading**

In order to understand the implications of the new technologies of information, it is useful to examine an article by Darnton (1989). Darnton attempts to explore how people read throughout history and how that has changed. From that he intends to learn how "our ancestors thought about themselves and made sense of their world" (p. 87).

There are a variety of techniques used and suggested in Darnton's article. One is analysis of borrowing patterns of libraries.
By the late 19th century, borrowing patterns in German, English, and American libraries had fallen into a strikingly similar pattern: 70 to 80 percent of the books came from the category of light fiction (mostly novels); 10 percent came from history, biography, and travel; and less than one percent came from religion....In little more than 200 years, the world of reading had been transformed. The rise of the novel had balanced a decline in religious literature, and in almost every case the turning point could be located in the second half of the 18th century, especially the 1770's. (p. 90)

One unsubstantiated, but intriguing, theory discussed in Darnton's article is from Rolf Engelsing who argued that:

a "reading revolution" took place at the end of the 18th century. From the Middle Ages until sometime after 1750, according to Engelsing, men read "intensively." They had only a few books—the Bible, an almanac, a devotional work or two—and they read them over and over again, usually aloud and in groups, so that a narrow range of traditional literature became deeply impressed on their consciousness. By 1800 people were reading "extensively." They read all kinds of material, especially periodicals and newspapers, and read things only once before racing on to the next item. (p. 91)

While skeptical of this "reading revolution," Darnton points out that another historian of reading, David Hall, an American, "has described a transformation of the reading habits of New Englanders between 1600 and 1850 in almost exactly the same terms as those used by Engelsing" (p. 92).

While the printing press opened the world to books for the masses, other developments contributed to providing many more people with an increasing variety of literature—"machine-made paper, steam-powered presses, linotype, and, in the western world, nearly universal literacy" (Darnton, 1989, p. 92).

It should therefore come as no surprise that, as the new information technologies develop, they will proliferate and be used primarily for entertainment and recreation. It is clear from a review of the history of reading that, as the variety and quantities of information grow, the ability to derive meaning and shared values from a body of literature begins to deteriorate. And, as Wurman (1989) pointed out: "Meaning requires time-consuming thought, and the pace of modern life works against affording us the time to think" (p. 39).

It seems clear that it is not only the pace of modern life militating against understanding and wisdom today, it is also the sheer volume and variety of information we are confronted with. People have only so much time. How they choose to spend it is an important economic decision. As librarians, we need to be aware that recreation and entertainment will be the predominant choice of most people in their
use of library resources and the new technologies. We also need to be very aware of the fact that less, but more meaningful, information may be a powerful elixir for those who dare to pursue it in the libraries of the next century.

Roszak, Wurman, and Darnton have said some important things about the future of libraries and planning. Call them "underlying guideposts" if you will. They help place the changes of the future in some context which helps in understanding them better. Those guiding principles seem to be:

1. Libraries need to reconnect to their value(s) to society and reeducate public officials of their public policy importance in order to become the "missing link" of the Information Age.
2. Libraries need to discover and invent ways of not contributing to the "information explosion" and information anxiety. Rather, we should develop new services built around the "understanding business."
3. History shows us that most people today read for pleasure and entertainment, much as they have for over a hundred years. We need to keep this in mind as the new information technologies are evolving.
4. We need to be cognizant of the fact that people are looking for shortcuts to knowledge and easier access to information is not it. We need to be mindful of developments that offer breakthroughs in this important area.
5. We need to remember Wurman's third principle—be prepared to go in the opposite direction to find a solution.

It should be pointed out here that it comes as no accident that none of these works were produced by librarians. It has been my experience that the most thought-provoking literature about libraries and librarians is being produced by nonlibrarians.

Having already begun exploring some past and future trends, let us examine the literature of trends and what it seems to be saying that is significant for libraries of the future.

FUTURE TRENDS

There are a number of areas of future trends that will be explored in this article. They encompass financial and technological spheres. While there are others of significance for libraries, these two will provide enough illustration of how we might incorporate the use of future trends into planning and marketing efforts in libraries.

It should first be pointed out that no reputable futurists would ever suggest that they are attempting to predict the future. Rather, they are speculating about alternative futures or future scenarios. By
doing so, they hope to help formulate possibilities. From those possibilities we might see paths that we prefer to take and those we do not. With this information, we will be in a position to understand how the different scenarios might come about and how we might avoid and pursue different desirable future scenarios, and avoid undesirable ones.

The trends discussed here are very broad and can be found in a variety of sources. These are trends that have been repeated so often that they are becoming more certain all the time. To a certain extent, these are exactly the kinds of future trends that will have the greatest short- and long-term impact on our development. These trends not only need to be incorporated into our thinking as we plan for our respective libraries, they need to be a part of a national discussion and consensus-building effort for libraries and library systems.

Financial Trends

The most important funding sources for public libraries have been and are (in general order of importance): (1) local government, (2) state government, (3) federal government, (4) fees, and (5) private funding. Curiously enough, the financial trends affecting the federal government today are probably having the greatest indirect impact on the major sources of library funding. Due to the excesses of the 1980s, the federal government is essentially bankrupt. One rarely hears anyone suggesting raising taxes or launching major new spending programs. In fact, the federal government has been shifting the cost of welfare and medicaid to the states. In many states, those are the two fastest growth areas in state budgets—often dwarfing all other categories of spending. So, if there is no significant effort at controlling rising health care costs and the federal deficit, we can expect Washington to continue to shift costs to states.

That shift to the states is placing increasing downward pressure on aids to local governments (where they exist) and schools. As that has been occurring, property taxes have had to rise to offset the losses of state support and/or services have had to be reduced.

When you combine that scenario with the recent recession and slow growing economy you get the following trend in local and state government financing of libraries—local government financing of libraries will keep pace with inflation at best and will lag inflation or result in actual cuts in many places.

This trend will be mitigated most often where local and/or state economies are vibrant and the tax base is growing sufficiently well to afford expenditures for libraries above the rate of inflation. Ideally,
one hopes to work in one of these areas or ones in which the library is contributing to local economic development with well-targeted reference support functions.

The above trend is not very startling, and many might say that it is not much of a prediction. One might even say that is what has been happening throughout the history of public libraries. This author's response would be that you are probably right. Generally speaking, library funding has done well when the city and county coffers were full and expanding. However, whenever we have had to compete within a declining revenue base at the local level, libraries have usually been at the bottom of the totem pole in priorities. "Last to be funded, first to be cut" as the saying goes. There are noteworthy exceptions, but they are just that—exceptions.

It is important to involve ourselves in budget planning because the broad trends in government finance at the federal and state levels show no sign of abating any time soon. Government funding generally represents over 92 percent of public library funding. At present we cannot do much without it.

At the same time, we face increasing pressure on the local financing front, and we also face pressure from another financial trend—the cost of information is dropping.

We all know that the industry has been slow to drop prices for information that is now produced and distributed electronically, even though produced at a lower cost. The industry is, of course, in a transitional bind as they move from print publishing to electronic publishing—much as libraries are. They do not want to undercut their own print products, and there are not yet enough people able to purchase and use their electronic products.

Yet, one may notice that this is making a case for purchase and installation of a CD-ROM LAN because the economics of it make sense. We can avoid the costs of expensive personal computers in lieu of less expensive terminals (at least initially), and as our consortium group of libraries shares the cost of information products, we find the costs of sharing site licenses for these products less than the costs of purchasing them individually.

Now if we can understand this, so can the information industry. Remember the earlier discussion about the World Futurist Society conference? Well, the clincher argument was an economic one. It was pointed out that, while many people who use libraries buy books today, there are also many books people will need but choose not to buy. That is when they turn to the library, and it would be the same with electronic information products.

The conference dinner group then pointed out that when the price of information dropped substantially—to just pennies—
libraries would actually be more costly to use. One is reminded of the fact that there is an "economic" exchange that occurs when someone uses the "free" public library. A number of people have written about it over the years. The biggest ingredient in that exchange is people's time, which has a value to them. If it is a secretary, assistant, or businessperson, the dollar value is very real, and that is why we see many businesses turning to computerized services and information brokers when they need something.

But even the general public places value on the time they have to spend driving to the library, finding a place to park, and then finding the information. At that point they still have to read the materials and digest the information to make it useful. As people experience greater demands upon their "free" time, there may indeed come a point where the economic exchange tips away from the free public library toward commercial services that seem to offer the same opportunities to obtain needed information for lower cost and/or greater convenience.

A countervailing trend that may be emerging is whether people will have less discretionary income. If you read some of the economic literature and labor projections carefully, you may also detect what this author observed—a decline in the American standard of living.

This decline in standards is evident when we see figures that indicate that the ranks of the poor in America have grown. It is evident when we notice how many single parent families there are, and how often two parents are working to maintain a lifestyle that ten to twenty years ago could be maintained by one person working. It is evident when we notice how many young people now work while still in school. It is also evident when we see the concern on the faces of old people who worry whether they will be able to afford a nursing home when and if they need it. It is evident in many subtle ways.

The question is, is it now necessary for most members of a family to work to maintain their customary lifestyle? At some point, the rising costs of housing, health care, and the now customary luxuries—car(s), boat, vacation home, and so on—will be increasingly out of reach of more American families.

If that happens, what do you think will be some of the first things they cut from the family budget? The same things local officials cut when faced with declining revenue—the nonessential library. Just as they cut periodical subscriptions today, people will cut back on, or eliminate, the interactive videos and games, the electronic encyclopedia, and more—especially if they are available through the local library. So, while the information industry debates how much people will pay a month for pay-per-view movies on demand and
other interactive information services, it just may be that economic trends may still work to the advantage of the library. While the above is true for most people in the country, the haves will continue to spend for these types of services as they evolve.

What do these trends suggest to a library administrator getting ready to launch a new strategic planning effort at the library? The first trend suggests we should incorporate a financial strategy of diversification of the library's funding base. We need to secure the traditional base while developing new sources of funding to provide for growth in service.

The second trend suggests the necessity to become much more sensitive to the cost of information to the end-user and find ways to provide a broader array of information resources for less cost and more convenience to users.

The last trend suggests the necessity to understand what the traditional library user base—the middle class—wants and get it to them in order to retain their political support. At the same time, we need to be prepared for people to turn back to libraries, as they traditionally do during economic downturns, when the blush wears off the rose of new information technologies.

The economic "Catch-22" we have always faced is that increased use of the library rarely translates into increased budget dollars. In fact, recessions have often brought a double dilemma of increased use and decreased funding into play. These financial trends suggest increased funding pressure in both the near and long-term. It is important to discuss and explore new financial models for the funding of library service that preserves the public policy advantages of free access while at the same time incorporating the free-enterprise advantages of success translating more readily into increased revenues.

Technological Trends

Technology is certainly where most of the focus of discussion has been in the last several years. The debate over whether or not there will be a public library as we know it is centered here.

Robinson (1992) is but one who raises the question of our continued viability. He raises the spectre of the "electronic book and smart cards in a world of commercial Bookbanks" (p. 54). In some ways it is a scenario not very different than that of Theodor Nelson and Xanadu—his vision of Silverstands that would be everywhere like McDonald's and serve up information on demand for a price (Ditlea, 1990).

Pick any of the dreams or visions, they all spell out the same trend—the majority of information is already available in electronic digitized format, and the public will increasingly obtain their information in that form.
It should be pointed out that this author is an economic determinist—one of those that believes many decisions and actions are determined by underlying economic forces. The switch to digitized information is one of these forces. It is more cost effective for information to be produced electronically. It just so happens that as a by-product of that, you can deliver that same information electronically and add value to it. That has not escaped the publishing industry.

The latter statement is also extremely important to understand when evaluating this trend. Much of the resistance and criticism of this trend—particularly from within the library community—revolves around our sentimental attachment to the printed word and to the idea that people will not spend thousands of dollars for a computer to simply read a book. Those criticisms are largely correct.

We need to remember something we should have learned as card catalogs were automated. If all we were going to do was computerize the card catalog, we might just as well have left it as it was. The real value was in the capabilities the computerization of the catalog gave libraries—i.e., new ways to search for information; the ability to access the catalog from multiple locations, even remotely; and the ability to make massive changes in catalog access quite readily.

We also need to remember that the computers of today may look nothing like the computers that people will use in ten years. Computers can already be purchased for under $1,000. When the convergence of television, telephone, and computers is complete, we may not even recognize that we are using a powerful computer that is linked to a powerful international network. We simply have a keypad (like a remote control) that operates a high definition television that has a cable/telephone line plugged in.

It has been observed that people, including librarians, have difficulty in envisioning new technological improvements except in terms of the technology or medium being replaced. When that is the case, we have difficulty imagining how people would want to purchase it.

We need to remember that the upcoming generations are far less wedded to the print world and much more accepting (or expecting?) of electronic information. And, more importantly, we must realize that the breakthrough developments, which are sure to come, are awaiting those who understand the power of the new technologies. Those who will add value to the print forms of information will drive these new developments. Remember, the explosion in personal computer purchases was owing to the arrival of VisiCalc, the spreadsheet. Then it was possible to do something truly useful with the computer and this made so many more people want one.
We will thus see many halting efforts in the electronic information arena. But gradually there will be breakthroughs in the use of the technology and costs that cause thousands of people to line up in libraries looking for electronic books as they now line up for books on tape.

Another major technological trend facing us is the development of intelligent agents, also known as expert systems or "demon knowbots." This author first read about demon knowbots in an article by Steinberg (1990):

imagine a friendly demon, working in the background of your application as a personal librarian, flinging itself across a vast network of interconnected data repositories, gathering armfuls of reference materials while you work undistracted at your word processor. Such a demon, called a "Knowbot," for knowledge robot, is under development at the Corporation for National Research Initiatives (NRI), a nonprofit data-networking think tank in Reston, Virginia. (p. 135)

Think of them as software robots. If you thought that sounded threatening enough, "the NRI plans to use Knowbot demons as a linchpin of its ambitious Digital Library System" (p. 135).

As proposed in its 1988 report, "The Digital Library Project, Volume I: The World of Knowbots," the NRI would explore the technology needed to create a national "information infrastructure" linking huge collections of bibliographic information on public and private computer systems across the country. (Steinberg, 1990, p. 135)

The import of this is that we will not only see increased competition from the commercial sector for providing access to information, but we may also see competition in our role as guide to the most appropriate sources of information.

Our immediate response to these trends at the institutional level should be to plan flexibly. We need to reshape our institutions so as to respond more quickly than we have been able to in the past. That may mean we hire fewer staff and contract out more work when the needed expertise or service program has a short life expectancy.

We also need to remember that none of these trends functions in isolation. They are all affected by other trends as well. For instance, if people are confronted with 500 channels and an incredible array of information resources that they are expected to pay for every time they use them, their frustration may send them searching for a "free" way of sorting it all out. The jury is still out on whether the public is yet thrilled with the break-up of AT&T which was done in order to introduce more competition into the marketplace. Having to sort
through competing requests to switch to MCI, Sprint, and AT&T produces confusion and frustration in many people who would prefer a simpler choice. When confronted with an incredible array of competing commercial information services, what might the public's reaction be?

These two examples of future technological trends clearly call for what Robinson (1992) proposes:

First, give the best, most cost-effective service possible to the user with the resources and the technology we have....Second, recognize, talk about, and prepare for the future. This takes leadership—leadership with courage to look forward with readiness, not only to accept the realities that technology will bring, but also to implement it for the benefit of the user of information, the consumer of delight, the people who pay us and expect us to serve them. (p. 54)

**INCORPORATING FUTURE TRENDS IN PLANNING/MARKETING**

In order to plan effectively today, we must scan for future trends. Most librarians probably do this to some extent on a passive basis. In its simplest terms, it involves reading widely and evaluating various trends for their relevance to the library.

*Environmental Scanning*

There are several good articles on what is called environmental scanning that describe scanning projects, and they are listed in the reference list following this article. Renfro and Morrison (1984) provide a good overview and description. There are several relevant quotes about scanning for future trends and planning in the article:

However, given the accelerating pace of change, planners and the organizations they serve found that, increasingly, emerging issues in the outside world had a greater impact on the organization's future than internal issues. Thus it became the responsibility of the planner to scan the external environment for emerging issues, however remote. (p. 49)

Passive scanning has traditionally been a source of information about the external world for most decision-makers and, hence, for their organizations. The external environment requires at least passive scanning to maintain a basic level of fluency in current or emerging issues. However, the pace of change in the external environment has moved this scanning from an element of good citizenship to a professional requirement—from a low-level personal interest satisfied by passive scanning to a high-level professional responsibility requiring active scanning. (p. 50)

In general, scanning involves bringing together a group of people from within or across organizations to serve as a core committee. Active scanning would involve developing a list of newspapers,
journals, reports, broadcast media, and so on that the group would divide up and regularly review. Reports would be prepared by committee members on any trends of relevance to the institution. Quarterly meetings would involve discussion of the reports and evaluation of those trends with the most significant potential impacts.

An article by Meeker (1993) does an excellent job of describing the scanning project she codirects for the state of Hawaii. In the article, she delineates the kind of people who populate her fourteen-member scanning committee:

The type of scanners the Project needs most are the sort of people who need the Project—people with curiosity and eclectic interests who can't pass up an opportunity to read new magazines or an out-of-town newspaper. We are also people who jump at the chance of knowing a little bit about something before anyone else does. (p. 23)

Certainly more libraries need to take advantage of this approach in order to identify future trends. The literature discloses that very few have taken advantage of such an approach except in a passive way.

The entire issue of Minnesota Libraries (Newsome, 1987-88) was devoted to environmental scanning in libraries. There are not only several good articles but also good suggestions that local public libraries or a group of libraries ought to explore in order to establish scanning projects to serve local government. This could also be done for the business community.

A scanning project such as this would be a systematic approach to identifying trends that will be affecting libraries, and could also provide an opportunity to develop a new role in relation to government and business that would provide experience in moving from a passive provider of information access to an arbiter of information in support of community decision making.

Scenario Building

A more common method of incorporation of future trends into library planning and marketing is the use of alternative scenarios. One of the more recent examples is the book by Shuman (1989) which this author reviewed in 1990. The book provides an overview of future studies techniques, reviews a number of futurist's past predictions, explores the process of scenario building, and then proceeds to develop nine alternative library scenarios from the "Death of the Library Scenario" to the "Experience Parlour."

It is perhaps most significant for libraries that the only previous book-length treatment of the future of libraries was by Licklider (1965), and it is out of print. This says a great deal about the fact that
the profession has paid very little formal attention to the future, and that may have more to do with whether we have a perspective of everything that is going on around us.

This author has used scenarios to describe alternatives to planning participants to convey a sense of alternatives. In this manner, lay people could begin to discuss and explore—using their imaginations—different alternative paths the development of their library could take.

It might be useful, as some have done, to involve children (or anyone for that matter) in essay contests about what their library might be like in ten, twenty, or fifty years. What we might glean is not so much predictive but more of an idea of how people feel about changes that they sense are coming. Do they seem excited or apprehensive about intelligent agents? It could be an entertaining and informative way of involving people in speculating about the future of their institution.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this article has been to urge readers to consider the importance of more systematically incorporating the study of future trends into the planning for the library. In addition, it is hoped that it will serve as a contribution to a discussion about the future of the public library in a rapidly changing world.

Keep in mind the images with which this discussion began. The roads we take can make all the difference for our institutions. In a time of rapid change and increased competition, the wrong path can lead to extinction. Thus, it is extremely important that the library community focus on a shared vision for the future of libraries.

We need, more than at any time perhaps, a professional tolerance of different thinking. Remember in Wurman's (1989) principles the one about "not being afraid to go in the opposite direction to find solutions to problems." This author has personally found it interesting that, at times, the right thing to do is exactly the opposite of what one might naturally be inclined to do. It is a little like Robinson's (1992) ideas of leadership and its willingness to take risks.

This is a time of unquestionable challenge for libraries. Looking back on the few trends described here, it is apparent that we face increased competition for funds, increased public expectations for service, and growing competition from the private sector in the provision of information. That clearly means we will need a sharper focus on our future, a much more flexible organizational structure to adapt to increasingly rapid change, a much more entrepreneurial spirit, and a very keen sense of our mission and value(s) as public libraries in order to thrive in this new environment. Shuman (1989)
ends his book with a particularly appropriate quote from Pierre Elliot Trudeau: "If we don't solve our own problems, other people will—and the world of tomorrow belongs to the people who will solve them" (p. 126).

We also need all the talent in our profession to explore the issues of what the future means to libraries and for supplying solutions. At the same time, every library science professional needs to make a commitment to effective planning at the local level and incorporate trend identification into planning and strategy building efforts. We need to assure ourselves and our communities that we have mission statements that provide flexibility for dealing with the future and that encompass the values that distinguish us from all the commercial information providers.

If we succeed in that, we might find that the following message is appropriate for all our libraries. It comes from a paper delivered by Bezold (1991) to the White House Conference on Libraries and Information Services. It was a quote from the Library Book by Schucat and appears on the entrance of a branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore: “I am neither walls nor shelves/Nor even the Books that stand in rows/I am the wisdom of the Universe/Captured and arranged for you/I am the Library/Enter....”

REFERENCES

The Olympic Training Field for Planning Quality Library Services

Martha E. Catt

Abstract
Planning for customer-focused library services begins with looking at these services from the customer's viewpoint. With this focus as a guide, the preparation of goals and objectives needs to be a corporate response to a re-examination of the library's business, the library's customers, and what those customers consider to be of value. Determining what is of value to the customer will require ongoing data collection and evaluation of that data for interpretation into a relevant mission statement as well as roles, goals, and objectives. Just like the Olympic athletes, libraries may want to pursue the gold in terms of offering valued and quality services to ever-changing customers' needs.

A Comparison
The athletes at the 1994 Olympic Winter Games shared a common goal—take home the gold medal. Most of the athletes had worked many years for their chance to perform flawlessly for a few minutes in front of millions of people worldwide. The pressure, pain, preparation, and passion the athletes invested was both inspiring and exhilarating.

The media's interpretation of the athletes' journey to the gold at Lillehammer, Norway, revealed that these young people could boast more than the pursuit of a common dream. Although they had come from all over the world, from different cultures and families, and with different educational backgrounds and financial opportunities,
the athletes were tough, focused, disciplined, high-energy risk takers. More importantly, they were good at mastering and respecting the fundamentals of their sports.

The Olympic Team is an example of a well-marketed service organization which presents itself to the public as a source of pride, accomplishment, and motivation. Like libraries, the Olympic Team is supported by public contributions. One team mission is to reinforce American values and the concept that anyone can succeed. The Olympic Team offers a "feeling" of pride, oneness, and sense of well-being. The media are successful in subtly transferring the winning of the gold, ownership, and the team's success of this act to the American public who in turn support the team.

Those affiliated with the process of developing quality and meaningful library services may not be pursuing a Lillehammer gold medal but do pursue the support of the library's public as well as a personal sense of pride and accomplishment. There is a powerful comparison between the organization's pursuit of excellence combined with the need to transfer "ownership" of the accomplishment to the publics served by libraries.

THE CHALLENGE

Studies of individuals and organizations who achieve success demonstrate that planning and preparation are fundamental to the realization of that success. It sounds so easy, especially since the fundamentals of planning are readily understandable. However, it is the daily translation of these fundamentals into a successful program that provides the challenge.

Even though the basics are essentially easy to grasp intellectually, many nonprofit organizations as well as profit corporations continue to founder in the application of basic planning techniques. An organization which has a clear but simple grasp of what it is, who its customers are, what products or services it is in business to provide, where it is going, and how it plans to get there is more the exception than the rule in today's changing marketplace and in today's library.

A cover story in Business Week (March 26, 1990) featured Frances Hesselbein, former head of the Girl Scouts. The Girl Scouts, as does the American Olympic Team, depends on public goodwill and positive perception to prosper and successfully serve. Hesselbein was being heralded as having turned the Girl Scouts into an "innovative, customer-driven enterprise." She started by conducting "a major re-examination of the Girl Scouts' mission. 'We kept asking ourselves very simple questions. What is our business? Who is the customer? and What does the customer consider value?' ....Hesselbein continued,
'When you are clear about your mission, corporate goals and operating objectives flow from it' " (quoted in Byrae, 1990, pp. 70-72).

**THE COMMITMENT**

A key to success, whether on a Norway ski slope or in a corporate boardroom or at the director's desk in a rural public library, is that application of basic planning fundamentals. There is, however, a critical prerequisite to this step. Just like the Olympic athlete, the first step must be commitment to a well-conceived and simple course of action.

That commitment might be defined as acquiring, keeping, and satisfying library customers by providing services and programs that a majority of customers have expressed an interest in receiving. It will mean defining mission statement, roles, goals, and objectives from the customers' point of view rather than operating from the library's historic or even current perspective.

Coincidently this happens to be the basic premise of the marketing concept. Prior to adopting this concept as a course of action, it will be critical for library leaders to determine whether or not they are willing to actually follow through and provide what the customers indicate they want and need. This commitment to providing what the customers prefer will take the library leadership on a journey, which, when examined closely, may seriously challenge the rationale of earlier management strategy. Administrators may be best able to make such a shift in their management approach only if they completely commit to change and understand the potential consequences in advance of implementation.

The fundamental question to ask is "have customers been getting those products and services which library trustees, administrators, and staff members think they need?" The response will be that the services being offered on this basis are not entirely what customers perceive they should receive. The issue for library growth or even survival hinges on the fact that customers may seek and find the same service or information elsewhere at a price they feel is more comfortable.


Service-oriented organizations know that just to survive, and then to grow, they have to do more to distinguish themselves from the competition. New products, new features, and consistently high quality are all important. Without these, good service won't matter. Good service alone won't help if the products and services an organization offers are shoddy. But just offering new products,
new features, and high quality isn't enough, either. Successful, service-oriented organizations realize that service is more than icing on the cake. It is the competitive edge. (p. 13)

Disend continues with an illustration from "one of America's most service-oriented organizations. . .":

In spite of the enormous range of products, services, customers, employees, facilities, systems and situations that exist in today's business world, survival depends on making people happy. The ability to deliver superior service is perhaps the most significant measure of a company's prospects for the future [from a Disney brochure for a seminar called "The Disney Approach to Quality Service"]. (Disend, 1991, p. 13)

To understand this approach, it is vitally important to look first at what the library is doing exclusively from the customers' point of view. By removing the "librarian" hats and replacing them with "customer" hats, readers may be able to more honestly see themselves and the services offered. It may become obvious in this exercise that customers do not care about the same things that librarians care about. Customers of any business, service, or product only care about getting the results that they think are the most useful and economical for them today.

Whenever customers investigate the services offered by a bank, grocery, museum, boutique, or library, they instinctively ask themselves two questions, "What's in it for me?" and "How much will it cost me?" These are the price/value questions. Library customers weigh the trade-off between what they will gain and what they will pay. Customers usually pay with commodities like time, convenience, and energy in addition to tuition, taxes, or fees.

When library administrators adopt this modern marketing concept, they are buying into the idea that the existence of the library is justified through the satisfaction of what customers need and want (Crompton & Lamb, 1986, p. 3).

THE PLANNING

Administrators who adopt the concept that libraries are actually in the exchange business will find that the appropriate application of planning fundamentals is critical to short-term, long-term, or any-term success. Exchange is the price/value scenario. A significant portion of the market has needs which a library may be able to fill by offering selected services and programs. On the other hand, it is not considered exchange when customers are presented a smorgasbord of services which they may or may not perceive as good value for the price they are paying.
The introduction of the "exchange concept" is the fundamental difference between traditional long-range planning and marketing planning. Providing value for the customer in exchange for the customer's tax money, fees, tuition, or time (price) is the focus of the market planning exercise. The components of marketing planning vary in that the focus shifts away from the institution or product to the ever-changing customers' wants and needs.

Marketing starts with finding out what the customers want. For the American public, it may be a winning Olympic Team—a group of athletes who are giving their "all" for the prestige and satisfaction of winning the gold medal for their team and country. For library staffs, a common perception is that customers want everything. Customers may seem to want every book ever written, every journal article published, every CD, video, and audio tape in addition to desiring that the library facility be open twenty-four hours per day, seven days a week. The customer seems to expect the library staff to have read, heard, or watched every item in the library collection so they may recommend just the right title at any given moment. This is the world as it may appear from a library staff's perspective.

However, price/value marketing originates with the determination of what the majority of the customers actually want—not what it may seem that they want. An equally important step from the standpoint of library management will be to match customer wants or preferences with available library resources. It is important to shed traditional thinking and realize that some services may no longer be considered basic and instead might be offered on a partial or full cost recovery basis in order to provide additional services the customers seem to prefer.

It will be critical to not be sidetracked by the wants of the "vocal few." Every community has a vocal minority, which, when allowed to influence policymakers, may cause the production of a distorted program with marginal community support. There are a few individuals in every community who, because of position, politics, resources, talent, or available time, may be able to get and keep attention on a specific idea. Sometimes these ideas may have merit for the majority. However, each idea, regardless of the source, needs to be examined apart from the messenger and in the context of the needs of the majority the library serves.

That is why it is critical to the success of any customer needs evaluation that it be randomly distributed, readily available, and easily understood so that the results will be perceived as meaningful by the users of the library, as well as by those who are potential users of the library's services.
What do service-oriented organizations do differently from other organizations which are not perceived as being service-oriented by their customers?

In 1980, Citibank compiled the results of a study conducted with 18 highly service-oriented companies. Citibank conducted detailed, structured interviews with 90 managers in these companies to learn how they think and what they do to create and maintain excellent service. The Citibank study showed that, regardless of their size or the industry they're in, service-oriented firms have many things in common. They have similar policies and practices for delivering service; they think about service in the same ways; and their people talk about service in the same way, often using the same words. The message is: There's no mystery about what it takes to be a service leader. And the things they do will work in any company. They will also work for associations, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, schools and other organizations too. (pp. 15-16)

Specifically, the Citibank (survey) companies do the following:

1. promote from within;
2. continually monitor service levels via service audits;
3. make sure senior management is actively, visibly committed to service excellence;
4. regularly recognize and reward outstanding service by employees;
5. invest heavily in formal, ongoing training;
6. practice teamwork and open communications;
7. measure service performance against explicit standards;
8. actively seek customer feedback on service and use it in decision making;
9. use employee attitude surveys to continuously assess the organization's internal health; and
10. have a strong sense of employee accountability ("Each of us is the company"). (Disend, 1991, pp. 15-16)

Disend (1991) reports the results of additional surveys which offer concepts that libraries might find helpful in developing customer-driven goals and objectives which are customer driven. The following represents additional key survey results related to organizational approach which might be adapted or adopted by libraries in their pursuit of offering customer-focused services:

- Market-driven (customer-driven) innovation . . . creates value for the customer.
- The value the customer receives is more important than the mere cost of the product or service.
- It's best to expand . . . by edging out with small, sure steps, not giant leaps.
They are obsessive about knowing, even better than customers themselves, what customers want.

They create and manage customer's expectations.

They design their products and services to maximize customer satisfaction.

They make customer satisfaction everybody's business. (pp. 17-18)

Indeed, service organizations such as libraries need to continuously provide, as well as monitor, those mechanisms which successfully collect data from customers. These opinion-gathering devices or processes need to be in place to position the library so that it can readily adapt to changing market interests. Examples of such mechanisms might include customer report cards such as annual surveys which ask customers to rate the library against other information sources which the customer uses. Community surveys conducted every four to five years can provide increased information about a broader base of customer and potential customer needs and wants. Quick response cards titled, “Please comment on the service you received today” will offer insight for consideration. Focus groups organized to allow the library to probe for ideas about new products and services and evaluate existing ones will be useful. And, equally important, the administration of ongoing data retrieval needs to become second nature to staff. As a result, data collection will become perceived as a “normal” business activity to staff, while eliminating its potential threat to the status quo.

Often, in an effort to save time or money or both, administrators elect to conduct customer surveys and engage focus groups without the assistance of an outside independent resource. Librarians collecting and interpreting data collected from customers without professional guidance are similar to lawyers serving as their own counsel or doctors being their own physician. Customers may not be totally honest when asked to say what they think to the same people who, for instance, help their children find resources for homework assignments.

THE TRAINING

Besides data collection, it is important to institute an aggressive and adequately funded program for ongoing staff training. Staff need to be well trained to be able to provide responsive customer service. This is a financial investment in quality service which is required to ensure that staff is current in relevant areas of professional expertise as well as the provision of quality library service. A plan for training each employee should be established in every library. Because the world both inside and outside libraries is changing so rapidly, focused
staff training programs will help to keep the library responsive to the resulting changes in customer requirements and desires as well as the library's abilities to meet those needs.

When a library has been more product- than customer-oriented, it may be difficult to change that focus; after all, it is mired in tradition and practice. As Joel Barker (1990) says in his film, "Discovering Our Future: The Business of Paradigms," this shift in focus from product to customer could be defined as a paradigm or as a change in the way involvement with customers has traditionally been perceived. Often paradigm changes come from outside a field rather than from within. Some libraries have a longer journey than others to becoming customer focused in their offerings. It may be helpful to educate ourselves to marketing as it has evolved to embrace the exchange concept. This study may help librarians determine where the foundation for their present understanding begins so that they may move beyond that level, if necessary, to one of total commitment to the customer.

Marketing is an often misused and misunderstood term. The explanation for this common misunderstanding may be based on the fact that the paradigm of marketing has actually shifted in three major ways since the concept was conceived. These shifts have caused a general misunderstanding of the contemporary concept of the term "marketing" and its implementation.

Prior to the 1920s, the focus in marketing was on producing large quantities of products as inexpensively as possible. Another way of looking at this era would be to use Emerson's mousetrap analogy. "If a man makes a better mouse-trap, the world will beat a path to his door."

For libraries, this translated into the "library" being the focus rather than the people it served. The library staff and trustees decided what they could do best or what they wanted to do and then offered those services. If the customers didn't use the services offered, the rationalization was that the staff and trustees had done the best they could and something must be wrong with the customers. It would have never occurred to them that the library itself might be off track by focusing in the wrong direction (inward rather than outward).

Eventually the production phase (or marketing paradigm number one) gave way to the sales era (marketing paradigm number two) during the late 1920s. For instance, everyone had a "mousetrap" so industry needed to become more diligent in creating need so customers would be compelled to buy more mousetraps.

For libraries, this second shift in the marketing paradigm translated into services being promoted vigorously in order to increase usage and justify budgets. The take-it-or-leave it approach of the
pre-1920s gave way to this aggressive sales approach which dominated business and industry until about 1960 and still is used widely by libraries today.

In 1960, Levitt wrote an article which appeared in the *Harvard Business Review* titled "Marketing Myopia." The article served as a thought-provoking milestone. Levitt used railroads to illustrate how the sales approach was no longer appropriate or adequate to secure and retain the public's business. His theory focused on the fact that the railroads were no longer growing in the 1960s because the transportation need was being filled by other industries (p. 45).

According to Levitt, the railroad industry had erred in its analysis of what business they were in. They were not, as they perceived, in the "railroad business" but, more importantly, railroads were in the "transportation business."

Levitt (1960) made the following observation about the railroad's demise:

The railroads did not stop growing because the need for passenger and freight transportation declined. That grew. The railroads are in trouble today not because the need was filled by others (cars, trucks, airplanes, even telephones), but because it was not filled by the railroads themselves. They let others take customers away from them because they assumed themselves to be in the railroad business rather than in the transportation business. The reason they defined their industry wrong was because they were railroad-oriented instead of transportation-oriented; they were product-oriented instead of customer-oriented. (p. 45)

Levitt's observations changed the paradigm of marketing for a third time. Marketing efforts shifted to the attempt to determine customers' needs and find the most appropriate ways to meet those needs. The selling concept of the previous era had now given way to identifying customer wants and needs first and then developing programs and services in response to those particular needs (Crompton & Lamb, 1986, pp. 2-6).

Barker (1992) calls this "change in the fundamental rules" a paradigm shift.

Paradigms are like water to fish. They are invisible in many situations because it is "just the way we do things." Often they operate at an unconscious level. Yet they determine, to a large extent, our behavior... [Paradigms] have a profound effect on how we live our lives, how we value those things in our lives, how we solve the problems in our lives. They are at the core of who we are and where we are going. To ignore the power of paradigms to influence your judgment is to put yourself at significant risk when exploring the future. To be able to shape your future, you have to be ready and able to change your paradigms. (p. 125)
Shifting from "business as usual" to a customer focus may be a tremendous endeavor for some library administrators and trustees. To consider the consequences if that shift is not made, one has only to substitute the word "libraries" for "railroads" and "access to information" for "transportation" in the Levitt treatise.

Many libraries are still in the aggressive sales mode, though they would probably deny this with exuberance if queried. Their marketing paradigm is stuck. However, in order to expand the public's scarce resources as responsibly as possible, it is important to consider moving (and, it is hoped, to actually move) from the sales paradigm to the exchange paradigm of the contemporary marketing concept.

THE EXECUTION

The significant managerial value of marketing planning based on customer input is that the process can provide a clear course of action. "General" less specific directions need to be set aside in favor of the preparation of tactical goals and objectives which are customer focused. When library managers commit their operations to the marketing planning process, it is equally important that they commit to the preparation of a thorough and carefully researched document which mirrors the interests of local customers. Anything less will result in the expenditure of scarce resources for a plan that may fail. This line of action will identify specific and popular customer wants and offer customers value which they have identified as an important exchange for the price they are willing to pay. The process forces library administrators and staffs to terminate those services which customers no longer (or never did) value in exchange for those they value perhaps significantly more. The focus channels dollars and other resources where customers perceive they will receive the most value. At the same time, less emphasis will be placed on those services which the majority of customers value less or even the vocal minority value highly. It also may mean that some less popular services may be offered on a full or partial cost recovery basis so that more highly valued services may be offered to customers.

When changes are made, customers need to be informed that they have been made especially when those changes have been suggested by the customers themselves. The customers' perception is fragile, and this perception needs to be regarded by library staff, administration, and trustees as an essential element in quality program development. Likewise, finding a way to routinely respond to customer complaints and suggestions in a positive manner is critical to success.

The team responsible for preparing as well as implementing plans needs to "buy into" the exchange focus in order for the process
to be successful. Sometimes achievement of this level of commitment requires the introduction of an individual especially skilled in team development who is able to bring persons with diverse perspectives and abilities together to a point of workable consensus. It is essential that each team member commit to the focus, the plan, as well as the contents of the final document.

Any successful plan will limit the number of expectations to a level which can be reasonably accomplished. Three or four major objectives may be both realistic and a maximum load that the library staff can effectively handle in any given area of the operation. Giving staff a list of too many expectations can be just as fatal as giving them too few. Groups as well as individuals often have difficulty focusing effectively for sustained periods of time on multiple complex tasks.

Once the plan is defined, finding creative ways to keep the library mission as well as goals and objectives perpetually before boards, staff, administrators, as well as the customers is important to its overall success. Everyone knows someone who has spent the "taxpayers' dollars" to produce a planning document which was put in a drawer and drawn out once a year, more or less, with no special regard for its potential direction. With money increasingly scarce, and consumers more fiscally aware, customers expect to see results for the price they are paying. The plan and the direction in which the library is moving needs to be presented regularly to both those the library serves and those involved in facilitating the plan. The planning document serves as a road map outlining the direction the organization has chosen.

The words in the plan need to be posted strategically so they become a constant reminder of a group commitment. Recently a large Midwestern metropolitan Presbyterian church had a surprise visitor. While working in his study, the minister noticed a long black shiny limousine had pulled into the church parking lot. Since this was not a common occurrence, the minister proceeded to investigate who the limousine visitor was. Near the church sanctuary, the minister was both surprised and pleased to be able to greet Robert Schuller from the Crystal Cathedral in California. Schuller was visiting the city on a book promotion tour and had heard about the church from one of its members. The member had spoken with Schuller while he was being interviewed on a local radio talk show. Schuller explained to the local minister how he had come to stop at the church and exclaimed, "I noticed you have your mission posted in the elevator. I like that!" The minister responded, "Yes, we are intentional here in our regard and adherence to our purpose as a congregation." Schuller turned to his assistant and said, "Write that word 'intentional' down; I don't use that word enough."
Becoming intentional in regard to the development, incorporation, and realization of the organization's mission is critical to its success. Achieving unanimity of purpose requires that each staff member, each supervisor, and each board member personally participate at some level in the development phase of the mission and roles. During the development phase, as is true during the implementation phase, each team member will need to be continuously reminded about who they are and what they wish to achieve. Participation buys ownership which spawns support and interest in achieving long-term success for the organization.

By being intentional, it is hoped, the result will be internalization. Focusing on its mission and roles will keep the library on its chosen path. When every person immediately involved in the potential success of the organization can independently verbalize what the library is about, the realization of its chosen goals and objectives will become second nature to its daily operation.

Another example of constant reinforcement in the internalization of organization goals is illustrated by the experience visitors to the Atlanta, Georgia, Chamber of Commerce headquarters will have. Immediately visitors will be struck by the presence of the chamber's mission statement which is printed on a large fabric banner hanging behind the receptionist's desk. It appears that the mission statement has been edited and re-edited directly on the banner. The authors have boldly written their names across the bottom of the banner.

In addition to having the statement perpetually before the organization and its customers, other important elements include the use of brief and simple straightforward statements which make the mission and goals easier to internalize.

A common objection to the planning exercise is that there is no time. Library staffs are so busy fighting daily fires, there seems to be little time or energy left to plan for the future. This is a common deterrent to planning. Again, just like the Olympic athlete, it takes a commitment of time, attention, and resources. Planning requires taking a few minutes a day for a period of time to plan how to plan. It is not important that every person on the team spend an equal amount of time on planning. However, it is critical that every team member have an opportunity to participate personally. And, in addition to keeping elements of the plan simple and straightforward, it is equally important to keep the process straightforward and easy to manage.

To be appropriately involved, all participants need to be prepared to participate. They need to be assured that, whatever their role, they will be able to contribute value to the process. It is also important at this point in the process to advise the team that the individual
components of the plan will need to be supportive of the mission and corporate direction as well as be consistent and not compromise available resources.

In essence, the determination of a workable and practical process which all participants understand and agree to will be critical to successfully moving forward in the marketing planning process. Keeping a written record of a predetermined process for future reference through the planning phase is important to achieving consistency and will ultimately save time in "trying to remember" the corporate approach to which all team members had agreed upon initially. "Laying the ground rules" would be another way to define process. Yet another way to look at this effort is the mere act of trying to keep everyone involved on the same page at the same time. How is the group going to get from here to there? Who will do what? What are the fundamental rules applicable to each process? How often will meetings be held? Keeping the planning team together is fundamental to moving forward in both the planning and implementation of a well-conceived and workable plan.

THE GOAL

Many writers have already explained the essential characteristics of goals and objectives as applied in the planning process. Goals are broad statements about intentions, areas of interest, or key issues. Objectives are more specific than goals. Objectives are measurable and explain how goals will be accomplished.

Dirks and Daniel (1991), in their book Marketing Without Mystery, offer a series of worksheets which provide a structure for preparing marketing objectives. The questions they recommend be asked while preparing each objective include: What is to be achieved? By when? By whom? How will it be measured? Minimum and maximum limits are added to further define each of these four questions (p. 41).

Goals and objectives need to support the mission of the library. Objectives need to be linked to the single goal it supports as well as to accompanying objectives. Goals are usually long term and objectives are more short term. Goals are not measurable and objectives are.

Goals might be grouped in categories such as the specific services which customers expect, resource management, and administration. Goals need to be clear, always relevant to the customer, and, most importantly, need to reflect reality. When goals are not clear an organization will drift. On the other hand, focus and energy in any organization will result when its participants know where they are collectively based.
Bennis and Nanus, in their book *Leaders* (1985), identified skills that leaders possess. The following comments are paraphrased:

- acknowledging and sharing uncertainty in task force settings with colleagues;
- using their mistakes as learning experiences;
- engaging in goal-setting exercises to force re-examination of current assumptions and priorities;
- using their interpersonal skills to encourage others to join in the search for new ideas;
- constantly enhancing their understanding of their own limits and biases by testing their views against those of knowledgeable colleagues and outside experts (p. 189).

These authors observe that people are more likely to enthusiastically follow leaders who set specific goals and objectives.

The current trend in management is to allow department managers to play a significant role in the development and preparation of goals and objectives since these are the people upon whom the successful implementation of the plan depends. The department level staffs' ownership will serve to aid in the accomplishment of the group's goals and objectives.

Steiner (1990) offers ten important criteria to consider when developing objectives (paraphrased):

1. **Suitable.** The actual achievement of objectives must support the organization's mission.
2. **Measurable Over Time.** The achievement of objectives needs to be expressed in quantifiable terms like dollars, time, ratio, or percentages.
3. **Feasible.** The resources need to be available—like time, talent, or money—to achieve the objectives as stated.
4. **Acceptable.** Proposed objectives need to fit the value system of the organization.
5. **Flexible.** The objectives need to be fluid enough to be changeable in the event of unforeseen contingencies.
6. **Motivating.** Easily obtainable objectives do not challenge or motivate better performance. Objectives need to stretch attitudes and performance.
7. **Understandable.** The choice of words used to describe objectives needs to be simple and straightforward.
8. **Commitment.** The players on the team need to mutually agree to do what is necessary to accomplish the objectives as stated.
9. **People Participation.** Objectives provide specific roles and direction for those who are responsible for their achievement.
10. **Linkage.** Objectives need to relate back to the basic purpose of the organization and be consistent with the objectives of upper management (Steiner, 1990, pp. 165-67).

In addition, Jacob (1990) suggests that these questions be asked when developing objectives:

- Has a specific date for completion been identified?
- Have specific results been identified?
- Are these results measurable (will you know when you are done)?
- Can others see the relationship between the objective and the goal it supports? (p. 67)

**FINISHING FIRST**

On the Olympic training field of planning for customer-focused library services, concepts such as the following need to be thoughtfully considered and implemented if the pursuit of the gold or quality service is to be perceived as an acceptable corporate value:

- **Attitude.** Both the individual and collective attitudes of the library administration, managers, staff, and trustees toward providing quality customer focused service need to be perpetually monitored and challenged. Are library staffs indeed listening and performing as customers want?
- **Internalization.** Participants need to have the library mission become second nature to them. Posting the mission statement in several conspicuous places is a good way to constantly reinforce the agreed-to course of action.
- **Process.** Development of a means of successfully achieving all tasks in the planning process is critical to success. The process provides the road map which all have agreed will take the organization forward.
- **Data Collection.** Collection of information about what the customers perceive as value needs to become a continuous process.

The following represents additional Olympic-type training or planning tips which will be useful in the pursuit of offering quality services:

- **Respect the simplicity of planning basics.** Keep the process and application of the basics simple. Avoid complexities.
- **Expose all players to opportunities to learn and relearn appropriate applications of planning basics including data collection.**
- **Examine personal philosophy regarding success.** Is it more important for the library as an organization to succeed than for a single individual or group to succeed?
Become focused or intentional about a single mission. Keep the mission and supporting goals and objectives before all participants and customers continuously.

Generating a score of ideas can be stimulating. Determining whether these same ideas need to be translated into real services is a more difficult task. Often the later step is omitted. It is a common pattern to go directly from idea to implementation. Each part must fit the whole.

Resources can impose limits on what it is practical to offer. It is important to be realistic.

Develop a mutually agreed upon direction for each part of the process. Document the chosen process.

Determine whether customer focus is a concept the library can exclusively adopt. The result of this acceptance will be providing what customers want rather than what the leaders of the library may want.

Determine what could stand in the way of being successful and how potential deterrents will be managed to achieve quality service.

Train and retrain staff to be able to successfully offer what customers want. Remember to spend time with new participants to help them see and buy into the course that the library is presently pursuing.

Use talents available to the library creatively and wisely. Get outside help. Put a team together which brings a variety of strengths. Volunteers can be valuable and valued friends. Match volunteer talents carefully to tasks. An outsider can be a tremendous asset if appropriately assigned.

Compromise is not a sign of weakness but one of strength. Bringing a host of ideas together and developing them into a focused plan can be challenging but ultimately rewarding.

Actively solicit frequent customer input. Determine how to use this information to make adjustments to services.

Respect tradition but question it. Ask if the traditional services are still working or merely comfortable and easiest to offer?

Value each customer like a friend. Monitor customer losses and determine what can be done to avoid future loss.

Review progress toward the achievement of goals and objectives regularly at both board and staff meetings. Ask the customers about progress too.

CONCLUSION

Perhaps libraries of all sizes, shapes, and types are at a crossroads in determining their future. Terms like "re-engineering" and "re-inventing" are becoming common in the discussion of what organizations, both profit and nonprofit, will need to face in order
to flourish. The way things have always been done is no longer adequate. The basic rules remain the same, but the interpretation is changing. The focus must shift from inward to outward. The customers' needs and perceptions are relevant. Service is giving something of value in exchange for something else of value. Where is the plan taking the library? Is it a worthwhile and value-adding journey?

Expect this journey to be different than any one previously taken. Expect the pursuit of providing quality library services to be worthwhile but perpetually challenging. Expect difficulties. Expect to re-invent the library in the context of what the customers think is important. Expect to be realistic about available resources. Expect success!

REFERENCES

The Library's Product and Excellence

MARY C. BUSHING

ABSTRACT
In this time of transition for libraries, the use of marketing techniques to identify appropriate products (services, programs, and materials) and to evaluate the effectiveness of these products can be helpful. Libraries have failed to adopt or to recognize the use of marketing for three reasons: (1) a simple misunderstanding that equates marketing with the publicity and public relations function; (2) a lack of understanding of what marketing is and what it involves so that libraries fail to recognize many existing management and collection-development operations as marketing components; and (3) disagreement about the role of the client in determining the library's products and marketing mix. A modified marketing construct, that of a societal-marketing orientation which tries to balance the immediate demands of patrons with the long-term needs of society, may help to address the "good" versus "right" product argument. Product excellence can be defined in a number of ways including effectiveness, optimization of resources, and traditional library selection terms such as quality, timeliness, accuracy, completeness, and availability. The utilization of marketing theory and techniques improves the library's position and helps to assure that the library will be offering products which will be wanted and valued by a client group. Evidence of the value placed upon quality products will be provided by use statistics and political and fiscal support.
INTRODUCTION

For a number of years there have been those who have predicted the demise of the library as we have known it. The library literature is full of discussions of the virtual library, the library without walls, or the library as gateway rather than as warehouse. These discussions raise questions about the “contents” of the new library of the future. What will this library look like? What services, programs, and materials will be offered? How can we find answers to important questions about such things as: the relationship of access to ownership; the appropriate content and extent of collections; the right mix of services for a specific community of potential clients; and sources of adequate support for library activities? In order to address these concerns, we must first determine what the role of the library is to be. What is the business of the library? It is the answer to this question which is the crucial first step in defining the future. Once a role is selected or the business is defined, the staff can begin to translate the organization’s identity into appropriate products to be offered to clients. At least for public libraries, the American Library Association’s publication, Planning and Role Setting for Public Libraries (McClure et al., 1987) has done much to institutionalize the steps in establishing a specific role for the individual library and to formalize plans for implementation of that role through the provision of appropriate products in the form of services, materials, and programs. The process of identifying and formalizing a role and mission has become accepted practice in even the smallest public library. However, the relationship of roles to products is not well established in all libraries.

Marketing offers both a theory and a process by which libraries can link products, results, and roles. Marketing can assist libraries in determining their future and in identifying quality products—services, programs, and materials. A marketing audit and the resulting plan can contribute to a library’s ability to find a niche in the present as well as in the future and to fill that niche by an optimal allocation of resources. A marketing orientation can assist libraries in defining their role and in guaranteeing their future. Marketing provides a theoretical framework within which to address the specific library and information science questions facing public, school, special, and academic libraries in both the public and private sectors. What the library will look like and what it will offer as products can be determined through the use of modern marketing theory and practice.

If marketing provides tools that will assist libraries in their attempt to define themselves and their roles, why have librarians and governing authorities been slow to adopt the strategies of modern marketing despite the initial enthusiasm exhibited within the profession? This
failure to consciously adopt marketing in library practice may be because of at least one of the following reasons: a misunderstanding of marketing and its application in the library environment; a failure to recognize and understand a marketing orientation and its processes even when they are present; or a disagreement with the basic tenet of marketing that places the emphasis upon the client rather than the product, the profit, or the organization itself. The first explanation for the failure of the library community to embrace marketing is the easiest to address and to remedy. The fact that many misunderstand what marketing is and equate it with a sort of sophisticated public relations effort is fairly easy to address. While this misunderstanding is quite widespread, it can be handled by providing better information and education about marketing theory and process. Such information can present the broader implications of marketing and can place the publicity and public relations components of a marketing plan within the larger context of a total marketing plan.

The second reason for the failure of library organizations to adopt marketing theory may be more a matter of failing to recognize marketing than a rejection of the theory or the practical application of that theory. Many organizations may not be as far from adopting modern marketing theory as they think they are. Given current administrative operations and theories, collection development practices, and resource allocation considerations, libraries already have in place some of the components that might contribute to an application of marketing theory for the benefit of the library and the community of clients, especially as such theory impacts products. As Conroy (1984) observed ten years ago:

Although often not done consciously or capably, marketing is not unknown in libraries. For example, when planning new facilities or services, library managers have consistently taken into account demographic shifts, patterns of use, user need and promotion efforts. Without the concept and consciousness of marketing per se, libraries nonetheless have found various pieces of the marketing function so essential that they have used them. (p. 11)

In management, collection-development practice, program planning and evaluation, and, in other areas of library operations, marketing practices are used, but are simply not recognized as possible components of a comprehensive marketing plan. This article attempts to address some of the issues that link current library practice with marketing theory and to explore ways in which the concepts of marketing apply to product excellence and success for libraries of all types.

Understanding Marketing

Majaro (1993) presents the definition of marketing used by the Chartered Institute of Marketing as one of the most succinct available:
“Marketing is the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably” (p. 10). This definition describes the process, but it fails to clarify the full significance of the way in which marketing can and should pervade the whole organization if it is to be effective. It is important to understand that marketing really refers to two distinct, but interrelated concepts: (1) marketing as an organizational attitude, philosophy, a set of shared values; and (2) marketing as a function, a set of activities, a process.

The first concept, that of a marketing orientation, can be contrasted with organizations which are either production (product) or profit oriented. A marketing-oriented organization, on the other hand, is more concerned with attempting to identify and solve customers' problems than it is concerned with supplying discrete products and services or making a profit. Through the four Ps of the marketing mix—product, price, place (of distribution), and promotion—the market-oriented organization or library defines its activities and their resource allocations for the satisfaction of customers, clients, or patrons. While products and profits are important components of the exchange process, the difference is in the emphasis, the shared values within the organization, and the primary motivation for organizational activity. A marketing-oriented group will have a marketing attitude that permeates the entire organization and helps it anticipate events and needs. Evidence strongly suggests that companies that have adopted a marketing orientation are more likely to attain success than those with other orientations (Kotler, 1991; Majaro, 1993). For libraries, Baker (1993) notes that “there is evidence to support the fact that marketing may lead to a broader base of users” (p. 17) as well. A broader base of user/supporters can then be used to acquire resources to further expand and enhance library operations.

Kotler's (1975) definition of marketing is the one most often encountered in the library literature on marketing:

the analysis, planning, implementation, and control of carefully formulated programs designed to bring about voluntary exchanges of values with target markets for the purpose of achieving organizational objectives. It relies heavily on designing the organization's offering in terms of the target markets' needs and desires, and on using effective pricing, communication, and distribution to inform, motivate and service the markets. (p. 5)

Conroy (1984) summarizes Kotler's long definition by explaining marketing as the organization's effective management of exchange relations with various clients in order to achieve the organization's objectives (p. 11). Such a definition reveals marketing's holistic nature, broad scope, and applicability to a wide range of management activities.
The key points in the marketing concept have been enumerated by many educators and authors in the library field. In each discussion, the concept of marketing as a management tool and process, and the importance of the marketing mix of product, price, place (distribution), and promotion are stressed. Weingand (1987) in particular has stressed the relationship of marketing to the planning process for public libraries. Using a model of convergence and merging, she contends that: "When marketing and planning are combined into a single process, the resultant management tool is one of power and clarity. It is an innovative approach that can make the difference between an information service that is adequate and one that shines" (p. 20). The marketing handbook prepared and distributed by the State Library of Ohio (1993) addresses the issue of integrating other managerial functions, in particular the planning and role-setting process for public libraries, into the marketing organization.

Many librarians complain that they are so busy attempting to stretch resources to the limit, to meet the needs of everyone, that they lack the time and energy to devote to marketing's second aspect, that of processes and activities such as marketing audits and plans. The series of processes and activities that constitute this other aspect of marketing requires systematic and continuous analysis of data, prioritization of goals, analysis of audiences, analysis of products (services, materials, and programs), and identification and anticipation of customer requirements. To be successful, these activities require leadership and a continuing administrative commitment to the allocation of time and energy. A series of poorly integrated or disjointed activities does not constitute a marketing plan. In times of scarce resources, administrators hesitate to ask the staff and others involved with the library to accept yet another project and continuing responsibility. Just when the library might need it most, it is least likely to formally adopt marketing theory and practice in an organization where product (services, materials, and programs) selection, quality, and evaluation have been segregated in different departments. Libraries have a tradition of hierarchical structure which separates members of the organization by function both in terms of level and type of activity. Technical service functions and products (catalogs, OPACs, access tools) are distinct from public service functions and products (reference service, programming, and circulation). Further, public service is often divided into units that are defined by the age of the clients they serve so that children's services and products are distinct from similar adult services and products. Such segmentation further inhibits the ability of the library organization to initiate a comprehensive marketing plan and to coordinate marketing activities. The right hand may not know what the left hand is doing. With a more
holistic approach to the organization and its operations and with the adoption of organizational structures based upon teams, quality circles and more open arrangements in libraries, librarians may find the introduction of marketing theory to be easier to accomplish.

ACHIEVING CONGRUITY

For approximately fifteen years, the library literature on marketing has been growing, but, during this same time, there have been many other tools, processes, and innovations introduced into the mainstream of library operations, especially in the areas of collection development, resource sharing, and management. Each of these tools or theories has its own vocabulary and framework which appears to supersede, rather than to complement, other theories. For some librarians, marketing theory has been lost in the overwhelming changes and advances in the field during the past two decades. Identifying the processes and basic techniques of marketing currently being used by librarians as part of other theoretical management and library science practices, may help library organizations understand how marketing theory complements, and often enhances, these other constructs and practices. Although some of the administrative and resource management theories within the organization have become part of the organizational culture, the collection-development activities, an important component of the product line of most libraries, are in a state of transition because of issues of access rather than ownership and electronic versus more traditional formats. How does marketing fit into the existing library operation? What can marketing contribute to planning and role setting, project management, TQM (total quality management), collection assessment, resource sharing, access services, re-engineering the organization, or whatever initiative or structure for progress is part of the culture of a particular library? If libraries are going to embrace marketing theory and use it to the best advantage, it must be seen as a means to enhance existing organizational practice. Marketing theory and practice must be presented as complementary to other management and library-oriented theories and practices rather than as independent and isolated operations. Baker (1993) notes that "there is mounting evidence that marketing, with its emphasis on meeting user needs and on adopting an overall systematic plan to meet library objectives, can help libraries operate more efficiently, provide collections and services that will better satisfy patrons, and attract more resources" (p. 3). Thus, it is in the best interests of libraries to consider marketing theory as a means to ensure survival and as a means to adapt to a world of constant change.

One way to explore means by which libraries might achieve more congruity between existing library operations and marketing practice...
is to examine the management and library science theories currently in use. The library profession and management science have provided new labels for some theoretical applications over the past few years, but the practices themselves can often be traced through the professional literature for decades. Management theories in libraries, as in other living and changing organizations, have cyclical periods of popularity. Their popularity and use decline as these theories fail to meet the needs of the macro-environment and the micro-organization. Although these management and library science theories are not often being "sold" in the marketplace with a distinct price tag attached, they are products and have life cycles as other products do. The product life cycle consists of an initial period of emergence or introduction followed by stages of accelerating growth, maturity, and decline. This cycle assumes that products have a limited life span, although some may have multiple life cycles under similar names and contents. It further assumes that, during the distinct stages in the life cycle, the product will present unique challenges to the "seller" or provider in terms of production costs, pricing, marketing, resource allocation, and importance. As Kotler (1975) points out: "The product life cycle has characterized the history of many products, services, persons, places, organizations, and ideas. One has only to think of buggy whips, slavery, Hubert Humphrey, the World Federalists, and the Single Tax" (p. 168). Each of us can identify some of the theories and constructs we are currently using to manage present resources and to plan for a variety of possible futures. We can imagine each of these theories, along with their vocabularies, forms, and sometimes unique definitions, to be somewhere on a curve representative of the theory/product's life cycle. Is our organizational culture riding on theories that can be represented on the upward wave of innovation in their life cycles, or are we hold-outs for traditional ways of doing things and riding the tail of the product/theory life cycle as it declines and possibly disappears? Compared to the present life cycle position of modern marketing theory for the nonprofit organization and for libraries, how are your organization's management, collection-development, or program management theories situated on their imaginary life cycle curve?

By envisioning the possible product life cycle of our favorite management and collection-development theories and library practices, we can determine into which of Rogers's (1983) adopter groups we fall as individuals and organizations. Such reflection may open our minds and those of our colleagues to the possibilities of change and growth. This visualization may make it easier to recognize ways in which we are being isolated from additional or different ways of approaching the business of librarianship and library products.
Rogers's categories for the adoption of innovations consist of the following: the innovators who are often responsible for developing the innovation or product; the venturesome early adopters who are most often leaders; the early deliberate majority who are followers willing to take some risks; the late skeptical majority who only go for the sure thing; and the tradition bound laggards who are suspicious of changes and innovations and fail to adopt "new" theories and practices until they are on their "way out" or have themselves become tradition. Such reflection upon the life cycle of management tools and library practices as products and our role as consumers or customers of such products can provide insights into our management and personality styles, but it can also help us to let go of obsolete frameworks and practices and to move on to new possibilities. We can begin to see possible parallels between existing practice and organizational culture and the vocabulary, activities, and theory of marketing. Many marketing techniques exist within library organizations as part of strategic planning, accountability measures, and particularly as activities within the program-planning and the collection-development operations. What we have often failed to do is to understand these processes and techniques as components in a marketing audit and plan. By recognizing these operations as part of a larger theoretical framework, we can improve our holistic approach to library management and operations while incorporating a new conscious marketing orientation.

**PRODUCTS: SERVICES, PROGRAMS, AND MATERIALS**

In a holistic approach to library operations, the search for excellence is implicit in the attempt to unify the organization under one mission and a vision of the ideal future for the library. The library's success depends upon the quality and excellence of its products. As stated by Weingand (1987): "There is simply no substitute for a top-notch product; inferior or inadequate design will scuttle the most meritorious planning and marketing strategies" (p. 56). The products that libraries provide are varied and ever changing and consist of core, tangible, and augmented products. Kotler's (1982) definition of product is "anything that can be offered to a market to satisfy a need. It includes physical objects, services, persons, places, organizations, and ideas" (p. 289). Products include all of the goods and services made available through the library. These products might include materials owned by the library and services provided by staff of the library, but increasingly the products might also be such things as contracted services from other providers for which the library serves as a type of agent for the client. Products might be electronic information or access to information actually held by other libraries. The
ways in which libraries package information and organize access points between the client and the information are also products of the library. Therefore, cataloging, classifying, OPACs, indexes, and remote access to its own, and those of other libraries, collections, are also part of the library's product line and are directly related to the client market. Further, products consist of both existing and potential services and materials. Traditional reference service, preschool story hour, or Internet access to library-produced databases or other information are all products. Such products may have been in existence for a long period of time and be either declining or still in demand, while other products may only be in the planning, designing, or introduction stages. In addition, the concept of product life cycle, referred to earlier in the discussion of managerial theories, can be considered for each product, whether the product consists of materials or hard goods, access channels, or programs and services. The product life cycle illustrates the need for products to be reviewed, rearranged, redesigned, repackaged, renamed, or even retired. This is an extremely useful idea to introduce into a library organization where often conservatism and resistance to change make it difficult to critically examine any product, good or bad, effective or not, once it is in place. As library authors, educators, and leaders have long tried to stress, the library—any library—is doomed to failure if it attempts to be all things to all people, at all times. Marketing always requires choices of what products should be offered because "no institution can do everything" (State Library of Ohio et al., 1993, p. 3). Products, whether in the form of services, programs, or materials, must be constantly evaluated in terms of their ability to satisfy the community of users so as to justify the support provided by the community or organization. "Like old soldiers in the patriotic song, some products never die, they only fade away. That is to say, they do not feature in policy decisions but simply drift along" (Majaro, 1993, p. 86). Rather than have them drift along consuming valuable resources with little result, the marketing process provides a systematic means by which to evaluate products in a context that helps to eliminate territorial considerations and turf protection. The library organization's comfort level and sentiment toward a program, a collection, or a service may long outlast the product's usefulness for the clients. The need to adapt to ever-changing environments and patron needs is verified by Majaro (1993) who notes that "all the evidence seems to suggest that product life-cycles are becoming shorter and shorter" (p. 71). The realities of our information society, electronic communication, the media, and the virtual library are helping to accelerate the rate of change in our worlds.

Kotler's (1975) five distinguishing characteristics of products can be applied to the varied products of the library. These five
characteristics are: quality, features, styling, brand name, and packaging (p. 164). Of Kotler's five product characteristics, the one that receives the most discussion within libraries is that of quality. In practice, it is generally recognized that the other four characteristics contribute to or diminish product quality. Defining what we mean by quality in a product is more difficult than agreeing that it matters. Quality may be considered synonymous with excellence, but it may also be a variable "grade" or measure of "goodness" for an item. For the purposes of considering product quality in the marketing arena for libraries, "quality" can best be understood as an indication of the relative goodness or degree of perfection of an item. These characteristics may be used to describe products and to indicate a degree of appropriateness relative to a particular market segment or client group. Thus, for libraries, brand name may mean the publisher of a book, the production company or producer for a video, or even the degree and degree-granting institution of a reference librarian. Packaging can be described in terms of attractiveness or appeal, durability, and condition. The type of packaging, the styling, and the features are all elements that distinguish one product from another. These descriptive elements serve to identify products and their variable features that can affect the marketing exchange. These standard characteristics can be applied during the marketing audit to identify and describe the product line of the library.

The differences between core product and tangible product, and tangible product and augmented product are useful distinctions for those responsible for product design, implementation, evaluation, and delivery. A core product is what the individual consumer really wants, and it is often something intangible such as entertainment, wisdom, self-knowledge, or spiritual fulfillment, but librarians do not fill these needs directly by "dancing on their desks, teaching classes in nuclear physics, or conducting prayer meetings" (Baker, p. 53). Instead, libraries provide tangible products in the form of services and materials which meet user needs and requirements. Tangible products have the various characteristics of styling, features, quality level, packaging, and brand name, which determine their ability to meet the needs of clients, whether the clients are theoretical market segments, or real, named individual persons. The augmented product is "the totality of benefits and costs that the client receives or experiences in obtaining the product" (Kotler, 1975, p. 165). Thus, such things as the availability of convenient parking, the general environment of the library, and the level of expertise of the staff constitute the augmented product to the consumers or clients and affect the likelihood of their using the tangible products of the library to acquire core products and thus fulfill more basic and generic needs.
**Product Excellence**

The concept of quality or excellence has received increased visibility in both the private and public sectors in recent years. The principles outlined by Peters and Waterman in 1982 when *In Search of Excellence* was published, and by W. Edwards Deming and his fourteen points, have permeated management operations in a variety of ways even for those who have not embraced TQM or heard of Deming. The changing concept of the library from a physical place or warehouse to a means of access is another variable that is affecting the concept of product excellence or effectiveness. In terms of marketing theory, product excellence must be tied to market match and client satisfaction. Virgo (1985) talks about optimal allocation of resources by which she means that "resources are said to be optimally allocated when, by changing the mix of the allocation, you are unable to achieve a higher user/audience satisfaction rate" (p. 33). In other words, excellence is measured in terms of product effectiveness in response to client needs. As mentioned earlier, for libraries the discussion of product excellence has been complicated by the polarization of two views of collection and product quality. On the one hand is the definition often associated with Baltimore County and Charlie Robinson. This is characterized as an emphasis upon the "give them what they want" rationale. The other extreme is considered to be a more traditional view and is that of giving the clients what they "ought" to have as judged by the library staff. Given these seemingly conflicting perceptions of product quality, along with the changing definitions of both "library" and "product," how do we structure an approach to assuring excellence in product?

Baker (1993) suggests that libraries might have a societal-marketing orientation which "tries to balance the immediate demands of patrons with the long-term needs of society" (p. 20). This view is based in part upon Kotler's (1982) comments about marketing in nonprofit organizations. "A growing number of marketers see their responsibility to take four factors into account in their marketing decision making: consumer needs, consumer wants, consumer interests, and society's interests" (p. 23). This view does not eliminate entirely the conflict between the "give them what they want" group of librarians and the "give them what they ought to have" crowd since the relative point along the continuum between the two polarized views still needs to be determined by each library. The relative mix of popular high demand items and services versus the "classics" and traditional library products must be determined for each library organization. The ability to respond to client needs in a timely and appropriate manner is given varying value within differing libraries so that improving the availability of specific high demand items or
services may be important to some libraries, while providing a greater variety of titles or highly specialized services may carry more importance within another library of the same or different type with a different client audience. Every organization is responsible for determining how they wish to define excellence for the range of products they attempt to provide to their client groups. It is the primacy of responsiveness to client needs that establishes the marketing culture of the individual library. There are undoubtedly many appropriate proportions of product mixes that might successfully represent a societal-marketing orientation. The percentage of one emphasis rather than the other is dependent upon market segment definition, client needs, and expectations. It is possible that the proportion of immediate need satisfaction to long-term societal information and cultural heritage may be another way of expressing the difference between most public and academic libraries. The product mix is different. With the changing information environment, the reduced need for libraries to be storehouses, and the availability of product lines for even the smallest libraries that are really agents or access channels to materials, information, and services located elsewhere, the notion of product is quickly becoming understood to be more closely associated with the traditional marketing definition as that which is offered to the client in the exchange process. Library products may or may not be materials. They increasingly are services and points of access rather than physical materials.

In Baker's (1993) discussion of product quality as it applies particularly to collections, she points to the differing opinions of what constitutes quality. Patrons want a given book, video, recording, or journal article "to meet their specific needs at a given time" (p. 58). These needs exist at a variety of different levels. The most obvious level and the one most often considered by librarians is the conscious reason given when one asks "why do you want this?" and the response is frequently related to work, study, entertainment, or relaxation. More subtle needs also exist which may not be nearly as apparent to the potential library user. Such less conscious needs might include factors related to developmental issues at various stages of physical, emotional, and intellectual growth; psychological needs for more or less stimulation depending upon factors in a client's life; and physical needs that might inhibit the use of certain materials at a particular time. While librarians and collection-development tradition have usually defined quality for library materials in terms of aesthetic or artistic excellence, these seldom are the factors that determine the right "fit" at a particular time for a particular patron. The proportion of the long-term good of society to the immediate good to the members of a specific market segment becomes a very practical matter that
requires decisions about the allocation of resources. The place of the library along the continuum between the “good stuff” (classics, award winners, traditional services) and the “right stuff” (popular, high-demand materials, programs, and services such as computer games and seemingly unlimited copies of popular teen best-sellers) translates into product decisions that affect the product mix, the product line, and the products themselves. Further, the form, delivery, packaging, quantity, and costs of products are all affected by the general library philosophy regarding the importance of the client’s needs. If the emphasis is upon the library’s need for ease of operations and a belief in the superiority of the “professional judgment” of the staff over the ability of clients to determine what they desire and need to satisfy their requirements then the library will not acquire a culture of marketing and responsiveness.

It is assumed that with the help of a marketing orientation, marketing audit, marketing plan, and subsequent continuous responsiveness, the library will be able to deliver a series of excellent products in the form of services, programs, and materials to meet the needs of existing and potential clients. Without excellent products that address the specific clients, community, or market segments of a library, the library’s support base will deteriorate rather than expand. “If it [the library] offers a poor product, the library will loose patrons, and, eventually, financial support” (Weingand, 1983, p. 22). In today’s environment of informed consumerism, distrust of government, and demands for accountability, publicly funded libraries in particular are being challenged to provide products that give a very high return on the dollar. It is excellence or “quality” that distinguishes the successful organization from the mediocre one. It is excellent or quality products (programs, materials, services) that induce customers to return again and again, and to provide the appropriate exchange in terms of funding to allow the marketing or exchange relationship to continue. “Library customers are not captives. They can go elsewhere if not satisfied” (State Library of Ohio et al., 1993, p. 4), and they can withdraw their political and fiscal support in a variety of direct and indirect ways.

Weingand (1984), in discussing “effectiveness of product” related to accountability, suggests that accuracy, speed, completeness, availability, and integration are the keys to product effectiveness. These qualities apply also to defining excellence since one must assume that the same continuum that moves us toward excellence would also be moving us towards more effective accountability. These qualities ought to be considered by libraries when they define the criteria by which they will judge both proposed and existing products. Although these qualities are self-evident as they apply to most library products, some
of Weingand's rationale for these criteria refer once again to the exchange relationship and the delivery of quality products which results in support in the form of funding. For example, in explaining the need for speed in conjunction with accuracy, she says that "an agency that can provide an accurate product which can be delivered rapidly and with a minimum disruption of the client's schedule will be regarded as having a legitimate claim on public resources" (p. 50). By integration, Weingand means the interweaving of these measures of effectiveness into all aspects of the library operation. Again, a more holistic and unified approach to the management and identity of the library is being suggested. This process also refers to the integration of the library into the broader community or organization as an essential component.

Baker (1993), speaking directly about collection development in the marketing organization identifies the following as elements considered by individual users when they are making selections within the library's collections: subject, genre, quality, style, reading level, currency, language, format, attractiveness of the packaging, awareness of the author/title, and miscellaneous issues such as size of print, design of typeface, and length of book or media item. In addition to exploring ways to identify these qualities within collections, what standards of excellence should be applied to noncollection products? What is the relationship of product mix, product popularity, and the life cycle of products to the marketing decisions of libraries? In order to identify, develop, and maintain a complex product line to meet the needs of a library's client population, the library staff must make thoughtful, rather than impulsive, decisions. The product decisions should be made in a proactive, rather than a reactive, environment.

With regard to traditional library products—the materials in the collection—an increasing number of managerial procedures and practices are available to enable the library staff in any type or size of library to profile the collection in a manner that allows for specific relationships between clients and collections or product and market. These collection-related tools include, but are not limited to:

- strategic planning processes;
- the use of output measures;
- collection assessment through the use of the RLG or WLN conspectus or collection mapping;
- library system reports on use, age, acquisition patterns, and expenditures;
- automated collection analysis services from vendors and bibliographic utilities to determine the title mix and/or match to peer
institutions or standard lists such as *Books for College Libraries* (American Library Association, 1988);
• resource sharing statistics such as interlibrary loan transactions by subject, level, or journal title; and
• publishing and production information that can be used to indicate the percentage of appropriate materials actually available to the library's clients either directly or through access services.

In addition, libraries continue to utilize user and community surveys to more clearly identify both client needs and user satisfaction. Group process techniques, such as focus group interviews, are being used to gain insights into the motivations, opinions, and level of satisfaction of client communities. All of these data-gathering environment-clarifying techniques and methods are used by librarians in the management of library resources in an attempt to provide the best possible library service, program mix, and materials. This is marketing even if library organizations do not recognize it as such. Some organizations have implemented these tools for reasons other than marketing audits and plans, but that does not diminish their usefulness in the marketing process.

**Conclusion**

Librarians, then, may have failed to adopt marketing theory and practices for a variety of reasons. It may be because they misunderstand marketing and believe it to be simply another term for public relations and publicity. At another level it may be because of a real or perceived lack of resources to devote to marketing processes and the coordination of a marketing approach even when many of these processes, if not the organizational orientation, are already part of their organizational culture and operation. Lastly, libraries may not have adopted marketing because of a concern with the basic tenet of marketing theory that moves the locus of control from the librarian-expert to the clients. The first of these reasons can be addressed with information and education. The second can be addressed by identifying the ways in which marketing theory and practice is congruent and complementary to managerial and library operations that are already in place within the library and which may require only a minimum amount of coordination to create a marketing context for decision making. A marketing orientation for a library translates into a strong emphasis upon patron demand. At least in terms of product determination, some librarians perceive a conflict between the traditional emphasis upon the librarian's role in the evaluation and selection of the library's products,
and marketing's emphasis upon the client groups and their role in determining product mix and the length, width, and depth of product lines. The two approaches, librarian-as-expert and modern marketing theory, are often presented as opposites. If one considers these to be polarized orientations for the organization, there is little room to adopt marketing theory, especially in a library where tradition and "the way we have always done it" are the rule. The third reason for a library's failure to adopt marketing theory and practice as it relates to product development, and particularly to collection development, can be addressed by considering a modified marketing theory. A societal-marketing orientation as described by Kotler (1982) and interpreted by Baker (1993) provides for both the satisfaction of immediate client needs and the long-term needs of society which might be identified by experts or, in this case, librarians. "Sometimes the librarian, being the expert, must strike out with ideas and products the public does not yet understand. Drawing that line between responsiveness and innovation is one of the most difficult parts of creative librarianship" and marketing (State Library of Ohio et al., 1993, p. 75). It is at this juncture—between responsiveness and innovation—that vision is required. This is the challenge. It is incumbent upon the members of the library staff to develop excellent products that will fit the needs of particular client groups or market segments, but, at the same time, these products should represent the best professional and informed judgment of the librarian. In the implementation and evaluation stages, the staff must be careful to judge the product on its own merits, considering the usefulness the product has had for the client group. Personal feelings and values are not to enter into such evaluation. The librarian is supposed to care enough to "send the very best" but not care enough to allow personal values, taste, and preferences to enter into the decisions about the development, delivery, and evaluation of excellent products for the library.

REFERENCES
What Do Products/Services Cost?
How Do We Know?

Darlene E. Weingand

ABSTRACT
Of the four elements in the "marketing mix," price (cost) analysis provides the library manager with valuable data for decision-making and a practical approach to developing marketing strategies. This article examines the concept of the program budget, cost-finding methodologies, the influence of demand, the impact of technology, and budget presentation. Emphasis is given to looking beyond simple numbers and considering pricing within the broader definition of what products "cost"—and to whom.

Introduction
Of the elements in Kotler's (1982) "marketing mix" (p. 8), pricing is probably the most confusing. Certainly, library administrators have a strong interest in the issue of pricing and the questions that surround it. Taken at face value, it appears that this discussion will be about user fees—but that is definitely not the case. In the nonprofit sector, price or pricing must be defined as "cost"—the cost to produce a product. As one of the key elements in the marketing plan, price needs to identify all present and potential cost factors, including direct costs, personnel costs, indirect costs, profit (if applicable), and intangibles. Careful analysis of these factors yields a realistic appraisal of what a product actually costs to produce (Weingand, 1987, p. 74). Yet, how many library managers truly know exactly what each product/service costs?
THE FOUNDATION: A PROGRAM BUDGET

There is a direct relationship between cost factors and the budgeting process—and specifically, the structure of that process. While there are many types of budget formats—and many municipalities and institutions have requirements as to what format must be submitted—it is the program budget that yields the most information for planning and decision-making. It is certainly understandable that a funding authority would want all submitted budgets to conform to a single type and style in order to be able to make comparisons among units, and the library must comply with these instructions. Yet, it is a straightforward and relatively painless exercise to take the sums from a program budget and insert them into more condensed formats such as the line item budget.

Why bother? There is simply no profit-oriented business that does not know exactly what costs are involved in producing a product; such information is critical in order to establish the price tag for each item. In the nonprofit sector—where libraries are located—the need for such information has not been recognized. It is true that only rarely must a price tag be established in connection with libraries; however, even though the fiscal pie is fixed, decisions must be made as to how to allocate those resources. If cost factors are not known, simple demand or customer interest will yield only one-half of the equation.

In program budgeting, each product essentially carries its own budget for direct and indirect costs. These separate budgets can be merged in order to create a condensed format budget; for example, all of the “personnel” entries can be taken from the spectrum of program budgets and added together to produce a line item total for personnel. Yet, the library manager will know that the personnel costs are for each product and, since personnel costs in the library’s overall budget hover around the 70 percent mark, being knowledgeable about how those staff hours are being spent is necessary information.

Although a budget may, on the surface, appear to be a description of anticipated costs, it is actually a statement of the policy being adopted by the operating organization. The operational and fiscal aspects of budget creation are generally presented separately, although in reality they usually evolve simultaneously (Hamon et al., 1992, p. 12). Data from past and present budgets are examined in order to inform projections for the future. If the only such data available come from a condensed budget format, such as the line item budget, this comparison will need to wait until tentative program budgets have been created and the line item sums calculated.
COST FINDING

In order to produce the components of a program budget, cost-finding methodology of some type must be used. Each product of the library (e.g., reference service, circulation, the collection, network access, and so on) is broken down systematically so that each cost can be associated with an output. This is the opposite of the planning process for a new program, where the desired output would be stated and the resources necessary for that output would be estimated to arrive at a budget. It is a useful exercise to examine a known service in order to learn to recognize those factors that must be considered when planning a new program (Hamon et al., 1992, p. 12).

When doing cost finding, the product (program) being examined must be clearly identified and defined, with a designated output that reflects the mission, goal, and objectives to which that product relates. Each objective in the library's plan requires the implementation of one or more products in order to realize that objective. The relationship between cost and benefit can be ascertained once all cost factors are known.

For each product, both direct and indirect costs must be identified; some of these are fixed (known and stable) and some are flexible (adjustable or negotiable). Direct costs include personnel hired expressly for the designated product(s) and new supplies/equipment and so on purchased specifically for the product(s). Indirect costs can sometimes be difficult to apportion and reflect what might otherwise be viewed as operational expenses. Examples of indirect costs include the expenses incurred in: the operation of buildings and equipment, supplies from existing stores normally kept in stock, the time of permanent staff, and supplemental services (e.g., municipal or organizational purchasing, billing, printing, and so on). Detailed worksheets for determining costs can be found in Rosenberg (1985). A “quick and dirty” formula for allocating indirect costs based on staff time can be found in Weingand (1987, pp. 77-79).

PRICING AND DEMAND

Whether to offer a low-cost product with a low level of demand is a difficult decision. A low-cost product with high demand is an ideal situation. A high cost product with low demand is probably scheduled for phase out or elimination. A high cost product with high demand is another difficult decision. How is demand determined? One of the outcomes of the marketing audit is an indication of anticipated demand for each present and potential product. This projected demand must then be weighed against the identified cost factors. A series of questions can be useful in this analysis (Weingand, 1987):
What is the competition?
Is there duplication of this product by some other agency or group? If so, can my library do it better or for less cost?
Is there potential for growth in the target market so that more than one provider of this product is reasonable?
Should we provide this product?

What is the involvement of the target market?
How important is this product to the target market right now?
Is there a preexisting relationship between the target market and the product?

How complex are the information-gathering and decision-making processes?
Are library resources available to undertake this analysis of market relationship to product (assuming that this analysis is beyond the capability of the marketing audit)?

(pp. 81-82)

If representatives of the various target markets have been included in the planning process—ideally serving on the planning team—and effective communication patterns have been established, then needs can be continually monitored. Such nonformal data collection can provide valuable insights into the assessment of the ratio between cost and demand.

A Three-Dimensional Look at Pricing

Kotler (1982) quotes Adam Smith in stating that: "The real price of everything, what everything really costs to the [person] who wants to acquire it," is the toil and trouble of acquiring it (p. 305). He expands upon that statement by suggesting that there are three costs to be added to actual production cost: effort costs, psychic costs, and waiting costs. To illustrate, if a customer is seeking a specific title, the following cost factors are put into play:

- the cost to the library to purchase the material;
- the staff cost required to acquire and process the material;
- the indirect costs associated with the operation of the library;
- the customer's time, cost, and trouble to physically go to the library (if required);
- or...the library's cost in getting the material to the customer;
- the customer's anxiety over when—or if—the material can be secured;
- the customer's wait until the material is available and/or arrives; and
- the "intangibles" that accompany the transaction, such as speed, convenience, timeliness, accuracy, staff attitude, and so forth.
In addition, Kotler (1987) contends that "consumers balance the expected benefits from an action against the expected costs" (p. 450). He further maintains that "the nominal money price tag on the exchange may be the least important of the perceived costs the consumer is concerned about" (p. 451). Such perceived costs may well involve:

- the *time involved to make a request* (including getting to the library, waiting in line and/or on the telephone, returning once again if the item is not available during the original visit);
- the *potential embarrassment* if the requested information or item deals with a sensitive topic or does not support the self-image the customer wants projected (e.g., checking out a trashy novel);
- the *aggravation* of enduring heavy traffic or busy reference and/or circulation desks;
- *awkwardness* of having to ask for assistance.

Such perceived costs are rarely considered by library staff members—either in terms of the concept of pricing or with regard to customer relations. Yet all of these factors can be described as part of the "cost" or the "price" of linking the customer and the product. Obviously, cost overlaps into the "product" and "place/distribution" categories of the marketing mix and, if the customer heard about the product through the library's promotional efforts, then that aspect of marketing is also involved in the total pricing picture.

**AND THEN THERE IS TECHNOLOGY...**

If pricing were not already complex in the traditional library environment, information technology—and particularly networking—is changing the ways costs and benefits are generated, recovered, and diffused across the entire chain of activities and relationships that link producers and consumers (Peters, 1994, p. 8). Peters further states that: "In the business world, corporate executives have found that the benefits of using information technology must be measured differently from the benefits resulting from, say, adding a new manufacturing plant. In the service sector, information technology has greatly enhanced the industry's performance, but the traditional economic measures of productivity do not indicate a corresponding improvement. Researchers have noted that productivity in many cases is measured inadequately: For the most part, those productivity measures reflect neither the aspects of service quality—such as speed or convenience—that are affected by technology nor the alternative cost of what would have happened without technology" (Peters, 1994, pp. 8-9).
Individual libraries develop in-house networks for access and delivery. Networks have inherent cost factors and these also affect the costs in other library operations. In addition, mention must be also made of cooperative arrangements, both regionally and nationally. Cooperative interinstitutional strategies will play a major role in realizing the cost savings hoped for in terms of networked resources and services (Peters, 1994, p. 9). Costing out an individual library's share of cooperative ventures may be both simple and enigmatic. Costs must be identified before contracts are signed; actual operational costs may be more difficult to pin down, but all factors must be considered.

Technology, therefore, will have a significant impact upon both product development and the cost involved in accessing and delivering the information product. As technology changes, and with the passing of time, cost factors will also rise and fall. It is a volatile cost center and one that must be continually monitored.

**Budget Presentation**

Once the budget is constructed in draft form, it should be presented to whatever advisory groups and/or governing boards that are within the library's organizational structure. Boards tend to be policy oriented, and clear explanations of how the desired budget fits with the library's goals and objectives need to be articulated. Advisory groups not only must understand the overall concepts illustrated by the budget, but also should be made aware of the practical ramifications. In other words, an appropriate mix of technical and theoretical should be presented, depending upon the audience (Hamon et al., 1992, p. 14).

Some common pitfalls to be avoided include:

- Assuming a common understanding and/or acceptance of the mission statement.
- Leaving out key personnel in the budget development process, thereby depriving them of a sense of "ownership."
- Having key budget proponents who do not understand what the numbers mean.
- Concealing unfavorable data.
- Missing established deadlines.
- Failing to develop persuasive arguments. (Hamon et al., 1992, p. 14)

Lack of adequate and appropriate communication with other key players, both internally and externally, can result in generation of the wrong data in the wrong format, missed key elements, and conflicting testimony (Hamon et al., 1992, p. 14). A successful budget presentation will always be made within the political context, and requires that the presenter be completely knowledgeable about what
the numbers signify and how they mesh with the library's overall planned response to identified customer needs. Since politics involves the art of negotiation, contingency plans and proposals should have been developed—with clearly understood fallback positions and elements that can be surrendered in the spirit of compromise.

The final step in budget preparation is the actual presentation to the funding authority—those individual(s) who have the actual power to either approve or deny budgetary requests. Some libraries, particularly in the public sector, simply send in their budget; this can be a costly mistake. Every library director has a right to a personal presentation of the budget so that explanation of requests can be made, questions can be answered, and a shared understanding of library needs (based on customer needs)—and "what is possible" given additional funds—can be developed. This budget presentation should take cognizance of all aspects of pricing—beyond the actual numbers of the budget—in order to present a complete picture.

Much of any success will be rooted in the credibility of the library staff and particularly of the library director. If budgets are routinely "padded" and this fact is known, budget requests will always be seen by funders in that light. If complete documentation, sound fiscal management practices, and good rationale are normally delivered as part of the presentation, this will add to the library's credibility. The development of a healthy working relationship between the library manager and the funding authority cannot happen overnight; it must be nurtured over time. The seeds must be planted during nonbudget times when there will be no perceived vested interest. If carefully tended, the relationship may flower during the stress of budget hearings and add a very real intangible to the library's argument.

Conclusion

Price can be a difficult element in the marketing mix, but its importance must be acknowledged. Careful analysis of the transactions between customers and products through the lens of pricing results in a realistic assessment of what a product actually costs to produce and gives input into the decision of whether or not to continue to produce it. Knowing the projected cost figures provides a direction for establishing priorities of service as each present and potential product/service is evaluated using the same set of criteria. This pragmatic examination, when measured against the library's goals and objectives, helps to determine service priorities that are realistic as well as being in tune with the mission (Weingand, 1987, p. 74).
While some of the concepts may be unfamiliar and thereby cause some apprehension, there is no substitute for a clear grasp of cost factors, demand, and perception. Without attention to pricing, no library can operate both efficiently and effectively. In a time of increased attention to accountability, the full range of marketing elements—including pricing—must be incorporated into managerial practice.

REFERENCES
Distribution in an Electronic Environment, or Will there be Libraries as We Know Them in the Internet World?

KENNETH E. DOWLIN

ABSTRACT

The new technology and communication tools that are available today are much more powerful than those available even a few years ago. The channels for access and distribution of information and knowledge are much more diverse, they collapse the wait time, and provide more tools directly to the user. While libraries will not be replaced, they will need to adapt their methodologies to take advantage of the new tools. The library that successfully adapts its systems for collection, preservation, organization, and distribution of information and knowledge to the new technology will become a much more central institution in the community served.

INTRODUCTION

There are people, particularly those most enamored with high technology information and communication devices, who contend that the Internet world will displace libraries as we know them, and that there will be one gigantic computer chip in the sky, perhaps located at the Library of Congress. These people feel that we are in the midst of an electronic revolution that will engulf libraries. That is a simplistic and undesirable view of the future. Public opinion polls and public referenda consistently show that, in the United States, the communities want their libraries. In San Francisco, 77 percent of the voters approved a bond issue of $109.5 million for a new main library to open in 1996; the Library Foundation of San Francisco raised $30 million from private individuals, families, corporations,
and foundations to furnish and equip the new main library in two years; and 70 percent of the voters agreed on a June ballot initiative to increase the public library's budget by 50 percent and require the city to fund the library at that level for fifteen years. In June, all of the library referenda on the ballot in California passed. The public wants public libraries.

With that issue put to rest, the question is what will these libraries actually be doing in the future that is different from now? First, it must be recognized that successful libraries will change. There are significant social, economic, and marketing pressures that will push or pull the continued development of the electronic technology systems for the home and communities. The computer, telephone, and cable television companies, among others, all see the increasing market for electronic entertainment—and sometimes information and knowledge—as the next gold rush. The corporate world is now willing to make changes unheard of a few years ago, such as merging a telephone company and a cable television company, and the President and Congress of the United States are making major changes in laws and regulations that will not only permit changes in the limits on the corporate and public sector world but will stimulate the implementation of the wired nation. The electronic Inter-State Information Highway concept proposed by the President and the Vice President is a call to action for commercial and public sectors to create the system described in the President's National Information Initiative. The library that ignores national political, technology, and community pressures to use the evolving systems and tools will not only face a reduction in support but may miss an opportunity to continue as a major change agent in our society. The traditional library service that requires the person needing material or information to go to library facilities for service is less viable in a networked instant access world. This meant that the library needed to have multiple branches throughout the city or campus. In the past twenty-five years, the vision of neighborhood or academic department collections available to all was virtually accomplished. While viable in the 1960s and 1970s, the increase in labor and material costs makes this mode of operation untenable in tight fiscal times and less cost effective compared with the technological alternatives. So, the library of today must not only deal with the expectations of future services by the public, it must continue to capitalize on the fact that many library supporters are energized by their nostalgic memories of libraries sometime in the past. Many publicly supported libraries are in the "Mom and Pop Store" mode, while the competition is the large grocery store chains. Much of the future success for libraries rests with the library's ability to reconcile the two extremes. The
technology is here. The human organizations and institutions to use the technology effectively are not yet in existence.

**The Internet World**

The Internet has become a global cultural phenomenon. Tens of millions of people have access to the system. It is of the same magnitude as television was in its early years and is a most powerful current trend for societal change. Participation in the Internet collapses geography and time. The cost is independent of distance, and the information is accessed in real or virtual time with little delay. Since the response is immediate, the user accesses the system in an interactive mode. An individual can request something and, if what is requested is not what is wanted, try something else. Even though the number of access points in the world numbers in the millions, they are also very personal and are available to almost anyone with a computer, a modem, and a connection. With cellular telephones and laptop computers, the connection is now portable. The penetration level of the access points in the home, school, and office will continue to climb at an astonishing rate. Unfortunately, the Internet is a cloud of users; it is not well organized and it is difficult to find things.

One other significant attribute of the Internet is that the system requires the content to be digitized. Digitization, or computerization, then leads to other benefits to libraries. Acquisition of the content is done in real time and does not depend on mail or shipper delay. Since the time is collapsed so dramatically, it lessens the need for precision in the information used in seeking the content. The computer system used for storage and access is also a powerful tool for organizing the content and providing navigation tools for the user. The Online Public Access Catalogs (OPACs) of today are a tremendous improvement over the computerized storage systems in the early days of the computer. In the 1960s, it was necessary to tell the computer the physical location of the information being sought so it could retrieve it. The instructions were on punched cards. Today, not only do we not care but we do not know where the computer puts the information. The pioneering trend of storing and indexing the contents pages of journals is an exciting development. Someday soon someone will come up with a feasible program to use book indexes online for seeking the information.

Another benefit of digitizing content is for preservation purposes. It makes sense that a metallic format, such as CD-ROM, will last longer than paper and certainly longer than silver nitrate film or microforms even though the CD-ROM is such a new technology that we do not really know its longevity. We do know, however, that content
stored in digital form is easier to replicate or refresh than traditional library formats. Computer files can be backed up regularly and moved to new and longer lasting storage media much more easily than is true for paper formats. Thus, there is a symbiotic relationship between computers for storage and computers for access and delivery.

The capacity for change of the Internet, and the fact that it is now a global cultural phenomenon, means that one must view the technology as not just a networking tool but as a new medium.

Changes

While the change in libraries will not be revolutionary, it will be constantly evolving. This is why there is a window of opportunity for libraries to exercise a leadership role for our communities and institutions. The electronification of information and knowledge will require rethinking on the part of librarians. In many cases, our communities are ahead of the library and information services professionals. Our time today is analogous to the situation of the monastic librarian ten years after the invention of the printing press. He was used to receiving only handfuls of illuminated manuscripts per year from the other monks, chaining these manuscripts to the desk, and only allowing access to those who had special permission to use them. Suddenly, because of Gutenberg, hundreds, and soon thousands, of books were being published. If the masses got hold of this technology, who knew where it would lead?

The goal of the ad hoc steering committee for library networking for Region II in California (defined by the State Library as the San Francisco Bay area extended from Mendocino to Monterey) is to not only interconnect the online catalogs of the libraries in the region, but to facilitate and advocate access by the public to the Internet. The steering committee is leading the libraries in the area by putting into place a program to train 20,000 individuals on the Internet within the near future.

Library Issues

For libraries, the major issues that need to be addressed are: the roles of the different libraries, facilities, and staffing; the technology for providing access for location and delivery of electronic content; and the funding sources to support this new technology. The three broad themes for the library center around community, connectivity, and collaboration.

Community

Starting in 1960, the library's goal was a shared vision of librarians and supporters to provide reasonable access to public libraries. Access
was for all communities, libraries in all schools, and a dramatic expansion in academic library collections and resources. At the federal level, this vision was stimulated by the Library Services and Construction Act for public libraries; the Higher Education Act for universities and colleges; and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act for schools. With the funding of these acts, there was a dramatic increase in library resources in the United States. This program is an outstanding example of the Federal Government spending limited dollars to stimulate one sector of public service. It also stimulated the supporters of libraries to organize community support in cities, universities, and schools. Thus the library has become one of the most community connected institutions in history. This is important since John Gardner, former cabinet official for the President of the United States and an advocate for the average person, contends that the amount and rapidity of change in our societies are creating stresses that cause social turbulence in our communities. He asserts that, without the continuity of the shared values that community provides, freedom cannot survive. The key to the future of democracies rests with the ability of communities to regenerate or create a sense of community. Today the library is one of the most trusted community institutions and can play an even more important role in the future. The libraries will be called upon to negotiate access rights on behalf of their constituencies; to provide trained validated customers to the information providers; and to provide training in connectivity, documentation, and promotion of subsidized access. The technology for collecting, preserving, organizing, and distributing electronic content is a powerful tool for the building of community and enlisting those communities into supporting the library.

Connectivity

As more and more libraries create OPACs and use the OPAC as a search engine and gateway for other databases, the local library will become a node in a much greater network. The OPAC will become one of the first points of contact with the Internet world for a large proportion of the population, particularly those in formal education programs. The interconnection of hundreds or thousands of libraries could lead to the Global Village Library Network where the resources are mostly decentralized and focused on the local community's needs but are linked for shared access and retrieval. The technology currently exists to allow this interconnection. However, attention must be focused on the creation of organizations that will facilitate the wider range of access possible today. Fortunately, the Internet is a tremendous tool for collaboration. Thousands of collaborations have
sprung up on the Internet. This technology could be focused on developing new solutions to old library problems and on creating new services and systems. Connectivity is also central for linking small geographic or special interest communities into larger communities, such as neighborhoods into large cities and diverse cultural groups into city-wide resources such as the library. This process must take place to avoid the ignorance, bigotry, and even elitism of isolated groups.

**Collaboration**

One of the most powerful attributes of the Internet is its ability to foster collaboration. Networking is a powerful tool for symbiotic collaborations. The electronic milieu is creating new communities all over the world, brought together by common interests. We are a nation drowning in information and unresponsive sources, yet thirsting for knowledge. Collaboration is one of the key elements in the creation of knowledge. Thus, the Internet could lead to the development of knowledge through this collaboration. Collaboration also is central to the development of community and important for connectivity. With the elements that need to be changed in the operations of libraries, collaboration also will be crucial for librarians.

Some of the changes that the successful library must navigate are:

- from singular processes to mass processes;
- graphic to neographic;
- retail to wholesale;
- monodimensional access to multidimensional access;
- singular to collaborative organizations; and
- ownership orientation to access orientation.

**From Singular Processes to Mass Processes.** Libraries must increase their ability to deal with masses of information. Not only is the published world continuing to expand, the incorporation of many languages and nonprint formats are expanding the needs for organizing and preserving content exponentially. At the San Francisco Public Library, even though it has over 2 million books, the book collection is only 16 percent of the total collection. Yet the books are the only format that is totally cataloged. The attainment of the goal of cataloging or indexing and inventoring all resources is a gargantuan task, complicated by the increased rate of collection acquisition experienced over the last two years. New methodologies must be developed.

**Graphic to Neographic.** In many cases, the majority of the library's staffing and facilities have traditionally been devoted to the book
as the primary vehicle for the preservation and distribution of knowledge even though other media have been in libraries for a long time. Periodicals, microforms, videotapes, audio CDs, and now databases and network gateways are all part of the library's options for content access. The traditional catalog needs to be expanded to incorporate all formats in the collection, and the delivery systems must be adapted for all formats. The digitalization of content and the online catalog does present the opportunity to provide a seamless access tool for the public and a navigation and inventory tool for collection management. The methodology and standards for a "meta-catalog" (meaning all-encompassing) that would include all current technologies and allow for the incorporation of future technologies such as multimedia and even, perhaps, virtual reality, need to be developed. It is time to consider the library not just as a graphic-based institution but one that is neographic (a term coined by the author).

Retail to Wholesale. In most instances, libraries have viewed their main function as that of providing the information, knowledge, or content to the ultimate consumer—the user. With the ability to extend access through other institutions and agencies, libraries need to incorporate the concept of also being in the wholesale business. Other agencies can expand the library's abilities to reach currently unserved populations and communities. For example, local departments of social services can extend the library's services to the disadvantaged citizen. Literacy programs can extend the service to new populations. Libraries may even want to consider commercial partners such as cable television and the telephone company to extend services.

Monodimensional Access to Multidimensional Access. The meta-catalog technology will increase the diversity of access technologies for the user. When books, government documents, magazine indexes, online databases, and multimedia are all accessible through the same electronic device, users will have options related to preference for learning, such as audio, video, print, or images, and can also overcome significant physical barriers such as blindness and deafness or distance. The library has traditionally been a leader in communities in increasing the diversity of access to information and knowledge. To reach the maximum population, the library may need to think in terms of service similar to banking institutions such as automated teller machines (automated information machines for the library) for self service, tellers (library technical staff for the library) for assisted service, customer representatives (librarians) for mediated service, and a new level of service for libraries—collaborative.
**Singular to Collaborative Organizations.** The library that has the online communications systems can be an important leader in fostering collaborative groups. Librarians are leaders in networking. Interlibrary loan protocols were developed in libraries before most other interagency protocols were developed. It is only natural that the early organizational skills of librarians be extended into other agencies and organizations.

**Storage Centered to Communications Centered.** The technology available today provides the opportunity for the library to become communications oriented—i.e., to treat access to the information with the same level of effort that has gone into collection building. Cable television and online communications, such as freenets, provide new channels for community communication. It is important for the existence of community that the library seriously undertake the responsibility for community communications. The changes in the normal news and entertainment media are ignoring the needs of communities. Broadcast television and daily newspapers, among others, have consistently reduced the community content in their products. It is far more efficient for them to use wire feeds and syndicated articles than to employ local reporters. This trend is creating a huge vacuum in community communications.

**Ownership Orientation to Access Orientation.** While most libraries have had interlibrary loan programs for many decades, the level of activity has generally been less than one or two percent of the business. With enhanced capabilities of online access, the proportion of library services devoted to networking will increase. The increase could be significant depending on the library's willingness to lead. Negotiation of access rights is a different set of skills than buying books, periodicals, and microforms. The library staff involved will have to learn a new set of skills.

**CONCLUSION**

One of the greatest challenges facing librarians and other staff of libraries will be replacing the traditional skills learned in traditional library schools, such as book acquisition, cataloging, and reference work in graphic records, with a whole new set of skills. Skills that will be needed will be content selection as well as format selection, involving all formats, not just print on paper, and dealing with distribution as well as collection. Learning these new skills as well as the new technologies will place a premium on our ability to collaborate. Librarians must not only learn new skills but also learn to incorporate people who know those new skills into the library. The new environment will require dealing with copyright issues,
access rights, and navigation tools, and providing technical support to the user community.

The technology, and the collaboration facilitated by the technology, can lead to exciting new programs for libraries. Libraries can create multimedia encyclopedias on their communities. It is doubtful that the commercial market will support such community-specific activity. Libraries can lead in providing the community with online access to institutional or government information. Specific programs within a library, such as those related to Afro/American or Gay/Lesbian cultures, can be linked among libraries. Special interest programs, such as the environment or employment information, can be linked among libraries and agencies. The San Francisco Public Library will have twelve specific interest centers in the library, and the intent is to network each of them with resources of other libraries and institutions and agencies.

While electronic information technology may bring significant change to the methodology of the library, in many cases it only reinforces the basic mission of the library. At SFPL, the mission is to provide public access to information, and knowledge, and the joy of reading to the diverse population of San Francisco. The technology does not change that mission. It does increase the institution's ability to fulfill the mission. Being in the forefront of the development of delivery and navigation tools, the creation of community content, and leading the community for access means that the library will change. At SFPL, assumptions for planning include the fact that the library will be a regional online resource for libraries in Region II by 1995; will have a fully interactive multimedia network among all library facilities by 1996; and that this network will extend to the home, office, and classroom by the year 2000. These assumptions provide for a context in which planning is taking place.

The library is not on the descendance. The library has the potential to be the pre-eminent public institution in the twenty-first century.
Kissing in the Dark: Promoting and Communicating in a Public Library Setting

KELLY KRIEG-SIGMAN

ABSTRACT

In an era of ever-diminishing resources, effective promotion and communication of public library services has become vital to the survival of those same services. This article examines the central questions surrounding effective promotion and communication, and offers various tips and suggestions.

Within the public setting, the following questions are dealt with:

- Why promote?
- What should be promoted?
- How much promotion/communication needs to be done?
- What is the best way to promote/communicate?
- What are some of the potential pitfalls?

INTRODUCTION

When first presented with the challenge of writing this article, this author consulted that font of all wisdom, her father. He has spent his entire life marketing agricultural products to a variety of audiences. His words:

Promotion is like kissing a member of the opposite sex in the dark. You know what's going on, the person you're kissing knows what's going on, but no one else does unless you turn on a light. Promotion is the process of turning on that light.

WHY PROMOTE?

With apologies to William Shakespeare, to promote or not to promote; that is the question. Promotion takes time, costs money,
and, if done poorly, does more harm than good to the organization. So, why do it? This question is especially pertinent to smaller library organizations which find themselves in the contrary position of being in the most need of good promotion, yet having the least resources available to accomplish and maintain it. Yet, to return to our analogy, if you do not promote, no one will ever know what you are doing. The “light” will never be turned on.

Now some people and organizations may like the darkness; it is safe, it is comfortable, and, if no one knows what you are doing, no one asks difficult questions, bothers you, or forces change. Unfortunately, no one is likely to use you or support you either. So the answer to the question of why promote is because you must. Not to do so is not to survive.

**What Should be Promoted?**

What should be communicated? What is the difference? The answer to these questions begins with two more questions:

- What library product or service has relevance to your customers’ needs as determined by a marketing analysis?
- What outcome is desired?

Furthermore, it must be remembered that, while all promotion is communication, not all communication is promotion. You might say that promotion is communication with an attitude.

Let us take as an example the interlibrary loan (ILL) service. Even with the advances made in technology, this service is still one of the most expensive that a public library can offer. Yet for small- and medium-sized libraries, it is a major claim to fame—“we can get anything for you via interlibrary loan.” But can we? And how long does it take? What are the organization’s costs of providing each transaction? If a library has determined that ILL service is relevant to serve customer needs, but the current system of ILL is slow or inefficient, it may not be a wise idea to promote this service.

On the other hand, if the same library is part of a high-powered consortium with daily delivery, faxing, BBS services, and so on, ILL not only should be promoted but promoted consistently and heavily. By the same token, if a library does have a sound ILL system but is only a one- or two-person operation, promoting ILL and processing the resultant increase in ILL requests may cause staffing problems in other areas. There, indeed, may exist higher-priority services which may preclude executing swift and efficient ILL requests in this example.

To summarize, any library product or service should be actively promoted when the organization has determined/ensured that:
1. the service is efficient, reliable, and responsive to identified need; and
2. the desired outcome is either an increase in usage, a redirection (substitution) of usage, or a deeper understanding of the service in general.

The ultimate outcome, of course, is overall improvement of service.

On the other hand, a product or service should not be actively promoted, but only routinely communicated when the organization is:

1. unable to provide the level of service to meet an identified need;
2. cannot absorb or handle a major increase in work activity within the service area; or
3. the product or service is administrative in nature, such as the fines policies.

At the risk of irritating ILL librarians, the author will continue using ILL and her own organization to further illustrate these thoughts. Note the use in the previous paragraph of the words "actively" and "routinely." When first beginning in my present position, the library was small, and ILL service was a godsend. We would offer it to everyone—sometimes before even checking the local collection or trying for substitutes. After awhile, however, problems began to develop. Response time was slow, requests became increasingly esoteric, and customers had a hard time understanding existing geopolitical boundaries which did not allow direct speedy access to a nearby major metropolitan library. What had started as a highly promoted service now has become simply a communicated one.

If someone asks for information or a specific item now, we will exhaust all possibilities within our own collection before suggesting an interloan transaction. It is not "actively" offered, it is "routinely" suggested, and only after all else fails and the caveats of ILL explained.

Surprisingly enough, this approach has not resulted in a dearth of ILL requests. Service has improved in two ways:

1. by seeking substitutes within our own collection for ILL requests, we are frequently finding things for the customer that fit their customer needs as well or better than the original request; and
2. those customers who do use the ILL service do so with their eyes open and therefore are not frustrated or disappointed in the service.

**How Much Promotion/Communication Needs to Be Done?**

The appendix to this article, "How Many Times?" is posted on this author's office wall where it serves as a reminder that promotion
and/or communication always needs to be done and that every opportunity needs to be taken to do so.

There seem to be two types of "things" which libraries need to promote and/or communicate. The first is the "big event"—the major children's program, the author appearance, the annual book sale, the fund-raising dinner, the new automation system. The second is the ongoing "normal" (routine) things—regular services, hours of operation, the quality of the collection and staff, how much are fines, when is the book due, and so on.

Generally speaking, libraries are pretty good about promoting the big event. This is because this type of promotion is easily done. If an author is the big event and he/she has a big enough name, the event is distinct enough. One short phone call or a quick (one-page) press release to area media will be all the promotion needed—they will take it from there. The promotional effort has a definite beginning and end. Once the event is over, there is no longer a need to promote it. It is the second event type, the normal things, that causes problems.

How many times have you heard (or perhaps even said yourself) some variation of the following:

1. "We had somebody complaining that they didn't know when the book was due. We've always checked out books for three weeks. I just don't understand these people" (communication).
2. "You have videos (or compact discs or buying guides)? I did not know you had those" (promotion).
3. "It must be so nice to work here and read all day" (both communication and promotion).

Usually when these remarks occur, staff roll their eyes and mutter the unprintable without ever stopping to consider what those kinds of remarks indicate about the amount (and effectiveness) of promotion and communication going on within the organization.

Think about statement number 1. The issue of personal responsibility aside, the fact is that we operate in a busy world. Those who are not regular library users are not always tuned in to library procedures. One easy way for any library to improve communication is to make it standard operating procedure at the circulation desk to close each transaction by indicating the due date to the customer—"There you are. You have three items all due back on August 20. Thank you."

By making this a mandated procedure—a habit—a library will not only improve its communication but will also provide itself with an excellent defense for the inevitable, "Nobody told me when it was due" complaint (this author is always amazed at how
uncommunicative many front library desk people are; she has visited some libraries where not only do they not greet a customer, they do not even make eye contact).

Statement number 2 is the golden opportunity situation. Here is a chance for any sharp library employee, be it director or page, to not only answer in the affirmative but to further promote the service by adding such statements as, "why yes—we do have videos. They go out for two weeks and we've just gotten in some new children's Barney tapes. Would you like to be put on reserve for them?" That is not only excellent promotion, it is extremely good library service.

The issue of promotional opportunity is a particular soap box topic of this author. Far too many professionals equate "promotion" with handouts, posters, media spots, formal personal appearances—activities which are costly both in terms of time and money. The best promotion in the world is the "on-the-spot" promotion—e.g., you are at the grocery store and you meet a library customer who recognizes you and a brief conversation ensues. The customer happens to mention that the family car is in trouble and will have to be replaced. Opportunity is knocking. Any library professional worth his/her salt will at this point say something like, "Well, we've just obtained some new auto price guides. Give me a call later and I'll set them aside for you."

Kudos to the professional who consistently recognizes these types of opportunities and exploits them. The following example can be used as a test of how good a manager and disseminator of information you are. A regular customer approaches the checkout desk staffed by a nonprofessional. The nonprofessional recognizes the customer as being an avid reader of true crime books. Now suppose that the library recently received a copy of a hot new true crime book. Will this nonprofessional be able to promote that book to that customer? "Gosh, Mr. Brown, I think we just received a new book in an area you might like. Can you give me a moment to check?" How well do you keep your staff informed so that both professional and non-professional alike can do this kind of promotion effectively and regularly?

Statement number 3 is a challenge both to one's promotional skills and one's communications skills. Responding to a statement like number 3 requires that the individual effectively correct a major misconception while not blowing an excellent opportunity to promote a deeper understanding of what goes into working in, or running, a library. Never miss an opportunity to diplomatically see that no misconception stands.

A defensive response will result in the loss of the promotional opportunity. A thoughtful measured response will increase the
promotional opportunity. "Well, it is nice working here, but I don't do much reading, especially at this time of year when I have to prepare our budget." A response like this is agreeable yet clearly states the fact that you carry budgetary responsibilities and helps dispel the idea that all you do is sit around all day and read: "Well, I do like working here, but most of my reading has to be done for professional certification." Again, a nice agreeable answer but one that clearly promotes an enhanced picture of a librarian.

At this point, it is important to note that none of these promotional tips cost a lot of money or require major investments of time. What they require are listening skills, people skills, and a comprehensive knowledge of your library's products, services, and professionalism.

**What is the Best Way to Promote/Communicate? Part I**

Here is another one of those questions for which the answer depends on answers to other questions:

- How much money do you have?
- What are you promoting, to whom, and why?
- What need is being addressed by the promotion?
- What is the desired outcome?

A small library promoting its local history collection will go about these tasks in a far different manner than a large library promoting Internet access. Better signage may be an answer in one library and out of the question somewhere else. But, as with most questions like these, there are a few fundamentals. The first one here is consistency.

This author's favorite story on this point is the one that has taken on almost "urban legend" status about the director of a good-sized library who, after having worked there for over three years, was asked at a speaking appearance what the fine rate was for his organization. He did not know. The message? Everyone, from the director on down, in any public library needs to have basic knowledge of fundamental policies and services so that those policies and services can be communicated and promoted in a consistent way.

Now, not every staff member needs to know everything about everything. But there are some underlying basics that must form the basis of common staff knowledge in order to be able to promote and/or communicate to the general customer. The mark of a good manager is the ability to:

- effectively determine what needs to be shared with staff and when to do so, and
effectively develop staff to ensure promotion and communication which is consistent with established policy and consistent among staff members—i.e., everybody saying the same thing in similar ways.

Fines: Everybody needs to know the fine rate and communicate it consistently. Everybody also needs to know, and be able to communicate, the fact that fines are not meant to be punitive.

Selection Policy: Pages who are high school students do not need to be able to quote the selection policy. They do need to know that one exists and why one exists. Permanent employees need to know the same plus have a working knowledge of what to do in the face of a potential complaint.

Special Events: I worked in a library once where the children's department rarely let the adult reference department know about special children's programs. This was not good. It was also, on occasion, embarrassing. Before any press release or interview goes out, the staff needs to know first.

So, what is the "best" way to promote or communicate? Answer number 1, promote consistently. Library staff (and board members for that matter) cannot communicate or promote if they do not have the information, and nothing will be accomplished if the message is inconsistent. Think of a choir. In order to make beautiful music, every choir member needs to know the music and all members must sing together. Does your library know the music? Is it singing together?

**WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO PROMOTE OR COMMUNICATE? PART II**

Answer number 2 to this question is promote honestly. This aspect is doubly important when it comes to the "negative" things that libraries occasionally have to communicate—service cutbacks, budget shortfalls, and so on (we will discuss more on this in the final section on Potential Pitfalls). This seems like such an obvious thing, but it seems to happen infrequently enough to warrant special attention.

Continuing with the example of ILL, simply because it works well as an example, the promotion in almost any library is: "Through interlibrary loan we can get virtually anything for you." The promotion should be "ILL is a service which supplements the existing collection by allowing us to obtain materials from other libraries for you. Please allow a minimum of two weeks for delivery. Some materials and formats may be restricted." That is a much more honest promotion of the service. Check your organization to see that this is a matter of written, posted, and verbal policy.
Another perennial favorite here is collection size and content. The promotion is, “we have a collection of 45,000 volumes.” The promotion should be, “we have a collection of approximately 20,000 adult volumes and 25,000 children’s volumes. The content is designed to: (a) support K-12 local curriculum needs, (b) provide a general selection of popular reading material, and (c) support the independent learning needs of the adults in our service area. Again, a more honest portrayal of the service.

The most difficult area of promotion/communication in which to be honest is staff communication. This author heard one story recently where a manager was about to post what she knew would be a very unpopular work schedule. She posted the schedule the night before she was to leave for a week’s vacation in order to avoid the outcry. This is not honest communication. There will always be “bad” news that needs to be imparted to staff. Communicating it in an underhanded way or, worse yet, not communicating it at all and hoping that the bad news will go away, does nothing but stress all aspects of the organization.

When in doubt as to whether or not to say something to staff, say it. Better to inform them of something that turns out to be not important than to withhold something that turns out to be vital.

**What is the Best Way to Promote or Communicate? Part III**

Answer number 3 to this question is, communicate simply. This author has seen promotional pieces from libraries that went on for pages. There are administrative memos where a single sentence ran on for ten or twelve lines while stuffed with lingo and jargon. The more complicated a promotion or communication becomes, the less likely the message will be understood. Additionally, in an administrative setting, the more complicated the memo, the more likely it is that staff will begin to wonder, “what is he/she hiding?”

To find out if a promotional or communications effort meets the simplicity test, share it with your most difficult coworker or staff member. If they can understand it and repeat the gist of it back to you correctly, you have succeeded.

**What is the Best Way to Promote or Communicate? Part IV**

It would be nice if, at this point, it could be said, “the best way to promote or communicate is the local newspaper” or “the best way is through handouts.” But the truth is, if you answer the questions presented at the beginning of this section, and you keep the effort consistent, honest, and simple, any way will be the best
way. Select media/methods which fit the project—use what works. Every idea, every promotion, every item to be communicated, has its own set of “bests.” The professional literature is full of ideas and projects done by other libraries regarding clever and innovative ways of promoting events and services. But there are a couple of things that this author has done that work really well. Adapt what you read, what you experience, to your own situation. For example:

- **Monday morning memos:** These have become legendary. While these do not always get out on Mondays, this author does send a general staff memo out at least three times a month. These memos include my schedule, library board activities, new acquisitions of note, staff vacations, and so on. Every staff member gets one, and they have proven to be most effective in terms of consistent dissemination of information.

- **Cross-training:** Everyone in the author’s organization does a little of everything: shelve; the interloan person does YA selection; the children’s librarian catalogs. This not only allows for job variety, it is an excellent way for everyone to “know” the organization better, understand each area by being exposed to it, and therefore promote it better.

- **Personal involvement in the community:** One of the high points of this author’s career came two years ago when the high school junior class voted me in as grand marshal of the Homecoming parade. What better promotion could a public library want?

- **Staff-run staff meetings:** to find out what the staff really needs and wants to know, let them organize and run quarterly staff meetings. It is also an excellent way to see how communication both up and down the chain of command is going.

- **Library bulletin board:** If the facilities allow, establish a library-only bulletin board right at the main entrance. Post agendas, minutes, candid photographs, news clippings, suggestions, recent reviews, and responses—anything that has to do with the service. It is a great conversation starter.

- **Public postings of sensitive policies:** The most sensitive policy in any library is probably that of open access. My organization recently posted a notice to all parents that the library would not be held responsible for materials checked out by a minor. We prefaced this by reminding everyone that staff was available for guidance in materials selection. This policy has now been posted in four or five areas within the children’s department. This is another example of good communication that can also serve as an excellent defense when needed.
Now, back to the couple kissing in the dark. What if they should not be kissing each other? What if one of them is a really bad kisser and knows that improvement is needed? What if one is a really bad kisser but rejects the idea that improvement is needed? What if they are kissing so well and having so much fun that any illumination will ruin everything? What are the ramifications of “turning on the light?”

Up until now, the discussion has revolved around positive examples. ILL service, children’s programs, new acquisitions, and so on are all positive aspects of what libraries do and services that need to be promoted. Even fines are viewed benignly in most cases. But every library at some point in its existence is going to be faced with a promotional or communication challenge: a censorship problem, service or budgetary cutbacks, staffing problems, managerial disputes. And if good promotion and good communication are difficult to do under normal circumstances, it gets tougher under stressful situations. A few scenarios and questions to consider:

1. A local citizen is demanding the removal of *Our Bodies Ourselves*. The situation was mishandled at the front desk and is now in your office. Do you alert the press? Do you attempt to defuse the situation quietly? If the concerned citizen alerts the press and you get a surprise phone call, what is your response?

2. (A tougher call) the budget process has been sailing along. All of a sudden, at the very last budget meeting before approval, $30,000 is slashed from your request. This cut is probably going to result in loss of hours. What do you do? How do you communicate this to staff and customers without either whining or sniping at the municipality? How do you ensure that all staff will respond professionally when the inevitable questions come from the public?

3. The library board has just approved a particularly onerous new fees policy. You do not like it, but you understand the need for it in the face of spiraling operational costs. What must you do to effectively “promote” this?

4. Your library is about to cut off service to a substantial segment of your service population residing in a neighboring municipality and contributing nothing to your operating budget. These people do have their own library, but yours is superior in almost every way. They have accounted for a significant amount of your business. You also need the money. You “promote” the closing well in advance, assured that the subsequent outcry will bring political
pressure to bear and the neighboring municipality will allocate some funds to you and resolve the problem. The outcry never comes and neither does the money. How do you effectively handle this?

5. It has just come to your attention that in the newly passed salary ordinance, your staff members received the lowest percentage increase of any department. Keeping in mind that many staff members do not, as a rule, read the salary ordinance, do you tell them? Why or why not?

6. Budgets within your organization have been tight for a couple of years. To make up for the lack of tax support, your library has done a superlative job in acquiring additional monies through grants, foundations, fund-raising efforts, and so on. Should you be promoting these accomplishments? Do you run the risk of “turning on the light” only to have the municipal board say that because you are doing so well, you do not need any more electricity?

Remember that famous axiom of science: for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. Every promotional action you take will have a reaction. What possible reactions are there, and can you or the organization live with any of the possibilities?

Finally, a word about the “art,” not the “science,” of communication. There is an old “politically incorrect” joke having to do with the Pope and a Jewish janitor engaged in a silent theological debate using only hand signals. The humor comes not from any poke at religion, but from the fact that each debater wildly misinterprets the communication of the other. At the joke’s end, the Jewish janitor wins the debate but has no idea how he did it. The “message” was the same, but what was “communicated” was not. Good promotion and communication are entirely dependent upon:

- constant feedback (to which you listen) from your staff and customers,
- adherence to consistency, honesty, and simplicity.

Being a good communicator takes practice, just like being good at anything else. Good communicators (and, by definition, effective promoters as well):

- listen more than they talk,
- ask questions rather than make statements, and
- never assume anything.

As Abraham Lincoln once said: “Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak out and remove all doubt” (Boyle, 1967).
CONCLUSION

In an era of diminishing resources, effective promotion in a public library setting is crucial. Promotion is constant, just like buying books or performing reference. The best communication and promotion is consistent, honest, and simple. Do not kiss in the dark. Turn the light on to show how good—and how important—your organization really is.
APPENDIX

How Many Times?

The first time a man looks at an advertisement he does not see it. The second time he does not notice it. The third time he is conscious of its existence. The fourth time he faintly remembers having seen it before. The fifth time he reads it. The sixth time he turns his nose up at it. The seventh time he reads it through and says, "Oh brother!" The eighth time he says, "Here's that confounded thing again!" The ninth time he wonders if it amounts to anything. The tenth time he thinks he will ask his neighbor if he has tried it. The eleventh time he wonders how the advertiser makes it pay. The twelfth time he thinks it must be a good thing. The thirteenth time he thinks perhaps it might be worth something. The fourteenth time he remembers that he has wanted such a thing for a long time. The fifteenth time he is tantalized because he cannot afford to buy it. The sixteenth time he thinks he will buy it someday. The seventeenth time he makes a memorandum of it. The eighteenth time he swears at his poverty. The nineteenth time he counts his money carefully. The twentieth time he sees it, he buys the article, or instructs his wife to do so.

"Hints To Intending Advertisers"

Thomas Smith
London
1885
Marketing and the Political Environment

PETER G. HAMON

ABSTRACT
This article discusses the nature and function of various political processes which affect resource allocation to libraries and explores how to analyze these processes accurately. It discusses the marketing of library "products" through supplementing traditional measures of input and output with considerations of impact and by seeking to adapt and express library products in terms of the cognitive universes of decision makers. Finally, the article offers a selection of practical strategies intended to assist the individual librarian to maximize the probability of success in political processes.

INTRODUCTION
Herbert Grover, Wisconsin's State Superintendent of Public Instruction from 1981 to 1993, frequently opened his speeches to library groups by stating that, although many consider politics to be a "dirty" game, it is nevertheless one of the primary means by which scarce resources are divided up in our society. He would further note that, although it is entirely a matter of personal choice whether or not to participate in political processes, those who choose to stand aloof should also be prepared to do without the resources that these processes make available (Grover in a speech delivered to the State Superintendent's Conference for Public Librarians and Trustees, May 1989). As a former state legislator and the head of a state agency, Grover most often used the phrase "political process" to mean the way in which funds at the state level are allocated for library services.
But, in fact, his words apply equally well to almost any library situation. Whether a library is governed by a municipality, a district school superintendent, a board of regents, or a corporate department head, the resources received to conduct operations are determined by political processes. It is the purpose of this article to provide a brief overview concerning just how to utilize these processes effectively.

THE FIRST STEP: UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL PROCESSES

The phrase "political process" has many meanings. In the narrowest sense it is associated with political parties, candidates, campaigns, and elections. This definition is far too limited for this discussion. It applies only to how one particular kind of political environment is created and structured or, in other words, how the stage is set. Our task instead is to go backstage, to study the script, and to get to know the actors. We must look beyond structure and into function. We must determine how political processes actually operate after they are created, especially if we wish to learn how to influence them effectively on an ongoing basis on behalf of the various publics that we serve. Every organization has an official process for allocating resources. This process usually includes the presentation of plans or budgets, the consideration of these plans or budgets by one or more individuals or groups and, finally, the decision-making processes which actually allocate resources. The first step toward understanding this process in any organization is to seek information. Perhaps the best way to begin is simply to use the newspaper questions, "who," "what," "when," "where," and "why" and apply these to the process at hand. "Who" must include anyone who defines how a specific political process operates as well as anyone who sits in judgment of "products" at any stage during this process. For example, in a legislature, the political process varies greatly from year to year. Frequently, the joint leadership of the respective legislative houses determines what committees will hold hearings on a bill or a budget and whether there will be separate or combined hearings for fiscal and policy considerations. Likewise, the leadership chooses who will hear certain kinds of presentations based on which committees are given which tasks, or even which officials are appointed to which committees. Armed with the "who," a participant in the political process can attempt the fairly difficult task of influencing the design of the process itself to favor a particular "product" or the much simpler task of attempting to influence key decision makers to take favorable action at various points in the process. In either case, care must be exercised to discover who actually makes decisions rather than simply accepting the "official" roster
of decision makers listing their formal authority. Almost everyone has encountered a "lower level" employee in an organization who has somehow acquired the capacity to ensure that things either do or do not happen based solely on his or her own personal influence. This is not an uncommon situation. In fact, it is a normal condition in most organizations. For example, many legislators have key aides who deal with issues such as education. The legislator, swamped with detail, may rely on the aide to recommend decisions as well as, or even instead of, simply relaying information. Such an aide is often a more important factor in the political process than is the legislator who surrendered the authority.

The second question, "what," refers to seeking out technical elements of the process, such as directives defining what may or may not be requested, or the specific forms of request which will or will not be accepted. For instance, a corporation may have issued a directive to submit only a "hold the line" or even a "percentage reduction" budget. Is this directive being followed by every department or are there exceptions? Alliances result in some sort of sanctions being exercised against an administrator or a program. Is such a directive simply "window dressing" intended to convince stockholders of managerial frugality? Does the directive have "loopholes" which might apply to a specific operation? Careful investigation of all aspects of "what" is expected or allowed in a process places one in a position to ameliorate the possibly devastating consequences of simply "following the rules." For instance, instructions to prepare a simple line item budget might be intended to ease the load on overworked administrators. On the other hand, such instructions may call for line item budgets because, containing less explanatory material, they are easier to cut. Can a program budget, which better explains and supports an operation, be prepared to at least supplement the line item budget initially requested? If this can be done, to whom and how must such a budget be provided so that it ultimately attracts the attention of the appropriate decision makers?

The third and fourth questions, "when" and "where," are often best addressed together. They refer to the fact that the elements which comprise almost all political processes are constantly in a state of flux with regard to time and space. The library budget a city required next week is now due yesterday if not sooner. A promise is made that a particular issue will be the very first thing on a legislative agenda, but it actually comes up six hours later after most of the supporters of the concept have already gone home. School board hearings mysteriously move from building to building, and no one seems quite sure where the next one is or who might possess this information. The final question, "why," is the only one which can
usually be answered without reference to any specific political process. Contrary to popular belief, most political processes are not designed to help good concepts or products to succeed. Instead, they are usually crafted as, or quickly evolve into, systems which function to enable participants in them to fail. In any political process, there are many more requests for resources than there are resources available for distribution. Furthermore, although each request may be both simple and understandable if given proper study and consideration, those in charge of resource distribution seldom have either the time or the expertise required to do justice to all the information laid out before them.

Agencies which distribute resources are frequently faced with hundreds, if not thousands, of highly complex requests, all of which must be reviewed in a very short time and frequently under the microscope of hostile public scrutiny. Finally, even if the vast majority of requests can be eliminated due to a lack of merit, those truly deserving requests which remain may still call for resources far in excess of the amount available. What this all boils down to is that, if a request is turned down on the basis of merit, that decision is likely to be challenged. If a request is rejected by an identifiable individual, then that individual can easily become a target for political reprisal. If, on the other hand, someone missed a deadline, was not present at a key hearing, or simply failed to fill out the right form, then that individual was rejected by a faceless system. Those in authority can express their deep regret and offer advice concerning how to do better “next time.” The very clear assumption underlying both these regrets and this advice, however, is that any blame for failure lies solely with the participant and in no way reflects on the decision makers in the political process.

Although this view of why political processes function as they do may seem depressing, an objective understanding of what is actually going on is the first real step toward success. Remember that almost all the programs and requests for resources which are in competition with library programs and requests must undergo these same political processes, and most will ultimately fail for many of the reasons discussed earlier. Careful study of the political process which pertains to your operation, careful verification of your conclusions with whatever “resident experts” you can locate, and continuous monitoring of the inevitable “midstream course changes” in your process will often yield a definite competitive advantage over other programs or requests even though many of these may initially be much better understood or more generally popular than those emanating from the library community.
THE SECOND STEP: UNDERSTANDING AND MARKETING YOUR PRODUCT

It should go without saying that good programs are the result of good planning. Since a discussion of how to conduct a planning process is somewhat beyond the scope of this article, let it suffice to note here that before any service product (or the request for the resources to carry it out) is ready to be marketed through the political process, it must at least meet certain general criteria.

First, a product or request must be expressed in plain language and must include accurate cost information. Second, specific requests or products must support the overall long-range goals of the parent organization, and a comprehensive long-range plan must be readily available as evidence of this connection. Third, except in very rare circumstances, both the specific product and the long-range plan must have been approved by the individual or body which immediately governs the requesting agency. Finally, the long-range plan must have undergone processes leading to the endorsement of its primary provisions by the people or groups its services are intended to benefit, and it must be possible to demonstrate how a specific product or request is intended to achieve these benefits. These "environmental" criteria should ensure that a product can be understood and discussed, both alone and in context, and that a presentation has verifiably been "legitimized" both by a basic authority structure and by the public the agency serves. Unfortunately for anyone preparing to rest on his or her laurels, meeting these basic planning and legitimizing criteria is simply the beginning of the marketing process.

The single most important factor in marketing in the political environment is not product but perception. Consider the fairly common offer from automobile companies to pay a "manufacturer's cash rebate," often amounting to several thousand dollars, if the prospective customer will only purchase the particular vehicle being advertised. It is doubtful that this incentive alone causes many individuals to rush out and buy new automobiles, largely because many already have cars and most lack both the means and the desire to purchase new ones with any great frequency. Conversely, such an offer is very effective in cases where the listener has a real or perceived need for a product. Then the only questions that remain to be decided are those of which offer and which product are most advantageous. The decision to purchase has already been made.

Perhaps the greatest weakness in traditional efforts to market library service is the failure to establish a need or even the perception of need for library products in the minds of those who control political processes. All too frequently our approach depends on our own perception of the goods we offer, and the perceptions of our audience
are completely ignored. "Libraries are good, just like motherhood and apple pie. If libraries are given resources, wonderful library things will happen. The nature of these things is not quite decided yet, but you may be assured that they will benefit you greatly." Expressed in this fashion, this "input only" argument is both ridiculous and embarrassing. Yet a surprising number of attempts to seek resources through the political process, once shorn of their voluminous jargon and technical detail, really represent nothing more than this approach. This methodology can work, but success depends upon those to whom it is presented already sharing a common belief in the value and importance of what is being offered. Otherwise, this approach is generally doomed to failure. A second "evolutionary stage" in the library marketing spectrum involves measuring and expressing outputs as well as inputs (Van House et al., 1987). This approach attempts to measure specifically quantifiable things that are being achieved with existing resources (such as circulation per capita, various fill rates, times required for document delivery, and so forth, and to suggest and ultimately measure how much more could be achieved through internal redesign or access to increased resources. Output measures provide a powerful managerial technique in that they enable us to study what is being done, how it is being done, and how it can be done better. This can be of critical importance in designing library requests or products in the first place, but output measures do very little to actually alter the basic perceptions of our audience of decision makers. A library may, for instance, successfully answer three times as many reference questions this year as last, but to an individual who has never used a library and sees no reason why anyone should, this achievement has little value.

An uncritical acceptance of the premise that "more is better" with regard to traditional measures of library services, may also actually hinder rather than help our attempts to adapt to a rapidly changing world. A customer who has refused staff assistance has little choice but to check out everything that may pertain to his or her need or do without. Circulation increases, but service clearly remains substandard. A customer, properly advised, checks out only what is necessary and circulation decreases, although reference usage may rise. A customer well trained in library usage, and perhaps also with direct access to full-text databases, may only show up as a number on a door counter or perhaps, on occasion, be represented in internal usage surveys. Circulation of materials by this customer may become almost nonexistent. Yet how many libraries still tie their budget requests to rising circulation?

In short, the misuse of library output measures to market our wares causes us to fall prey to the same fallacy we often attribute
to accountants and budget analysts. We know the cost (and, in this case, the frequency) of everything, and yet we know the value of nothing.

If neither input nor output measures alone provide an adequate basis upon which to market library service, then we must go beyond them to explore dimensions of value and social impact. To achieve this, we must set aside many of our own perceptions and attempt to enter into the minds of those we serve.

Consider for a moment the automotive engineer's view of a car. He or she almost certainly knows the characteristics of the alloy used to construct the cylinder walls of the engine and further understands how this alloy will perform under a wide range of conditions. As lay persons, on the other hand, we may only want to know how a car drives, what it costs, and whether it is available in fire engine red with a leather interior. This is not to say that the concerns of the engineer are unimportant to us. We want cars that run well with minimal effort on our part, and we get very upset if these conditions are not met. But the technical considerations that enable reliable and efficient operation are, for the most part, simply background to us. Our overriding (although perhaps, it is hoped, unconscious) concern may actually be limited to the image that we project to the rest of our species when we get behind the wheel.

The significance of the kinds of differing perceptions suggested by this automotive example is frequently underestimated. Our tendency is to assume that a few well-chosen descriptive phrases and statistics can convey the value and importance of library products to almost anyone no matter what his or her background. This is by no means necessarily the case.

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, a theory which came to the attention of anthropological theorists in the early 1930s, attempts to explain differences in perceived realities, often called cognitive universes (Romney & D'Andrade, 1964, pp. 146-70), on the grounds that “language is culture, and that culture is controlled by and controls language” (Sills, 1986, p. 536). For example, Sapir and Whorf noted that certain historical Aleut (otherwise known as Eskimo) languages contained over fifty words referring to different types of ice. In our own culture, we make do with half a dozen or so. This difference is easy to understand. To a traditional hunter in the polar regions, correctly identifying a type of ice not only had a direct bearing on finding game, but also, since falling through the ice was invariably fatal, even basic survival was at stake. Our need is not that great so our language does not include this range of distinctions, and we do not think of ice in the same way. Conversely, certain southwestern Native American groups living in an arid desert environment used
the same word to refer to the color blue as well as to the color green. In our own culture, however, these two colors are not only indicated by separate words but, as any artist or decorator can tell you, we further treat these colors as categories which are subdivided into literally hundreds of different shades, each with its own unique linguistic descriptor.

Although the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis has frequently been taken to mean that individuals in different cultures cannot imagine concepts not expressed in their own languages, this is, in fact, a misinterpretation of the intent of the authors of the hypothesis. Instead, it appears evident that humans can learn the criteria defining anyone else's cognitive universe, but that they habitually do not do so if there is neither a convenient opportunity nor a pressing need.

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis may seem rather far afield from considerations of how to market libraries in the political environment, but, in fact, the concept is central to our efforts. Different cognitive universes not only occur among cultures but also within them. George Bernard Shaw once referred to England and America as "[T]wo countries separated by the same language" (Platte, 1989, p. 105). In fact, in many ways in our society, we are hundreds, if not thousands, of separate peoples divided by an increasingly specialized language. Although most people in our society have access to a broad range of concepts for general communication, separate specialized groups also utilize an ever-increasing quantity of field specific "jargon," which means everything to the initiated but little or nothing to anyone not consistently involved in the same subset of the culture. Thus a farmer may be able to fluently discuss field-specific issues ranging from the practical effects of fertilizers to the specific designations of new hybrid crops without ever entering the cognitive universe of libraries at all. Librarians, on the other hand, discuss interloan, MARC formats, circulation, and various arcane aspects of the "information superhighway" in the confident, and often completely erroneous, belief that those to whom we speak either understand what we say or at least care enough to try. An added complication to this situation is that, since all parties employ, technically speaking, the same language, the same words used in entirely different field-specific ways only further compound the confusion. For example, "bus" means to clean up tables in the restaurant trade, is a device to transmit information in the parlance of computer designers, and represents a cheap means of cross town transportation to the rest of us.

If we are unlikely to be able to impress the full wonder of our own cognitive universe of librarianship on a farmer, or a businessperson, or a legislator, then we must instead reshape our communications
so that we speak to those outside our field in terms which lie either within their cognitive universes or which lie within the general shared cognitive universe of the majority of our society.

Overcoming the marketing problems created by different cognitive universes, and by the fact that the cognitive universe of librarianship is not inhabited by a majority of the population in our society, is a task which demands a three step approach. First, a product or request for which resources are to be sought through the political process must be designed based on careful study and quantification of what is happening now, what beneficial changes will occur if the proposal becomes reality, what relationship the proposal has to the long-range plans of its parent organization, and what resources are required to turn the proposal into reality. This first step essentially creates a base of information which, if not necessarily comprehensible to those outside the library field, at least allows precise discussion and development of a specific product. This part of the process might be compared to creating blueprints for the design of a large building. These documents define the product and enable it to be redesigned as required. They are not, however, of a great deal of use to the casual observer.

The second step, therefore, is the translation of this product (and of as much of its underlying information base as necessary) into common, or at least well-defined, terms so that it makes sense to those outside the cognitive universe of the library field. For instance, instead of proposing an investment in public access terminals for use with the OCLC interloan subsystem, the same concept might be explained as a way to enable a student or professor who requires a book which a university library cannot afford, to borrow that book cheaply and efficiently from another university almost anywhere in the United States or even from somewhere else in the world.

Finally, and most importantly, a product must be shown to have a positive impact, which can be either personal or societal, within the terms of the cognitive universes of the audience of decision makers. For example, some generally perceived problems in our society include overcrowded prisons, ever-expanding welfare rolls, an educational system that seems inferior in some respects to that of Japan, a decline in literacy, a falling standard of living, and the perceived need for American business to compete more effectively in a global market. Can public libraries have an impact in these areas? Do they therefore deserve a larger share of scarce resources? Absolutely. Only people who are literate can hold most jobs. People who have reasonable jobs are a great deal less likely to end up either in prison or on the welfare rolls. Literacy improves the business climate because a literate work force is far more adaptable and trainable than an illiterate
one. Good business conditions mean good jobs and a higher standard of living for all. Public libraries promote literacy by strengthening the reading skills of children during summers when most of our schools (unlike those in Japan) are not in session. Public libraries usually direct anyone who wants to learn to read to professional literacy programs and supports such programs with masses of reading material which are freely available to all. Public libraries are a window of access to a wide range of private and governmental programs as well as information concerning how and where to obtain education and jobs and how and where to seek retraining when changes in the workplace leave workers behind. Public libraries provide businesses with information on almost everything (ranging from new product markets to the effects of changing governmental regulation) required to maintain a competitive edge.

This final step, which is adaptable to any kind of library and almost any type of program or request, consists of simply seeking to translate what we perceive as the good offered by our institutions and services into concepts understandable and persuasive to an audience not necessarily familiar with our cognitive universe. In short, rather than trying to convince those who control resources in the political process to change their own world views to encompass our products, we must instead try to demonstrate how our products will benefit or improve the worlds those decision makers already understand.

Frequently, once the necessity for exploring cognitive universes other than our own is understood, the actual techniques required to gather information concerning these universes are not too difficult. Whether a target audience consists of rural county board members, city officials, or corporate vice presidents, the process is much the same. It is necessary to become familiar with current and long-standing concerns in the audience's area of expertise and to learn how these are expressed within that "culture." This information can be verified and supplemented through actual interviews of individual members of the target "culture." If possible, it is desirable to determine if there are general "articles of faith" (i.e., "everyone knows that the government over regulates small business") which are commonly accepted within this "culture." In order to be persuasive, consideration must then be given to adapting at least part of the information intended for presentation concerning the library product to meet the expressed needs of the target audience's world view.

For instance, crop markets rise and fall and farmers must adapt to changing circumstances or go out of business. A few years ago the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection advised farmers that the long-term outlook for traditional
crops was not good, and that they might profitably consider growing entirely new kinds of crops, such as asparagus ("Asparagus May Green Farm Future," 1987, p. 11). The agricultural community, however, soon noted, and commented upon, a lack of information concerning just how to grow and market these new crops. Needless to say, any library proposal of that era which sought to identify with that particular information gap and which further suggested how the gap could be closed, not only stood an excellent chance of being funded but also tended to build up valuable political capital for future use.

One particular note of caution. Do not ever allow yourself to be seen as attempting to offer expertise in an area where you have none. It is effective to note that: "Several members of your group have indicated that the following is a problem, and here is how my agency may be able to help to solve it." It is suicidal to proclaim, "the answer to the single most important problem in computer design today is...." and to have everyone in the room simultaneously realize that you have no idea what you are talking about. To avoid this, test presentation arguments on someone who is representative of, or at least very familiar with, your target audience of decision makers. This person should not, however, be a member of the specific decision-making body itself. This testing process helps to avoid errors in fact, terminology, and concept. It also provides feedback concerning whether arguments are both germane and convincing as to how a program or agency is vital (or at least beneficial) to the needs of a target audience. Finally, if no way can be found in which a specific program or request serves the field-specific needs of an audience, then it should be designed and presented in terms of commonly held world views and to meet needs perceived in this shared universe.

THE FINAL STEP: USING THE POLITICAL PROCESS EFFECTIVELY

The preceding parts of this article have dealt primarily with theoretical aspects of how and why political processes operate and of how to design and market products through these processes. This final section contains a selection of practical advice concerning how to operate effectively within ongoing political processes. This material is designed to take the reader beyond theory and into the political "game" itself by discussing actual strategies for utilizing structural and functional elements of political processes so as to increase the probability of successful resolution of these processes.

Strategy 1: Prepare for Any Outcome

Absolute victory or defeat is certainly a possible outcome of any political process, but the usual result lies somewhere between these
two extremes. Politics has been described as the art of negotiation, and it is necessary to study this art to succeed in this field. Although the art of negotiation is the subject of many treatises, there are two cardinal principles which should suffice here. First, the negotiator with the most time normally wins. This is because someone up against a deadline must usually choose between an inferior solution or none at all. Second, unbalanced settlements seldom endure. If either negotiator wins everything, the other party has good cause to attempt to somehow undermine or disavow the agreement and will frequently attempt to do so. Only if the final agreement contains something of value to each party are both likely to maintain it voluntarily.

Since political processes are highly fluid, it is vital to know at all times where things stand (information being the single most valuable commodity in political processes) and what fallback positions are acceptable. Would you agree to half your needs being met? What about 20 percent? The actual culmination of a political process frequently occurs within a period of a few seconds. The proposed invasion of Normandy in World War II, for example, required years of planning and preparation as well as extensive political agreement among many nations concerning such factors as goals, resource commitment, and methodology. As late as the day before the invasion, weather conditions made the proposition a low odds gamble at best. On the night of June 5th, 1944, Dwight Eisenhower weighed the evidence and uttered those immortal, if uninspiring words, “Okay, we’ll go” (Leckie, 1987, p. 678). The few seconds required for that simple phrase represented the culmination of years of political maneuvering and changed the history of the world.

Strategy 2: Develop Your Personal and Institutional Credibility

Always present a proposal as objectively and fairly as you can. If possible, present information which might undermine your case before your opponents are able to do so. This allows you to explain the problem in your terms (and in terms of the cognitive universe of your listeners), while also defusing any possible charge of concealing information. Never, under any circumstances, either lie or “shade” information beyond what can actually be verified. A primary objective should be the development of a positive and long-term relationship with the decision makers in your political process. An admission of ignorance, followed by a promise to find out, may lead to a short-term setback, but this same honesty enhances long-term credibility—frequently a political gain of far greater worth. In the library profession, we can all learn from those special librarians who prepare interest profiles on key personnel in their organizations and supply these individuals with resources and information as it becomes
available and without being asked. When decision makers in the political process are approached at budget time, it is usually fairly obvious why this is happening. On the other hand, a long-standing relationship enables the decision maker to count on the librarian as someone to be relied upon for honest information. Library requests and proposals are much more likely to find a ready audience in this case than if this long-term relationship did not exist.

**Strategy 3: Understand the Players**

Most political processes involve a wide spectrum of "players" ranging from actual decision makers, through information providers, to "hangers on" of many sorts. Who among these individuals opposes library issues? Is this opposition based on budgetary or philosophical grounds or perhaps even on simple misunderstanding? It is first necessary to learn what motivates opposition because only then can strategies be developed to overcome it. Understanding "friends" of library issues is as important as understanding "enemies." While library issues may be a real "bottom line" to some decision makers, frequently other priorities are likely to erode their support for these issues as the political process unfolds and more demands are made upon a limited package of resources. Even if library support cannot be obtained in the current situation, the failure of library "friends" to support library issues can often be translated into meaningful guarantees of improved support in the future.

**Strategy 4: Use Activity to Overcome Inertia**

Most people prefer not to expend energy without a fairly compelling reason, especially if such an expenditure involves risk, boredom, or complicated thought processes. If, in any political process, a situation can be arranged where library proposals are enacted unless someone takes direct action to stop them, the battle is already half won. An example of this involves the development of a positive long-term relationship of providing accurate and unbiased information to those individuals who write legislative position papers. If a legislative alternative favoring libraries can be introduced into such a paper through such a relationship (and especially if it heads the list of alternatives in the position paper), then even if the actual decision makers have little time or inclination to deal with the issue, your preferred alternative is nevertheless going to be discussed and may well be the one selected even if the choice is ultimately made by default.

**Strategy 5: Understand and Utilize Power Bases Effectively**

A wide spectrum of support must be enlisted in order to achieve specific goals in a political process. Such support is called a power
base. There are two primary power bases in political processes. These are the "grassroots" and the "power elite." The first, in terms of elective political processes, represents the mass of the people. This power base is hard to mobilize but, once this mobilization has been accomplished, this power base tends to maintain its direction and its frequently large size makes it hard to stop. The second power base, the "power elite," is often made up of small groups of "power players," including entrenched decision makers and wealthy special interest lobbies. This power base can act quickly and decisively but can easily lose momentum or change direction due to only minor changes in personnel. Elite power bases frequently silence opposition by intimidation. Your choice may be to give up your cause now or face the consequence of losing more resources, or perhaps even your job, later. The danger this intimidation presents, both to persons and to organizations, can be very real. In practice, it tends to function as yet another weeding process in the political arena. You must choose to take the risk or do without the resources you require. The best protection against this tactic is to build strong ongoing relationships with decision makers (in the case of many public officials, especially around election time) and to always be prepared to take your case to the "grassroots," for tactics of intimidation do not stand exposure to the light of day at all well.

**Strategy 6: Develop Successful Presentation Techniques**

Be brief. Almost every political process requires its decision makers to cope with incredible masses of information. One Wisconsin legislator is renowned for saying: "If you can't write it on a three by five card, make an appointment with my aide to discuss your issue next week" (J. Kiesow, personal communication, June 27, 1994).

Use easily understood anecdotes and examples to support more informal data. The library issues we must shepherd through political processes are often extremely complex. It is very difficult to get anyone to pay attention to even the primary components of such issues, much less to vote for the often intricate solutions required to adequately resolve them. We must make this complexity easy to understand, and one of our best tools to do this is by use of anecdotes or examples. Audiences remember these and, by remembering them, create a positive linkage in their minds among these examples and the more formal and complex points you are trying to get across.

For instance, in Wisconsin we have a library community which includes many different kinds of libraries and serves many different publics. Our libraries are operated by many separate units of government as well as by private agencies. Our libraries are also funded through many agreements and formulas which appear arcane, to say
the least, to the casual observer. To explain why state-level funding is required to enable cooperation among these many kinds of libraries, we soon learned to avoid boring audiences with masses of technical jargon. Instead we hit upon the metaphor of highways. Highways are also a complex network created and maintained by many agencies. Yet this network need not be understood by the traveler to be used. Instead, a map guides you easily from one place to another. Library customers wish to obtain information, much as travelers wish to reach their destinations. Cooperation among libraries is like a highway network, but a question directed to a librarian becomes the map to a destination. The library customer, just like the traveler, need not be concerned with how this information highway is built or funded. He or she only has to use it.

Of course the almost universal use today of the metaphor of the information highway to describe the Internet requires the Wisconsin library community to seek out new and improved examples to support our proposals. There is no lack of candidates for this honor. From the high ideals of the early exploration of space, to the task of restoring control of inner city neighborhoods to law abiding citizens, almost any social good can be used to create a valid example in support of library service.

In addition to theoretical examples, both anecdotes and personal testimony are very powerful ways to support library proposals. A few years ago, the Wisconsin State Senate was discussing the funding level for a public library system for the next biennium while in the throes of a politically charged pre-election austerity drive. The funding future for libraries looked bleak indeed until the joint finance committee began to take citizen testimony. One elderly resident of a rural county described how her failing vision was cutting her off, step by step, from all the things she loved most in life. She then discussed how large print books and other similar materials kept her door to the rest of society open. "Please," she said, "don't take my world away from me." The effect was profound. Although the services she spoke of only represented a tiny fraction of what was purchased with the funds under consideration, libraries escaped unscathed from that budget process.

Express yourself appropriately. You may be verbally challenged by decision makers in political processes, and frequently such treatment is both harsh and unfair. An angry response, however, is usually grounds for many decision makers to dismiss your testimony out of hand. Your best response is to continue to present your information in a cool, collected, and positive manner, and to simply outlast your detractor. Similarly, if an opportunity presents itself to make a cutting personal remark or to somehow cause a decision maker
to look foolish, do not succumb to the temptation. Most politicians commonly attack each other’s parties, philosophies, and ideas. Clever politicians, however, seldom attack each other personally. This is because personal attacks shift the focus away from the issues and frequently destroy any real hope of voluntary compromise. Additionally, issues come and go. Today’s enemy may be tomorrow’s ally but only if a professional relationship based on mutual respect is maintained and nurtured.

Similarly, if presented with an opportunity to win on a technicality—for instance, due to a misprint in a hastily drafted amendment—do not be too eager to take advantage of the situation. Once again, the long-range cost to a working relationship (even with your strongest opposition) may well outweigh the short-term gain.

Ask for what is really wanted, not just for what is easy to obtain. Libraries are often referred to as a “white hat” issue, which means that they are popular, at least in theory, with almost everyone. This makes it very easy to ask a decision maker if he or she will support libraries. The answer is almost always yes. This answer is usually also meaningless. Ask instead if the decision maker will vote for, or even introduce, your program or request. Positive responses to this question are much harder to obtain but are far more worthwhile.

As a corollary to this principle, never enter a critical stage in the political process voluntarily without a fairly good idea of how the decision makers will vote and without a good chance of winning. All too often librarians fail to adequately investigate the positions taken by decision makers and thus enter key segments of political processes lacking the motions, seconds, and majorities required to win.

Be satisfied with victory. All of us have encountered advocates for causes who become so enamored with their issues that they become known more for their tedium than for their insight. The first priority of the library advocate in the political process must be to obtain required resources. Converting everyone involved in the process into experts in library affairs is usually not possible and certainly not desirable if such attempts begin to conflict with the primary goal of obtaining resources.

Choose appropriate modes of expression and presentation. Dress for the occasion. Do not wear a T-shirt to a finance committee hearing, but also do not wear either an evening gown or a three piece suit to a county fair. Learn to speak naturally but professionally. A brief course in public speaking is an investment that is usually repaid many times over.

Use humor but with care. Legitimate humor may generally address achieved characteristics (such as pomposity), but must never be directed at ascribed characteristics (such as race or physical
disability). Your own shortcomings, or those of the group you represent, are usually a fair target for your humor. Lacking either the talent or the urge to be witty, at least smile.

Always remember that every word has an emotional component in its meaning. Fillet of sole, sautéed to a delicate golden brown, is nothing more than a piece of dead fish fried in fat. This description, however, is very unlikely to keep a restaurant in business very long. Choose key words and concepts in presentations to evoke desirable emotions and connotations and to avoid negative ones.

Use appropriate presentation modes adapted to known characteristics of the audience at hand. It is entirely appropriate to use audiovisual aids in making a presentation to a group of educators. The audiovisual presentation made to a county board, however, can be disastrous. In one case in which a slide presentation concerning county libraries was made during an evening meeting to a county board largely composed of retired farmers, when the lights were turned off, thirty-four members were present. When the lights were turned back on some twenty minutes later, only two members remained.

Learn how to use mass media effectively. All too often, librarians consider it sufficient to communicate only with the "already converted" through such means as in-house surveys. In reality, obtaining scarce resources through political processes frequently requires appealing to a wide spectrum of the public. The mass media, including newspapers, radio, and television, are often the appropriate tool for this task. Just as in the case of political officials, long-term relationships built on honesty and mutual respect are invaluable. Remember at budget time that everyone wants coverage, but news must be produced all year round. Libraries and their activities always provide good filler material, but be sure to offer appropriate items to each media format. For instance, a television station may rush to cover a fairly bombastic summer children's program, complete with local celebrities, but a shelf of books, no matter how valuable, lacks visual appeal and is better covered in print.

**Strategy 7: Provide Solutions Rather than Problems**

Decision makers in any political process usually face difficult problems at the outset. As the process unfolds, as resources are expended, and as the full magnitude of the task at hand becomes apparent, remaining problems can appear to be insoluble. Approaching decision makers and asking them to make hard choices violates the principle of activity versus inertia. It also faces these decision makers with even more problems than they already had.
Such a strategy is unlikely to earn either their gratitude or their approval of your requests. A far better alternative is to offer a means by which your request can be granted and yet which has no negative impact on the decision makers involved.

An excellent example of this kind of strategy was the small public library which faced massive budget cuts because newly elected local officials determined to honor certain rather ill-advised campaign promises about cutting taxes. This library calculated that the cost of maintaining, and even increasing, their budget so that they could undertake several badly needed services, was only an additional fourteen dollars on an average property tax bill. Having built up an excellent relationship with both their public and local media, this library appealed directly to the citizenry. Several hundred individuals approached their elected officials and volunteered to pay the additional amounts required for the purposes of improved library services (Schmeling 1986). The mayor and the city council, provided with this solution to a difficult problem, passed the library budget at the requested level without further objection.

CONCLUSION

On the one hand this is an era of dwindling resources. A growing lack of public trust in traditional solutions to social problems, especially solutions proposed by government, is clearly evident. Yet, on the other hand, the capability to provide information to the general populace, in ways unheard of only a few years ago, is almost within our grasp. Libraries, and all the services they offer, may become central to this “second stage” of the information explosion, or they may become peripheral and ultimately just fade away. Our ability to effectively utilize political processes may go a long way toward making the difference. Do not think of this article as a theoretical treatise on politics. It is, instead, a call to action. Two alternative futures await—the choice between them is ours.

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Practice as a Marketing Tool: 
Four Case Studies

DUNCAN SMITH

ABSTRACT
MARKETING is frequently viewed as a set of strategies and techniques that belong to administrators or to individuals outside of librarianship. In addition, marketing is viewed as a set of highly specialized skills and tools which reside only with experts. Marketing is also a stance which, rather than being separate from practice, is an essential element of good practice. This article examines the experiences of four librarians who adopted a marketing stance as they attempted to improve not only their practice but also their institution's services. The role of marketing in assisting the profession in defining a role for itself in today's information society is also examined.

PRACTICE AS A MARKETING TOOL
Kennedy (1993) opens his book, Preparing for the Twenty-First Century, by invoking the ghost of Thomas Robert Malthus. He argues that Malthus's examination of the issues facing late eighteenth-century England are metaphorically linked to the issues facing the global community in the late twentieth century. Malthus was concerned that England's rapidly increasing population would overwhelm England's resources and result in the collapse of English society. Kennedy goes on to explain why Malthus's vision of England—an England faced with "increasing starvation and deprivation, mass deaths through famine and disease, and a rending of the social fabric"—never occurred (p. 5). Kennedy argues that three developments allowed England to escape the future that Malthus had predicted for it. These three
developments were a massive emigration of people from the British Isles, significant improvements in British farming output, and a vast leap in productivity due to Britain's successful entry into the Industrial Revolution (pp. 6-7). In essence, England escaped Malthus's vision because a declining population placed fewer demands on existing resources, and significant gains occurred in both the effective utilization of existing resources and the development and exploitation of new technology-oriented resources. While England was able to avoid the future that Malthus predicted for it, not all portions of the world were as successful. Kennedy points out that, at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, England and India had similar per capita levels of industrialization. By 1900, however, India's level of industrialization was only one-hundredth that of the United Kingdom (p. 11).

For Kennedy, Malthus provides a nice frame for discussing the challenges facing today's global community. Kennedy sees those challenges as dealing with the world's population explosion and increased illegal migration, the robotics revolution and global labor demand, technology, and shrinking national sovereignty (p. 17). Kennedy's discussion and elaboration of these issues and their interconnectedness is too lengthy and well-developed to be condensed here, but, at the risk of over-simplifying his argument, his basic concerns can be reduced to the following two questions:

1. How does the world best use its existing resources to equitably meet the needs of the most people?
2. How does the world best use developing and newly discovered resources to equitably meet the needs of the most people?

Just as Malthus provides a frame for Kennedy, Kennedy provides a frame for libraries and librarians in today's information age. Like the countries and regions of the world contained in Kennedy's book, libraries and librarians are struggling with a population explosion in the form of users. This population explosion places an increased demand on limited human and material resources. At the same time that libraries are experiencing an increase in the demand for traditional library services, information technology and a changing information infrastructure are forcing libraries to consider developing new services for new clienteles. In essence, libraries are faced with a "Malthusian dilemma" all their own. Like the challenges outlined by Kennedy and Malthus, these challenges are ones which deal with how to equitably allocate resources to ensure that the needs of the most people are met.

The nature of this Malthusian dilemma is discussed by Childers (1994) in his recent study of public library reference service in the state of California. Childers found that librarians in California, much like their colleagues elsewhere, were being pressed for time and space.

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interviews with a variety of library personnel to develop an accurate picture of the reference service that was being provided by California's public libraries. His findings indicate that reference service in that state has been severely degraded over the past ten to fifteen years. The main reasons for this degradation are a decline in the human and material resources needed to provide reference service coupled with an increase in demand for these services. In addition to these two factors, the introduction of information technology resources into the service program of most of the state's public libraries has made reference transactions so complex that a large number of library patrons are no longer able to help themselves. Childers also found that these challenges had not been equally distributed across the state. Some jurisdictions were better off than others, but it was not unusual for there to be libraries that were "haves" and libraries that were "have nots" even within the same jurisdiction. This imbalance is reminiscent of the imbalance Kennedy found among the various regions of the world in terms of resources and the demands placed on those resources.

Kennedy's choice of Malthus as a metaphor for framing his discussion of the issues facing today's global society is an apt and effective one. He could, however, have also chosen to frame his discussion in terms of a marketing problem. At its core, Kennedy's book is about who has resources, who needs resources, and how these two groups might develop a means of transferring these. In her book, Marketing/Planning Library and Information Services, Weingand (1987) introduces the concept that marketing is an exchange relationship. She states that marketing is "an evolving process, one that is influenced by definitions, perceptions, environmental and cultural conditions and trends" (p. 3). She goes on to state that libraries have been involved in a culture of "selling." Libraries have tried to convince individuals to use library resources because the library's resources and services were inherently good for them. Weingand argues that, in a world of profound change and decreasing resources, librarians must examine themselves and their relationships with their users. She states that "the pragmatic manager of information services must reexamine the existing relationship between producer and consumer and, using current marketing principles, forge a new way of thinking and acting" (p. 5).

Marketing's specific tools and techniques are discussed in more detail elsewhere in this issue of Library Trends. The major focus of this article will be on an examination of four case studies of pragmatic managers who have reexamined their relationships with either their existing or potential user groups. These case studies are offered as a way of examining how these managers framed the marketing problem
which faced their institutions. These four examples provide an opportunity for us to engage in what Schön (1987) calls “reflective practice.” Schön argues that the thoughtful examination of one’s practice and the practice of one’s colleagues is an essential part in both the growth of a profession’s individual practitioners and the profession itself. He states that: “When a practitioner becomes aware of his frames, he also becomes aware of the possibility of alternative ways of framing the reality of his practice” (p. 310). The four librarians represented in the case studies both knowingly and unknowingly used a marketing stance to alter their own and their library’s relationship with their users. As part of their daily practice, these librarians focused on user behavior, redefined their product and its delivery system, created a new institution, and repositioned an existing one.

FOCUSING ON USER BEHAVIOR

An excellent example of focusing on users and their behavior is provided by Virginia Rankin (1992) in her article “Pre-Search Intellectual Access to Information.” Rankin states her commitment to provide not only physical access to information but intellectual access to it as well. She has observed that the students who use her library frequently copy entire encyclopedia articles word-for-word. The result of this activity was an overemphasis by students on a few resources at the expense of others more relevant yet not as well known. A more important result of this activity was that students did not view the learning process as engaging. Rankin’s students frequently viewed research as something that was more suited to a photocopy machine than a person. In her experience, the common reason provided for this behavior is that students are just “too lazy to stop and think.” For Rankin, this common explanation by nonstudents for this student behavior is not acceptable. Rather than engage in a process of blaming her users for not being properly motivated, she chose to “reframe” this common problem. Rather than laziness, she feels that students engage in this behavior because they have not learned to make distinctions between information that is useful and information that is not. As a result of this assumption, she developed a three-step process to assist students in developing the skills and means needed to make the distinction between relevant and irrelevant information.

Rankin defines the presearch as “the process that helps students to relate research to prior knowledge of a topic first and then develop questions about the topic to organize their search” (p. 168). The remainder of her article describes her experience using the presearch with one group of students. One of the many library assignments Rankin assisted students with was a report on diseases. Each student
had been assigned a specific disease and asked to write a report on it. After she had dealt with this assignment twice, she asked a few of the students using her library a few questions about their assignment. She discovered that they could not answer some fundamental questions about their assigned ailment. For example, a student working on tuberculosis could not tell Rankin how a doctor would know if someone had tuberculosis. Rankin points out that this student had been working on her assignment for four days and had several pages of notes.

Rankin concluded, as a result of her informal interviews, that what her students needed for this assignment was a framework. She then developed a series of activities designed to assist her students in developing this framework. These activities included making lists of words that relate to diseases, learning how to gather ideas for frameworks from a general encyclopedia article, developing lists of questions about diseases in general, and practice in the art of note taking. One ingenious strategy involved distributing folders to students with envelopes glued into the folders. Each student wrote one of the questions they were interested in on each of the envelopes. After a student made a note card on information they had located, they had to place the note card in the envelope of the question it answered. If the student could not place the note card in one of the envelopes, the note card was discarded.

As part of her evaluation of the presearch process, Rankin asked her students for their feedback. As a result of this feedback, Rankin learned that her students were aware of changes in their behavior, that they had learned the importance of developing a framework for their research activities, and that these ideas and strategies would make future research projects easier.

While Rankin might not view the process she describes in her article as marketing, it is marketing nonetheless. Weingand (1987) quotes Kotler's definition of marketing in her book. Kotler defines marketing in the following manner:

Marketing is the analysis, planning, implementation, and control of carefully formulated programs designed to bring about voluntary exchanges of values with target markets for the purpose of achieving organizational objectives. It relies heavily on designing the organization’s offering in terms of the target market’s needs and desires, and on using effective pricing, communication, and distribution to inform, motivate, and service the markets. (p. 5)

In her article, Rankin describes not only the presearch process but her process in coming to her conclusions about the presearch and its benefits for her students. Her process involves observing student
behavior and developing concepts about that behavior. She observes that students copy from encyclopedias rather than developing and expressing ideas in their own words. She rejects the commonly held assumption that students do this because they are lazy. In place of this rejected assumption, she postulates that students engage in this activity because they cannot distinguish between useful and irrelevant information. She conducts informal interviews with a few students and determines that this is, indeed, the case. As a result of her interviews, she also learns that students lack a framework for conducting research. Rankin then develops an intervention or service which assists her students in developing a framework for a specific research assignment. The outcome of this process is that library research becomes less costly for Rankin's students. Rather than being a time-consuming and boring process—something more suited for photocopiers—research becomes something that is personally relevant, efficient, and fun. These outcomes are verified by obtaining feedback from her service's consumers. The process Rankin employs for developing and implementing the presearch described in her article mirrors several aspects of Kotler's definition of marketing. Rankin changes and improves her practice by employing marketing strategies to plan and implement a service based on the needs and desires of her target market.

Redefining the Product and Its Delivery System

In "Reference Encounters of a Different Kind: A Symposium," Virginia Massey-Burzio (1992) describes a situation that is a microcosm of the universes described by Malthus, Kennedy, and Childers. At the time of her article, Massey-Burzio was head of the reference department at Brandeis University. Like most academic libraries during 1988/89, Brandeis University's main library was in the process of adding databases in the CD format. During the same time period, the number of reference questions received by this department increased 300 percent. This increase had to be absorbed with no additional staff. Like Malthus, Kennedy, and Childers, Massey-Burzio found herself in a situation where more users were making more demands on the same resources. A standard response to an increase in use would be to seek more staff. The acquisition of more human resources, however, was not possible at Brandeis. In an attempt to cope with this increasingly untenable situation, Massey-Burzio began a systematic analysis of her situation which resulted in her reframing the way she viewed not only her situation at Brandeis but reference service itself.

Massey-Burzio conducted an informal survey of academic reference librarians in the Boston area to develop a baseline for what
the question to staff ratio would be for an adequately staffed reference desk. The figure she arrived at as a result of this process was 2,500 questions per year per staff member. In order to bring the Brandeis reference desk into this range, Massey-Burzio would either have to add several more reference librarians or reduce the number of questions received. Neither seemed to be possible at Brandeis at that time. As a result of her findings, she began a detailed review of the literature to identify additional solutions to her problem. Her review revealed two very interesting trends. One was the fact that, while the tools and strategies used in providing reference service had grown and changed, the actual means of delivering that service had not. She also discovered articles which began to question whether or not the value of reference service resided solely with the provision of an accurate answer.

In a response to the situation at Brandeis and as a result of her literature review, Massey-Burzio and her staff decided to eliminate the reference desk in their library. In its place they created an “information desk” and a “research consultation service.” The information desk was staffed by graduate students who had been trained in providing ready reference service. These students became the reference department’s front line. They were responsible for determining whether or not a question was a directional or ready reference question or whether it was a research question. If the question was a research question, it was referred to the librarian who was on duty in the research consultation service office.

This means of delivering information service offered several advantages for the Brandeis community. First of all, it allowed for a more equitable and effective distribution of staff resources. The expertise of the reference librarians was channeled toward users with research questions and away from users with directional or ready reference questions. By segmenting the “reference question market,” the Brandeis staff was able to develop service strategies that more appropriately addressed the needs of users. Under the traditional reference desk model, all users and their questions were viewed as equal. Whether a user had a directional question or a research question, the user was treated in the same way. The user’s question was addressed at the reference desk with all the distractions and time constraints inherent in the traditional reference desk model of service delivery. Under the information desk/research consultation service model, users and their questions were directed into the service modality that was most appropriate for their needs. Finally, the research consultation service office was an environmental setting which was designed not only to increase the utilization of the library’s human resources but
to increase both the accuracy and quality of the reference transaction itself.

The research consultation service office is an office. It resembles the offices of other professionals like lawyers and doctors. It is a private setting in which a professional and client can engage in a confidential dialogue without being disturbed. Like a doctor's office, the research consultation service office also contain the basic tools and equipment needed to provide service: ready reference tools and a scholar workstation which provided access to all the functions of the library's online catalog as well as dial-up access to a wide range of online reference and information resources. This environment not only sets a more "professional tone" for the reference transaction, it creates a space in which the overall quality of the reference transaction could be improved. Several studies have pointed out that interpersonal communication skills play a major part in the provision of accurate answers to reference questions (Gers & Seward, 1985, pp. 32-35). The research consultation service office is an environment which increases the likelihood of successful interpersonal communication. Studies are also beginning to appear in the literature which point out that accurate answers are not the only factor valued by users who seek information service. Durrance (1989) found that factors such as being made to feel comfortable by the librarian, showing an interest in the question, and being friendly contributed to user satisfaction with the reference transaction. While the reference consultation service office in and of itself will not increase either a particular staff member's interpersonal skills or their "friendliness," it does provide an environment which allows these skills and traits to be used to their fullest.

Like Rankin, Massey-Burzio would probably not view her process as a marketing process. She is more likely to view it as either being a good librarian or being a good manager or both. While it may indeed be these, it is also a marketing process. Some of the marketing elements Massey-Burzio describes in her article are assessing her service's environment, identifying her user community and segmenting that community into unique markets, and evaluating and designing an appropriate delivery system for her service. Her key marketing task, however, was to redefine her product. Rather than defining reference service narrowly in terms of providing the most answers to the most questions, Massey-Burzio and her staff viewed reference service as more than providing answers. By viewing reference service's product as the quality of the reference transaction, the staff at Brandeis was able to make more effective use of their resources and add value to the service received by their users.
Creating a New Service

At the end of 1982, Peggy Hull (personal communication, August 1, 1994) found herself in need of a job. She was just completing the end of a temporary assignment as a cataloger in an exemplary special library. This library served a large pharmaceutical company and was well-known and respected both within the company and within the industry. Her experience in this setting had opened her eyes to the possibilities of providing information services in a corporate environment in the private sector. A remark made by a colleague regarding requests for assistance from another pharmaceutical company in the area provided Hull with an opportunity to attempt to create a position for herself.

Hull made an appointment with a representative of the neighboring company to explore the possibility of being hired as the new company's librarian. This company had recently located to the area and, while it was engaged in pharmaceutical research and marketing, it only had twenty-five professional employees. Hull's contact did not see either the possibility or the need in hiring a librarian at the time of her interview. During the interview, Hull continued to express the specific skills she had that could be of use to the company. These included organizing the company's growing print resources, performing literature searches, and providing a document delivery service for company employees. At the end of the interview, it was agreed that Hull would be given a three-month temporary position to "organize the company's journals." At the end of three months, her position would be evaluated.

With only three months to justify both her existence and the value of her profession, Hull decided to focus on providing those services which would have an immediate and visible benefit for her users. In her new company, Hull quickly learned that time was something that was a highly valued resource. It was also a resource that was in short supply. As a result of reflecting on the needs and values of her users, she decided to focus on performing literature searches and providing a document delivery service. These two services would be tied more directly to the immediate needs of her users and have the added value of saving them time. Shortly after arriving, Hull found herself being kept busy with these two services. She quickly developed forms for requesting literature searches and articles. These forms allowed users to record their requests quickly without having to wait for her if she was working with someone else or was out of the building retrieving documents for other clients.

These forms had another benefit as well. They provided a record of the number of requests received and the number of items obtained. Hull began to gather this information as a way of communicating
the value of her service to the individuals she hoped would become her superiors. The results of her analysis showed a steady increase in growth and demand relating to her service. Hull was not asked to keep this information. She decided that it was important to be able to convince her employers of the value of her services.

Hull spends a great deal of time in her narrative about her experience of the emerging corporate culture in which she found herself. She uses words like confident, enthusiastic, and energetic to describe her users. She goes on to say that these traits were contagious, and she found that her initial feelings of apprehension about her venture were giving way to feelings of enthusiasm and confidence. She found herself buying stock in her company and urging others to buy stock in it. She also found herself turning a potential liability into a major asset. The library was located in the only conference room available to company personnel. Rather than viewing this as an inconvenience, she asked to be allowed to work quietly while meetings were being held in the room. As a result of being allowed to stay in the library while meetings were being conducted, Hull was able to learn more about the company, its language, and its needs. This information was translated into more and better service for her users.

At the end of her three-month appointment, Hull was made a permanent employee of the company. Eleven years later, this library enterprise, which began with one temporary employee, employs a total of fourteen professional librarians. Of the three case studies so far, Hull is most conscious of the marketing aspect of her practice. She entered her company knowing that she had to focus on her users and provide services that added value to them and allowed them to add value to the company. Notice that she does not focus on the activity for which she was originally hired. She identifies and focuses on activities that are based on the needs of her users. Notice also that she quickly begins communicating the value of her service to her consumers. Communicating the value of your product or service is a major component of any marketing program. Notice also that Hull’s communication and interaction with her market is not one way. Just as she adds value to her users, they add value to her. They share their enthusiasm, confidence, and energy with Hull. She moves from being someone who wonders whether or not what she is doing is useful to someone who knows that she is making a valued contribution to her company. She also moves from someone who is on the outside looking in to someone who is a full partner in this particular enterprise.

**Repositioning an Institution**

While Hull created an institution, Steve Sumerford and the staff of one of the Greensboro Public Library’s branches reinvented an
in institution (Pates, 1994, pp. 1-5). Approximately five years ago, Sumerford became director of the Greensboro Public Library's Southeast Branch. Sumerford was hired, in part, to explore ways of increasing use at the Southeast Branch. Prior to his hiring, the Southeast Branch had been considered for closing because it was not performing as well as other branches in the Greensboro system. Performance at this time was measured mainly by circulation figures. One of the reasons for its low circulation was that the library was located in a low-income neighborhood with high unemployment and a high degree of illiteracy. Sumerford viewed his primary tasks as determining ways to make the branch relevant to its community and determining ways to evaluate the effectiveness of his branch's services.

Sumerford began his first task by establishing relationships with other agencies that were providing services in the southeast Greensboro community. As a result of his discussions with these agencies, he determined that his branch's market had two primary concerns. The first concern was services for children. A large number of residents of the southeast Greensboro community were children. The parents of these children were very concerned that their children have access to more opportunities than they had themselves. The second area of concern for the Southeast Branch's market was employment. With these two needs in mind, Sumerford and his staff began to develop programs and services which could contribute to addressing these needs. From the beginning, Sumerford and his staff saw the library and its programs and services as part of a larger program designed to address the needs of the southeast Greensboro community. The library was not an institution operating alone. It was one of many agencies operating to address the southeast Greensboro community's needs.

Early on in this process, the following motto was developed as a guiding principle for the efforts of the Southeast Branch Library: The library in the community and the community in the library. Some of the services which grew out of this motto were the development of a literacy collection for both students and teachers, a computer laboratory, a job and career counseling service with supporting materials, storytimes for children from local childcare centers, GED classes, an independent learning lab, an after school homework club, and storytimes at the local homeless shelter. As a result of these services, the Southeast Branch Library began to see an increase in both use and the attention it was receiving as part of its efforts. In fact, community groups began to contribute funds to the branch and host fund-raising events to support the branch, its programs, and services. A total of over $210,000 has been raised
for the branch and its programs through gifts and grants over the past three years.

Like Hull, Sumerford and his staff were very aware of the challenges they faced in marketing library services. They were faced with the challenge of reinventing their institution. The cornerstone of their marketing strategy was to redefine their institution for their community in terms of their community. This meant, in some cases, delivering library services and creating a library presence outside of the library building itself. This also meant assessing not only their end-users but potential organizational shareholders in the library. By forming a partnership with other community organizations, Sumerford and his staff were able to identify ways to make their library relevant in their community. It was a process which not only positioned the library and its services within the southeast Greensboro community but also made the library a full member of that community. A final aspect of the Southeast Branch’s marketing program was to rename itself to reflect more accurately its role in its community and the services it provides to that community. Greensboro Public Library’s Southeast Branch is now known as the Vance-Chavis Lifelong Learning Center.

Another reflection of the value placed on the efforts of this branch came from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation. Each year the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, a private nonprofit foundation, gives the Susan B. Reynolds Awards. The purpose of these awards is to recognize outstanding and courageous leadership at the grassroots level. These awards are frequently referred to as “North Carolina’s Nobel Prize.” In 1993, Steve Sumerford received the Susan B. Reynolds Award for Community Change. He is the only librarian in the award’s eight-year history to be so honored. His quote in the award’s ceremony program is an apt summation of the efforts of Sumerford and the staff at the Vance-Chavis Lifelong Learning Center:

There’s this image now of reinventing government. I like that image. We need to reinvent some institutions, and there are aspects of the public library that I think need to be reinvented. We’ve got to listen to what the public needs and then make changes to our institutions to respond to those needs. Otherwise, the institutions will die out of lack of interest and lack of need. (Reynolds, 1994)

**Conclusion**

Each generation of librarians must define for itself and its users what the library is and how it will add value to the information exchanges of its community. Libraries and librarians have traditionally added value to these exchanges in three major ways. They
have provided physical access to information, they have organized this information for use, and they have provided assistance in locating and utilizing this information. Each of the librarians in this article starts with one of these traditional values and makes it relevant to today's users. Virginia Rankin chooses to provide not only physical access to her library's collection but works to assist her students in gaining intellectual access to the information contained in her library. Virginia Massey-Burzio redefines reference service's product and its delivery system. Peggy Hull finds a niche for herself and her profession in a growing and dynamic enterprise in the corporate sector. Steve Sumerford and his staff, by focusing on the needs of his institution's users, moves his library from being irrelevant to being a centerpiece of the community and a vital part of the lives of its citizens.

These librarians have removed barriers between their institutions and the markets their institutions sought to serve. They did so by placing a higher value on the needs of their users than the resources they would use to serve those users. Marketing has frequently been viewed as something that is separate from librarianship and its practice. As these case studies show, there is no need for this barrier to exist. Marketing is not a set of tools and strategies that resides in textbooks and library school lecture halls. Marketing is a stance and an attitude that focuses on meeting the needs of users. Marketing is a means of ensuring that libraries, librarians, and librarianship are integrated into both today's and tomorrow's emerging global culture. Marketing is not separate from good practice. It is good practice.

References
Marketing Youth Services

BARBARA DIMICK

ABSTRACT

A marketing orientation to service planning offers youth services professionals marketing techniques that are especially useful for designing effective programs, collections, and services. Market segmentation research is a valuable method for determining customer needs. The marketing mix—the four P's of product, place, price, and promotion—provides a useful framework for analyzing the effectiveness of the services of the library. Youth services can have a strong positive effect on the library's position in the community, helping to build a loyal customer base and future library users.

INTRODUCTION

A true marketing approach to managing libraries asks that librarians change how they define what they do—from an emphasis on product (collections, services) to an emphasis on customer. "A customer orientation holds that the main task of the organization is to determine the perceptions, needs, and wants of target markets and to satisfy them through the design, communication, pricing, and delivery of appropriate and competitively viable offerings" (Kotler & Andreasen, 1987, p. 41). Market-oriented management identifies its markets, or specific populations, researches the needs of those populations, and then devises products and services designed to meet those needs, taking into account the available resources and ability to implement the necessary mix of services. "A customer-centered organization is one that makes every effort to sense, serve,
and satisfy the needs of and wants of its clients and publics within the constraints of its budget" (Kotler & Andreasen, 1987, p. 43). Similarly, marketing is more than devising communications strategies designed to change customers to fit what the organization offers. The true marketer's philosophy considers that it is the organization that must be willing to adapt its offering to the customer and not vice versa (Kotler & Andreasen, 1987, p. 56). Collections and programs are driven by what is known about the needs of the target market and may or may not parallel traditional library service offerings. This can be, and has been, a difficult concept for many librarians, including those in youth services.

The difficulty lies in the perception of librarianship as held by its professionals. A "professional orientation" holds that the organization's task is to develop programs and services which it believes are satisfying to the public and do not conflict with the professional role to which librarians aspire. Librarians are unwilling to relinquish their professional role in determining what products the library will offer to the marketplace. Yet marketing demands that the organization be designed to serve not the needs of the librarians, but the needs of the chosen markets (Dragon & Leisner, 1983, p. 36). There is an "unspoken fear that [a] marketing orientation will ultimately cause...nonprofit professionals to bend their professional standards and integrity to 'please the masses'. [which] can be at variance to many of the most elevated pursuits of society" (Kotler & Andreasen, 1987, p. 61). "[S]ome librarians, in all likelihood, are apt to experience a role conflict between what they believe is appropriate professional conduct and the behavior requirements of a marketing-oriented organization" (Dragon & Leisner, 1983, p. 41). Examples of this are the youth services professionals who agonize over adding comic books or Barney spin-offs to the collection, arguing that their professional responsibility is to use limited resources wisely to acquire materials of the highest quality for the community.

This perception of marketing misses the point. Marketing's role is one of supporting the organization in achieving its goals by devising strategies that are customer focused instead of organization focused. It is a tool to help the library get where it is going. Using marketing and being customer-oriented are not goals in and of themselves; these are ways to achieve goals. Management sets direction through ongoing planning and evaluation, and marketing becomes a means to achieve the organization's goals (Kotler & Andreasen, 1987, p. 61). Library professionals, including youth services professionals, instead of being threatened by this marketing orientation, can apply their expertise in developing services and collections that meet the needs of identified target markets and that take into account library resources and the
overall mission of the library. Those youth services librarians struggling with the pop-culture demand could determine what needs are being met by those comic books for those children wanting them, or for those preschoolers demanding more Barney, and evaluate various possibilities, given available resources. A marketing orientation views services from the customer's point of view; therefore, it actually adds a dimension to professionalism rather than detracting from it by asking that librarians analyze markets, assess their needs, and develop services to meet those needs. Successful marketing requires that a library professional devise a proactive public relations effort that enables effective two-way communication between the library and the library user, continue to evaluate target markets and their response to library offerings, and adopt a flexibility that allows for changing service priorities based on changing customer profiles. This is a tall order, especially since many youth services professionals have no background or educational experience with marketing concepts or techniques.

During the late 1980s, there was a widening acceptance of the use of social marketing among governmental agencies. Instead of seeking to influence consumers in their buying behavior, social marketing seeks to influence social behaviors not to benefit the marketer but to benefit the target audience and the general society. Social marketing applies generic marketing techniques to a specific class of problems to influence social behavior (Kotler & Andreasen, 1991, pp. 403-04). Perhaps youth services librarians are more comfortable if the end result of a marketing effort is a positive change in a child's behavior (increase in the number of library visits or amount of time spent reading), especially since that behavior is recognized to benefit both the child and society.

**Market Segmentation**

Ultimately, the goals of market segmentation are to predict and influence customer behavior. All marketing efforts achieve more efficient and effective results when they are directed toward smaller subsets of a larger market. This enables librarians to manage library budgets efficiently and to advance the library mission and goals effectively (Wood, 1988, pp. 47-50). Even though youth services itself is a market segment of the total public library market, children's services professionals have long been in the habit of further segmenting that youth services market by age and interest levels and then setting up collections, programs, and special displays to meet the needs of those market subsets. The picture books are in one part of the department, books for beginning readers are in another, and the fiction and magazines aimed at young teens in another. Summer
library programs are often segmented according to age with separate components for elementary and middle schoolers. By so doing, children's services use limited resources effectively by attempting to satisfy identified portions of their larger potential market. Because the characteristics of specific segments of the clientele are different, specific services can be designed based on those differences, and then capitalized on.

Age is obviously a major segmentation in the youth services market, but the issue of market segmentation is so vital to an effective marketing effort that youth services professionals are advised to be aware of other methods of segmentation that are successfully used in business and by other nonprofit organizations. Geography could be combined with the usual demographic breakdowns of the total market (categorizing families by age, income, occupation, and so on). For instance, a branch located in an upper middle-class neighborhood will emphasize different programs and parts of the collection than a branch located in a more disadvantaged area.

Psychographics, or psychological profiles, of current and potential users—attitude, personality, interests, lifestyle, and opinions, including the use of leisure time—is another category that may be useful for youth services professionals to consider when researching market segments. Children are part of a family unit which exhibits specific lifestyles and attitudes toward leisure time; libraries could combine this segmentation category with demographic information and determine what activities potential patrons are substituting for library use (Wood, 1988, p. 53).

Looking at attributes of the organization's products can also be useful. Benefit segmentation is the benefit the customer sees in the organization's product. If a love of books and reading is a value for a family, then preschool storytimes (the library's product) will be seen as a benefit because they encourage a love of books and reading. Most libraries have a market segment made up of families and caregivers who regularly attend preschool storytimes, even though those families and caregivers may represent different geographic or demographic variables. "The value of knowing what generic benefit is sought by a customer and whether a given product is seen as possessing that attribute" is that it can be used to predict customer behavior. "Potential customers can be influenced if their desires and perceptions are known," and existing services or new services can be offered according to their effectiveness in providing the benefits sought (Wood, 1988, p. 53).

McNeal (1992) looks at children as an object of market research for the for-profit sector. "Retailers significantly upped their interest level in children as consumers during the last half of the 1980s"
(McNeal, 1992, p. 113), and youth services librarians can benefit from the research that has occurred. Children are seen as a *primary market*—they have money of their own to spend; as an *influence market*—they directly and indirectly influence household purchases; and as a *future market*—the market that has the greatest potential. When these dimensions are augmented with demographics, lifestyles, benefit segmentations, and product usage rate, marketers have a clearer idea of what the needs and wants are of specific target market segments and can devise products and services for those markets and determine how to promote those products and services (McNeal, 1992, pp. 16-17). McNeal has found that the most effective products and services for children appeal to children's most important needs—play, sensory appeal or gratification, and affiliation (McNeal, 1992, pp. 182-91). Children's librarians have operated on these assumptions for years—reading programs are first and foremost fun—they have kid appeal. They use music, movement, color. Children's rooms are set up to help the child feel that he or she belongs and is welcome. “If public libraries understood that children are not only significant customers in their own right and influential participants in family decisions about library use but the future *adult* users of libraries, they might put more effort into developing long-term customer loyalty” (Walter, 1994, p. 288).

This issue of building a loyal customer base is primary to a marketing orientation; retailers recognize the importance of repeat use of a product or service and spend millions determining the factors that will keep their customers coming back. Libraries rely on youth services to build future users and to maintain a loyal customer base into the future. Three research studies on library usage patterns discussed by Lynch and Rockwood (1986) indicate the importance of regular library use as a child in determining adult library use and satisfaction. Among other findings, a comparison of the three studies revealed that early childhood library or reading experiences are strong predictors of adult library use (Lynch & Rockwood, 1986, p. 32), that there is strong influence from the family in forming reading and library habits, and that among public library users who reported frequent use prior to age twelve, most are current users (Lynch & Rockwood, 1986, p. 36). The authors suggest the findings can help formulate a marketing strategy designed to increase the number of users and the frequency of use of children's services and therefore the market of long-term active patrons—in other words, building a loyal customer base. Among their recommendations are strengthening market development efforts directed to children under age twelve, promoting children's services to parents in order to benefit from the generational influence on library patronage, and tailoring
promotions to the uses and benefits that market segments—both parents and children—seek from library services (Lynch & Rockwood, 1986, pp. 37-38). The authors underscore the importance of behavioral, over demographic or geographic, characteristics of the market segment with respect to library services. After learning about the patron's potential objectives, preferences in materials, and expected benefits, the librarian can review the collection for suitability to the needs of the particular market segment and design promotional messages that will be most effective for that segment (Lynch & Rockwood, 1986, p. 39). The research suggests that "[t]he primary adult market segment—i.e., persons who respond readily to promotion of the library and who make the most use of the library and gain the greatest satisfaction from it, includes those who started reading and going to the library before age twelve, were accompanied as children by family members, have parents with more-than-average education, have more-than-average education themselves, remember children's services specifically and favorably, and are motivated to use the library to satisfy personal objectives" (Lynch & Rockwood, 1986, p. 40).

Building a loyal customer base in terms of studying current users and offering those services that will keep them coming back is relatively straightforward, but how do youth services librarians reach out to nonusers of library services? What information is available about people who do not use the library that would indicate why they do not? What benefits might they see in regular library use that public libraries could use to adapt collections and services that would change their behavior? Reaching out to new market segments in order to expand the library's total market can be very difficult. Segmentation studies done for libraries have conflicting recommendations as to whether or not to target nonusers. Some advise targeting only users because nonusers are seen as unreachable. People become nonusers for reasons beyond libraries' control; "they do not have the time...they're not in the habit, or...they buy their books instead" (Welch & Donohue, 1994, p. 151). "Other studies recommend going after...[nonusers], removing such obstacles to library use as perceived inaccessibility of the library (hours, location, short loan period) or irrelevance of its collection and service to their lives" (Wood, 1988, pp. 55-56). If the library's long-range plan calls for an active outreach effort to particular nonusing populations, the same marketing approach is followed, but the key element of gathering information on the target group may prove much more difficult than marketing research about library users. Demographic and geographic information will be insufficient for designing a service profile that will be effective. The "focus of research should be on benefits
(expectations) associated with libraries rather than on the collection or even on awareness of facilities and services” (Wood, 1988, p. 58) and, in order to know this, researchers must ascertain the needs and values of the market segment. If a large Hmong population is identified as a target for outreach, the staff needs to work with other community agencies and leaders of that community itself in order to understand what is important to Hmong families, how library services (new or traditional) could benefit them, and how the library could communicate that benefit. As well as focusing on benefits, the staff could solicit information about the influence of others (family, neighbors, and coworkers) within a group, and begin by targeting community leaders. “It may be possible to reach potential patrons by changing the attitudes of people who influence them” (Wood, 1988, p. 58). The decision to make the effort to expand the library’s markets is arrived at through a strategic planning process that includes citizen input, community values, and an analysis of the library’s resources. Youth services staff, with their unique knowledge of the youth market, are an integral part of that process.

**The Importance of Position**

“Positioning is often called the battle for your mind. It is defined as the way a product or service, company or institution is perceived by the client, customer, investor, consumer, or voter” (Walters, 1992, p. 29). It deals with the library’s image as perceived by its markets. “Positioning is not just advertising or promotion, although advertising is often used to communicate a library’s position; rather it refers to the perception of the library’s placement within the array of competitors for the patron’s and funding sources support” (Dragon & Leisner, 1983, p. 37). The library’s job is to identify what major attributes the target market uses to evaluate potential and choose among competitors. It is a process of understanding the needs of various target markets and of communicating to the targets the advantages of library use when compared to the alternatives for satisfying information or recreational needs (Dragon & Leisner, 1983, p. 37). “Positioning is achieved by advertising, promotion, and communication programs. Libraries need to be aware of their position in the marketplace and devise separate positioning strategies for different customers and potential customers—local elected officials, community leaders, parents and children, the business community, neighborhood associations, senior citizens, students, and so on. The objective of public relations for youth services in public libraries is not only visibility in the community, but positioning the library in the minds of elected officials and voters in general, as well as families. As the environment in which the library operates changes,
positioning is important in order to secure continued support. Repositioning or changing the library’s image is important to correct a damaged or weak posture (Walters, 1992, p. 310). Youth services could be positioned on the basis of an outstanding summer reading program that is perceived as keeping children reading over the summer, or on providing friendly helpful information/reference services to help students with reports when school libraries are not available, or on offering a stimulating physical environment for enjoyment and exploration. A strong youth services position in the community will be invaluable in strengthening the overall position of the library.

**How Do You Know What Your Customers Need and Want?**

Professional marketing researchers use many tools and methods which include census and other demographic data, interviews, surveys, focus groups, direct observation, and product usage data. Analyzing market segments to determine what they need and how to deliver library services to them is really part of the planning process. Maintaining a current needs assessment of the community can be framed in terms of understanding different markets. Evaluation as part of the planning process calls for continued measurement and analysis of users and usage, which can be translated into market segmentation research. Youth services librarians have available to them a useful easy-to-follow instruction manual for helping to determine the needs of various market segments: *Output Measures for Public Library Service to Children: A Manual of Standardized Procedures* (Walter, 1992). This book expands on the Public Library Association’s planning process manuals, *Planning and Role Setting for Public Libraries* and *Output Measures for Public Libraries*, second edition. The manual describes in detail a mixture of techniques for measuring library use by children, library use for children, and use of children’s library materials. It also discusses the eight roles for libraries described in *Planning and Role Setting for Public Libraries* and describes how those roles are applied to children’s services. As well as discussing how to collect, analyze, and interpret data relevant to youth services framed around the various output measures, it presents techniques for collecting data through user surveys and focus groups.

Measurement of library usage patterns reveals a wealth of information for the practitioner about how children (and adults) use children’s collections and services. Materials-use measures and materials-availability measures help practitioners track the tightness of the fit between the collection and the people using it. When turnover rates (the average number of times in a year a typical item
is circulated) are analyzed for each segment of the collection, children's librarians can identify areas that need improvement and can develop collections based on quantifiable data. When combined with a well-planned weeding schedule, turnover rates, taken over time, can indicate usage trends for materials budget allocations. Homework fill rate and picture book fill rate describe how well the library is serving two specific market segments—students and preschoolers. Measures to quantify information usage, programming attendance, class visit rate, child care center rate, and annual number of community contacts (outreach) are described with detailed instructions for their collection. When these quantitative data are evaluated and combined with analyses of the relevant market segments, the picture of how customers interact with children's services becomes much clearer and enables the librarian to more effectively plan collections and programs and predict trends.

Important to gathering information about identified market segments is an understanding of the use of surveys and focus groups. Surveys to gather customer reactions to summer library programs and preschool story times are included in *Output Measures for Public Library Service to Children* along with suggestions for adaptations (Walter, 1992, pp. 65-69). An explanation of the value of, and procedures for setting up, focus groups is included (Walter, 1992, pp. 62-65). Focus groups—of parents, teens, middle schoolers, and even teachers and day care center workers—could be used by children's services to further understand the needs and wants of the users and nonusers of youth services.

How do you find out what your customers want and need? As well as asking them directly (in interviews and surveys) and studying their patterns of product usage (circulation data, reference transaction information, program attendance, and so on), librarians need to be aware that direct observation of customer behavior is a valid and often useful technique. Children's librarians doing programs can tell in very short order whether a particular activity or book is engaging the audience and can "switch gears" if necessary. In so doing, they are gauging the fit between customer and product, in this case, "on the fly." Observing after school behavior or how well the middle school crowd is able to navigate the new online catalog, or how eager or reticent children are in approaching an information desk—all speak volumes about customer behavior and library products without formal (and time-consuming) data gathering. Similarly, anecdotal information gathered through observation and direct interaction with users can be very powerful in making a case, especially when backed up with quantitative data. The library board might respond more readily to a well-chosen anecdote than to reams of numbers. For
example, one Summer Library Reading Incentive Program, which
drew 1,600 children who collectively read 20,000 hours, was a success,
but its impact hit home through sharing the comments of one mom
about how it changed her son's behavior (as reported by an alert
children's librarian). Although all three of her kids had had a great
time and had kept up their enthusiasm for reading all summer long,
her 7 1/2 year old had just started reading right at the end of the
school year and really took off with it during the Summer Library
Program. His favorite summer activity was to sit in his tree house
and read, feeling very grown-up and proud of himself. She credited
the Summer Library Program for giving him a self-image as a reader
and wanted to thank the library for that.

**Youth Services Marketing Mix**

Product, price, place, and promotion—the four P's of
marketing—can be applied to youth services. The *products* are
obvious—programs, collections, special services, and so on. Kotler
and Andreasen (1991) further refine the definition of product into
the core product, the tangible product, and the augmented product.
The core product is, at the most fundamental level, the benefit the
customer is seeking, the need the product is meeting. The tangible
product is the actual offering or service, and the augmented product
includes the services and benefits offered that go beyond the tangible
product (Kotler & Andreasen, 1991, pp. 385-86). In youth services terms,
a core product or benefit that a customer might be seeking is help
with developing a preschool child who has the experiential level,
motivation, and readiness to learn to read. The tangible products
are the extensive collection of picture books available for families
to check out and read to their preschool children, and the augmented
product is preschool story time, or in-service programs for parents
and caregivers on using literature with young children—services that
extend the benefits of the tangible product. In effective marketing,
the benefits derived from regularly using picture books with preschool
children are emphasized and promoted to the market segment
identified as valuing school readiness and success.

The concept of a product's life cycle also is useful to youth services
practitioners. The product life cycle progresses from low recognition
and weak acceptance of a product at first, through strong acceptance
and growth, to eventual decline in use or volume (Wood, 1988, p. 69).
By being aware of the response to a collection or service over time
and monitoring the environment, librarians can either rejuvenate
or abandon a product in its declining stages, depending on the
circumstances, thus making better use of available resources. When
home video recorders became commonplace and many libraries began
circulating children's feature and instructional videos, a correspond-
ing decline in attendance at film programs for school-age children
occurred, changing the mix of services offered to this age group.

Pricing in terms of looking at the marketing mix in the nonprofit
sector has interesting ramifications. The cost to the taxpayer of a
service or collection can be calculated. The cost of preschool storytime,
for instance, is the actual cost of paying the presenter, including
his or her preparation time, the overhead for the site of the program,
plus mileage, supplies, and so on. But there are other cost factors.
What is the cost to the user to come to the program in terms of
his or her time, mileage, and so on? What other service or activity
is not accomplished because time is spent on this one? It is the
responsibility of youth services to strike a balance of services that
makes the best use of limited resources, taking into account the
benefits received by the market segment in relation to their cost.

Place in the marketing mix refers to the obvious for libraries—
where the service is offered. Access to convenient facilities is a most
important consideration, especially since geographic location can be
a major barrier to library use for children. "[L]ocation is an important
factor in predicting use. If the library is in a convenient location... it
will draw people" (Welch & Donohue, 1994, p. 151). But bibliographic
access issues are also involved—if the title being sought is not on
the shelf due to lack of adequate shelving time or inaccurate biblio-
graphic control, there is a psychic cost (frustration) to the customer
(Wood, 1988, p. 73). Placement can refer to internal organization
and display of collections as well as the safety and comfort of users.
Is the furniture child-size and the physical environment appealing
to children? Are the books displayed face out to take advantage of
the lure of cover art for children? Are the bibliographic access tools
appropriate to children?

Promotion, the last "P," is the one that is most commonly
associated with marketing. Four aspects of promotion have been
identified—personal selling, indirect selling, publicity, and
advertising:

- Promotion in the form of personal selling occurs during every
  user interaction, every time a librarian represents the library at
  a community event, and every time a customer complaint is fielded.
- Indirect selling means encouraging use of a product by indirect
  means. Youth services encourages reading and library use during
  the summer using incentives, giveaways, and programs.
- Publicity is essentially free advertising. Youth services is very good
  at providing photo opportunities for the print media or an
interesting feature for the six o'clock news. Since children as a market segment have almost universal media appeal, publicity for the library is not hard to come by.

- "Advertising is paid nonpersonal communication about an organization, product or person, the purchaser of which is clearly identified." The effects of advertising are not easy to determine, since they may be long term and cumulative. Since an advertising campaign is expensive and its benefits are not immediately apparent, libraries have not used it extensively, unless joint advertising opportunities occur where the cost can be shared, or unless the cost of an advertising campaign is subsidized as a result of a cooperative venture with the private sector or through a grant or special fund (Wood, 1988, pp. 75-77).

All four methods of promotion aim at the same goals: arousing the attention of the customer about the product, moving the customer to have positive feelings about the product, and, finally, influencing the customer to action—use of the product (Wood, 1988, p. 78).

Since there are so many variables to all four P's, the potential for creating marketing strategies is staggering. Youth services looks at the information about the target market, evaluates the internal and external environments in light of opportunity and available resources, and determines the best marketing mix for each market segment. But one more facet of the process is missing—i.e., looking at the marketing process itself.

**The Marketing Audit**

The marketing audit is broader than a needs assessment or a community analysis. It includes efforts to assess client needs and to understand community patterns, and also analyzes the internal environment (Weingand, 1987, p. 36). A marketing audit gathers information about the external environment including demographic, economic, psychographic, and political factors, and then analyzes the internal environment—the library itself, its mission, goals and objectives, resources, organizational structure, and strengths and weaknesses. The audit then evaluates the current marketing system, including analyzing the marketing mix for the various target markets, and makes recommendations for organizational change and resource allocation (Weingand, 1987, pp. 38-45). Such a marketing audit offers a genuine opportunity to evaluate the library and its environment, strengthening the effectiveness of the marketing plan (Weingand, 1987, p. 47). Youth services cooperation with the library's marketing audit is beneficial to both the service and the audit process.
MISSIONS, ROLES, AND MARKETS

The importance of determining the library's mission and roles is vital to a successful marketing effort. If there is not a common understanding of what the library is about, it will weaken the library's position in the community, undermine its marketing efforts, and negatively impact its influence and support. The problem is in reaching agreement on the purpose of the library.

Is the purpose of the library to be a storehouse of man's collective knowledge, or a place where people can get what they want? Is the library a definite place, confined by a building, or is it a concept of service which reaches out to its community in various ways? Is the library a home for fine, quality literature, or a potpourri of popular books, nonprint materials, innovative services and imaginative programs? (Kies, 1987, p. 44)

Until a strategic planning process defines the mission and roles of the public library within its community, it will be impossible to devise clear and simple messages to appeal to individuals and groups. “If we don't know what we're selling, we can hardly expect the public to buy” (Kies, 1987, p. 45). The library cannot market effectively until it has resolved this dilemma and its mission is known and understood by staff, funders, and clientele. Youth services efforts can be hindered if, for instance, there is a demand on collections and reference services from students doing school reports, but it is not clear that the library as a whole supports that educational role. There will be confusion among the reference staff as to how much help to offer individual students, resulting in uneven service at best, and confusion on the part of the collection developers in determining how much of the budget should be spent on titles or in subject areas that respond to recurring student assignments.

D'Elia and Rodger (1994) sought to identify the reasons, measured in terms of the roles described in the Public Library Association's planning manuals, why patrons visited the library, and the degree of importance they placed on their reasons for visiting. They determined that “there appear to be three fundamental roles of the library in the community: educational support, provision of information, and recreation” (D'Elia & Rodger, 1994, p. 143). They also determined that libraries within systems are being used for different reasons—they play different roles within their communities—and planning within systems needs to take these differences into account. Their research also indicated that patrons of color use the library for different reasons than Caucasian patrons. “[T]he percentages of patrons of color using the library for educational support and for information gathering are systematically greater than the percentages of Caucasians using the library for these reasons” (D'Elia & Rodger, 1994, p. 143). The
study also indicated that "for large urban systems serving diverse populations, the recreational role of the library . . . appears not to be as important as either the information provision or educational support roles (p. 143).

This is exactly the kind of information that youth services librarians, and librarians in general, need in order to determine roles and to plan and market collections and services effectively. If librarians know what different people value—why they use the library—services can be devised to meet their needs and promotions designed that will get their attention. If the library's roles grow out of the needs of the clients it serves and, through market segmentation the library ensures a good fit between product and customer, user satisfaction will increase as will repeat use and long-term support.

As members of the library team, youth services professionals are an integral part of the planning process that determines the library's mission and roles and directs its marketing strategies. As direct service providers, youth services professionals help create a core of repeat users for libraries and ensure long-term customer loyalty by their ability to identify and research target markets, effectively promote the benefits of library services to those market segments, and offer children and their families services that meet their needs and reinforce their values.

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Marketing in the Special Library Environment

JANET E. POWERS

ABSTRACT
Special libraries developed in response to a need for specific information and the emerging recognition that an organization with quick access to good information may have a competitive advantage. Effective marketing is an ongoing well-executed process of planning for favorable exchange to help achieve organizational objectives. Marketing plans in special libraries integrate library services and functions with organizational goals and objectives, influencing the behavior and performance of the organization by the way information from the library is communicated and used. Successful special libraries, located in either profit or nonprofit organizations, effectively increase organizational opportunities by discovering and delivering information that is really needed. Integrated strategic marketing planning within the special library environment focuses the library toward organizational strategic thinking and planning and offers the opportunity to develop more effective library services, which may lead to overall improved organizational decision-making.

INTRODUCTION
Special libraries develop their own culture. They are part of the culture of their parent organization, thinking and doing things the way the organization thinks and does things. They are part of the common assumptions and beliefs and part of the shared values and understandings of the organization. The organization's culture sets the tone and style of communication within the organization,
promoting the common interpretation of "reality" of the organization. Behaviors, emotions, talk, and physical objects reflect the culture of an organization. Organizational leaders define and influence culture by their behavior and response to organizational situations.

Special libraries are also influenced by the very traditional cultures of libraries, specifically the expectation of the familiar. Since most special libraries do not adequately fulfill traditional library roles, not fulfilling the expectation of the familiar is a part of the culture of special libraries. How special libraries handle the expectation of the familiar in a positive meaningful way defines an important component of their culture. Additionally, the culture of special libraries defines them as special—i.e., not academic, school, public, or research. A widely used definition of a special library is from White (1984) and suggests that a special library "exists to support and enhance the mission of the organization in which it is housed" (p. 25). Special libraries provide special services to specialized clientele in a specialized location. The culture of special libraries sets special libraries apart from traditional libraries, that distinction becoming a part of the organizational culture surrounding the special library.

Successful special libraries influence organizational culture, responding proactively to traditional roles of libraries and the expectation of the familiar by defining and promoting a more current and service-oriented image. The special library creates a "reality" of itself within the cultural arena surrounding it that provides a positive and consistent philosophy that accurately reflects the mission. Blending special library culture and organizational culture into a positive service-oriented client-based image within the culture is a challenge for most special library managers.

An integrated marketing plan is a very effective tool for a special library to define and transmit its image, philosophy, and mission within the organizational culture to create a dynamic process of information exchange. Strategic positioning within the organization will become a more defined and planned process with the development and implementation of a marketing plan.

Marketing Plan

Marketing plans in special libraries integrate library goals and objectives with organizational goals and objectives. An integrated marketing plan blends internal and external environments (objectives, goals, strategies, and plans) of an organization with public relations, advertising, and communications, including publications, and presentations of the organization's culture and image to convey a consistent message to a target audience. The marketing plan orients the organization toward a path of future growth and opportunity,
thereby creating priorities to achieve goals and objectives, and provides a framework for organizational communication. The planning process identifies, promotes, and evaluates organizational activity.

The marketing process is the process of exchange—i.e., taking something of value and exchanging it for something needed. The process of developing a marketing plan creates the plan and the path to future growth and development. The process itself is critical to the success of the plan. The process of developing the plan defines it and is more important than the plan itself. The process of planning is the product of planning. Again, the organizational culture influences the marketing planning process; an open empowering client-centered culture will offer the best opportunity for inclusiveness in planning, resulting in a comprehensive shared marketing plan.

There are several models of strategic marketing planning, many based on Kotler's strategic marketing planning process. Crompton and Lamb (1986) offer comprehensive steps in developing a marketing plan. The marketing plan developed in this article borrows concepts from both models as well as from the Marketing Workbook for Nonprofit Organizations by the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation (Stern, 1990) and Drucker's (1993) The Five Most Important Questions You Will Ever Ask About Your Nonprofit Organization. Although developed primarily as a strategic integrated marketing plan for special libraries in nonprofit organizations, special libraries in profit organizations may also incorporate many of the same processes and steps outlined later.

Define the Organization

The first step in integrated strategic marketing planning is to define the mission, goals, objectives, underlying philosophy, and messages of the organization. The process of articulating an organizational mission will set the tone for the process. While it is important to create change within the current environment, and the process of planning is very time consuming, appropriate time allotted to creating a shared mission is time well spent.

"What business are we in?" is Drucker's (1993) number one question in his listing of the five most important questions a library will ever ask. It is a very important question, especially for special libraries. Traditional libraries have often been influenced by what is called a social service culture (Kotler, p. 76). Good-hearted efforts, the true democratic process, and equal access to equal information have long been accepted as library missions. Special libraries generally do not have that as their mission, although many still react to that in their culture. Their mission is part of the organization mission and serves to support that mission. While the special library mission
may support the organizational mission in a very specific and defined area, it is still a support mission. The mission establishes the business of the organization.

Goals and objectives describe the desired future of an organization. Goals often have an implicit message or philosophy. Ben-Shir (1993), director of the Health Science Resource Center at MacNeal Hospital in Berwyn, Illinois, has developed a philosophy of service in two very important messages. The first message is "the front door is the phone." Hospital staff do not often have time to come to the resource center, therefore the library will deliver services to the staff. The second message is "the resource center is a secret weapon for hospital staff." Working with staff to meet their deadlines, Ben-Shir's messages further develop the philosophy of service for the resource center.

Other messages that special libraries may wish to consider as they develop goals include promoting leading edge technology to ensure speedy document delivery, creating and maintaining a friendly and helpful workplace, listening and responding to information requests, developing a client-centered library, and providing quality information services. Goals may be image goals, action goals, or philosophical goals. Part of the process of establishing goals and objectives is to look at organizational strengths and weaknesses. Why are certain areas strengths and others weaknesses? Are there enough resources allocated to create a strength out of a weakness? Will that alone make it a strength or is something else creating a weakness? What may be causes of strengths and weaknesses?

Special libraries will have a brighter future if their departmental goals and objectives support the institutional goals and objectives. An important philosophy for the special library's goals and objectives is that our future will improve your future. Emphasize to your library clients the value timely information will have on decision-making, confidence, planning, and strategizing. Successful special libraries recognize and accommodate the real needs of clients and not perceived needs. Goals and objectives will reflect real needs if messages and philosophy are focused on client need. Supporting institutional goals and objectives is the first step toward a client-centered approach to defining needed library services. Listen to the messages from the organization. Respond to the messages in terms of benefits the library may offer clients. Recognize the individual in the client and offer customized services based on individual information needs.

Participating in the organizational process of defining mission, goals, and objectives offers the special library staff an opportunity to participate in the exchange process—i.e., in the process of building a shared vision for impacting the culture of the organization. Working
with managers and executives within the organization helps build a framework for developing collaborative programs and resource sharing. Again, the philosophy of most special libraries is based on their mission to support the information needs of the parent organization. Supporting the information needs is much easier to accomplish when there is a process of communication to truly understand what those needs may be.

**Define External Forces**

The second stage in integrated strategic marketing planning is to carefully analyze and define external forces, including threats and opportunities. Fundamental forces that shape the external environment include demographic, economic, technological, political, and social indicators. The impact and nature of many of these forces will be felt differently in different organizational structures. Nonprofit organizations may be more heavily influenced by social or economic indicators, whereas a multinational corporation may respond very keenly to some political forces in developing countries where they are heavily invested. Defining and recognizing the impact of fundamental external forces on the organization and on special libraries offers the opportunity to plan and prepare for the future.

The culture of special libraries will be influenced by some fundamental forces. External threats and opportunities will impact the direction of the special library. Having some kind of plan to identify and track threats and opportunities from the external environment will help the special library focus on planning for the future. A movement toward an information-based economy may signal increased support for work in special libraries; it may also signal increased competition. As information and communication technologies advance and mutually influence one another, their progress and future influence the way libraries get information and do business. Information systems departments in some organizations may challenge special libraries to deliver information. Special libraries may want to respond by marketing the real value of a special library, which is getting needed information to the client. Traditional library instruction teaches the reference interview process, which is the process of communication exchange and of implementing the communication process to create favorable exchange. Assessing and determining what is really needed is a very important value to the work in special libraries.

Globalization is another trend that may alter the culture of special libraries. Global economic competition is changing the way
businesses work. Economic changes in the world market restructure our ideas on the value of information and means of access to it. Networking management, rather than hierarchical management, is one response to the pressures of a volatile economic market. The special library may want to revisit its client base, look very closely at a needs assessment, and respond with services that address globalization.

The changing nature of competition and public trends may influence corporate thinking on many levels of product development. There is a growing emphasis on individual over institutional thinking, influencing consumer decision-making. Empowering individuals toward self-fulfillment, self-definition, and entrepreneurial career opportunities are shifts in thinking resulting from this trend, and they could alter the way an organization may want to think about handling its business.

The special library may become an active participant in this step of the overall marketing plan by taking the initiative and gathering materials and resources on trends and by forecasting. Maintaining and promoting a resource file describing trends may assist senior management in decision-making and planning. A service the library may wish to develop and market to the organization actively engaged in the process of marketing planning is a service to track trends that directly impact organizational planning and development.

Both the special library culture and the organizational culture will respond to external forces; the challenge is to blend both cultures into a cohesive analysis of tracking and managing trends and the potential impact those may have on the business of the organization.

Conduct a Marketing Audit

A marketing audit is an organized examination and assessment of the library's activities, including needs and capabilities. Building from the previous internal and external analyses, the marketing audit details where the organization is and why. By plotting the current place of an organization, the marketing audit will offer possible paths toward a desired direction, an improved marketing position, and increased performance. The process of conducting a marketing audit leads to the action plan. An effective audit is designed to assist management in effective decision-making to develop better marketing strategies.

An audit in a special library considers the culture of both the organization and the special library, mission, objectives and goals,
and philosophy and messages. The marketing audit also analyses the "P's" of marketing: product, publics, price, place, production, and promotion. The product in most special libraries is library services available to clients. Interlibrary loan, periodical routing, borrowing privileges, online and CD-ROM searching, selective dissemination of information, in-depth research, and information analysis are some of the services available in many special libraries. Trend analysis and tracking and prospect research may also be valuable services special libraries perform. In some cases, the collection may also be considered part of the product. Specifically unique and targeted files, special collections, antiquarian materials, and special publications may be a library product. Often, though, the collection is the tool available to provide the service, and the services are the product of a special library.

The publics are the clients using the library. Often the publics in the special library are, very simply stated, the staff of the organization. Part of the challenge of the marketing audit is to analyze different publics and their need for the product. Are there staff who never use the library, and, if so, why? Are there staff using the library in only a very static way, staff who seek citations only rather than subject queries? There are many effective marketing research tools to further analyze publics, including surveys and circulation and use statistics. How do objectives, goals, and philosophy impact potential library clients? How might a new objective impact one particular department and why?

The price of services includes direct and indirect costs needed to produce the product. In the special library environment, price relates to what the client must give up to use the product or services offered. Often in a special library environment, price refers to the overall cost of the library in relation to the value of the service. Here cost-benefit analysis and statistics may support library services. What is the value of the service to the client? What does the client need and is the client getting what is really needed? Information services may be costed out and analyzed relative to the overall benefit the library services provide.

Place in a special library generally refers to delivery and distribution of the product. Many special library clients go months without setting foot in the actual library. Ben-Shir's (1993) message that the telephone is the front door is an excellent description of place in a special library. Place is where the product or service is delivered. Delivery of information to the location requested by the client is place. Barriers to place include some of the limits to technology. However, the real barriers to place are often in the cultural and philosophical thinking of place as an object rather than as a
process. Place is often the process of delivery, is often dynamic, and is often active.

Meeting demand or production of the product is essential to the success of the product. For a special library, demand is generally dependent on client, and the more client-centered the organization is in its thinking, the easier it will be for the special library to recognize and meet demand or production of the product. In an organizational culture that is structured around client-centered thinking and the economics of service, the client needs will be more often communicated and more accessible. Meeting demand for a special library includes providing services that are really needed by the client, not just services that the library wants to provide. Recognizing and meeting demand involves recognizing the needs for information services and the need to listen to the client and what the client really requires.

Promotion techniques invite the public in. Word of mouth promotion is the best promotion for a special library. A satisfied and happy client will almost guarantee continued successful promotion. The philosophy and messages can be very effectively communicated by word of mouth. Messages that may have developed during the process of setting goals and objectives now become part of the promotion of the special library. Messages that will spread easily by word of mouth will promote the special library very effectively. Other promotional techniques to increase success in marketing the special library include brochures, monthly newsletters, public presentations, publishing articles and reports, and special events. The attitude and atmosphere when someone walks into the library can also promote the special library. Is the library staff friendly, courteous, and helpful? Is there ample opportunity for the client to ask for what is really needed? Creating a warm and inviting atmosphere at the front door is excellent promotion.

The marketing audit provides several important ways to look at where the organization is, where the special library is, and points toward a direction to respond to where the organization and the library want to go. What information is really needed and how the library identifies and addresses the need becomes clearer during the marketing audit process.

Formulate a Marketing Strategy

Once the audit has been completed and there is a sense of where the organization is and where the special library is within that organization, the strategy will become the path followed to achieve organizational goals and objectives. Incorporating strengths and
weaknesses of the organization, the strategy links goals and objectives with the action. The marketing strategy positions the "P's" of marketing in such a way that it becomes clear which path is desired and determines a course of action to get the organization on that path to where it wants to go. Often described as finding the right marketing mix, the marketing strategy creates a series of scenarios to position a product or service to succeed. There are many kinds of strategies. Some of the more viable strategies special libraries may wish to consider include market segmentation strategies (offering a new service to existing clients), market development strategies (develop new clients), market penetration strategies (increased use of services by existing clients), diversification strategies (new services to new clients), and distribution strategies (new ways of information delivery).

A marketing segmentation strategy, offering a new service to existing clients, may be instrumental to developing a new service—i.e., prospect research for development of potential funding sources in a special library. Look at the clients requesting the service and why. Is a goal of the institution to increase fund-raising? How does the library position the new service to the development department to achieve maximum results? What is the value of the service to the development department and to the organization as a whole? How will the special library deliver the service? Where is the service located? Many services in special libraries may benefit from the process of developing a marketing strategy. This is an effective tool to define client need.

A market-development strategy—developing new clients—could be developed for existing services in a special library. What clients are not using the service and why? Are there particular organization departments that do not use the service? Does the service directly address the needs of the potential new clients? Is there a way to enhance the service so that it may meet the information needs of new clients? A market-development strategy may help a special library begin to think about potential clients, about clients who do not use the library, and figure out what to do to encourage them to use the special library.

The marketing communications strategy advertises, promotes, and publicizes the product or service to the targeted audience. An effective marketing communications strategy promotes the benefit of the product or service, offering specific steps to influence the exchange process. The marketing communications strategy seamlessly links the messages and the philosophy of the organization to the product or service. The message or philosophy of most special libraries in some way supports the work of the organization and should be
communicated in all promotions, advertising, and publicity about the library. Special libraries will want to emphasize promotions in a communications strategy. This is something often overlooked in libraries. Promotions that may be quite effective for a special library include brochures, annual reports, newsletters, news releases, publishing, public speaking, networking, and alert services.

The best communications strategy starts with doing what you do very well, doing things so well that people talk about what is going on with enthusiasm and excitement. Inform all associated with the organization about what is going on in such a way that the message is communicated by word of mouth. Finally, asking all involved to share the good word will do wonders to promote the service or product.

**Implement Action Plans**

The action plan provides direction and instruction to reach the goals and objectives, pointing all activities of marketing toward reaching planned results. Action and implementation plans focus the marketing process toward a course of action, thereby setting priorities and specific plans. The results anticipated, as well as the actual support needed to fulfill the goals and objectives, are written out and communicated to all involved. Specific objectives are assigned to specific strategies with a time frame, a set of activities to track and evaluate, and a set of questions to answer.

Drucker's (1993) fifth question is “What is our plan?” He recommends focusing on priorities and results and recommends doing a few “right things” well. He also suggests revisiting the mission and thinking about what the organization really believes in, what is the commitment, what are the competencies, and where are the opportunities. Answering these questions as an organization or as an entity within an organization working on strategic marketing planning may point to the few “right things” to act upon.

Libraries in general often suffer from trying to do too many things for too many people without adequate resources. At this point in the strategic marketing planning process, the special library may want to recognize what few “right things” it may want to focus on and why. A closer look at information services may show time and resources spent on activities that are not productive, where there is a lack of cohesiveness or direction in some information services, and where there have been missed opportunities. Recognizing and prioritizing a few “right things” to do well may focus library resources into direct action plans.
The marketing mix defined by the marketing strategy process is further detailed in planning the action plan. The marketing “P’s” are weighted and prioritized and developed strategically to accomplish something specific. Place and production are aligned with product. The action and implementation plans for developing the new prospect research service within a special library might include a very specific mission, goals and objectives, as well as actions. A goal might be to increase corporate funding by 40 percent. Possible objectives might be to develop one hundred new donors to the donor support program. The action and implementation plan then includes very specific programs to add the one hundred new donors, budgets that support the programs, and staff to implement the programs. What the new service needs in order to succeed is very carefully spelled out in the action and implementation plan.

Who gets what and how much? What is the expected cost and what are the expected benefits? How are the benefits measured? What standards are used to measure variation from planning? How is the service evaluated? What are the priorities? The action and implementation plans activate the process, thereby giving life and structure to the product.

Both action and implementation plans assign responsibility and prioritize projects and programs. A time frame is established for completion of tasks. Ways to measure success are detailed, and quality control mechanisms are established. Implementing the plan involves getting people started in the process. Confidence, communication, and understanding of the goals and objectives of the marketing process facilitate activating the plan. Inclusiveness in the process from the beginning will encourage mutual support at critical times in implementation. Support and direction from senior management are essential at this juncture in the process. Also, employee and staff support for the plan offers the best opportunity for effective implementation. Without support at all levels, the process will quickly stall. Teamwork, participation, and integrated communication will keep the process focused and directed toward achieving goals and objectives and directed toward a more thorough understanding and appreciation of the product. This is the point in the process where the process really becomes the product of integrated strategic marketing planning.

Conduct Evaluation

Evaluation measures the effectiveness of the integrated strategic marketing planning process. Evaluations are designed measurement
systems that track performance and point toward needed adjustments to reach goals and objectives. Evaluation is the process of asking questions about performance and behavior before, during, and after the process of marketing. Were goals met? What worked and what did not work? What might be done differently? What might be repeated? These are just some of the questions that may be included in the evaluative process.

There are two primary kinds of evaluation: formative and summative. Formative evaluations take place during planning and development of the marketing process, and results are used to change and improve the process. Summative evaluations take place at the conclusion of a program or event or after the establishment of a service and evaluate the overall effectiveness with respect to the original goals. Evaluations offer tools to focus on results provided to clients and customers as well as all constituents involved with the service or product evaluated.

Marketing research supports a dynamic marketing process. While marketing research tools may be incorporated into several steps of the marketing planning process, they are essential to the success of the evaluative process. Marketing research lends itself to both formative and summative evaluation. There are several types of surveys, including personal interviews, telephone surveys, and mail surveys. Written, telephone, and in-person surveys offer a tremendous amount of information about public attitudes and opinions. Surveys about special library services, accessibility, collection needs, and client needs will provide helpful information.

Other marketing research techniques include focus groups and quantitative and qualitative analysis of statistical information. Focus groups are organized around a predetermined set of questions and discussion points and lead a small group of people to respond with opinions and thoughts. The goal of a focus group is to present information about what clients value, what they might change, and what they might do with a service or product. Demographic, economic, and census information may be analyzed in some way to further ascertain the need for some kind of information service. Consumer opinion studies may also provide helpful statistical analysis.

How are special library services evaluated? What services produce desired results and why? What results are desirable? Results are provided by feedback from the client or customer. Client-based services may be designed with evaluative processes included in the initial design. Quantitative evaluation may work very well with clients already familiar with services. Qualitative research may work very well when trying to attract new clients to a service (market development strategies), especially within the special library environment,
where frequently the client base is relatively stable. What information might current nonusers in the client base need and how might converting the nonuser to a special library client improve the client's performance or results and improve the overall performance of the organization? Responding to this question or questions similar in nature may help further define what kinds of evaluations the special library may wish to perform.

Special libraries often provide very specific individualized client services. Tracking and accounting for the service is an ongoing way to quantify and analyze results. Offering each client the opportunity to comment before, during, and after the service is performed may be an excellent way to provide evaluative services. Building evaluation into the "reference interview" process and into all written, verbal, and electronic forms of communication provides evaluation information integrated with the service.

It is expected that special libraries offer services that improve organizational behavior and performance. Currently, there are some interesting studies conducted in the special library environment to determine and evaluate how special libraries improve organizational decision-making. Initial models to measure the value of information have been developed by three new studies: Marshall's (1993), Matarazzo and Prusak's (1990), and Griffiths and King's (1993) (discussed in Drake, 1993, p. 8). Methods to determine the value of information provided to senior management are being developed. There is no longer a valid assumption that library services are valued. Rather, it is vital to demonstrate statistically that information adds value and enhances efficiency and effectiveness of organizational productivity. Results from Marshall's study indicate that senior managers were better able to perform the following activities based on information received from their special library—proceed to the next step on a project or task, decide upon a course of action, improve the image of the institution, improve relations with a client, and exploit a new business opportunity. Senior managers also indicated that they were able to avoid: loss of the employee's time, a poor business decision, waste of another employee's time, loss of funds, and waste of resources such as equipment or supplies (Marshall, 1993, p. 61). Improving performance and decreasing waste in an organization are important goals of special libraries and will be acknowledged more appropriately with substantial statistics and evaluation methodologies. The special library that monitors and evaluates services (defines and implements services) with a very specific goal of improving senior management results (decision-making, leadership, consensus-building) is a special library securing a future
for itself and improving overall performance of its parent organization.

The evaluation process links the conclusion of the marketing planning process to the beginning of the process and provides a link to perpetual planning. Summative evaluation is instrumental to the renewed process of formative evaluation as information services are enhanced, refined, and as they continue to respond to information requests. Information gleaned from the evaluation process will become part of the overall marketing planning process.

CONCLUSION

The marketing process in the special library environment can be one of the more interesting challenges to special library staff. The integrated marketing planning process in a special library gets the library going in an orderly way to meet the needs of the library clients, usually the staff of the organization. Recognizing what is needed and the value of what is needed is a major benefit to special libraries when they participate in integrated strategic marketing planning. Special libraries exchange information. By exchanging information within the parameters of the marketing process of exchange, special libraries enhance the information exchange process, provide a structure for evaluation, improve accountability and performance, and improve the product of special libraries. The plan allows special libraries to plan for the future and recognize potential competition. As the global economy has evolved to an information-based economy, the value and cost of information is increasing, creating new competition. In some organizations, computer departments have become primary competitors for special libraries. Entrepreneurial information brokering services, telecommunications, and enhanced end-user products have forced special librarians to consider alternate and improved services. Such threats have created new and exciting challenges for new information product marketing opportunities.

The process of strategic marketing planning and the process of the “reference interview” relate to the process of communication. The process of communication is the process of transferring information and understanding from one person to another. Grounded in a social relationship, communication is also a process of exchange. The nature and purpose of the message from the sender is transferred to the receiver. How the receiver perceives and interprets the message is the biggest roadblock to communication. Listening, understanding the perspective of the sender, patience, and attention to the message increase perception and interpretation during the process of commun-
ication. Improved communication, listening, and responding facilitate the exchange of information and the marketing process.

Devote time for the integrated marketing planning process and devote time to marketing. The planning process allows opportunity to enhance and integrate strategic thinking, philosophy, and planning into measurable performance. The benefits of strategic thinking and developing a philosophy include an acknowledgment and expanded perception of organizational cultures and organizational behavior, a sharpened focus of the function of the organization, increased awareness of the external environment, and an orientation toward the future. Planning allows the opportunity to focus on goals and objectives and to establish priorities. Additionally, planning establishes an inclusiveness and an organized structure to accomplish tasks.

The process of strategic marketing planning in special libraries requires a concentrated effort, especially as organizations and corporations have endured economic downsizing and streamlining. The benefits of exerting a concentrated effort far outweigh the costs in long-term gain. The opportunity to identify and evaluate client information needs will lead to improved information services, new information products, and new clients. Without strategic marketing planning, many special libraries may be isolated from organizational objectives and eventually eliminated. Without strategic marketing planning, many special libraries may become depositories or collections of outdated materials. With strategic marketing planning, special libraries may strive beyond all current expectations and achieve a prominence and value within the parent organization and, additionally, within the primary industry of the organization.

The integrated strategic marketing planning process in special libraries encourages continued growth and learning, offering unlimited potential to develop new information services. Moving beyond the expectation of the familiar and into the creation of integrated information services is an especially challenging area in the special library environment. Understanding the product in the special library environment, and the value of that product to the overall organizational mission, creates opportunities to seek a more prominent role within the process of the information exchange.

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Trends in Marketing Services

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ABSTRACT

Service marketing differs from product marketing due to the fact that services are intangible and typically require personal interaction with the customer. Yet an understanding of this type of marketing is important since service jobs generate 74 percent of gross domestic product. Even though many of the tactics of product marketing (e.g., advertising) require only minor adaptation to be applied to services, the role of interpersonal relationships distinguishes service and product marketing in strategic vision and organizational considerations.

This article explores some of the trends in service marketing as they relate to strategic vision, operational and organizational changes, and marketing tactics. In terms of strategic vision, examples are provided of companies that have successfully redefined their businesses as broader systems of services built on competitive core competencies. It then goes on to describe the need for a market-driven culture, the use of training and incentives in making the transition, the role of product management in enabling a crossfunctional perspective necessary for quality service to become a reality, and the significance of "mood" or climate. Finally, it presents comments on new service development, segmentation, database marketing, channels, and advertising as these relate to marketing in the service sector.
INTRODUCTION

Marketing, as the term is commonly understood today, developed initially in connection with the selling of consumer packaged goods and later with the selling of industrial goods. Yet one of the major megatrends in America has been the phenomenal growth of services. Service jobs generate 74 percent of gross domestic product and 79 percent of all jobs. In fact, the Bureau of Labor Statistics expects service professions to account for any net job growth through 2005 (Henkoff, 1994, p. 49). These jobs go beyond what is characteristically considered the low-paid service position to include professionals in a variety of fields including medical, financial, telecommunications, and information services.

There are many perceptions of what "service" is, and it may be useful to differentiate between services which are salable products per se and those customer services which are tangential to the product (such as empathy, a friendly attitude, and superior customer treatment). Corporations provide a range of offerings along a continuum from pure services to pure products with very few things at either extreme. Customer service activities are a critical and inseparable part of doing business for any offering along the continuum. However, the farther an offering is on the service side of the continuum, the more important the human relationship between the provider and consumer of the service becomes. Since service sector products are intangible, the buyer uses satisfaction with customer service treatment as an indicator of the quality of the core service purchased.

The book by Berry, Bennett, and Brown (1989), Service Quality, describes how important the service process is to the customer's perception of quality:

The way customers judge a service may depend as much or even more on the service process than on the service outcome. In services, the "how" of service delivery is a key part of the service. Purchasers of tangible products judge quality on the basis of the finished product—its durability, functioning, appearance, and so on. Purchasers of services judge quality on the basis of experiences they have during the service process as well as what might occur afterwards. (p. 34)

Due to the importance of the relationship between the service provider and consumer, quality customer service is increasingly being viewed as a key subset of service marketing. Even though many of the tactics of product marketing (e.g., advertising) require only minor adaptation to be applied to services, the role of interpersonal relationships distinguishes service and product marketing in strategic vision and organizational considerations. These are discussed later.
Strategic Trends

Levitt (1960), in his article "Marketing Myopia," wrote that the railroad industry foundered because it considered itself in the railroad business rather than in the transportation business. This fundamental shift in business definition would have dictated a very different approach to planning and growth.

Services are faced with the same challenge to redefine their businesses as broader systems of services built on competitive core competencies. Progressive Corporation is an example of an organization that has redefined its business from a company that sells automobile insurance to a "mediator of human trauma" (Henkoff, 1994, p. 49). Its CAT (catastrophe) team flies to the scene of major accidents, provides support, and handles claims quickly. Contact is made with 80 percent of accident victims within nine hours after learning of the crash. To be able to provide support effectively, Progressive pays for training its agents not only in insurance matters but also in grief counseling (since part of the job involves dealing with the relatives of accident victims). This approach has earned Progressive one of the highest margins in the property and casualty insurance industry, which has notoriously low margins.

Health care is another industry being forced to reexamine its direction. Hospitals emerged during the Industrial Revolution to treat long-term chronic diseases on an inpatient basis. Their facilities were designed to accomplish that strategic mission or goal. Today's environment has shifted, and hospitals are challenged to deal with preventive medicine and outpatient services. A visible trend has been for hospitals to redesign their layout, policies, and signage to better "fit" the needs of the increasing number of outpatients. "Ambulatory services are the fastest growing part of the hospital," with outpatient admissions exceeding inpatient admissions by ten to one (Goldsmith, 1989, p. 109).

In addition, hospitals have become more active in their role of promoting health maintenance. For example, Condell Memorial Hospital in Libertyville, Illinois, has recognized its mission of promoting health wellness and physical fitness by opening a 70,000 square-foot health club located on the hospital's grounds. The difference between Condell's health club and others is that health education and preventive medicine are part of the "service package" offered to members (Teschke, 1989, p. 129).

The costly service innovations mentioned earlier may imply that the service vision approach is only for "expensive" services. It is not. Fryar (1991) suggests that McDonald's is not in the hamburger business but in the service business. Its slogans ("you deserve a break today" and "we do it all for you") demonstrate its service-oriented
positioning. Competitors use product-oriented positioning ("flame-broiled versus fried") and are not as effective (p. 55).

Taco Bell is another example frequently cited in the literature of a service company reorganizing to "fit" a broadened service vision. When the company changed the way it thought about itself—from preparing food to feeding hungry people—a change in structure became necessary. Taco Bell had moved from a product (manufacturing) orientation to a market (service) orientation. It reduced the size of its kitchens by outsourcing many of the operations. This freed up space and employees to serve customers better (Henkoff, 1994, p. 56).

Part of the impetus for service organizations to change their missions has been the dramatic increase in competition. Competition has increased not only in number but also in form. Many segments of the retail industry are facing competition from "category killers" such as Whole Foods and Fresh Fields in natural foods; Wal-Mart in general merchandise; and Home Depot in do-it-yourself outlets. Hospitals are losing patients to walk-in clinics. Insurance companies are facing pressure from corporate clients who choose to self-insure. Telephone companies are waging competitive battles with cable companies. Universities are finding corporations setting up their own on-site campuses. Libraries are facing competition from corporate libraries, electronic search and retrieval firms, and other suppliers of information services.

These shifts have altered the service/price/value equation. Because customers have been exposed to more and varied services, their expectations have escalated. They now demand more quality for a lower price. The business press refers to the 1990s as the "value decade." Companies that provide more value for the dollar than the competition will be winners in this period. Southwest Airlines has been a consistently profitable airline, even though it has taken a "no-frills" approach to operation (Heskett, 1994, p. 168). It has been profitable for twenty-one consecutive years and was the most profitable airline in the industry in 1992, demonstrating that a low price for solid consistent service is valued by customers. However, value does not necessarily mean low price. Progressive Corporation, as mentioned earlier, increased the perceived value by providing exceptional services with a higher premium.

All of these changes force service providers to take a fresh look at their offerings in terms of the superior benefits they are providing their customers. In today's world, customers have almost limitless options available in goods and services. A strong mission of service is a good starting point, but successful service companies have also
been changing operational policies and organizational structures to achieve their marketing strategies.

**Operational and Organizational Trends**

Service organizations that have increased their involvement in marketing realize that it is not simply enough to hire a marketing director; the entire corporate culture must change to be more market-driven. As Berry and Parasuraman (1991) write in their book *Marketing Services*: "In service businesses the least effective marketing department executives strive to be clever marketers; the most effective executives strive to turn everyone else in the organization into clever marketers" (p. 78).

An appropriate culture is one of the most important ingredients for successfully marketing services. Bowen and Schneider (1988) cite several references stressing the importance of creating and sustaining cultures that enhance employee attachment to organizational service values (p. 63). Therefore, a market-driven "vision" is a precursor to marketing strategy. Webster (1992) provides a thirty-four-item instrument for assessing the marketing culture of a service organization to help service firms understand this aspect of strategy (pp. 54-67).

The link between satisfied customers and a culture of motivated market-driven employees has been cited in several studies. Jones (1991) describes a study conducted by Barnett Banks. The organization simultaneously conducted a survey of employees at twenty-one branches and a survey of current and former customers. They discovered that the branches to which customers gave higher ratings were the same branches where employees felt more positive and motivated (p. 40). The researchers found similar findings at other banks, concluding that higher customer satisfaction was associated with offices where employees felt their work was "facilitated" (p. 41). In a similar study where home health agencies were surveyed, job satisfaction was positively correlated with customer-oriented behavior (Hoffman & Ingram, 1992, p. 77). In a proprietary study in the insurance industry, low employee turnover was linked closely to high customer satisfaction. This study also found that a primary source of job satisfaction was the employee's perception of an ability to satisfy the customer (Heskett, 1994, p. 170).

This has significant implications for marketing strategy. Since the attainment of a strategic vision for service organizations depends on employee/customer interaction to an even greater degree than is true for product marketers, training and organizational functions become critical components in the implementation of the marketing
program. Heskett (1987) argues that a strategic service vision requires marketing and operations to be operated as one function:

The need of most service organizations to plan as well as direct marketing and operations as one function has led to the formation in leading companies of what I call a strategic service vision. Its elements consist of identification of a target market segment, development of a service concept to address targeted customers' needs, codification of an operating strategy to support the service concept, and design of a service delivery system to support the operating strategy. (p. 119)

One of the marketing organization forms that brings together marketing and operations (although in a matrix structure rather than direct line authority) is the product management function. Product management, like many of the marketing approaches, grew up in the consumer packaged goods industry. In this organizational form, product managers were given responsibility for specific brands or product lines. They forecast sales volumes, developed long- and short-term plans, recommended new products and product changes, developed marketing strategies to accomplish the plans, and served as the liaison among the customer, the sales force, and the varied internal departments on issues related to the product. In most cases, the product manager was charged with the responsibility for assuring bottom-line results without having direct authority over the internal departments producing and selling the product. The work had to be handled cooperatively in a cross-functional team fashion.

Product management then moved into consumer durables, into industrial products, and is now common in service organizations. In some cases, the product manager manages a line of service products, very similar to the approach used in product companies. However, many service organizations have product managers responsible for specific market segments. Although the product manager typically still operates through referent authority rather than explicit authority, the position enables the cross-functional perspective necessary for quality service to become a reality. When the product/market manager focuses on satisfying the needs of a specific target market segment, the service "product" and customer service activities are brought together into a quality package.

Insurance companies frequently have product managers assigned to specific lines of products. Many major financial institutions have product managers for specific markets such as small businesses. Health care organizations may have product managers for women's services, covering offerings from weight maintenance, prenatal care,
birthing options, menopause, and other related issues. The success of the organizational structure depends on a variety of issues as it does for manufacturers of physical products. However, there have been some studies which indicate that a product management organizational structure can improve the bottom line for the service organization.

Naidu, Kleimenhagen, and Pillari (1993) cite survey data collected from a random sample of hospitals which indicate that hospitals with product line management outperformed those without on virtually all performance indicators, including occupancy rate, gross patient-revenue per bed, average profit margin, and return on assets (p. 8). Not surprisingly, the implementation of product line management increased with level of competition and hospital bed size. In referencing previous studies, the authors found that product line management in hospitals offered the benefits of increased accountability, elimination of duplication of services, and a better market orientation. The limitations cited included a possible increase in costs since functional management was not eliminated, and there was an increased need for more timely and accurate data (p. 10).

Whether or not product management is instituted in an organization, employee hiring, training, and incentives are critical to the realization of a strategic service vision. Henkoff (1994) suggests that “[t]he changing nature of customer service demands a new breed of worker—one who is empathetic, flexible, inventive, and able to work with minimal supervision” (p. 56). The author cites ServiceMaster’s Merry Maids subsidiary as an example of careful employee selection. They reject nine out of ten applicants for entry-level positions because they are looking for employees who fit their commitment and values (p. 60).

Training can be in the classroom and/or on the job. Classroom training should provide information on both company policies and procedures and interpersonal skills. Disneyland provides extensive training for its street sweepers—not just to do the physical job better but also to “empower” them to answer any questions customers may have about the facilities.

Training employees in several jobs—called multiskilling—has been a growing trend in several organizations. For many, it started in response to labor shortages, but the result has been more satisfying work, increased knowledge of the overall company, and faster response to customers. Lechmere, Inc., a retail chain owned by Dayton Hudson, tested multiskilling in a store it opened in Sarasota where workers were in short supply. It offered raises to workers based on the number of jobs they learned to perform. By having employees with transferable skills, Lechmere could redeploy workers when needs changed.
According to corporate management, this store was more productive and had more full-time employees than the rest of the chain (Alster, 1989, p. 62).

Retraining employees in conjunction with technological improvements has been a growing and significant trend in service organizations. USAA, a San Antonio, Texas, insurance and financial services firm, has used a combination of training and technology to improve employee efficiency. Customer service representatives now assume broader responsibilities by handling the insurance application process from start to finish, a process that used to require the work of several departments. A new office automation system allows them to complete the work through a telephone and terminal, accessing the necessary pieces of information immediately (Alster, 1989, p. 62).

Schneider National, facing a deregulated transportation market, realized the need to transform the company. First, it attempted major cultural change to refocus the organization to be more market driven. The company became less bureaucratic, encouraging its "associates" to act on behalf of the customer. Second, capital was invested in a satellite computer system to track and make the most efficient assignment of trucks and drivers (Magnet, 1992, p. 96).

ServiceMaster augments education with research and development. By studying how people work, the company develops better equipment and chemicals so its employees can do the job better and more comfortably.

Training provides the knowledge employees need (and may also provide the motivation), but companies are increasingly using incentives based on customer satisfaction as part of the service culture. At Xerox, sales, service, and customer administration executives receive bonuses indexed to responses to customer satisfaction surveys ("Indexing Bonuses to Customer Satisfaction," 1988, p. 37). Domino's pays "mystery customers" to buy pizzas and evaluate the service. Managers' compensation is tied partially to the results of those surveys (Sellers, 1989, p. 40).

A service guarantee is another tool for assessing service quality. The existence of a guarantee makes it easier for a customer to let you know when a service did not meet expectations and why. With more information on mistakes, a company has more opportunities to learn and more opportunities to improve its service. Hart (1988) lists five reasons a guarantee is valuable for both marketing service quality and achieving it:

First, it pushes the entire company to focus on the customers' definition of good service—not on executives' assumptions. Second, it sets clear performance standards, which boost employee performance and morale. Third, it generates reliable data
(through payouts) when performance is poor. Fourth, it forces an organization to examine its entire service-delivery system for possible failure points. Last, it builds customer loyalty, sales, and market share. (p. 57)

In addition to the above operational and organizational issues, Knowles, Grove, and Pickett (1993) suggest that “mood” may affect customer satisfaction and the perception of service quality (p. 50). The authors maintain that environmental and interpersonal influences may be more critical in the evaluation of services than in the evaluation of goods. The physical surroundings (cleanliness, appearance), ambient conditions (music, lighting), and procedures affect the mood of employees and customers. Although the mood of customers obtaining a service cannot be controlled, the authors suggest that environmental conditions can play a role in modifying the mood.

Bowen and Schneider (1988) refer to other research which supports this position:

A summary conclusion from this line of research is that the climate for service created in service firms “shows” to both employees and customers. Service firms, then, need to manage and enhance their internal climate for service to positively impact the attitudes and behaviors of the employees who serve the customers. Since it is employees who provide the service to consumers, organizations need to manage all the evidence consumers may use in appraising service. Indeed, as the intangibility of what the consumer receives is increased, the need to pay attention to the details of service delivery probably also increase. (p. 59)

Fryar (1991) agrees with the importance of this image on customer perception. She points out that McDonald’s employees are trained to look busy—that the service workers are “choreographed” to portray efficiency as an important part of the planned image. Because of the importance of this “choreography,” she asserts that successful service companies make this type of training part of the marketing function (p. 55).

TACTICAL MARKETING TRENDS

When people think of marketing, they frequently think of advertising and/or selling. When excelling in marketing according to these definitions, a company may be effective in the short term but actually hurt its position in the long term. IBM had a “world class” sales force, but neglected innovative product development which resulted in a loss in competitive standing. Like many large companies, it became a market-share manipulator—its defense of existing markets took precedence over the creation of new ones.
Service providers run this same risk if they limit their “marketing” to advertising and selling. It is not uncommon for the majority of the effort to go toward protecting existing service products based on what they contributed in the past rather than what they are likely to contribute in the future. Service providers must continually challenge themselves to improve their products and develop new innovations as an active part of the marketing program.

Some new product ideas come from rethinking the difference between service products and customer service. Some services that are given away free are valuable to only certain segments of customers who would pay for them rather than not have them available. Banks have redesigned some of their services as a consequence of this finding. Operating services, once viewed as fringe benefits given away to attract credit customers, are now becoming firmly established as profit centers at a growing number of larger banks. Cash management, wire transfer, securities processing, letters of credit, bond services, and payroll processing are some of the items that have moved from unpaid customer services to service products. Today, many of the top fifty banks find noncredit services are providing 40 to 70 percent of the profits generated by their wholesale banking units.

Sometimes the emergence of new technology enables new service products to be developed. MCI spent an estimated $300 million on a new computer system in 1986. This allowed innovative residential calling services such as their Friends & Family Plan, a new service which would not have been possible without the technology.

People frequently think they are doing good marketing when they react to what their customers want. However, the most effective service marketers anticipate customer demands and satisfy them before competitors do. When Fred Smith came up with the idea of overnight delivery of packages, freight forwarders rejected the idea because no one had asked for it. Yet Federal Express became a successful company by anticipating customer needs and proactively creating the services to address them.

Coming up with new service products requires creativity and a certain level of risk. However, there are some things that can be done to minimize risk. Manipulating the new service portfolio is a key action step. Successful companies tend to balance their new product portfolio. They go after the higher big-hit new-to-the-world opportunities along with lower risk line extensions, cost reductions, and product improvements. It is no different from investing in the stock market by mixing high-risk/high-return stocks with lower-risk/low-return stocks. Combining different levels of risk into the new service plan makes the overall risk of the program lower than it would be for any single new service product.
The new services developed should be consistent with the strategic vision and core competencies. Condell Memorial Hospital risked opening a health club because it was consistent with their mission of wellness. Taco Bell deleted services tangential to its core offering to allow it to focus on service.

As is true in the marketing of products, mass marketing is being increasingly replaced by segmented marketing. Many industries are maturing and facing considerable competitive pressure. Companies need to classify or prioritize their customers and provide service "packages" that are appropriate for each segment or perhaps focus exclusively on one niche.

As the credit card market matures, marketing approaches are emerging with multiple positioning options. One approach is to offer packaged services to subsets of customers. First National Bank of Commerce in New Orleans has two packaged credit card services. Upscale customers with minimum money market accounts are offered a companion credit card with a low APR (annual percentage rate). Midscale customers are offered a companion card with a higher APR and an annual fee (Duffy, 1990, p. 46).

Shouldice Hospital near Toronto, Canada, uses a segmentation strategy by focusing exclusively on hernia surgery (Davidow & Uttal, 1989, p. 77). By appealing to a very specific segment, doctors have become more proficient, and procedures and layout have been designed to be consistent with the needs of this one select group. Since patients recover faster when they are up and about, Shouldice needs a minimum of wheelchairs and aides. TVs are centrally located to facilitate patient movement. Davidow and Uttal (1989) argue that not all customers want high levels of service, but they deserve to get what they are promised. Therefore, it is imperative to research the needs of the market, segment the market to match needs with the firm's competencies, develop services consistent with those needs, and be very careful to set expectations at the right level (p. 85).

Database marketing enables service providers to segment the market and approximate the one-on-one contact necessary to build the interpersonal relationships required in the service sector. Clinical databases, for example, can facilitate follow-up treatment by combining knowledge of disease progression with the patient's current medical status (Kelsey & McGrath, 1990, p. 72). Hospitals can determine which patients can benefit from clinically valid follow-up treatment and work with physicians to contact patients who might not otherwise be aware the services exist. The authors recognize the ethical considerations of using such a system for marketing purposes and emphasize the need to maintain confidentiality and eliminate the potential of the system being used as a scare tactic.
Database marketing has been successfully used by other service-sector industries. Banks have begun to develop relational databases so that profiles of customers can be pulled from the various product-specific databases, providing more complete knowledge of the demand for "packages" of services. Some experts even believe that this information, with complete credit histories on a customer-by-customer basis, may enable banks to price loans in the future based on an individual's credit worthiness. Retailers use database information to separate their best (loyal) customers from "swing" customers (those who patronize the particular store on only an occasional basis).

Service-sector companies have become increasingly aware of the concept of marketing channels, the logistical aspect of marketing. Changing customer needs, for example, has encouraged financial institutions to provide more transactional convenience. Customers want to do their banking anytime, anywhere. Although automated tellers provide part of this function, the personal interaction is missing. Therefore, banks of all sizes have begun to open up branches in supermarkets, frequently with extended hours. This provides the time/place convenience customers want and also provides a selling platform for the bank (Duffy, 1991, p. 20). Since many of the store shoppers are not customers of the bank, in-store branches can reach a significant number of prospects each week without spending money on advertising.

Credit unions have also been active in providing time/place utility. IBM's credit union branches, for example, strive for "high touch/high tech with a human equation" (Duffy, 1991, p. 22). Their self-service machines can read the MICR (magnetic ink character recognition) encoding on the checks deposited and cash checks to the penny. In fact, they are designed to perform 90 percent of the functions handled by live tellers including deposit splitting and advances on home-equity loans.

Florsheim Shoe Company has used kiosks—interactive videos similar to automated teller machines—to increase time/place utility. Surveys indicated that a large percentage of customers walked out of the store because they did not see what they wanted in stock. The computers were placed in retail stores so customers could obtain additional information and pictures on styles not carried in inventory, thereby capturing sales that might otherwise be lost. Stores in which the terminals were installed posted sales increases over those without terminals. Even the U.S. Postal Service is experimenting with interactive video. The Postal Service's development of its automated personal teller, which vends stamps and related mailing materials, is one application.
On the surface it might seem that these technologies are inconsistent with the stated importance of personal contact in service purchases, and that satisfaction would decline with their introduction. Fryar (1991) asserts that the opposite has happened due to what psychologists view as a matter of involvement. When customers are punching numbers into the ATM or using interactive videos, they are personally involved with the transaction. This control makes them more tolerant of potential difficulties. On the other hand, customers waiting in line are less involved and less in control, causing them to become more resentful. Therefore, Fryar states that "the secret to a satisfied customer is an involved customer" (p. 56).

In terms of advertising, many nontraditional companies have become active players. Professional services, such as legal, and accounting as well as health care, which were reticent in the past to advertise their services, have begun to reach out to new markets. Much of the initial "stigma" regarding advertising has lessened; however, the effectiveness may not be what was planned. The existence of these new advertisers has added more "clutter" to an already saturated industry. Advertising effectiveness will depend on developing a differentiated identity, reaching the "best" market segments, and making promises regarding only what is attainable on a continual basis.

Onkvisit and Shaw (1989) state that, because of the intangible nature of services, a proper "image" may be even more critical for service marketing than for product marketing. "Although services are often treated as commodities, they can be branded and transformed into products. Branding assures buyers of uniform service quality and can provide service marketers with a greater degree of pricing freedom, if the brand image is properly created and promoted" (p. 13). To be successful, the brand must connote an identifiable image in people's minds. Several companies have tried to employ relevant tangible "symbols" in their advertising (Allstate's good hands, Travelers' umbrella). In the brokerage industry, Dreyfus is identifiable because of its lion; Merrill Lynch because of its bull. When Merrill Lynch retired the bull as its symbol, it quickly realized its error and brought it back. These symbols provide a tangible image and continuity for the campaign. The authors go on to state:

Many purchases made by consumers are directly influenced by the image an individual has of himself and the image of a product or seller. Since users of consumer services are self-image buyers, a strong and distinct image is essential. Image takes on a greater
degree of importance in the service markets, and it should be fully integrated into a firm's marketing programs. (p. 18)

Another critical consideration in advertising services is controlling the “promises” made. Several companies have realized, to their dismay, that positive press about their firm's extraordinary service performance raised customers' expectations to a level beyond that which they could routinely fulfill. Berry, Parasuraman, and Zeithaml (1988) refer to the difference between what customers expect and what companies provide as the service-performance gap (p. 38).

Customer satisfaction depends more on the size of the gap than on the actual level of service. If customers’ expectations are met or exceeded, they are satisfied. If their expectations are not met, they are dissatisfied. As competition escalates, companies try to promise more and more to get business away from their competitors. Customers begin to expect more and more due to the “promise war” that exists. Eventually, customers become dissatisfied when their expectations are not met.

Advertising plays a role in managing the expectations of customers. Service marketers should be especially careful not to overpromise in their brochures, ads, and television commercials and to ensure that salespeople are not making unrealistic claims.

**CONCLUSION**

Service marketing differs from product marketing due to the fact that services are intangible and typically require personal interaction with the customer. As a result, the quality of this service interaction becomes an important subset of marketing strategy. Marketers are challenged to define their businesses as broad systems of customer benefits; to create a market-driven culture through selection, education and motivation of employees, as well as development of appropriate business procedures and technologies; and to design marketing programs which continually create new benefits and value for the customer, make the offerings more tangible, and control the level of promises so that customers are not led to expect more than can be delivered on a continual basis.

**REFERENCES**


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