
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.