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## Marketing Youth Services

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### 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. "[R]etailers 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 corresponding 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 bibliographic 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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