V. THE MARKETING MIX

The challenge: Use the right blend of techniques.

- Do you know what marketing is, and how it differs from promotion?

- Do you know and understand the marketing techniques available to you?

- Can you mix and match techniques to achieve your desired objectives?

V. THE MARKETING MIX

What is marketing?

1.0 **Marketing is a set of activities by which the demand for goods, ideas, and services is managed to facilitate exchange. (Markin,** 1982).

It is a planned strategic approach of bringing together consumers and products.

1.1 A marketing oriented organization takes its marching orders from its customers; it produces products and services based on its customers' needs, wants and levels of satisfaction. This kind of thinking allows an organization to adapt and respond to an ever-changing environment.

1.2 Marketing is strategic behavior. The prize for the marketing-oriented organization is survival and profitability, both of which are functions of customer satisfaction.

2.0 An organization's ability to produce customer satisfaction depends on its marketing strategy.

Marketing strategy is a comprehensive plan of action designed to meet the needs of an organization operating in a particular environment.

In their first step towards a marketing concept operation, libraries must find out their patron's present and future needs.

Who markets?

1.O Marketing is a relatively new profession, less than 30 years old.

1.1 In this short span of time, it has become a dominant force in the competitive business environment.

1.2 More recently, both service and nonprofit organizations have adopted the principles of marketing.

Look around, marketing is taking place everywhere-by doctors, lawyers, social workers, banks, financial institutions, hospitals and charities.

Even writing a personal resume is a form of marketing, in which the benefits of your skills and talents are communicated to a potential employer.

2.0 Marketing is not a science; there are no single answers.

Marketing requires attention to the needs and wants of your customers or users, much planning, a little intuition, creative ideas, and a trial-and-error attitude to find out what works best.

In addition to attending seminars or taking courses, librarians can take advantage of readily available resources.

Corporate librarians can seek assistance from the company's public relations and marketing departments: academic librarians can get support from the university's marketing office and faculty; public librarians can turn to local community colleges or universities.

Marketing functions and activities

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1 .O The four P's.

Although many factors affect an organization's marketing strategy, all marketing decision-making can be classified into four strategy elements, sometimes referred to as the marketing mix or the four P's: Product, price, place, and promotion. As each library product or potential product is analyzed and developed for its target customer, it must be viewed with the four P's in mind.

2.0 Product: What are the benefits of this product and service to its customers?

3.0 Place: What can be done to make this product and service more accessible and available?

4.0 Price: Should this product and service be free or funded by a grant? Should a price be charged to cover costs only? Should the price allow for a profit? Should the price be based solely on the product's perceived benefits?

5.0 Promotion: What can be done to increase the visibility of this product and service? What can be done to increase its usage or exposure?

6.0 While these four factors are important individually, their real significance lies in the mix, the unique way they are combined into a careful plan or strategy.

The combination of these four factors is the foundation of any marketing plan, and a marketing plan should exist for each one of the library's products and services.

Product planning concerns decisions related to products: Quality, charac-
ter of products, new product development and product life cycle.

1 .O Life cycle of products--birth, maturation and death.

All products, including information products, have **a** life cycle consist-
ing of these phases: introduction, growth, maturity, decline.

1**.1** The speed with which products move through the four stages varies
from one product to another.

The marketing emphasis required for each product will depend on
what stage of its life cycle it is in.

1.2 A product or service is introduced. It takes time for prospective pur-
chasers to become aware of it and what it will do. At some point, growth will
cease and the stage of maturity is reached.

1.3 Determining the stage of a product's life cycle is the first step in assem-
bling the marketing mix.

For mature products, you must decide whether to add or enhance ex-
isting features in order to meet current and future customer needs. Perhaps
you may want to find new customers or markets.

For products in decline, it's often necessary to eliminate those ac-
tivities without a high enough payoff for the library.

1.4 Constant monitoring of a product's performance will help position it on
the life cycle curve, and consequently indicate what kinds of marketing ac-
tivities are appropriate.

Does the market need further research? Have the complexion and
range of customers changed so that different marketing techniques are re-
quired?

1.5 Continuous thought and planning about the phased introduction of new
products are vital if the organization is to achieve its objectives.

It would be disastrous if, when a product is in decline, there was not a
replacement ready for roll-out.

2.0 Benefits--the key to success.

People buy products for their benefits, they buy expectations; for ex-
ample, consumers buy books for the expectation of enjoyment and knowl-
edge.

Librarians need to concentrate on the package of expectations attached to each product; that is, not the product itself, but the benefits derived from it by the user.

3.0 The four types of products.

3.1 Formal product. The tangible physical product that the consumer is buying; for example, books or an online searching service.

3.2 Core product. The core benefit associated with using the formal product; what the customer is really buying; for example, knowledge or status.

3.3 Augmented'product. The totality of benefits that the customer receives from the formal product; for example, time saved or quick access to information.

3.4 System product. The expansion of the augmented product: the attendant add-on's and extras that come with the formal product; for example, manuals, training support or a Selective Dissemination of Information service.

4.0 Once these four definitions have been established for each one of the library's products, the process of positioning your products and services will be much easier.

Often the same product may benefit various customers in different ways.

4.1 By isolating a product's core benefit, you can tailor your marketing message more effectively to each group, be it a corporate department, **a** segment of your community or **a** cross section of local businesses.

4.2 Probe for your products' benefits.

What benefits do your products offer that are better than your competitor's product? How can you place your benefit concepts in people's minds? How can you make sure your customers' needs are satisfied with these products?

5.0 Libraries are the sum total of their products and services.

It is crucial that librarians think of their organizations in this light. Before appropriate and effective marketing plans can be developed, librarians must evaluate their products on the core level and match these products to their intended audiences.

1 .O Price is one of the most complex marketing decisions.

It plays a number of roles in most marketing strategies: it can be a key component in product image (quality); a powerful sales promotion tool (discounts, coupons); or a versatile element in competition (underpricing).

2.0 Determining pricing strategy is a delicate task.

It requires that you assess customer demand and analyze cost in order to choose a price that will create customer satisfaction and yield a satisfactory level of profit (Markim, 1982).

3.0 Pricing is related to the goals and objectives of your organization.

What are the objectives for your library? Are you a profit making institution or is cost recovery your goal? One thing is clear, nothing is free anymore, especially information.

4.0 When thinking about pricing, you must consider all costs associated with any given product.

Direct costs include production as well as staff salaries and time. Such fixed costs as light, heat, phone, furniture and computers must also be applied to the cost of products and services. All costs must then be matched against the product's benefits and the priority given to its users.

5.0 The final price is a marketing decision.

5.1 The ultimate price that is set may be to cover expenses only; a reasonable fee based on the demographics of the community or the corporation; a fee high enough to generate sufficient revenue to make up the difference between donations or grants and total expenses; or a fee commensurate with the perceived value of the product being offered.

5.2 Marketers often refer to these pricing approaches as *average-cost pricing, target rare-of-return pricing* and *breakeven-analysis pricing.* There are no hard-and-fast rules for pricing.

5.3 There has been an increase in the number of fee-based services being offered by libraries, especially in the area of online searching.

The need to charge a fee is an outgrowth of the increased cost of computer time, networks and telecommunications as well as the access time to commercial databases.

"Fee or Free? One Public Library's Approach", reprinted from *MLS: Marketing Library* Services, appears in Appendix A to this chapter.

5.4 The key questions that should be addressed while developing **a** pricing strategy are:

- Is there competition and can you do better than the competition? Should you compete at all?
- What impact does price have on the perceived benefits of the product offering?
- Should you offer a lower price to stimulate business or offer the market price?

Place decisions

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1 .O Place decisions relate to distribution, how the library plans to make products and services available and accessible to customers.

Place adds value by making services available at convenient times and locations; by creating a pleasant environment in terms of location size, lighting, staff; by allowing for multiple types of distribution: Electronic, mail or walk-in.

Place and distribution are ways to differentiate your services, making them more responsive to your customers' needs.

2.O With the arrival of newer telecommunications and electronic delivery mechanisms, library channels of distribution must be looked at very closely.

Knowing the needs of your customers is key in evaluating how you should deliver your products: How fast do they need information, how readily available is it, and how do they want it; that is, full-text, abstracts, bibliographic citation form?

3.0 Look at your customer base.

Possibly the same information product can be delivered in **a** number of ways. Many libraries are instituting electronic catalogs; corporate libraries are beginning to take advantage of the firm's electronic mail facilities to deliver such tailored information products as news clipping services and research alerts.

Promotion decisions and techniques

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1 .O Many people confuse the marketing concept with the fourth P in the marketing mix--promotion.

1.**1** Promotion decisions are concerned with the organization's combined efforts to communicate with its markets.

1.2 There are four kinds of promotional activities:
- Advertising
- Personal selling
- Sales promotion
- Publicity and public relations.

2.0 Promotional campaigns are built around all four activities.

Every product and service warrants its own unique package of promotional activities. The ones selected will depend on the nature of the particular product and service, its intended audience, the characteristics of that audience, and the objectives of the product's marketing plan.

3.0 Naturally, these factors must be balanced against your organization's available monies and resources and overall commitment to promotion.

Many library managers historically downgraded promotion as being beneath the dignity of the library. This attitude needs to change.

4.0 Most successful promotional campaigns center around a unifying theme.

4.1 Use the research done in the information needs assessment process to pinpoint the customers' perceived needs and attitudes.

This knowledge will guide you in tailoring the marketing message and suggest an effective promotional blend. Above all, the communication process must be continuous and repetitious. It is not a once-a-month or once-a-year activity. See "Zebras Add Zing to Marketing," reprinted from *MLS*, in Appendix B to this chapter.

5.0 Keep these four questions in mind as you develop your promotional program:
- What are you promoting? Try to think in terms of the core product.
- Why are you promoting? To build awareness, introduce a new product, to increase usage, bring in new users?
- To whom are you promoting--businesses, parents, department managers, civic or community leaders? Each requires different language and modes of communication.
- What method of promotion best suits your needs, and your clients' needs? Which is the most effective?

6.0 Planning is the key to any promotional program.

A planned program can be accurately measured to evaluate its progress, and its success or failure. Adequate planning also saves you money in the long run.

1 .O Marketing literature--commonly referred to as collateral--is most often used to communicate to your market.

1.**1** It usually consists of brochures, catalogs and fact sheets.

1.2 There are many uses for this type of literature: it can:
- Be mailed to inquirers
- Set up as shelf or counter displays
- Distributed at presentations.

2.0 What marketing collateral gives the reader.
All marketing literature should contain:
- Descriptions of the various library products and services;
- Pricing information;
- How the products and services are delivered or accessible;
- Background and expertise of the organization and its staff.

3.0 The format selected for the literature will be governed by the end use to which the literature will be put.
You must consider the means of distribution as well as the needs of the target recipients in making your selection.

4.0 Catalogs and master brochures.

4.1 A catalog usually covers specific products offered by the organization and is set up in a multi-page bound book format.

4.2   A *master* brochure, on the other hand, is usually a folder, booklet or mini-catalog that contains only basic information about the organization and the types of products and services it offers.
Information about specific products and prices is inserted in the master brochure using separate product fact sheets.
This technique is especially useful with customers who have only limited interest in your products or services; or for situations in which you need to revise or add product or service information frequently, since revising separate product sheets is much cheaper than revising a complete brochure.
A master brochure in the form of a folder with pockets can also be used for media kits and special events, making it more versatile than other formats.

4.3 Suggested sizes.

Catalogs and master brochures should usually be approximately eight and one-half inches x 11 inches, especially when they are meant to go to businesses. This size fits well on bookshelves or in files, making it convenient for business people to keep your material on hand.

5.0 Copywriting.

5.1 All collateral should emphasize the benefits and advantages to the customer, not the product's features.

5.2 Benefits should make up **50-55** percent of all copy; descriptive writing 25 percent; the remaining 25 percent should be used to add emphasis through graphics. The biggest problem with brochures is overwriting. Leave white space to enhance reading ease.

5.3 Defining the four subcategories of products and services (formal, core, augmented, and systems product) is the key to writing successful copy.

For each product and service feature, there must be **a** benefit and advantage to the user. Descriptive writing creates a mental image of the product or service, while benefits sell the product.

Key benefit words include easy solution, *save, results, proven, qualify, discover, success, help.*

5.4 Marketing literature must answer these questions:
- What is it?
- What will it do for me?
- Why should I believe it?

The formula is to stress benefits, give description, and support benefit claims with data, testimonials, case histories and examples.

6.0 Logo and graphics.

Logo development is essential to distinguish your library. A logo, which can be a graphic design or a consistent typeface, provides a uniform look for all marketing collateral: Brochures, stationery, fact sheets, newsletters, business cards, news releases, library cards and annual reports.

It sets the foundation on how your market perceives your organization.

6.1 Effective design is essential for all printed materials.

If you do not have a staff artist, consider hiring a design firm or a freelance graphic artist to help you create appealing graphics.

6.2 Many companies have internal design departments for this purpose; academic libraries may be able to use the institution's art department.

Public libraries may also turn to a local college's art department for graphic assistance at relatively low cost.

1 .O Advertising is an impersonal presentation of goods, ideas, or services requiring a mass medium (Markin, 1982).

The mass media-radio, television, newspapers, magazines-have the power to reach large numbers of potential users or buyers of a product with a persuasive message.

Advertising, in the broadest sense, informs and sells.

1.1 Advertising has several functions:
- Create awareness and build interest.
- Remind users and potential users of a product's availability.
- Presell products and ideas.
- Sometimes eliminate dissatisfaction.

1.2 Since advertising can be very expensive, you should always keep in mind who you want to reach in terms of volume, your budget; and how it fits into the marketing mix of product, price and place.

2.0 Paid advertisements.

Ads in mass media are usually the most expensive because commercial advertising rates are very high and messages must be reiterated fre quently to have significant impact. You may reach the largest number of people, but your message may not be targeted and repeated often enough to be effective.

3.0 Direct mail.

Direct mail is a relatively low cost means of advertising.

3.1 It can take many forms:
- A personal letter to specified target customers
- A brochure
- A newsletter
- An announcement or invitation
- A memo to corporate departments

3.2 The direct mail package usually contains an offer and a response card and envelope.

3.3 Depending on what you are promoting, following up a mailing with telephone calls can be considered.

3.4 Direct mail is very effective for reaching specific segments with minimum wasted circulation.

In addition, direct mail can be made more personal than most other forms of advertising. It offers great flexibility and the advantage of presenting a marketing message without the competition of other media ads.

3.5 The key to direct mail success is the quality of the names on your mailing list, and the mailing's capacity to catch the receiver's attention.

For corporate mailing, acquiring names is not a difficult process. For external mailings, however, you may have to buy a commercial mailing list. Many types of commercial mailing lists are available; for example, compiled lists, consumer lists by zip code, and lists of business executives by SIC and title.

These lists can be segmented by type of business, executive level and geographic area. Professional brokers who supply these lists can be extremely helpful in selecting the appropriate ones.

Perhaps the best known source of business-to-business lists is Dun & Bradstreet, which has local sales representatives in most major cities.

4.0 Newsletters.

Newsletters can deliver a consistent, focused message about your organization's specialized products and services to your patrons or just a highly targeted group of users.

A newsletter can provide information about products and services while building your library's credibility and awareness in its community or corporation.

4.1 Newsletters should combine the features of brochures, direct mail and even posters. They should be graphic, direct, and to the point but not overwritten.

4.2 Newsletters need not be expensive to produce.

They can be prepared on a typewriter or word processor, with clip art for emphasis, and run off using a copy or offset machine. Be sure to use effective headlines, put the biggest or most interesting article on the cover, and most importantly, make sure the copy pertains to the intended audience.

4.3 The key to producing an effective newsletter is to publish often, not less than quarterly; show rather than tell how your library's products and services can benefit users with case stories and testimonials; and promote it aggressively by sending the newsletter to beyond its intended audience.

5.0 Posters.

Posters are an effective, yet inexpensive advertising medium.

5.1 Posters are excellent reminder vehicles, especially if you are promoting a new product or building awareness. Posters can be placed on community

bulletin boards, in corporate departments around the library, **and in the lob-**bies of local office buildings.

5.2 Graphics are the single most important part of a poster and many library posters have traditionally been too wordy. If posters are not noticed, then they are a waste of time.

Sales promotion

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1 .O Sales promotion refers to short-run inducements to use a product or service, and usually supplements advertising.

The most frequent use of sales promotion is to attract new users and to penetrate new markets. Some examples of sales promotion include contests, giveaways, couponing, discounts and free-trial offers.

2.0 Training sessions.

Training sessions can be considered sales promotion. In the case of new high technology information products, such as online searching or CD-ROM products, the need for demonstrations or hands-on training is paramount to support the advertising effort.

2.1 Most training sessions have two basic purposes:
- Present information
- Develop new skills

2.2 Training sessions should include:
. A marketing message to motivate the prospective user.
- An explanation of the product;
- Practice time in order to orient the customer to the technology;

2.3 Stress the benefits of the new technology.

If you are introducing new services to your company or community, you must stimulate the customers' interest by offering training or presentations of the technology.

Set up demonstrations in your library, open houses or specific meetings for targeted groups.

2.4 Many information providers, such as database publishers and vendors, offer assistance in helping you train users on their technology. These companies are usually very supportive with their training staff and will supply marketing materials for this purpose.

Public relations and publicity constitute the fourth major component of promotion.

1 .O Public relations is a planned effort to shape the attitudes and be-havior of the public (Markin, 1932).

These activities differ somewhat from the others in that they are not to-tally controllable by the organization. Every organization attempts to create good public relations in order to receive good publicity.

2.0 The primary objectives of public relations include:
- Create articles or talk pieces with which to interest buyers.
- Create user acceptance and presell ideas.
- Create goodwill between an organization and its publics.
- Provide wide exposure for new or existing products and services.

2.1 The major audience for public relations is usually the media.

Media relations is an important function; therefore, find out who the key editors are for important business and trade periodicals for your-company's internal publications. Develop a media file with their names and respective editorial deadlines.

2.2 Cultivating the media is an ongoing process.

Maintain frequent contact with key reporters or editors. Conduct tours on occasion, host a breakfast or lunch. Send reporters annual reports, newsletters, any and all marketing literature.

2.3 Public relations also provides an inexpensive way to promote the orga-nization's products.

Publicity introduces credibility by virtue of communicating a product's value in an editorial format. Being quoted in a newspaper or magazine about the quality of your organization often has as much punch as a good ad, but costs nothing.

3.0 News releases.

Issuing news releases is the way you communicate news or events to the media.

3.1 News releases are prepared on letter-size paper, and include the release date, a title, and a contact person with phone number.

3.2 The release provides, in a concise format, the details about an event or news item. It answers the 5 W's-Who, What, When, Where, Why and some times How.

3.3 Editors are deluged with news releases so most are not read.
　　The most important part of the release is the first sentence; it must grab the editor's attention. This sentence should contain the most interesting fact about the newsworthy event.

4.0 Media kits.

A media kit is an important tool when you need to gain the acceptance of the media for inclusion in their periodicals.

4.1 The media kit sets the tone of your organization's credibility.

4.2 The kit typically consists of a folder, which could be your organization's master brochure, containing a news release, a fact sheet that highlights the features and benefits of the organization's products and services, background information on the organization and its staff-including biographies where necessary-and copies of previously-written, relevant, feature stories.

5.0 Speeches and presentations.

Speeches or presentations need not be elaborate, but they must be carefully prepared and rehearsed. Since you are talking about your organization, you are talking to people about things you know very well. A few notes written on a note card to highlight the most important points of what you want to cover should be adequate.

5.1 For emphasis and attention, use overheads, slides or a flip chart to highlight the key points of your talk. This technique will help you keep the audience's attention.

5.2 Remember, the business leaders, department managers, civic clubs or academic communities you are addressing want basic information about your organization, its products and services and how you can benefit them.
　　Don't get bogged down in detail. You can address specific details in a question-and-answer session at the end of the presentation.

Promotional activities will vary depending on the type of library (public, academic, or corporate) and·on its respective marketing objectives and goals.

1 .O Corporate or special libraries.

The mission of many corporate libraries is to sell the library's function within the company.

The marketing thrust generally is to develop targeted information products and services and create an indispensable service department. Some ideas to consider are:

1.1 Write a brochure describing the library and its services; distribute it throughout the corporation, targeting heavy information users in marketing, sales, sales support, research groups.

1.2 Send a memorandum introducing the library to all new employees; participate in all new employee orientation programs.

1.3 Announce all new library services, acquisition and staff expertise.

1.4 Give presentations to such information hungry groups as marketing, sales and strategic planning.

Highlight the new technologies and information available that relates to their corporate function.

1.5 Write articles for the corporate newsletter and other internal publications that are distributed to key departments or groups.

1.6 Prepare quarterly or annual reports on the library's progress and future plans for management.

Include evidence of where the library has had direct impact on the corporation's effectiveness; for example, the money saved or productivity improved. Be included in the company's annual report.

1.7 Know your management's goals and information needs.

Supply executives with tailored information, such as a clipping service about competition, market conditions, or a consultant's analysis of your firm's products.

2.0 Academic libraries.

Academic libraries can enhance their image as the intellectual center for the university's faculty and students by applying marketing concepts.

2.1 Write stories for the university newsletter on topics such as new information technologies available at the library.

2.2 Organize seminars to promote underused reference materials, underutilized reference skills, and new information technologies, such as on-line searching.

2.3 Participate in freshman orientation; give tours of the library; give a refresher course on research methodology.

2.4 Work with department chairmen in collection management and publicize holdings within these groups.

2.5 Include the library in the university's promotional literature.

2.6 Reach out to disciplines where online research can benefit teachers and students.

3.0 Public libraries.

3.1 Sponsor a Little League team in your community; host breakfasts for community business leaders; donate books to charities or local hospitals.

3.2 Target a group of citizens-for example, parents and children, senior citizens, local businesses-and develop a newsletter aimed at their information needs.

3.3 Prepare an annual report in which you present your image to the community in terms of the benefit return on investment in the library. Try a new format such as a videotape.

3.4 Write articles or editorials for local press about the value of the library's products and services, stressing the totality of the institution.

3.5 Use CD-ROM technology as a magnet to pull patrons to the reference service with a media campaign.

Product: "Competitor Watch" is a biweekly compendium of competitive news and analyses taken from major industry periodicals and market research reports as well as data gathered by the participants of the service. Each quarter, the participants to the service will meet and discuss key competitive issues and make recommendations for the project.

Price: "Competitor Watch" prototype will be free in the first year, funded by the Strategic Marketing Department. Year Two will require funding from additional participants on a cost recovery basis. Year Three will charge a fee for general distribution beyond the major headquarter and subsidiary major departments.

Place: "Competitor Watch" will be distributed via inter-office mail on every other Monday. The Strategic Marketing Department will receive "Competitor Watch" after the first three months via the firm's electronic mail and will test this delivery versus the printed version. Roll out of electronic delivery to all participants will be on a phased basis in Year Two.

Promotion: Direct Mail to key managers with concomitant department presentations. Articles about "Competitor Watch" will be written for the corporate newsletter as well as the headquarters monthly journal. Brochures and slide presentation materials will be developed to support the presentations and direct mail campaigns.

What can a public library do to increase its funding and services in an era characterized by fiscal constraint?

Before you respond with an emphatic "Not much," you might want to talk to Gerald Furi, Assistant Director of the Farmington Community Library. Ask about his experience and you'll hear a library success story worth listening to.

Marketing makes a difference

The Farmington Community Library, located in a suburb of Detroit with a population approaching 80,000, has a staff of 33 full-time employees. Five years ago, the Library established on a cost-recovery basis an online information retrieval service for the community. Today, with an online service budget of $20,000, the Library conducts over 800 searches annually, and the community is now more aware of the Library's ability to provide valuable, up-to-date information.

The Farmington Community Library's success with its online service may be due in part to its location within a very literate and professional community. Effective research, analysis and planning turned the idea into a reality. But it is through the Library's concentrated marketing efforts that the service continues to grow.

Seizing an opportunity

The service was first conceptualized in 1981, and a management committee chaired by Furi was formed to develop the idea. The committee felt that this type of service represented a great opportunity for the library to increase funds and improve its offerings. It also perceived the *absence* of such a service as a potential threat to the Library's future viability.

As Furi points out, "If we didn't offer the service, someone else was bound to."

The committee began analyzing and planning how the service might be set up. The Friends of the Library agreed to donate the hardware and software for searching, and the reference area became the designated site. A decision was made to charge patrons for online costs and telecommunications, plus a twenty percent fee to cover documentation and staff training.

The initial marker

The initial target market consisted of judges and attorneys because, says Furi, "We wanted to heighten the Library's visibility among the 'movers and shakers' in Farmington."

The Library obtained a Westlaw password and planned to train end-users to do the searching themselves.

Once the service was operational, Furi sent out letters and made phone calls inviting the prospects to a series of breakfast meetings. About 35 people attended each session which included a demonstration of the on-line information retrieval process, using Westlaw as an example. Additional demonstrations were set up as others became interested in the service.

More than 90 attorneys took the Westlaw training, but it soon became apparent that most attorneys preferred to have the Library staff run searches for them, instead of doing it themselves.

The catalyst for success

Furi says the real catalyst for the service's growth came when the Library began offering lower-priced online services like DIALOG's Knowledge Index and BRS' After Dark.

"We use these to try to keep the costs as low as possible. The cost of online information retrieval is an important one to address," admits Furi.

With more general information services available, the Library began introducing its service to the local schools, first through a breakfast meeting with administrators, then demonstrations to media specialists and students.

The concept quickly caught on with students, resulting in one school establishing a deposit account with the Library.

Increasing the marketing efforts

As interest in the service grew, the Library stepped up its marketing efforts. It continued to give demos, adding business forums like a Chamber of Commerce meeting and a booth at the Detroit Business Expo.

A program about the online service aired on the local cable TV channel as part of the "Spotlighting Library Services" series.

The Library reported the progress of the service in its Annual Report, which gets mailed each year to about 30,000 people. This year, incidentally, the Annual Report will also be produced in videotape format, and be available for circulation.

Direct mail campaigns to area businesses are part of the ongoing marketing effort. Using names and addresses downloaded from searches in the Electronic Yellow Pages database, personalized letters from Furi are prepared on the library's PC.

The client mix

"Use of the service by local businesses has really grown," boasts Furi.

"We have clients from ad agencies, consulting and high-tech firms, medical research centers, and many other types of companies. Because of their needs," he adds, "our service has expanded to offering data in special formats such as mailing labels, or on diskette, in electronic form."

The service today

The online information retrieval service at Farmington Community is now an important part of the Library's overall services.

Offered in two locations, Farmington and Farmington Hills, it is available all hours that the Library is open.

No appointment is necessary since all reference librarians are trained searchers. (Incidentally, the online service did not require additional staff, but the library did allocate funds for staff learning modules and competency levels.)

As the service continues to grow, **Furi** recognizes the need for better planning and management. An extensive user survey, conducted last year by an outside research firm, contributed to the development of the Library's strategic plan.

The 1987 marketing plan

This year, the Library has a marketing plan specifically for the online service that includes:

. Demonstrations at community expos, meetings, and the Library;
. Training sessions by database vendors and producers;
. Direct mail campaigns to selected businesses;
. Special programs coordinated with the Michigan Online Users Group (MIDBUG).

"The service has been very successful to date, and I'm looking forward to an even better year with the implementation of our first marketing plan," **Furi** says with healthy optimism.

Judging by past accomplishments, *MLS* has reason to believe he's right.

Editor's note: Questions of comments about the service can be directed to Gerald Furi, Assistant Director, Farmingron Community Library, 32737 West Twelve Mile Road, Farmingron Hills, MI 48078, Telephone 313/553-0303

Editor's Note: What do zebras and libraries have in common? How can a new technology and a strong visual image contribute to successful library marketing? The following story about the introduction of an online catalog and circulation system at the Lansing Community College Libraries will answer both questions.

It illustrates how this library actually used the integration of a new technology to establish a strong visual identity, and through careful planning and frequent communication, was successful in gaining the community's acceptance of the new system.

MLS wishes to thank Ellen Person, Chair of the LCC Library Information Services Department, for her rime and cooperation in the preparation of this article.

Occupying seven city blocks in the downtown section of Michigan's capital city, Lansing Community College (LCC) is a progressive, 30-year old institution offering education and training for over 300 career and occupational specialties and the liberal arts. Last year, more than 40,000 people enrolled at LCC, many of whom are employed by local business, industry or government.

As part of an urban college, LCC's Library Information Services Department faces some tough challenges in the delivery of library service. For one thing, there are three libraries on campus: the Old Central Library (its original home), the Arts and Sciences Library, and a Vocational Technology Library. Since 1966, the collection has been divided, with appropriate portions housed in the buildings that also contain the related classrooms and laboratories. This organization puts resources close to potential users, but it often distorts their perception of what constitutes the entire collection.

Another problem is the part-time status of LCC's students and faculty, As a result, they are on campus for only one or two classes a week. Because of restraints on their time, they have limited exposure to any of the LCC Libraries, and consequently are hard to reach.

Online Catalog Offers A Solution
Ellen Person, Chair of the Library Information Services Department at LCC, explained how these and other factors affected the decision several years ago to acquire and install an online catalog and circulation system.

"The LCC Libraries had a desire, supported by College administrators, to computerize many operations. With three libraries in our system, it was getting difficult to maintain our card catalogs manually, to say nothing of the space they consumed. Since many students and faculty typically experienced only a portion of the library's resources, we needed to establish a

link between the three libraries on campus. Plus we wanted to network and share resources with the Lansing Public Library, located only four blocks away.

"It seemed that an online catalog could solve several problems for us: it would help us integrate the three libraries in our own system, it would simplify catalog updating and maintenance, it could tie us electronically with Lansing Public, and also help us demonstrate that the Library's materials were multidisciplinary."

Marketing Planning

Once the decision was made and the funds for the system obtained, Ellen immediately began planning for its implementation. Realizing that an online catalog would have a major impact on the Library's customers, her plan incorporated many proven marketing techniques to ensure the LCC Community's acceptance of the system.

A publicity program was set up to meet three objectives: to inform members of the LCC community on the progress of the project, to prepare them for upcoming changes in library procedures, and to gain their acceptance of the new technology. The program included frequent news releases and a series of articles about the Library's project. Stories such as the process of converting records to machine-readable form appeared in the Library's Newsletter Notes and in the College's *Open Line* newsletter, mailed by the Public Information Office to 3000 area businesses and households.

Setting up the computer terminals in the library, even months before the catalog was ready to go online, was another technique used by Ellen to generate interest and enthusiasm. This step gave both staff and students the opportunity to explore the hardware and ask questions without inhibition.

Technology Inspires New Logo

Visual inspiration for the library's campaign came from one of the procedural changes that the new catalog would bring. Under the new system, customers would need a bar code or zebra label for identification. This meant that thousands of LCC students, faculty and employees had to be made aware of a new requirement. A large-scale information campaign was necessary, and Ellen knew that in order for it to be effective, their materials had to be attractive.

"People are so busy nowadays, they don't have the time or patience to deal with too many words," commented Ellen. "There's so much visual competition out there, that unless you do a visually attractive job on the materials you put out, people aren't going to pay attention to them, no matter how good or how valuable the information is."

For help designing materials that would be picked up and read, Ellen turned to the college's graphic artists. They created a logo emphasizing the similarity between a zebra's stripes and the stripes on the bar code label.

The Library used this logo and the question, "What Do Zebras and Libraries Have In Common?" as the lead-in on a bold, black and white glossy flyer. Inside, the flyer told of the need for a zebra label, and gave the locations, hours and phone numbers of the LCC Libraries where one could be obtained. This was used as a handout at registration time, and also distributed in all campus building literature racks.

Because it was eye-catching and didn't overload the reader with too much information, the flyer succeeded in getting the message out to students, It helped boost the overall visibility of the LCC Libraries on campus, and, in fact, still works to bring newpeople to the Libraries each term.

Logo's Repetition Builds Awareness

Building on the awareness created by this flyer, the LCC Libraries began using the zebra logo on all types of materials. Signs at the circulation desk, indicating where people could register for their zebra label, naturally included the logo. Bumper stickers with the zebra logo were printed and distributed to college offices and others on request (cost = $170 for 1000). The Library's newsletter was redesigned with the logo and renamed *Between the Lines.* Even the Library's comment form, used to obtain feedback from students and faculty, carried the zebra bar code symbol.

Ongoing Training

By using the logo consistently, the LCC Libraries established a strong visual image that gave their materials instant recognition. Of course, it was not the only reason that they were successful in introducing their online catalog. Frequent demonstrations on how to use the catalog, and some unique **self-**training materials helped the Library's customers make the transition. An instructional videotape, for instance, was prepared by library staff and produced with the help of the College's Media Department.

This can be viewed individually using equipment in the Library, and is also available to faculty for use within the classroom. Other aids included a chapter in the textbook, *Search On: Using Libraries,* written by LCC librarians, and a *Focus On the Computer Catalog* leaflet that provides brief instructions.

Strong Visual Image Enhances Marketing

Several years have passed now since the online catalog was first introduced at LCC, and the major hurdles associated with its appearance on campus have been overcome. But as each successive term brings new students and faculty to campus, the Library's job of promoting the online catalog, and all of its resources, continues.

This year, for example, the online catalog will be enhanced with new search software, so Ellen and her staff will need to update their training materials and again inform the LCC community of changes in procedures. But that job is much easier now, thanks to the Library's recognizable image.

Ellen indicated that the zebra theme continues to be a vital element in the Library's marketing plan. Not long ago, in fact, the original logo was replaced by a new, even stronger version, which is now being integrated on all of the Library's materials.

"I've been amazed at just how much impact a visual image can have," commented Ellen, "and as long as this one continues to **work** for us, we'll keep using it. As testimony to its strength, we're continually finding new ways to apply it in our marketing efforts."

To obtain a sample of the promotional materials in use at the LCC Libraries, write Ellen M. Person, Chair, Library Information Services Dept., Lansing Community College, P.O. Box 40010, Lansing, MI 48901.