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Kristin Cheney, Marketing Law Libraries: Strategies and Techniques in the Digital Age, 26 *Legal Reference Services Quarterly* 281 (2007).

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Marketing Law Libraries: Strategies and Techniques in the Digital Age

Kristin Cheney

SUMMARY. Marketing is no longer a sporadic activity undertaken on an ad hoc basis, but rather has become an integral component of every library's day-to-day operations. This article provides an overview of basic marketing principles and then examines effective marketing strategies and promotional techniques in an academic environment. While viewed within the context of the law school setting, a majority of the marketing activities discussed are equally applicable in other types of law libraries. doi:10.1300/J113v26n01_14 [Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <docdelivery@haworthpress.com> Website: <<http://www.HaworthPress.com>> © 2007 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.]

KEYWORDS. Law libraries, law schools, marketing, promotion, strategies and techniques, relationship marketing, segmentation, marketing mix, evaluation

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The author would like to thank Kara Phillips, Associate Director, Seattle University Law Library, for her thoughtful comments and suggestions during the writing of this piece.

[Haworth co-indexing entry note]: "Marketing Law Libraries: Strategies and Techniques in the Digital Age." Cheney, Kristin. Co-published simultaneously in *Legal Reference Services Quarterly*® (The Haworth Information Press, Inc., an imprint of The Haworth Press, Inc.) Vol. 26, No. 1/2, 2007, pp. 281-299; and: *Public Services in Law Libraries: Evolution and Innovation in the 21st Century* (ed: Barbara Bintliff and Lee F. Peoples) The Haworth Information Press, Inc., an imprint of The Haworth Press, 2007, pp. 281-299. Single or multiple copies of this article are available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service [1-800-HAWORTH, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (EST). E-mail address: docdelivery@haworthpress.com].

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doi:10.1300/J113v26n01_14

INTRODUCTION

Today's law libraries, whether academic, private, state, court, county or special, face the challenges of increased costs, shrinking budgets, and competition for funding while simultaneously dealing with the impact of rapidly changing technologies. As potential library users become more reliant on the Internet, it is becoming more critical than ever for librarians to pro-actively market not only the library's products and services, but also to educate their users regarding the library's unique abilities to provide professional and personalized "value added" information.

Twenty-First Century librarians and other information specialists recognize that marketing is no longer a sporadic activity undertaken on an ad hoc basis, but rather has become an integral component of every library's day-to-day operations. While librarians increasingly acknowledge the necessity of marketing their products, their services and themselves, many continue to struggle with how to plan and implement the library's marketing activities.

Marketing Law Libraries is divided into two sections. Section I provides an overview of basic marketing principles; Section II examines effective marketing strategies and promotional techniques employed in academic law libraries. While viewed within the context of the law school setting, a majority of the marketing activities discussed are equally applicable in other types of law libraries.

Although Section II focuses on the promotional aspects of marketing, it is important to note that promotion is not synonymous with marketing. A library's promotional activities are one part, albeit an important part, of an overall marketing plan, which in turn, is a component of the library's strategic plan. Additionally, the marketing plan of a library contained within a larger organization should not only incorporate and reflect the library's mission and goals, but also should be consistent with and complement the "parent" organization's long-range strategies. Viewing the library's marketing activities within strategic planning parameters provides a context within which to predict future organizational changes which in turn will enable the library to better anticipate and proactively address users' future needs.¹

Creating and implementing an effective marketing plan need not be an elaborate or time-consuming undertaking. However, it is advisable to formally document a marketing plan, regardless of whether the goals are limited (e.g., introducing a new service) or broad in scope (e.g., heightening awareness of the library's value to its constituents). Although it may consist of no more than a one-page outline, a written plan

not only provides direction and enables the library to better focus its marketing efforts, but also from a management standpoint it visually reflects to those outside the library, particularly parties involved in library finances, that the library is designing programs and allocating resources in an effective and organized manner.

A solid understanding of marketing principles is imperative before undertaking any marketing-related project. Today's literature abounds with articles describing and analyzing various marketing approaches, each with its own particular spin and accompanying nomenclature. Terminology aside, most writers in the field agree that marketing involves a series of activities that can be loosely grouped into four categories: (1) marketing research, (2) marketing segmentation, (3) marketing mix strategy, and (4) marketing evaluation.² Whether academic, private, or other, every library's marketing plan should address all four marketing activities, although the extent to which each category is developed will vary depending on each library's unique profile.

MARKETING BASICS

Marketing Research and Analysis

Before developing a library marketing plan, take time to review the current situation. Who uses the library? What resources and services do library patron's use? It makes little sense to promote a product without first determining what users need, want, and expect. Learn as much about library users as possible through focus groups, surveys, one-on-one interviews, exit interviews, analyzing service and collection usage patterns and transaction logs, reviewing suggestion box comments and requests, or simply by observing what patrons are doing.

Librarians, as well as other types of marketers, all too often fall into the trap of assuming that they know what is best for their customers,³ and consequently rush head first into developing and promoting a product or service before asking whether anyone really wants or needs it.⁴ As information experts, librarians will certainly find occasion to promote a resource of which their users are unaware, but, even in that instance, the decision to introduce this product should be based on a customer-centric needs assessment.

In addition to assuring that a marketing plan is designed to satisfy the customer's needs, information gleaned from these assessment activities

will provide a picture of how users' perceive the library. Are these perceptions accurate and, if not, what misconceptions need to be overcome?⁵ Identifying current perceptions will help a library formulate and refine its marketing objectives and goals.⁶

But who exactly are these customers that the library is striving to satisfy? Every library customer comes in the door, or over the internet, with their own personalized set of needs and expectations. Marketing segmentation, the process of identifying and grouping users and potential users into "like" categories, is integral to the overall marketing plan.

Marketing Segmentation

Over the past 5-10 years, library marketing has evolved from a transaction-based approach where success was gauged by circulation statistics, searches performed, hours of operation, etc.,⁷ to a more customer-driven "relationship" model that emphasizes establishing, maintaining, and enhancing contacts with library users.⁸ Rather than concentrating on services and products, relationship marketing focuses on getting and keeping satisfied customers, who, in theory, will in turn extol the benefits of the library to other potential users.⁹

Most libraries serve more than one user group each of which may require a different marketing plan. Segmenting the library's existing and potential customers into user groups with similar traits will allow the library to tailor communications to each audience and their specific information needs. The library may have a great product or service, but its marketing efforts are doomed to failure, or at best to limited success, if the wrong audience is targeted. In contrast to mass or undifferentiated marketing, the more customized, targeted marketing increases the probability that the library's message will be heard by a user group that will appreciate and benefit from this information.

Marketing Mix Strategy (or the "Six P's Principle")

In addition to serving a mix of users, today's libraries offer a mix of resources and services, so it is no wonder that matching users with these products can prove challenging. Developing a successful marketing mix can be described as finding "the right *product* at the right *price* in the right *place*, *promoted* in the right way to the right *people* at the right *point* in time."¹⁰

What constitutes a *product*? Broadly defined, the term product includes anything that the library is offering, or could offer, to satisfy a need of its users or potential users. A product may possess physical characteristics (e.g., a book, a database) or it can be a service that accompanies a product (e.g., interlibrary loan or real-time reference using chat software). How the library decides to market a product will often depend on whether the item can be physically “used” by the patron (e.g., book), or is a service that is experienced by the patron (e.g., liaison program).

Price, or more appropriately described as cost, includes not only the actual cost of the product, but also the value assigned to the customer’s time spent accessing and using the product, as well as staff time supporting the product. To put the price into perspective, the user must understand the value of the product. For example, although a new service may be expensive, when applying a cost/benefit analysis, this service may make perfect economic sense. A successful marketing campaign educates both the user and the organization to view the product’s price as an investment rather than as an expense.¹¹ A promotional message should validate the library’s expenditure on a product, particularly when the audience can influence library funding.

In the marketing context, *place* refers to not only where a product is provided, but also how a product is delivered. As library customers increasingly access resources and services electronically, place is as likely to refer to a database available remotely via the web as it is to denote a “bricks and mortar” facility where patrons check out materials.

If patrons are not told what the library has to offer, how will they know? *Promotional*¹² activities can take many forms (e.g., brochures, flyers, newsletters, giveaways, exhibits/displays, workshops, training sessions, lunchtime brown bags, library tours, classroom instruction, newsletters, e-mails, articles, one-on-one conversations, or Web site announcements) just to name a few. The method or methods a library selects to promote a product depends to a large extent on the nature of the target audience.

People.¹³ When introducing a new database, using an interactive training session may be well suited to one group of customers, while promoting that same resource via an article in an electronic newsletter may be a more appropriate medium to attract the attention of another segment of potential users. This “integrated marketing communications” approach, a mixture of promotional tools and media, can be an effective means of marketing the same product to disparate audiences.¹⁴

The timing of marketing activities can play a critical role in whether the activities succeed or fail. Marketing the right product at the wrong *point* in time is a waste of time.¹⁵ For example, introducing a product before laying the necessary groundwork may result in users not realizing that this product would benefit them. Conversely, if a library waits too long to market a product, users may have migrated elsewhere to satisfy their needs.

With market research and analysis complete, a target audience identified through marketing segmentation, and a marketing mix strategy implemented the novice marketer may mistakenly assume that the marketing process is complete. Although often overlooked and underrated, the next step of identifying and evaluating what worked and what did not is a critical component of any marketing campaign.

Evaluation

Gauging the success or failure of marketing efforts will depend on how success is defined. Under a needs-based relationship marketing model, success equates to customer satisfaction. But how is satisfaction determined and quantified? For example, hits on a Web site only reflect the number of visits, not necessarily satisfaction or repeat usage. Likewise, while keeping a tally of reference transactions will provide librarians with the number of interactions, it does not reflect whether those interactions satisfied customer needs.¹⁶

Many of the same tools that were used in the initial research phase of the marketing plan (surveys, focus groups, face-to-face interviews, usage pattern analysis, etc.) can also be used during the evaluative stage to determine satisfaction levels. Additionally, follow-up surveys and other evaluative mechanisms can be employed to not only assess user satisfaction, but also can serve as product marketing tools in and of themselves (e.g., survey text reintroduces the product and provides another opportunity to educate users regarding that product's potential benefits).

Although everyone enjoys positive feedback, negative comments are equally valuable and should not be ignored. Ask whether these comments reflect a misunderstanding on the part of the user requiring further product education, or rather do they illustrate that this product is not appropriate for this particular audience. To enhance customer satisfaction, the library needs to understand not only what its users want, but also what they do not want. Libraries must market to their customer base, not to someone else's audience. Consistently promoting products

that have no value to the library's customers, may deplete credibility with users and run the risk that users will ignore future promotions for products from which they could benefit.

If follow-up data demonstrates that a product matches user needs but the marketing message was not effectively communicated to the targeted audience the message should be re-tailored to more specifically address that group's needs. The mode and timing of the communication should also be reevaluated. Rarely does this evaluative stage finalize the marketing process, but instead often results in the implementation of a more refined second phase marketing plan.

Marketing, while multifaceted, need not be a complicated or onerous process. Having reviewed basic marketing principles, the next step is to apply these basic precepts in a particular setting.

MARKETING THE ACADEMIC LAW LIBRARY

"Marketing is determining who you serve and with what products."¹⁷ "Marketing involves finding out what the user wants, then setting out to meet those needs."¹⁸ "Marketing is anything you do to get or keep a customer."¹⁹ As these statements reflect, marketing can be defined in a variety of ways, but one element that most marketing experts agree on is that, at its core, marketing is about customers (users), knowing who your customers or potential customers are, and how to satisfy their needs.

User Groups

Academic law libraries serve a variety of constituencies. As discussed in Section I, categorizing these customers into groups with like characteristics allows the library to pinpoint user needs, identify what products are most appropriate to those needs, and facilitates "tailored" communication with each group and/or subgroups.

Segmenting these law library users into groups with like characteristics, while not a terribly difficult undertaking, nonetheless, can result in a fairly detailed user schematic.

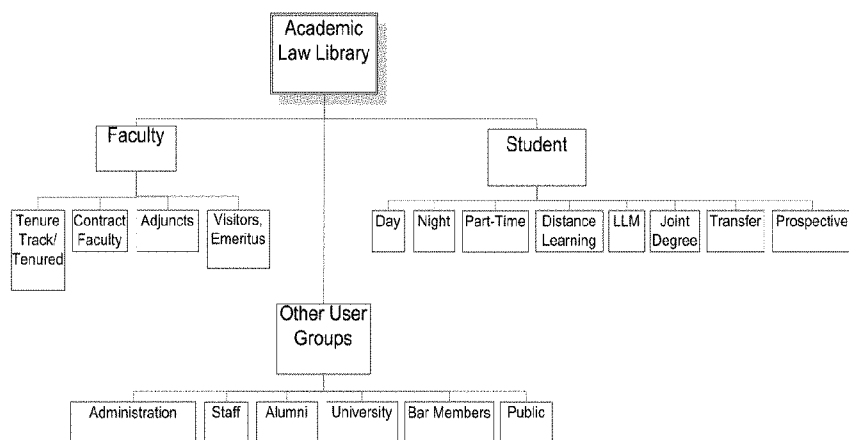
Whether affiliated with a state-supported or private university, law school library users include law school faculty, students, administration, staff and alumni, and possibly the larger university community. In the case of state-supported universities, local attorneys and the general public should be added to the list of user groups. All of these user categories can be further divided into subpopulations; however, as this discussion

will focus on faculty and student-related marketing activities, Chart 1 reflects only those user subdivisions. In addition to these basic categories, users can be classified based on behavioral characteristics (e.g., willingness to innovate, usage rates, perception of benefit) which will also vary from group to group and within each group.²⁰

With all of these possible groups to consider, who should be targeted initially? Primary users? New users? Underserved users? Marketing is an ongoing activity. Although over time the needs of each constituency will be addressed, it is important to be realistic regarding how many marketing activities can be simultaneously supported. Prioritizing marketing efforts, rather than employing a “scattergun” approach, will allow the effective concentration of resources.

One guiding principle that may help initial marketing efforts is: do not forget the needs of primary users. Although a current marketing campaign may target new (distance learners) or underserved (students in night program) populations, the needs of core customers must always be satisfied. In the law school setting, the library has two primary constituencies—faculty and students. Academic law librarians often espouse that both groups are equally important, but to paraphrase Snowball in George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*, “some [users] are more equal than others.”²¹ Concentrating marketing efforts on faculty may well prove the most rewarding.

CHART 1: Typical Academic Law Library User Groups



Marketing to Faculty

As Robert Hu pointed out in his 2002 “PR for Academic Libraries” article, faculty are the academic library’s most constant customers.²² While the law student population turns over every few years, the faculty pool remains fairly stable so that many faculty establish permanent relationships with the library.²³ It is by no means hyperbole to state that “good relations with the faculty can make or break a library.”²⁴ Although faculty involvement will vary from institution to institution, this group of users can wield significant influence over the library’s operations, budget, personnel, collections, and other policies.²⁵

In our increasingly complex information environment, it can be extremely difficult to choose which of the many products and services to promote. Marketing research is necessary to determine users’ needs, wants, and expectations. Faculty needs vary depending on the activity in which they are engaged (teaching, learning, researching, or writing). While surveys, questionnaires, focus groups, or even exit interviews may work well in assessing student needs, these information gathering mechanisms are marginally successful with faculty for a variety of reasons (e.g., surveys/questionnaires are often ignored; focus group participation is difficult due to the variety of faculty schedules; and some faculty never or rarely visit the library).²⁶

In contrast, brief one-on-one interviews often prove an effective means of identifying faculty needs and expectations. Whether the result of a scheduled office visit, sitting next to each other at the monthly meeting, or standing side-by-side at the coffee bar, these information gathering opportunities will likely occur only if the librarian proactively initiates the conversation. To successfully identify and assess faculty needs, librarians must venture beyond the library’s physical boundaries and attend faculty presentations, law school and other campus special events, participate on law school or university committees, or otherwise interact directly with faculty.

While one marketing goal may be to develop a faculty awareness of the library’s resources, an equally important goal is to cultivate a faculty/library relationship that will influence how faculty perceive the library in the future.²⁷ Faculty liaison programs can achieve both objectives.

Under a typical liaison program, faculty are assigned a librarian who serves as the faculty member’s primary contact in the library.²⁸ In addition to facilitating communication between the library and faculty, this one-on-one contact allows the librarian to better identify the specific needs of each faculty member and introduce the user to resources from

which he or she will specifically benefit. However, a library liaison program offers marketing opportunities far beyond the mere matching of faculty with appropriate library products.

Academic librarians historically serve faculty in a support capacity. Liaison programs afford librarians the opportunity to transition from the role of assistant to that of collaborator, from information purveyor to information consultant. As information consultants, librarians can assume a more participatory role and partner with faculty in such activities as designing and planning course curriculum, team-teaching or otherwise participating in classroom instruction, or co-authoring a publication.

Traditional promotional strategies aimed at faculty range from placing flyers and brochures in their mailboxes, to providing library orientations and introductory information packets, from scheduling individual instruction sessions, to presenting short demonstrations at faculty meetings, or offering lunchtime brownbag workshops. While traditional marketing activities remain valid techniques, the proliferation of electronic resources has introduced additional variables into the marketing mix.²⁹

Although faculty as a group are becoming more technologically conversant, promoting an online product or using technology as a marketing medium to reach this audience can nonetheless prove challenging. How and through what medium an electronic resource is introduced to any library customer depends on that user's technology comfort level. As is typical of most user groups, different faculty adopt technology at different rates. While demographics vary from institution to institution, every faculty has its *innovators* (first to try a new service) or *early adopters*, as well as the more cautious *early majority adopters* and of course, the *laggards*.³⁰

Faculty as users or potential users will more readily stretch beyond their comfort zone if they are convinced there is a tangible benefit derived from this added effort. For example, over the years it has been a common practice for law school libraries to route various daily or weekly current awareness publications to faculty. A promotional strategy that emphasizes same day online access and the ability to receive electronic routing via e-mail can entice even the more reticent users to explore this option. Additionally, introducing a user to the electronic counterpart of a print material with which they are already familiar poses less of a threat to that individual's comfort level, thereby increasing the probability that they will take that first step of trying out the electronically packaged product.

A particularly effective promotional strategy with faculty is to enlist the help of another faculty member in marketing the product. Most faculty

enjoy the opportunity to “teach” other faculty something new and to display their newly acquired expertise. Whether demonstrating the simplicity of uploading a working paper to SSRN or bepress, or explaining how they used Citation 9 or Endnote to organize the research notes and bibliographic references for their last law review article, peer-to-peer testimonials can prove more effective than a librarian’s powers of persuasion.

Employing a faculty member as part of a promotion need not be exclusive to specific library services or products, but rather can be an effective means of increasing the library’s visibility and enhancing the library’s image among its users. For example, for the past several years Seattle University Law Library’s celebration of National Library Week has featured a faculty specific READ poster display. Participating faculty are asked to select a book that holds special significance for them and write a brief paragraph explaining why they selected this particular publication. This relatively simple exhibit, consisting of a series of faculty posters and selected books with accompanying faculty authored paragraphs, was designed to generate awareness of and interest in National Library Week. Prior to our READ poster displays, National Library Week would come and go with little faculty recognition, let alone involvement. In contrast, faculty now volunteer six months in advance to serve as READ poster celebrities and actually mark their calendars for this April event.

Encouraging these READ posters and similar types of faculty interaction with the library, as well as cultivating the more individualized liaison partnerships, not only influences how faculty use and value the library and its services, but also affects how students perceive the library. Faculty who are knowledgeable about the information resources available in the library and who have a positive working relationship with the librarians are more likely to invite librarians into their classrooms or incorporate librarians into independent studies and other student projects. Thus faculty can serve as a promotional bridge to the law library’s other primary user group, the law school student population. Library liaison programs and faculty services in general are discussed in more detail in Margaret Schlit’s *Faculty Services in the 21st Century: Evolution and Innovation* in this publication.

Marketing to Students

Although students are an ever-present category, the composition of this audience is in a constant state of flux. Marketing to and cultivating a relationship with students should start early in this group’s law school

experience. When librarians conduct 1L library tours and orientations, as well as participate in the 1L writing and research programs, they not only are marketing the library's resources, but also are educating students regarding the expertise of and the value added services provided by librarians.

The Gen X, Y, Millennial, and Echo Boomer students of today have grown up in an electronic world in which everyone communicates via e-mail, online chat, text messaging, and blogging. It is quite natural that students turn to the internet for their information services. While obtaining information packaged as podcasts or vodcasts and distributed via RSS feeds may be foreign to many law school faculty, use of these online tools is second nature to today's law students. A prospective student's initial contact with the library may occur via its virtual tour, or if onsite, through an audio tour downloaded to his or her PDA or MP3 player.³¹ This techno-savvy group readily embraces remote access to the library's catalog through their Web-enabled cell phone or other wireless devices³² and often prefers receiving library research updates and legal news electronically.³³

More aptly described as the G-Generation (Google), a significant number of law students have shifted from a reliance on paper to that of electronic resources as their first choice of information.³⁴ To effectively market the value added content that libraries provide, librarians should (1) assume that search engines will often be the student's tool of choice, and (2) market library products with that in mind. Librarians cannot ignore the existence of commercial sites and search engines that students already use. These Internet infomediaries³⁵ are not information professionals and need not be viewed as villainous competitors.

Creating a one-stop shopping research portal that in addition to providing access to the library's licensed databases and electronic resources, also incorporates links to search engines and other non-library products, is one way of enticing students to visit the library's Webpages. By introducing students at an early stage to the variety of resources available through the library's Web site, the library can encourage students to start their research from that page. A research portal exposes students to the wide range of free and subscription-based resources and helps to educate this audience as to the appropriate role that each resource plays in academic research. Presenting a full array of electronic resources provides students the ability to compare the professionally enhanced library-based products with resources available over the public Internet. If successfully promoted, the more technologically adept students will likely bookmark the library's research portal page, consequently bypassing

the library's home page. To ensure that news of a new product reaches all student subgroups may necessitate posting the same or similar promotional messages on several library Webpages.

This student research portal is a combination of product, delivery mechanism, and promotional tool, as are any other customized research/resource pages created for faculty, alumni, public, or other user groups. To maximize the marketing potential of these pages library stationary, brochures, flyers, giveaways, etc., should reflect not only some type of library branding, but additionally the appropriate Web site URLs.

Students enrolled in a law school's evening program or participating as distance learners often have very little onsite contact with the library. For these groups the library's Web site is their library. Developing a separate Webpage for these off-campus users, offering resources tailored to their needs (e.g., remote access databases and e-journals, online ILL forms, e-reference, pod and/or vodcasts featuring events that these students could otherwise not attend) furnishes access to specialized products and provides an efficient means of marketing these products.³⁶ Designating a librarian to serve as the library liaison to these programs allows the library to further focus their marketing activities to the targeted audiences.

General Marketing Tips

Today's users, whether faculty or students, have busy schedules. Promotions, as a general rule, should be kept short and to the point. Whether the distribution channel is print, electronic, or in-person, the audience should not be overloaded with too much information. Rather than relying on one all encompassing event, a successful marketing strategy may well consist of a series of promotional activities employing a variety of mediums. For example, targeted e-mails, briefly describing the product and why it will benefit that user, are an inexpensive and efficient introductory technique. However, to transition the customer from awareness, to interest, to desire, to action ("AIDA")³⁷ may require utilizing additional modes of follow-up or promotion (e.g., office visit or phone call from the library liaison, brown bag training session, special event or reception, newsletter article. . .).

Library promotions need not be complicated, time-consuming, or expensive. Even in the digital age, some of the most basic, non-technological promotions remain strategically effective. For example, as is typical of many academic law libraries, the Seattle University Law Library markets new acquisitions by e-mailing subject-specific announcements to

select faculty and student groups, as well as through a "New & Notables" segment in the library's online newsletter and the "In the Stacks" column published in the student weekly. Several of these electronic promotions are quite technologically sophisticated, featuring roll-over photos that transition into textual excerpts containing further links to publisher comments and author biographies, and require hours of staff time to create. Nonetheless, after scrutinizing the effectiveness of each promotional technique, it was determined that notwithstanding the level of electronic promotion, materials temporarily shelved in the "new books" display located at the reference desk consistently circulated at a significantly higher level even if these materials were not the focus of our online promotions. While continuing to electronically publicize the library's recent acquisitions, there is definitely a renewed appreciation for the simple, but effective, tabletop new books shelf.

Evaluation

No marketing activity is complete without periodically monitoring and evaluating its success. A marketing evaluation should determine to what extent marketing objectives were met and identify what changes, if any, are necessary to further ensure or enhance user satisfaction. Evaluation in an academic setting will typically include surveys, questionnaires, focus groups, comment cards, and one-on-one conversations.

Students are more likely than faculty to complete surveys and questionnaires, or participate in exit interviews and focus groups. LibQUAL+™, developed by the Association of Research Libraries, is a nationally recognized evaluative tool used by academic libraries to assess and improve library services and market the library.³⁸ While this Web-based survey mechanism is easy to administer and the aggregated data and reports allow comparison of an individual library's performance with that of peer institutions, the questions are not always specific to law libraries and their services. Additionally, the cost of LibQUAL+™ is substantial, even at a reduced consortium rate. In contrast, an in-house developed and administered survey has the benefit of customizing questions to a specific audience and institution. However, creating an in-house survey instrument, and compiling and analyzing the results can be labor intensive, and generates no comparative data. If budget and time allow, administering the web-based LibQUAL+™ one year, followed by a library-created print survey the next year (or the reverse sequence), not only provides a comprehensive overview of an individual library, but also generates responses from users who respond to communications in only

print or electronic format. LibQUAL+™ and other survey mechanisms are discussed in more detail in H. Kumar Percy Jayasuriya and Frances M. Brillantine's *Student Services in the 21st Century: Evolution and Innovation in Discovering Student Needs, Teaching Information Literacy, and Designing Library 2.0-Based Student Services* in this publication.

Both commercial and in-house developed survey mechanisms can effectively gauge use of library products and the level of user satisfaction provided a response rate adequate to represent the overall target population is achieved. Follow-up flyers, e-mail reminders, screen saver messages on library terminals, brief announcement on the library's electronic docket or kiosk, combined with more tangible incentives (e.g., completed survey allows entry in a drawing; respondents receive a giveaway when survey submitted) may be required to guarantee a healthy response rate.

Although follow-up surveys, questionnaires, and other generally administered evaluative tools can be helpful in ascertaining the success of marketing efforts, library staff observations can provide valuable insight into product usage rates and customer satisfaction. An informal meeting between faculty and liaison or a one-on-one conversation with circulation staff can quickly reveal whether faculty are satisfied with a new product, or if they are even aware of the recently promoted product.

While public services librarians and other front line staff interact with students and faculty to a higher degree than technical services personnel, *all* library staff should be involved not only in the evaluative stage of marketing, but also throughout the entire marketing process. Whether "front line" or "back room," each staff member provides service to faculty and students and is in their own way representing the library. The service that each user receives, in turn, affects how the library is perceived. As library representatives, all staff should be aware of and conversant with the library's marketing objectives and the accompanying promotional strategies.

Different Constituents, Same Principles

"Every interaction with a customer is a marketing moment."³⁹ Although user groups vary depending on the type of law library and within each library, assessing and satisfying the changing needs of customers is, or should be, an ongoing activity for all librarians. Many of the techniques and strategies discussed above in the academic context are equally effective when applied in other law library settings.

For example, blogs (or blawgs), a relative newcomer to the marketing arsenal, are becoming an increasingly viable tool used by all types of libraries to promote their services, resources, and programs.⁴⁰ In Bonnie Shucha's 2005 survey of law library bloggers, marketing was cited as the primary reason for contributing to a blog.⁴¹ Survey data further revealed that although the largest percentage of bloggers were associated with academic law libraries 39.2%, firm and corporate law libraries represented 13.7% of these participants, while 5.9% were affiliated with state, court, or county libraries.⁴² As one surveyed librarian noted, "[Blogs are] the single most important advertising tool we have for the effort and money spent."⁴³ An even more recent addition to the marketing toolkit, blawgcasts (legal podcasts) provide yet another means of communicating with students, attorneys, or other targeted audiences.⁴⁴

On a more traditional level, newsletters are a popular marketing tool in law school, law firm, corporate, court, and county law libraries. Newsletter content will vary with each library but the topical categories (e.g., new services and products, recent acquisitions, upcoming training and brown bag offerings, frequently asked questions, and useful Web sites) remain relatively constant notwithstanding library type. When produced and distributed electronically, newsletters offer an inexpensive means of promoting resources tailored to specific user groups (e.g., specialty and practice area attorneys, summer associates, paralegals, local practitioners, judges, and the public) regardless of geographic diversity. Photos and other digital enhancements provide visual variety and further personalize a newsletter. When staffing levels or monetary constraints preclude the option of generating a library-based publication, marketing resources through a weekly or monthly column in the local bar bulletin, or the law firm or corporate office newsletter, may be an option.

Individual libraries will decide whether marketing will involve a blog, a newsletter, or something else. But when it comes to whether or not to market, libraries have no choice. Marketing cannot be viewed as an optional activity, but rather must be seen as an integral part of every customer interaction.

CONCLUSION

All law librarians, regardless of workplace affiliation, have a dual responsibility not only to offer products and services appropriate to the needs of their constituents, but also to ensure that these users are fully aware of and understand the relative benefits associated with their

information choices. Today's information seekers are confronted with new products, new services, and new technologies. An effective marketing plan provides library users the guidance necessary to navigate this ever-changing landscape.

NOTES

1. See Cesar Caballero, *Strategic Planning as a Prerequisite to Strategic Marketing Action in Libraries and Information Agencies*, in *Strategic Marketing in Library and Information Science* 33-59 (2002) (discussing the development and implementation of library strategic plans).

2. Christine Koontz, *Customer-Based Marketing—Promotion is Not the Same as Marketing*, 20(1) *Marketing Library Services* 4 (Jan.-Feb. 2006).

3. See Judith A. Siess, *Visible Librarian, Asserting Your Value with Marketing and Advocacy* 1 (2003) (hypothesizing why librarians, as a group, readily describe themselves as customer service-oriented, yet seem uncomfortable labeling their users/patrons as customers).

4. *Id.* Koontz, *supra* n. 2, at 4.

5. *Quantum²: The Power to Lead Change—10-Step Guide to Promoting the Information Center*, ¶ 2, http://quantum.dialog.com/q2_resources/marketing/10stepguide.shtml (accessed Dec. 1, 2006).

6. *Id.*

7. Larry X. Besant and Deborah Sharp, *Libraries Need Relationship Marketing*, *Information Online* 17 (Mar. 2000).

8. Eileen Elliot de Saez, *Marketing Concepts for Libraries and Information Services*, 2nd ed. 157 (2002).

9. *Id.*

10. Seiss, *supra* n. 3, at 20.

11. Robert Middleton, *Are You an Investment or an Expense? Action Plan Marketing*, (included in Dialog Quantum 2 program materials, 2001), <http://www.actionplan.com>, (accessed Dec. 1, 2006). See also, Marilyn Bromley, *Return on Investment, Quantum² Leadership Series 3.04.02*, http://quantum.dialog.com/q2_resources/casestudies (discussing how to construct a return on investment study of library services) (accessed Dec. 1, 2006); Amelia Kassel, *Practical Tips to Help You Prove Your Value*, 16(4) *Marketing Library Services* 1 (May/June 2002) (discussing how to demonstrate a library's return on investment).

12. Not unlike the tendency to use the terms marketing and promotion interchangeably, promotional activities are frequently described as publicity. Although a subset of promotion, publicity often denotes a single event (e.g., reminding users of a particular service that is available), while promotion of that service would likely entail a more comprehensive, multi-phased approach designed to resonate with various targeted audiences and that evolves in response to user feedback.

13. See *infra* "Marketing Segmentation" (for further discussion regarding target audiences).

14. Koontz, *supra* n. 2, at 6.

15. Seiss, *supra* n. 3, at 32.

16. Christie Koontz, *Customer-Based Marketing—How to Assess Your Marketing Effectiveness*, 18(3) *Marketing Library Services* 7 (May-June 2004).
17. Seiss, *supra* n. 3, at XVI.
18. UK Chartered Institute of Marketing as referred to in Julie Nicholas, *Marketing and Promotion of Library Services*, *Library and Information Services in Astronomy III*, ASP Conference Series, Vol. 153 (1998) <http://www.stsci.edu/stsci/meetings/lisa3/nicholasj.html> (accessed on Dec. 1, 2006).
19. Michael Porter, Harvard Professor as referred to in *Marketing Library Services: Packaging, Promoting and Persuading*, *Quantum2 White Paper Leadership Series: Marketing* (Oct. 2004).
20. de Saez, *supra* n. 8, at 121.
21. George Orwell, *Animal Farm*, Ch. 10 (1945) (noted in Seiss, *supra* n. 3, at 5).
22. Robert H. Hu, *PR for Academic Libraries: Focus on the Faculty*, 6(5) *Spectrum* 28 (Feb. 2002).
23. *Id.*
24. Seiss, *supra* n. 3, at 48.
25. Hu, *supra* n. 22, at 28.
26. See Lynn Westbrook, *Identifying and Analyzing User Needs* 209 (2001) (outlining data-gathering instruments used to ascertain faculty information needs).
27. Linda Reeves et al., *Faculty Outreach: A Win-Win Proposition*, in *Outreach Services in Academic and Special Libraries* 61 (Paul Kelsey & Sigrid Kelsey, eds., Haworth Information Press 2003).
28. Examples of reverse liaison programs in which faculty members are designated as liaisons to the library, alerting the staff when curriculum changes will require the purchase of supporting library materials, and informing colleagues about new library services, collections and programs, while serving as a marketing technique on the undergraduate library level, have yet to find a home at the law school level.
29. See St. Thomas Law Library Faculty Services Blog, <http://www.facultyservices.blogspot.com> (example of marketing faculty services using a blog) (accessed Dec. 1, 2006).
30. de Saez, *supra* n. 8, at 128.
31. See University of Indiana Law School's law library audio tour, http://www.law.indiana.edu/library/about/adu_tour.shtml (accessed Dec. 1, 2006).
32. See Yale Law School, Lillian Goldman Library, http://ringding.law.yale.edu/screens/airpac_help.html (accessed Dec. 1, 2006).
33. See Santa Clara University School of Law, Heafey Law Library, *Heafey Headnotes*, <http://www.scu.edu/law/blog/heafeyheadnotes> (accessed Dec. 1, 2006); University of Wisconsin Law School, University of Wisconsin Law Library, *WisBlawg*, <http://www.law.wisc.edu/blogs/wisblawg> (accessed Dec. 1, 2006).
34. M. Breaks and R. MacLeod, *Joining up the Academic Information Landscape*, 103(5) *Library Association Record* 286 (2001).
35. de Saez, *supra* n. 8, at 138.
36. Seiss, *supra* n. 3, at 49.
37. See de Saez, *supra* n. 8, at 83 (discussing the AIDA marketing model).
38. *LibQUAL+™: Defining and Promoting Library Service Quality*, ¶ 1, <http://www.libqual.org/About/Information/index.cfm> (accessed Dec. 1, 2006).
39. Amelia Kassel, *Marketing: Realistic Tips for Planning and Implementation in Special Libraries*, 6(11) *Information Outlook* 6 (2002).

40. See generally Jill Stover's blog, Library Marketing—Thinking Outside the Book, <http://librarymarketing.blogspot.com> (accessed Dec. 1, 2006).

41. Bonnie Shucha, *The State of the Law Library Blogosphere*, II. *Bloggers Motivations*, A. *Marketing and Outreach*, LLRX (Aug. 15, 2006), <http://www.llrx.com/features/blogosphere.htm> (accessed Dec. 1, 2006).

42. *Id.* at I. *About Law Library Bloggers*, A. *Affiliations*.

43. *Id.* at II. *Bloggers Motivations*, A. *Marketing and Outreach*.

44. See Rita Kaiser, *Collections Note: The New Podcasts on the Block*, King County Bar Bulletin (May 2006), <http://www.kcba.org/scriptcontent/KCBA/barbulletin/0604/lawlib.cfm> (accessed Dec. 1, 2006).

doi:10.1300/J113v26n01_14

Afterword

Nearly everything about the modern law library seems open for debate. Discussions range from what law libraries should look like, what their collections should contain, how users should access their collections, and of course the types of public services law libraries should provide.¹ The continued relevance of the profession of law librarianship has not been immune from these discussions.² In a recent article titled, *Vision: The Essence of Professionalism and the Key to the Future of Law Librarianship as a Profession*, Dennis S. Sears argued that the future of the profession depends on law librarians' abilities to "envision the future and anticipate the possible impact of future trends."³

The diverse group of authors who contributed chapters to this collection exemplify the vision required of law librarians. These authors wholeheartedly embraced cold calls to compose scholarly pieces of significant length, many in areas where little or nothing had been written. The editors are sincerely grateful for the authors' efforts, which greatly exceeded our expectations. The authors' reference skills shined as they hunted the fodder for their articles beyond the traditional sources of law library literature. Several conducted comprehensive surveys of large groups, spent hours conducting interviews in areas where nothing had been written, poured through AALL archives, and performed other research. The finished product is a testament to their tireless work to improve law librarianship and a lasting contribution to the scholarship of our profession.

Some of the chapters in this collection examine public services in specific types of law libraries. However, innovative librarians will monitor the approaches taken by their colleagues in all types of libraries and

[Haworth co-indexing entry note]: "Afterword." Bintliff, Barbara, and Lee F. Peoples. Co-published simultaneously in *Legal Reference Services Quarterly*® (The Haworth Information Press, Inc., an imprint of The Haworth Press, Inc.) Vol. 26, No. 1/2, 2007, pp. 301-302; and: *Public Services in Law Libraries: Evolution and Innovation in the 21st Century* (ed: Barbara Bintliff and Lee F. Peoples) The Haworth Information Press, Inc., an imprint of The Haworth Press, 2007, pp. 301-302. Single or multiple copies of this article are available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service [1-800-HAWORTH, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (EST). E-mail address: docdelivery@haworthpress.com].

borrow ideas where appropriate. Other chapters explore general concepts directly applicable across all types of law libraries. The *AALL Competencies of Law Librarianship* related to reference, research, and client services have provided basic guidance to public services librarians for years and should be updated to incorporate new technologies, formats, and approaches to public services. Before, during, and after new services are introduced librarians must be attuned to patron needs and make patrons aware of new services by employing marketing principles. Librarians should strive to offer services customized to individual patrons' preferences while simultaneously protecting their privacy. Many of the core services and interfaces currently offered by libraries, including the reference interview, the OPAC, instructional services, and faculty and administrative support, must evolve in order to exceed the expectations of our patrons.

The gauntlet has been laid at our feet. To stay relevant law librarians must explore the approaches, ideas, and technologies discussed by these insightful authors and implement them where appropriate. Many of these concepts are bleeding edge and have not yet been tested. Continued evolution and innovation is required to maintain the vitality of law library public services.

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NOTES

1. See, Paul E. Howard & Renee Y. Rastorfer, *Do We Still Need Books? A Selected Annotated Bibliography*, 97 L. Lib. J. 257 (2005); Thomas R. French, *Law Librarians and Library Design, Construction, and Renovation: An Annotated Bibliography and Review of the Literature*, 98 L. Lib. J. 99 (2006); and The Future of Law Libraries Symposium (2007) <http://www.fcsf.edu/events/lawlibrarysymposium/> (accessed Feb. 21, 2007).

2. See, Robert H. Smith, *The Librarian's Risk of Irrelevance (in the Eyes of the Law School Dean)*, 95 L. Lib. J. 421 (2003); ALL-SIS Marketing Toolkit for Academic Law Libraries <http://www.aallnet.org/sis/allsis/toolkit/index.asp> (accessed Feb. 7, 2007); and *Toward a Renaissance in Law Librarianship* (Richard A. Danner, ed., West 1997) http://www.aallnet.org/committee/reports_renaissance.asp (accessed Feb. 7, 2007).

3. Dennis S. Sears, *Vision: The Essence of Professionalism and the Key to the Future of Law Librarianship as a Profession*, 98 L. Lib. J. 81, 88 (2006).