

New Roles For Information Professionals: Marketing Implications

Brimming with marketing implications, "New Roles For Online Professionals," a session at the Online/CD-ROM '93 conference, was led by Don Hawkins of AT&T Bell Laboratories, Bill Woodruff of Hershey Foods, and Richard Kesner of Babson College. Hawkins presented an overview of the new roles that librarians have undertaken to meet the information challenges presented by new technology. Woodruff and Kesner described how they had structured their roles and information centers to capitalize on the advantages that new technology offers.

New roles need new names, and a few terms were proposed for the high-technology librarian. Kesner, whose integrated information system stresses Total Quality Management, prefers "Information Service Professional," because it keeps service central to the librarian's identity. Hawkins favors the simpler "Information Professional," but asked us to think about the implications of the term "Information Artist," suggested in the newsletter *Monitor*. This somewhat hyperbolic term stresses an increasingly important part of the librarian's job: creating order from chaos, breathing meaning into raw materials, culling pearls of importance from a sea of possibility. As information becomes increasingly accessible in increasingly greater quantities, it is through these artistic functions that librarians provide value to their clients.

In reviewing the highlights of the session, we'll focus on the marketing ideas and implications that an examination of current and potential library roles exposes. These boil down to three main issues: positioning, public relations; the threat of information professional obsolescence as access to information becomes universal; and the imperative of integrating information services to make the library a leading and active player within the organization.

Roles We've Learned To Play

Hawkins divided new information roles into three categories: information-related, administrative, and technology-oriented. Information-related roles include the traditional roles of literature searcher and reference librarian, as well as competitive analyst, document delivery expert, information source expert, copyright specialist, marketer, product development consultant, ethical decision maker, and

what Hawkins calls "information physician." When patients come to the doctor with an undefined ailment and the doctor questions them to ascertain the scope, severity, and identity of the problem, similarly, clients come to the librarian with a vague information need, and by careful questioning and thoughtful listening, the librarian helps them identify their search requirements. And just as a doctor with excellent diagnostic knowledge can be defeated by poor bedside manner, a library could have access to all the texts in the world, but without a skilled librarian to help clients articulate their needs, the library cannot serve its purpose.

This analogy illustrates the information professional's art—an art that no technology can replace. A hospital library about to embark on a promotional campaign might use the physician/librarian parallel to broaden client appreciation of the scope of help the information center provides.

In their administrative capacity Hawkins points out, information professionals have served as sales agents, encouraging clients to use databases and online services, as teachers and trainers, contract negotiators, word processors, accountants, and bill collectors.

Hawkins's third set of roles, technology-oriented roles, were created when information professionals began to act as agents of change, bringing technology to libraries in order to offer more and better services to library clients. In bringing technology to their libraries, information professionals have also assumed the roles of hardware and software specialists, systems designers and developers, and database builders.

But despite the struggle to bring a high level of technology to their libraries, information professionals remain responsible for all three roles—information-related, administrative, and technology-oriented—and must continue to focus on clients and marketing while meeting the high standards they set for themselves.

Facing The Obsolescence Challenge

Consider PCs, fax machines, the Internet, microwave ovens, VCRs, ATMs, cellular phones, and overseas dialing—things we take for granted today that didn't exist in the '60's. Each of these advances enabled us to perform tasks we had

Pearls of Wisdom

Print attractive, inexpensive bookplates while keeping track of new acquisitions in your computer database. Doug Uhlman, writing in the *Apple Library Users Group Newsletter* (Summer, 1993), explains how he makes bookplates using Avery's MacLabelPro. The program's merging of custom-designed labels with serial number assignments is one of its best features, helping the library track gift books as they are acquired. But keep in mind that this can be accomplished by other database programs with desktop publishing features or desktop publishing programs with data importing features. An additional advantage of using a library computer to print bookplates over purchasing printed labels are those of cost (Uhlman found that printed labels cost between two and three times more). For more information about MacLabelPro, call 800/462-8379.

As seen by your editor in an office supply store: self-adhesive, clear plastic, computer disk pockets from Cardinal. Attach them to the inside cover of reports—hard copy and software fit neatly together, increasing the client's sense of product value and ease of use. Cardinal also makes plastic business card pockets so you can easily attach your business card to folders, binders etc. And here's a perfect example of what NOT to do in your promotion activities—have great products supported by incomplete advertising. Your editor thinks you can get information from Atapco Office Products Group, St. Louis, MO 63141. It's the only address information printed on the package. This after they went through the trouble of listing their other products on the package wrapper. We surmise that Atapco represents Cardinal, who has the product line of Holdit! Organizing Accessories, which is where these neat plastic, stick-on computer disk and business card pockets are listed. Try all three names at your office supply store. Oh, yeah. They're made in Denmark!

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Missing issues must be reported within 3 months of issue date. Missing issues requested after this time will be supplied at the regular back-issue price.

Planning a conference, workshop, training session or meeting?(see Promotion Gems, page 5) Try Baudville's Badge-maker software and accessories, enabling you to custom design and print badges, rolodex postcards, business cards and diskette labels from a single database. Baudville also supplies pin-back and clip-back badge holders, bordered awards and certificates for laser or continuous feed printers, metallic seals, and laser foils. Call 800/728-0888.

Know the rules—follow these suggestions by Mary Pretzer (first published in *In House Graphics*) when using rules.

- 1) Save thick rules for horizontals
- 2) Limit the number of rule weights within a publication to three.
- 3) Consider pointed rather than rounded box corners—pointed corners make publications look professional.
- 4) Uneven columns? A horizontal rule across the bottom of the page will make them appear squared off.

Sign up for the chance to prepare your own signs, incorporating your library's slogan, logo, and (if you use Paper Direct stationary) colors and design elements. Paper Direct now offers the LaserSign System. How does it work? First, using the computer template, design your sign. Then print it onto a paper insert, available in seven different designs. The insert is perforated to the correct size, so after it's printed, just punch out the perforations, and snap it in place between the sign holder and its clear cover. The LaserSign System comes from desk size (2" x 8") to wall size (8.5" x 8.5"). You can also order acrylic stands, velcro coins and magnet sheets to display your signs. Call 800/A-PAPERS.

If you're thinking of making signs to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), consider *Olson's Library Clip Art, Volume 2*, with 56 images depicting disabled individuals using various library services, plus ADA graphics and symbols. Call 410/647-6708 or fax 410/647-0415 for a free brochure.

Warm up clients with "Winter Special" flyers printed on pre-designed papers in shades of blue and white. Idea Art offers two different designs, one with a soft snowflake print, the other with frosty lettering getting a blast of cold air from Old Man Winter. Call 800/435-2278.

Sweets for the sweet . . . or at least the sweetest prospects. If you're romancing a new client, consider the impact a two pound bar of chocolate the size of a license plate bearing your logo will have on the deal. Totally Chocolate's promotional sweets will make your services an irresistible temptation. Call 206/332-3900 or fax 206/332-1802.

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previously relied on specialists to perform. Now consider computers in the service of libraries. Early on, selected librarians had access to central computer terminals, then terminals arrived in the library, next they fit onto librarians' desks, and some information centers now have PCs on every countertop, open to the public. Someone unfamiliar with library services might conclude that public access to vast amounts of information will make librarians obsolete. As information professionals everywhere are witnessing, this is clearly not the case.

The high level of proactivity already exercised in many libraries counters this illusion of obsolescence. The "sea of information" makes librarians more valuable than ever. A promotion campaign centered around a slogan like "charting a course in the sea of information" helps explain the new place of the information professional. Woodruff interprets the information professional's place as one of active partner in the client's decision-making process. He initiated that partnership at Hershey by renaming the library "The Information Analysis Center."

The information analysis center is to the proactive library as the proactive library is to the archival library. Taking the step to information analysis center can mean expanding the mission of the library before the organization has seen the need to do so. Therefore, librarians must take the leading role in explaining that the more information available, the less valuable that information becomes—but the more valuable analysis becomes. The transition to information analysis center will not only raise the library's status, it will help the organization from drowning in the sea of information—information that is becoming increasingly easier to access but harder to make sense of.

Librarians working to make this transition will find themselves confronting the three major factors that determine the role of the information professional within an organization. These can either smooth the path or create obstacles along the way. All three should be considered when planning this transformation.

The first factor—the level of information technology available to your center—determines if the library is capable of functioning as an information analysis center. Not only will a high level of information technology provide access to more and more tailored information, it will also allow information professionals to promote information literacy among clients, keeping staff and resources free for analysis and decision-making work.

The second factor—client expectations—will, at its worst, limit the library to an archival role. At best, it will enthusiastically turn information professionals into internal information consultants. It is up to librarians to mold these expectations—that is what we mean by marketing. To begin the switch to proactive library or information analysis center, begin by thinking of yourself as an internal information consultant. Consider yourself a partner to your clients, one who anticipates and responds to their needs. Client expectations can be upgraded project by project, as you provide expertise and analysis that is at first unexpected.

The third factor is corporate structure. As is the case with client expectations, keeping corporate structure from limiting the information professional's role demands a concerted marketing effort with a long-range plan. A corporate structure that sees a library as merely archival will rarely call on its services. The antidote to this is proactivity, and librarians who find themselves in the role of archivist can, with emphasis on product development and promotion, market the library away from the archival role. For example, if your library has a small budget, you can implement a few new programs independently, then present a plan to upper management on the library's new direction, pointing out the success of those programs. If the plan meets with doubt or apathy, consider offering charge-back services. As these become successful, you can either continue to charge back or use these services as a step in accustoming the organization to better information services. Once the organization has sampled the benefits of using an information analysis center, your battle for a greater budget will be more easily won.

Versatility will aid your switch to the information analysis center in the face of organizational downsizing and right-sizing. Woodruff's information analysis center took on roles such as audiovisual responsibilities, technical team liaison, and group facilitation, none of which is strictly information-related. The fact that information professionals filled these gaps caused departments and staff members that were not information-driven to depend on the library.

As you multiply your roles, you must ease out of the role of information gatekeeper by empowering clients. Information analysts succeed by enabling clients to do as much as possible themselves, saving the bulk of their own time and resources for jobs with the highest impact and the greatest value to the client. In the same vein, for an information professional, buildings are irrelevant. So what if one day there will be no third floor put aside for the information center? Far from being a threat to the existence of

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a library, impending irrelevance of library buildings turns every desktop into a library mini-branch.

Integrated Information—Endless Opportunities

Imagine a hospital library in charge of technology and support for billing, records, patient nutrition, and administration as well as medical literature and research. Imagine nurses pursuing advanced training through a library-administered program. Think of a legal library that, in addition to its research responsibilities, tracks the firm's marketing program, coordinates secretarial form letters and documents, and tracks business expenses for billing, profitability, tax, and reimbursement purposes. Or imagine a college where course curricula, assignments, and notes pop up on students' computer screens. Students mail questions to professors and consult electronically with classmates. They access library information to complete assignments from their own desks.

This imaginary college is a reality at Babson College, where Kesner serves as Chief Information Officer. There, he has integrated information functions throughout the college at tremendous savings of time and money and with the benefit of easier and therefore more widespread use of library services. The library offers a comprehensive array of information services to students, faculty, and staff. Kesner's information network extends to all aspects of the college, and all employees share a single electronic system, allowing maximum transferability of information, and eliminating the barriers between job functions that proliferate in multi-system bureaucracies.

Kesner's integration of information services is geared to meet all of the college's information service and computer needs. Such an undertaking is indeed ambitious, but when successful, it clearly not only saves the college substantial amounts of money by avoiding duplication of tasks and responsibilities, but also permits the college organization to tackle more ambitious projects—and ensure that the library will be central to its plans.

An organization with an integrated information system under the direction of a Chief Information Officer makes sense as more departments in more organizations become information-driven. Why develop, implement, and maintain separate computer systems for research, records, accounting, and support services? Under one standard information service, not only are costs lowered, but more opportunity arises for people to fill a broader range of roles, making them less dependent on those in other departments to provide information.

How can you move your organization towards an integrated information system? Although true integration requires a long-range, comprehensive plan, the selling of that plan could depend on the success you and your staff have already had in assuming information roles throughout your organization before such a plan is even proposed. Do people in every department rely on the library to help their work smoother, smarter, and more efficient? Are they in the habit of calling the information center when they need help of the kind you can offer? The more you and your staff are a part of everyone's work life, the more receptive your organization will be to information services being formally integrated on the organizational level.

One more piece of advice: when hiring library staff, look for people who will act as entrepreneurs—people always looking for opportunities to take on new programs, people used to putting their own ideas into action. Seek team players who are always ready to step into the role of team leader.

Kesner ended the session with a discussion of critical success factors for an integrated organizational information system. The first item on the list was a focus on customer needs. He demanded a dropping of "the MLS baggage of the '70s and '80s." He stressed the need to rapidly test, deliver, benchmark, and continuously improve services. He emphasized the need for a long-range plan consistent with the organization's long-range goals. And finally, he pointed out that good luck and prayer will always come in handy.

Prayer and good luck are indeed helpful, but they will never replace the careful examination and planning, the prime tools in a librarian's marketing tool kit. By responding to technology, we become leaders in technology, and by filling new roles, information professionals discover new opportunities.

Promoting Your New Image

It's not enough to change your approach to library services on a Friday afternoon and expect on Monday morning that everyone outside of the library will automatically know that you're "different." Assuming a new role in your organization and "positioning" your services differently requires a marketing plan that will make your new role known to everyone in your target market. If you've changed your organizational name, then plan on developing a new logo and a whole new visual approach that supports and communicates your new image. Plan a promotion blitz that gets your new name and identity in front of people as many times and in as many places as possible. Remember, the rule of thumb is that a message must be encountered at least eight times

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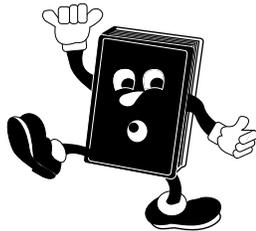
Worth Its Weight in Gold

Editor's Note: Marketing Treasures originally came with sheets of library clip art and this column provided ideas on how to use the graphics. The clip art images from Marketing Treasures are now available from www.LibraryClipArt.com

This issue of *Marketing Treasures* includes your new Cut & Paste Clip Sheet. The sheet presents original artwork in camera-ready form. If you would like previously published clip art sheets, ask for the Cut & Paste Clip Art Order form. It shows all the clip art sheets that have appeared in *Marketing Treasures*.

Pinball Machine. Rack up points with library clients by helping them win in the Information Explosion. This graphic is perfect for introducing a library game or contest. Or use it to make the point that information professionals win everyday at the "Information Game."

Out of This World. Use this graphic in scientific or research libraries, when introducing new technology, or in a promotion campaign with "Star Trek" appeal.



Information Resource Materials Parade.

Use these personable graphics as single images, or group them together to form a parade border. Some ideas for messages include: invitations that ask recipients to "go where the facts are," overdue notices that wish "books had legs so they could walk back to the library," announcements for "coming your way from the information center."

Happy Holidays. Print this graphic on holiday cards, and illustrate everything else during the holiday season: faxes, memos, bookmarks, cover sheets, flyers, even overdue notices. If you want to reproduce it in color, lightly trace the image outline, color it with markers or crayons, and run off color copies from a color photocopier. You can make your own holiday letterhead this way very inexpensively.

Snow Globe. Use this graphic all winter long, on stickers and bookmarks as "A souvenir from the library." You could put your library's name on the bottom. We've given you two versions of the globe to help illustrate your messages.

Appointment Book. This graphic works well on reference desk notepads, a calendar of events, or the bottom of any memo. If your sponsoring an event in the first few months of 1994, this graphic could accompany the library's logo in all promotional materials. Enlarge the image to the full size of a piece of paper and you'll have a poster.

Promotion Gems

If you're planning a meeting, conference, workshop or training session and aiming for maximum attendance put extra time and effort into promoting the event. *Marketing Treasures* has researched a few tricks of the meeting and event planners' trade to help increase attendance at your next event.

- 1) When designing flyers, maintain a visual family resemblance of design elements and color coordination, but use the design elements and colors slightly differently on each piece— promotion brochure, acknowledgement letter, event package cover. etc. Strict adherence detracts from excitement, making the event seem like nothing special. Instead, take design elements and colors to maintain visual recognition, but turn them into something new.
- 2) Attendance benefits should be listed in the meeting agenda. Industry news benefits professionals; general information of trends and developments, benefits everyone in attendance, and a how-to benefits beginners. Make it easy for people to justify attending your event.
- 3) Keep event names along the lines of "profit improvement workshop" or "cost reduction seminar." Have the title of the event reflect the major benefit. Attendees should have no problem getting the go-ahead to attend from their bosses.
- 4) The "who should attend" box, while an event planning cliché, is always effective. The list should reflect the people you are targeting for this event— secretaries, administrative assistants, researchers— use common job titles so recipients will readily identify with the list.
- 5) Make sure the speaker(s) get to the event in plenty of time to get acquainted with the setup. Always be sure that you have a backup plan of action should the speaker not make it. (Your editor has first hand experience with delayed or "no-show" speakers due to transportation problems, deaths in the family, illness, misplaced speech notes, so be prepared to fill in— get speech notes from the speaker before the event!)
- 6) Get feedback on your event. Pursue evaluations, but don't clutter them with extraneous questions. Discover what attendees disliked and take make a note for your next event.
- 7) Perform post mortems, by yourself and with your staff. What went right? What went wrong? What will you do better next time?
- 8) The magic ingredients to event promotion: exclusivity and eventfulness.

Sparkling Reviews

Understanding Presentation Graphics. Michael Talman. SYBEX, Alameda, CA. 1992. ISBN: 0-7821-1023-1

If there's a presentation in your future, make sure you put *Understanding Presentation Graphics* on your resource list. Although its title suggests a singular focus on graphics, this book covers all aspects of presentations.

The two sections of the book are divided into well defined chapters. Each chapter thoroughly examines its designated subject, giving illustrations of both good and bad ways of presenting, to show how and why the good is good. The chapter on charts and graphs, for example, not only discusses 9 different kinds of charts and their variations, it also illustrates what kind are good for showing what sort of data to what advantage. Each chapter ends with a clear summary of bulleted guidelines for accomplishing the goals of the chapter.

The first section, "Preparing a Presentation," takes you through scheduling, research, audience profile, presentation outline, script and storyboard. The second part, "Producing Your Presentation" guides you through design planning, presentation format, color, typography, output, and staging. Three appendices cover desktop presentation software, imaging service bureaus, and further reading.

This is an excellent book for anyone involved with presentations. The tone is light and casual, the instructions are clear and direct. If there is a best way to do something, the writer is not shy about saying so. And the book's thorough and expert coverage of all aspects of presentation graphics ensures that you'll find ways to improve your presentations. The humor and informality of the writing promises that you won't be bored

while you learn. Each chapter ends with a section called "Real World," in which the reader follows the exploits of employees at Hypothetical International as they prepare a presentation for Dewey, Cheatem and Howe.

Among *Understanding Presentation Graphics*' final advice are these words: "When all is said and done, a presentation is a lone speaker in front of an audience. Everything that comes before—the planning, the production, the practice—affect the persuasiveness of the speakers message." Your editors believe this book will help you master everything that comes before.

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before it impacts its readers.

A change in service or product offerings requires a marketing strategy that starts with service or product features and characteristics (i.e., name packing, schedule) and ends with a promotion campaign announcing availability. Consider flooding the marketplace with the new service or product—offer it free—present it without being asked. This strategy coupled with an advertising campaign with a strong message will draw attention to your new offering and bring people to rely upon it. If you have to charge for the service or product, providing it free for a limited time will permit people to try it, like it, and come to depend on it enough to be converted to paying clients.

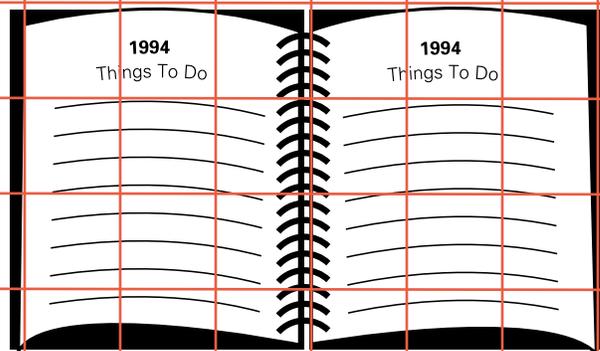
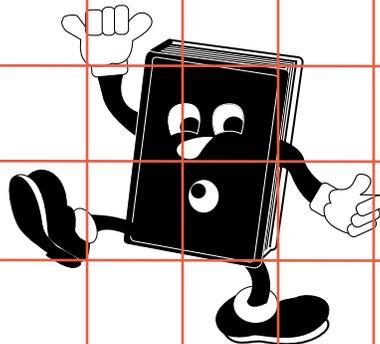
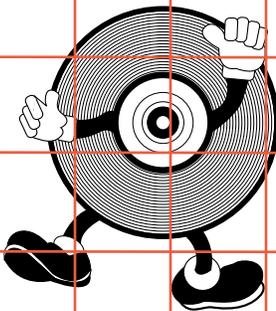
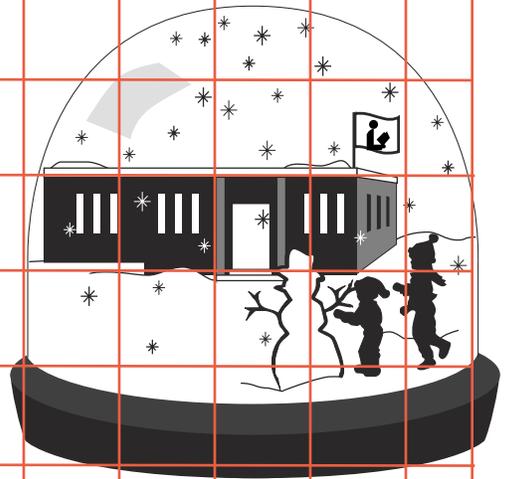
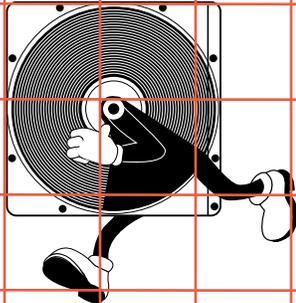
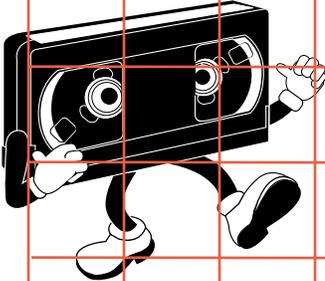
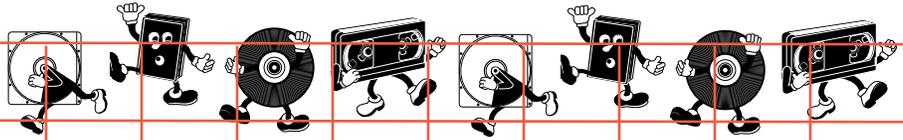
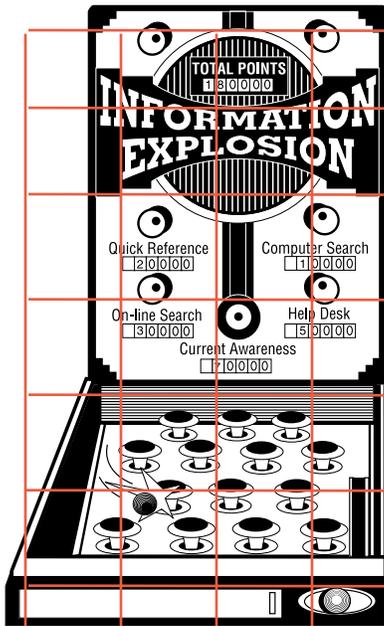
These are just two examples of how new roles that you adopt for yourself and your library imply a change and action in your marketing program. If you don't follow through, you may wind up being the only person who views the library as a dynamic change agent in the new age of information.

The Crystal Ball

January 13, 1994 "Promoting the Library and the Librarian." A presentation by Kaycee Hale at the Los Angeles Downtown Librarians luncheon. Contact: Kaycee's office 213/624-1200.

January 25 - March 1 "Information Entrepreneurship." A course taught by Alice Warner at Simmons Graduate Library School (6 Tuesday afternoons) in Boston. Contact: Judy Beals 617/521-2801.

HELP! Our Crystal ball is getting cloudy from the lack of knowing who is sponsoring what marketing programs where and when. If your library association or chapter is planning a talk, workshop, seminar, dinner, conference session, or other such event on any topic related to marketing and promotion of libraries, please let us know so we can list it in the The Crystal Ball. There is no charge for the listing. In fact, we'll give you free samples of marketing materials to display at your event! Write, phone, or e-mail us at Marketing Treasures, Chris Olson & Associates, 857 Twin Harbor Dr., Arnold, Maryland 21012; 410/647-6708; fax 410/647-0415; Internet olson@access.digex.net.



Put The Information Center
In Your 1994 Research Plans