



The electronic newsletter
with marketing ideas for
information professionals.

compliments of...
Chris Olson & Associates

A Note From Chris

Time to put on your marketing glasses! Our [lead article](#) considers the marketing strategies of service companies and points out approaches libraries can incorporate into their own strategies.

Everyday someone encounters your library brand. Managing these "touchpoints" is an essential aspect of brand management. Learn more by reading "[What is A Touchpoint?](#)"

In our [Promotion Gems](#) column we recommend that you forget the slides and focus on the person the next time you are invited to make a presentation about the library.

Look for our next issue November 16th when we will feature tips for holding brainstorming sessions.

Happy Autumn!
Happy Spring!

Chris Olson
Publisher

Taking Cues from Service Companies

Planning and managing the marketing strategies of an library information service can be tough. What makes it so difficult is that an information service is intangible. It can't be held. It can't be inspected before using it. It can't be stored until it's needed. A user of an information service has to trust the promises made by a library about its services. Users have to rely on their experience, what they know, what they've heard, and their perceptions about a library's information service when making a decision to use its services. When you think about it, if you're not a regular library user and you're not familiar with information services, it's quite a leap of faith to put your question into the hands of someone you don't know.

Libraries aren't the only enterprises faced with the challenge of marketing intangible services. Hotels, banks, entertainment establishments, cleaning services, real estate brokers, and travel offices are just a few other businesses that must overcome the intangibility of what they offer. For example, hotels are in the business of providing a night's rest. Sure you can inspect the room like you can inspect a library, but experiencing the night's rest is like asking a question at the reference desk: it's not until you actually put your head on the pillow or ask the question that you begin to know if the service is meeting expectations. And by the time you've made the commitment, it's too late to turn back. Unlike a tangible product that you can inspect ahead of time and return if you don't like it, an intangible service is consumed at the time of its presentation.

If marketing an intangible service is so difficult, why do hotels, car rental agencies, restaurants and other service companies not only stay in business, but thrive? Because they constantly apply tangible features to their services. Every strategy in their marketing management playbook strives to

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Please forward this newsletter to anyone you know who is looking for ideas and resources for marketing their library.

overcome the intangible nature of their services. Hotel brands utilize every feature of a overnight stay to promise a good night's sleep. Bank marketing strategies strive to earn your trust while cruiseslines tangibilize trips with ports of call and lifestyle images.

As the person or team concerned with your library's marketing program, the strategies and activities of other service companies offer a wealth of insights and ideas that you can apply to your own marketing endeavors. I call this "wearing marketing glasses." Instead of looking at every television or magazine ad for a car rental agency, bank, or hotel chain as a nuisance, stop and pay attention to the message and the images they use. Become a marketing critic and analyze not only the specific ad, but the whole series. Become aware of their marketing mix -- the different media, communications and events they use to get their messages across. What's the message? What service features have they selected to tangibilize and how is it being accomplished? You might be surprised at what you learn. You'll see successful campaigns and not so successful ones.

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Take the insurance companies. Now there's an intangible service if ever there was one. In fact, in the case of a life insurance policy service, you're not around to experience it at all! How does a life insurance company tangibilize its service? Many of them start with their name and brand tagline. Prudential gives you "a piece of the rock" while at Allstate Insurance "you're in good hands."

Other marketing lessons abound across service industries. Here's one from Disney. As a stock owner I received an email message from the new company president on his first day on the job. In the short letter he stated his goals and the vision he has for the company, and provided a quick overview of the company's major initiatives which span the globe. It wasn't a major report. It was a reassuring note to stakeholders in the Disney company business -- investors, staff members, suppliers and others. It's a valuable marketing lesson. When was the last time you communicated with stakeholders and gave them a snapshot of your library's information business? Don't wait until there's a crisis.

As service marketing strategies come into focus through your newfound marketing glasses, you'll begin to recognize strategies that don't work. Take heed and avoid the same mistakes. A couple of years ago EDS, a computer software services company spent millions on an ad which aired at the Superbowl football game. It used the analogy of herding cats to illustrate that managing company information resources was as difficult as managing cats. The commercial related how EDS offered services which could successfully manage disparate pieces of company information. It was, in my opinion, a brilliant ad that effectively and memorably represented their service. Everyone who saw that ad remembered it. And yet, EDS didn't run with it. They squandered a great opportunity for making themselves a household name like IBM or Hilton. If they had allowed the strategy to evolve they could have spun the cat herding concept into a brand personality which would continue to tell the company's story. (If you don't remember the cat herding ad or never saw it, you can find it on the web site of the ad agency which created it. <http://www.fallon.com/05/fallon.html>) Go to "Our Work." Click "Television." Go to the last movie entry on the list called "Best of Television.")

I recommend looking at any company in the hotel industry for marketing insights. Notice how they package their intangible services and brand them. Compare the branding strategies of Intercontinental Hotels Group, owners of the Holiday Inn brand, with Marriott, owners of the Courtyard brand. What's the difference? Marriott attaches their corporate brand name to every one of their services while Intercontinental prefers individual brand names to stand on their own. Both strategies have their pros and cons. Which strategy does your library follow when it names services and products? What ideas and insights can you pick up from either hotel chain that you can adapt to your own situation?

Another good service industry to watch is consulting services. In fact, you might find it easier to relate to the marketing strategies of KPMG and Accenture. Many times companies share their marketing messages on their web sites. For example, to review the message theme for Accenture go to <http://digbig.com/4fakd> Okay. So maybe your budget can't afford the likes of Tiger Woods. But as you read their campaign description about performance do you get any ideas of applying the concept of "performance" to your own marketing message theme? And I don't mean statistics. What has your library done lately and what difference has its performance made to library stakeholders?

Or perhaps you'd feel more comfortable with the approach taken by KPMG at

<http://www.kpmg.com/about/ourpeople.asp> Notice how they emphasize the roles their people play in providing services, and what their staff members add to the company and the work that it performs. How about the clean design of the web site and the clearly worded descriptions. Each of these features helps KPMG to tangibilize its services.

I could go on. **The point however, is that you're not alone in marketing an intangible service.** There are other companies overcoming the challenge everyday, many times with strategies which have approaches suitable for your library's marketing efforts. Just **remember to wear those marketing glasses so you don't miss a great idea!**

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Treasure Tips

What Is A Touchpoint?

Touchpoints are all the physical, communication and human interactions an audience -- users, staff members, suppliers/vendors, management/investors, partners, prospective users, and others -- experience during their relationship lifecycle with a library service. Every day people make decisions and create perceptions about information professionals and information services based on their experiences and interactions with libraries and our profession.

If you consider the various ways your library brand interacts with and impacts different stakeholders, it becomes clear that managing brand interactions, or "touchpoints" is critical to the success of your library. Touchpoints can include web sites, newsletters, phone conversations, meetings, press releases, advertisements, networking introductions, sponsorships, awards, publications, mentoring chats, presentations, reference desk interactions, reading rooms, exhibit displays, promotion items -- to name a few. For example, take a few minutes to list every contact your library has with current library users. From the moment they see the directional sign for the library to when they interact with a staff member to the time they visit your website, list all the situations your library brand "touches" a user. I am sure you'll have quite a list when you get done, and it will take you more than a few minutes. Each touchpoint offers you the opportunity to establish and build your library's brand into a positive experience and memory.

Consider this: Your staff and other stakeholders could be experiencing your brand touchpoints as many as 100 times per day. Multiplied by the number of people experiencing the interactions, and it becomes apparent that every day the library brand touches scores of people hundreds of times. And each time is an opportunity for you and your library to make an impact, tell your story, communicate your value, and distinguish your services from competitors.

Touchpoints are brand assets you should include in your information service branding plans. The long-term benefits of assessing and managing touchpoints can't be over emphasized, especially if value perceptions are an issue. Brands have been described as mental footprints. Every time someone interacts with your brand, perceptions and memories are formed. Don't ignore your brand touchpoints. Every point of contact matters.

Promotion Gems

Forget the Slides

How many times have you introduced the library by walking into someone's office and giving a prepared presentation using slides, handouts or a brochure? We've all done it. We talk about the library, it's products and services, how great the library is, and in closing we remind people to call us. And then we walk out the door. During your presentation did you find out their job title and responsibilities? Their interest level for services? Phone number and email? Immediate information needs?

Unfortunately, it's too easy to rely on slides and handouts to carry us through a presentation, and we never take the time to learn about our prospective users. It doesn't matter whether you're an academic librarian, a librarian embedded in a corporate department, a public library director, or a consultant, an invitation to make a presentation about the library is the perfect opportunity to get to know your users and relate the library's services and products to their needs.

Here's an exercise I'd like you to try sometime. When you visit a prospective user, leave the slides and brochures in your briefcase. Instead, take out only a piece of paper, a pen, and your business card. Just the thought of starting a meeting without a brochure or folder in hand can be scary. What

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are you going to present? Absolutely nothing. This exercise will force you to have a real conversation with the person. Before going into the meeting, jot down these words on the piece of paper: Who? What? Where? When? Why? How? As you speak with the person, fill in the blanks. Do not start talking about the library until you get a complete story of their situation. Here's how the conversation might go:

"Hi, my name is Chris. I appreciate the time you're taking to help me understand how my library/information service can be of assistance to you. Before we start talking about the library, I want to take a couple of minutes to get to know a little more about you and your department/office to determine which of our services are best suited to your needs and how we can help you."

This approach creates a "consulting" environment rather than a "library sales pitch" tone to the meeting, and it sets you up for showing how the library is a valuable asset from the user's perspective. The key to a good presentation is to encourage people to talk about themselves -- their job, needs, preferences, constraints, and what they consider to be valuable. Use any combination of questions to answer the "who, what, and where" points. As you listen you're getting to know your prospective user better, enabling you to make a quick assessment of what library products and services you should highlight.

Now you're in a position to make a presentation, one that is tailored to match the user's needs and wants. You can emphasize the features of library services and use examples based on the user's profile. You can point out the advantages of your library over the disadvantages of a competing information service, or talk about Google's role relative to the services you offer and what the person may need under different circumstances. Best of all, you'll be in the position to walk away with an "order for an information service or product." This is a great way to begin a long-term relationship -- they'll be library supporters for life.

Your goal during a presentation to a prospective library user is to find out how the library can make them look good and solve their information problems. So introduce yourself with only a business card, a pad of paper and pen. Take good notes and ask probing questions. Only after you have a profile of your library customer should you pull out the brochure and handouts to help you make a tailored presentation which shows the value of the library from the user's perspective.

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Pearls of Wisdom

Why Libraries Matter: A Story Long Overdue

The Alliance Library System and TumbleBooks, Inc have produced a new animated online book entitled "Why Libraries Matter: A Story Long Overdue." The book, in both online and downloadable format, is available free for use on public library and elementary school websites.

The animated story, told in rhyming verse, features a young girl who shows her family and neighbors how important the library is to them and their community. The Alliance Library System introduced the blue "Libraries Matter" bracelets last year. Definitely an out-of-the-box group of thinkers at Alliance! Pick up the animated book at <http://www.librariesmatter.com/>

Wall Words

Here's an inexpensive way to jazz up your library. Display words, sayings, phrases or quotes on walls, doors, stairways, stair risers, bookshelf ends, cement floors, sidewalks, signs, posters, fabric hangings, doorway entrances, ceilings, windows, and more. The Wall Words website features pre-pasted and pre-spaced transfer letters for painting all types of surfaces. And it won't break your budget. Most quotes are only \$27.95. The website takes orders and makes letters and stencils that have a one time use. The stencils are easy to apply and the lettering is perfectly spaced. They offer a wide selection of quotes, phrases, words and single-image designs, or you can use your own. The website allows you to review your selection in the color and typestyle you select. Looks fool-proof to us. <http://www.wallwords.com/index.htm>

32 Innovation Tips

Steve Abram at Sirsi has written a series of 3 articles with 32 tips for inspiring innovation in your library. I always enjoy reading Steve's perspective and contemplating his ideas. Here are the links to his articles. <http://www.imakenews.com/sirsi/>
part 1. <http://digbig.com/4fakb>



part 2. <http://digbig.com/4faq>
part 3. <http://digbig.com/4fajy>

The Brand Gap: A Review

Every once and a while a book arrives on my desk which I can't put down. I thumb through pages and before I know it, I've got numerous sticky notes bookmarking nuggets. Here's one for you, "Brand management is the management of differences, not as they exist on data sheets, but as they exist in the minds of people." In that one sentence Marty Neumeier captures a basic tenet of branding. And there are more in his book, *The Brand Gap* (revised edition). This is a must-have and must-read for everyone involved in marketing and communicating the products, services -- and above all -- the benefits and value of libraries and information. Characterized as a "white board presentation," the book's black and white pages are a pleasing combination of text, imaginative photos, diagrams, and sketches. In his preface Neumeier says one of his goals is "to give you a book you can finish in a short plane ride." Well, he succeeded. In 45 minutes (or less if you're a speed reader) I got excellent insights into basic branding concepts -- differentiation, collaboration, innovation, validation, and cultivation. The writing style is snappy and personal. A back-of-the-book summary presents key points while a handy glossary of branding terms and a short annotated reading list rounds out the 190 pages. Buy this book and have your highlighter and sticky notes handy.

The Brand Gap by Marty Neumeier, (Revised Edition) 2006

Published by New Riders. ISBN 0-321-34810-9 <http://www.peachpit.com>

Contests to Enter

1.) **Win \$2,000 for your library with the "@Your Library" awards** sponsored by FOLUSA, ALA, and Baker & Taylor. Friends groups of all sizes and types, including school, academic, and public library Friends groups, are encouraged to apply. Award information is available online at <http://www.folusa.org>, including the official entry form, guidelines, and details. Deadline is November 15, 2005. Go for it!

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2.) **Win \$1,000 in the IFLA Management and Marketing Section's International Marketing Award** for 2006. Sponsored by SirsiDynix, the award considers any library in the world which has employed an on-going marketing project during recent years. The winner gets airfare, registration fee, hotel charges and per diem and a cash award of \$1,000 to further marketing activities in the library. Deadline for submissions is: November 30, 2005 (if it says January 2005 on their web site, ignore it.) For details please visit: <http://www.ifla.org/III/grants/marketing-award.htm>

Help This Marketeer

Centennial Celebration Ideas Sought

Kari Martin at Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) Libraries is looking for ideas for a Centennial celebration. Kari writes, "Our University is currently in its Centennial year. As such, all large units on campus have been challenged to plan a special event and have been given a budget of \$3,000 - \$4,000. EKU Libraries are in the process of trying to identify a special event we could host some time in March or April. Our target audiences would include our students and faculty/staff, as well as our community users. I would appreciate any ideas, suggestions, and/or experience you could share with me regarding similar celebrations that have taken place at your library. What did you do? What was well received? What was not well received? What did it cost?"

(In case you're wondering, the 2005-06 academic year is considered the Centennial Celebration year. And the library archives have plenty of information, documents, and pictures regarding the library's history.) Send your responses to MarketeerSOS@chrisolson.com. We'll compile and publish responses in the November issue of *Marketing Treasures*.

Marketing SOS Lifesavers

A public library wanted to know if other libraries sold advertising space in their library newsletters. And guess what? Out of the thousands of people who read this newsletter, not one of you sent an example. Huh? I don't believe it.

We did receive an excellent tip from Stephanie Holloway, Community Relations Manager at the Anderson Public Library in Anderson, Indiana. She notes, "We currently receive a [special] bulk mail

rate for our monthly newsletter. We once received a coupon in our newsletter and were subsequently scolded by the post office. Apparently you cannot receive the special bulk mail rate when you put corporate or for-profit types information in your publications."

Stephanie's experience shouldn't put a damper on your newsletter mailings. Here's the US Post Office page which explains the restrictions using the Special Bulk Rate allowed for nonprofit organizations. <<http://pe.usps.gov/text/dmm200/additional.htm#mailing>>. However, you can register and use a regular bulk mail or periodical rate permit for your newsletter and not have so many restrictions. <<http://pe.usps.gov/text/dmm200/discount.htm>> Our best advice is to talk with your local post master. The guidelines for postal mailings are so complex that it takes experience to know the options and requirements.

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Returning to our question about selling advertising space in library newsletters. I'm surprised that no one is selling business card ads or small classifieds to offset production and mailing costs, or offset web site maintenance expenses. So if you're out there selling advertising space in your library newsletter or web site, let me know at marketeersos@chrisolson.com

Marketeer SOS Update

Remember Amy Skolnik from Exeter Public Library in Rhode Island? She was looking for library cards to celebrate her 1st year anniversary. Well, thanks to many of our readers, Amy was able to display more than 60 different cards along with notes of congratulations. The folks in Exeter saw how their library connects them to a world of information - literally. The display included cards from Sweden, New Zealand, Australia and Canada!

About the display, Amy writes "This is how I created our display: I put each card in a clear report-cover sleeve with either a note from the library who sent the card or a map of that library's state. All the sleeves were mounted on a wall where everyone could see them. To ensure that people would actually look at the display, I created 4 mini-quizzes and drew a winner from all completed entries. Examples of questions were "Which library sent us a letter on yellow paper?", "Which library card has palm trees on it?", "What 4 countries did we receive cards from?" (Answer: Sweden, New Zealand, Australia and Canada).

Amy continues, "I promoted the display and information about Library Card Sign-up month on the library's blog, in our newsletter and in a local press release. In addition to the display, I created a "Library Card Wall of Fame" encouraging students in grades K-6 to sign their name according to grade if they had a library card. Kids were excited to see their names and the names of their friends when they stopped in. It also served as a very informal survey of what age students were spending the most time in the library (grades 2 & 4.)"

In closing Amy says, "I really appreciate the efforts of all the libraries who sent library cards to us and I am willing to pass on the collection if anyone asks." Photos of Amy's display can be found on the library blog at <http://exterpubliclibrary.blogspot.com/>

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Thanks everyone for your great insights and ideas! Need some help with a promotion program? Looking for advice? Want to know what others have done? Send your marketing challenge to "Help this Marketeer" at MarketeerSOS@chrisolson.com.

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Golden Opportunities

October 21. Marketing As If Your Library Depended on It! A full day workshop by Pat Wagner in San Juan, Puerto Rico. <http://rcm-library.rcm.upr.edu/scmla2005/>

October 22. Service Strategy: How to Get the Right "Mix" of Services. Marketing Library & Information Services: A Practical Approach. School Librarians = Information Gurus. Workshops and sessions at Internet Library 2005, Monterey, CA
<http://www.infotoday.com/il2005/preconference.shtml#sunday>

October 25. Writing for the Web. Sponsored by OCLC CAPCON Center. A half day workshop in Washington, DC. <http://www.oclc.org/capcon/training/courses/descriptions/l170.htm>

November 4. Market Your Library: Reach Out to Faculty and Students. A workshop by Peggy Barber and Linda Wallace. Sponsored by the Ontario College and University Library Association. In Toronto. <http://digbig.com/4ercq>

November 14 Branding 101. Learn the basic strategies for creating and managing a library brand. A morning workshop by Chris Olson in Washington, DC. Sponsored by OCLC CAPCON. <http://www.oclc.org/capcon/training/courses/descriptions/M211.htm>

November 14 Promoting Library Services Using Blogs and RSS. A live online course. 4 hours over 2 days taught by Max Anderson. Sponsored by SOLINET. <http://digbig.com/4ercn>

December 4 Planning Library Promotion Campaigns. Step through the process of planning a campaign & apply your new knowledge on a promotion planning team. A morning workshop by Chris Olson in Washington, DC. Sponsored by OCLC CAPCON. <http://www.oclc.org/capcon/training/courses/descriptions/M212.htm>

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Are your marketing efforts stuck on the back burner? Time to call Chris Olson!

Whether you need help on a product make-over, logo design, brainstorming sessions, promotion campaign, web site design, communications plans or branding strategies, Chris and her associates are available to lend a helping hand. Call 410-647-6708 or send a note to Chris@chrisolson.com.

All inquiries and projects are held in complete confidence.

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<http://www.chrisolson.com/marketingtreasures/mtcurrent.html>

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