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MARKETING *Treasures*

TM

Ideas and Insights into Promoting Library & Information Services

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The Role of Learning Styles in Library Communications

Watch a group of people at a trade show display and you'll see them take in the information in different ways. Some will look at pictures, read handouts and perhaps even step back to get a view of the whole exhibit. Some will buttonhole the nearest representative and ask a lot of questions about the product or talk it over with a passerby. Other people will get their fingerprints all over the schematics, handle the product, and pick up every promotional item in sight.

You've just seen three different learning styles in action: visual, auditory and kinesthetic. There are many different theories about how people acquire information, but almost everyone learns in one of these three ways. Moreover, almost every group of people includes all three types. When you need to communicate information, think about how to communicate to each of these different learning styles. If you can't communicate, you can't market, and marketing is what survival is all about in a competitive world.

Identifying Learning Styles

The first step in using this information is finding out what kind of learner you are. That tells you your bias and helps you get out of your own box and into the larger world of communications styles.

"If you can't communicate, you can't market, and marketing is what survival is all about in a competitive world."

People constantly give clues about their style. If their conversation is peppered with expressions such as "I see," "look at it this way," "point of view" or "vision" they're likely to be of the visual persuasion. Frequently, they'll want to look over something completely before they discuss it. Auditory learners say things like, "I hear you," "listen to this," "let's talk it over" and "explain that to me." They come right up and talk to you, rather than reading for information. Kinesthetic learners are more likely to say "you're out of touch," "we need to get a handle on this," "it feels right," or "let me try it." They're also likely to crowd your physical space because they want to be in the middle of the action.

As you probably realize, school is biased towards visual and auditory learners. Reading from a book, looking at the blackboard, listening to lectures, and presenting oral reports all work best for the visual and auditory learners. School really is about "show and tell." People with photographic or phonographic memories have it made. No wonder the kinesthetic learners, who want to touch, assemble, act, or dissect tend to be labeled "hyperactive." Odds are that people who went to library school on a basketball scholarship are kinesthetic learners.

Communicating with people of other learning persuasions can be like communicating with another species. Your auditory/kinesthetic editor knows: she works with a couple of visual/kinesthetic graphic designers. Without our common kinesthetic mode, it would be very difficult to get our ideas across to each other.

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Pearls of Wisdom

Sometimes a cigar isn't just a cigar. A box of Godiva chocolate cigars will make even non-smokers ecstatic, and you can send this gift for just \$35 per dozen. If you have real cigar smokers on your gift list, California Pantry has sampler packs and all kinds of baskets of goodies for the gift season. Call them at 1-800-394-0394.

Speaking of food—if you want to make a big visual splash with a food gift, look no farther than ACE Specialty Foods. Their Pecan showcase features 1 lb of pecan halves displayed in a round box. Almost looks too good to eat. These are premium pecans and we know some folks who are nuts about them. Other catalog items include popcorn, food gift bags and boxes, and chocolate Christmas lights filled with miniature chocolate trees. Something for everyone on the list. Call 1-800-323-9754 for a catalog.

Presentations can be a challenge with flying flip charts and masking tape stuck all over walls—or in the case of one meeting room we encountered, masking tape didn't even stick to the windows! PaperDirect has taken on this challenge with the Wall Write Presentation Kit. Instead of paper, the easel holds 35 sheets you can use and reuse with dry-erase markers. Better yet, detach the sheets from the easel and they'll cling to the wall—no more tape marks or pushpin holes. You can adjust the easel for the proper height, and the whole kit fits into a 12-lb carrying case, for easy transportation. Calling 800-A-PAPERS puts you in touch with this versatile presentation tool.

If you participate in your parent organization's training or orientation program, you probably have a canned presentation and it's probably going stale (or after reading our cover article you realize it needs to be enhanced for all types of learners!). We suggest getting together with your library staff and brainstorming new ideas and approaches to update the old presentation with current news, interaction devices, and handouts. And don't forget to practice, practice, practice. Get staffers to toss the toughest questions at you to help you think fast on your feet. Then go out and promote your library confidently.

How many times a day do you look at your clock to see what time it is? Now consider that from the perspective of your custom-



Artville clip art
Out on the Town collection

ers and you have just identified a dynamite promotion tool. Top-U.S.A. Corporation produces wall clocks customized with your logo on the clock face. For \$1 you can get a customized sample to see what a 10 ³/₄" , battery-operated, wall clock will look like with your logo. And then order larger quantities at very reasonable rates for giveaway promotions. Not only do you keep your library in front of your customers, but everyone who visits their offices will see the clock and your logo too! For details call 614/431-1601 or write to Top-U.S.A. at 771-N Dearborn Park Lane, Worthington, OH 43085 or send email to info@topusa.com.

No one who produces marketing materials ever has enough clip art. Consider adding Artville to your collections. They offer original, affordable and royalty-free graphics, illustrations and photographs featuring different artists, styles and mediums. The quality is excellent and the diversity of images is refreshing. They have a starter kit (\$29.95) which includes a full color book showing the more than 8,000 images they offer, plus a catalogue CD disc so you can preview images on your computer screen. Or you can visit their web site at www.artville.com and search their image database. And yes, the royalty-free license allows you to use the images on web sites. For a free overview catalog, phone Artville at 1-800-204-9935. ■

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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 rate.

Clip art used in this issue: Artville collections as noted. Front cover: Image Club Graphics, Our Environment collection.

Role of Learning Styles...continued from page 1

Lucky for all of us, librarianship offers wonderful opportunities for all types. There's so much visual richness—beautiful books, visual records in art, and new graphical means of communication. Reference and mentoring are great jobs for auditory people who excel in asking, listening, interpreting and explaining. And when it comes to kinesthetic learners—how often have you heard a fellow librarian talk about the joy of handling a book, not just dealing with abstract information? The interactive world of computers is full of exciting action for the kinesthetic learners as well.

You can often tell which kind of learner you are by what you dislike. Kinesthetic learners can't cope with an 8-hour stint at a desk—they go stir crazy without action. Visual learners don't think quickly on their feet—they want to see the question and the answer in writing, not have to wing it in an auditory environment like a busy reference desk. And auditory learners don't want to learn to use software by reading the manual—they want someone there to talk them through it.

Library Services

Look at how you provide library services. Are you biased in favor of one learning style? If you and your staff have a strong visual focus, the library probably looks great and your communications are mainly in written and pictorial form. Augment these with more oral and hands-on communications as well. Make sure the auditory learners can call, talk and listen to you. Help out the kinesthetic learners with interactive electronic communications and products they can pick up, handle and examine.

If you're auditory in orientation, you may run a great call-in reference desk and be a popular speaker for various groups. Back up your verbal reports and responses with a written format for those who are more comfortable reading the answers, and provide something a kinesthetic learner can take away.

Kinesthetic librarians? In the pre-electronic days, they probably went to work designing moveable shelving and building security systems and pioneering in the land of databases—or restoring beautiful antique books and art. If you're a kinesthetic person, you may need to slow down, write it down and slowly repeat the information for those of other persuasions. Remember that some

“Kinesthetic learners can't cope with an 8-hour stint at a desk...Visual learners... want to see the question and the answer in writing...auditory learners don't want to learn to use software by reading the manual...”

people just can't “get a feel for it”—they need to see or hear logically structured information to take it in.

People who contact the library with reference needs also give clues about their preferred learning style. Some write their questions and want a written response. Email, written reports and good visual presentations will communicate with them quickly. Others want to talk it through. They're concerned that you really hear their questions and prefer to have you call with an answer. An auditory learner might be most comfortable hearing a quick verbal summary of your findings, even if the output is a written report or analysis. And here comes that kinesthetic learner, moving in on the keyboard, wanting to type in the questions and interact with the database for the answers. Kinesthetic learners are great end-users.

Exhibiting

Trade shows, open houses, and information fairs are wonderful venues for reaching out to your customers. Use what you know to reach the three types of communicators.

Making the exhibit or library visually appealing is a big step in attracting the attention of visual learners. They just won't get interested in something that doesn't have some pizzazz. Bright colors, a neat layout and pictures go a long way to get visual learners to notice you. Video presentations often work well for them, too. There are people who are so strongly visually oriented that they only trust what they can see, so be sure and wear a nametag. Provide handouts with your full contact information, and make it possible for your visitors to communicate in writing—that's often what they prefer.

Auditory learners love to hear all about it, so have your verbal presentations prepared and be ready to think and answer questions quickly. If you have a staffer who's a star at the reference desk, fielding phone calls and walk-ins with equal ease, that's the one you want to have at your booth or open house answering questions. If you have a video running, provide commentary for the auditory learners to help underline your message. Greet those auditory types with, “Hello, I'm Pat Jones.” They may not take the time to read a name tag. When you give them contact information, emphasize

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your phone number and say, "I'll be waiting to hear from you,"

Kinesthetic learners just love fairs, open houses and exhibits. There's movement, involvement, interaction. Frequently their supervisors love the excuse to get those restless souls out of the office, so expect to see a lot of them. Bring along a computer and let those kinesthetic folks experience your product in action. If you notice twitchy fingers when you start to demonstrate at the keyboard, let them try it themselves. If they can't get in touch with it, they might not comprehend it, so be sure there are plenty of promotional items and handouts available for them to peruse, handle, heft and take away.

Communicating With the Outside World

Intranets and the Internet are a wonderful forum for all kinds of learners. While kinesthetic types are still waiting for virtual reality to be perfected and auditory learners are frustrated with silent web sites, the possibilities are beginning to blossom.

Visually your graphical interfaces can make all the difference. By all means, get graphic artists involved in the process of designing a web site. If it isn't visually compelling you're going to lose a large part of your audience right away. Colors, shapes, balance, and asymmetry, all play into the visual design mix. Make sure it's more interesting than just a lot of words on a page. Animation can be especially eye-catching and will draw in the visual learners.

Computer makers already understand that some of us are more likely to pay attention to an auditory signal than another icon popping up on the desktop. Use the growing sound capabilities of computers to make verbal announcements, play attention signals, or present audiovisual "live" audiovisual communications. Important bulletins might rate a spoken announcement with a pointer to a source for more information. Always include a library phone number on the web page, so the auditory learners can reach you personally with their questions.

Kinesthetic people want to do something with (and occasionally to) the computer. Hot links, interactive information exchange, even games catch their attention. To attract the kinesthetic

person, make sure they have some control over the information they receive and the order they receive it. Hypertext is often their native environment, so use that device to intrigue them and direct their attention where you want it to go, all the while letting users feel that they control the process. Kinesthetic people like to make choices so allow them to approach information from several different angles.

In the Classroom

Many librarians are now spending time training end-users to access electronic information or teaching employees to use a corporate intranet. The concept of learning modalities comes out of education theory, so be sure to use it when you're trying to get information across in a training situation.

The lecture format is wonderful for auditory learners. If you will tell, they will understand. Many good teachers are good auditory learners themselves. They are talented at asking leading questions, listening carefully to answers, and explaining things clearly. If you have those talents, use them, but expand on them to include the other types of learners in the classroom.

Visual learners respond well to written and illustrated information. When learning to use computers, they frequently do well learning from the manual. Printouts of what they'll see on the computer screen are a good resource for this group. The key to visual learners is to draw their attention with bright colors, clear illustrations, charts, graphs and schematics. Visual learners form a picture in their minds, so be sure to supply accurate and informative visual information for them to carry away.

Kinesthetic learners are the toughest ones to deal with in a group unless each member is sitting at his or her own computer terminal and can have the hands-on experience of actually doing the search or accessing the intranet while explanations are being given. If you're in a lecture setting, use breaks, small-group discussions, and activities to keep them interested. Make sure they have paper and something to write with—if only to doodle. That's one way they stay interested in presentations—by doing something while someone else talks. It can be distracting for the lecturer, but may help keep that kinesthetic learner tuned in.

"The concept of learning modalities comes out of education theory, so be sure to use it when you're trying to get information across in a training situation."

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Inside Treasure

Marketing Virtual Products

Would you buy a product you've never seen, from a company you can't visit? Online, we do it all the time. As librarians, we deal in the ultimate virtual products: knowledge, information, data. In **The Virtual Corporation**, William H. Davidow and Michael S. Malone examine this trend and offer some fascinating insights into how marketing will be done to promote the new kinds of products and services provided by these innovative corporations.

What is a Virtual Corporation?

Some virtual corporations produce solid, physical products but have a worldwide virtual presence. In these corporations, manufacturing plants and retail outlets are scattered around the globe leaving the concept of "headquarters" without much meaning. Satellite and computer-mediated communications allow real-time updates to coordinate activities between business sites separated by thousands of miles. Air express services and dedicated company transportation have formed the physical link between these sites. To the customer, it doesn't matter where the corporation "really" is, only that the company can be quickly contacted using toll-free numbers, email or web sites, and has a nearby outlet.

Other virtual corporations deal in virtual products—software, marketing campaigns, LANS, research, custom security systems. When you order such a product you are doing so on trust. You may never have seen the product. It may not even exist in the form you want it, but you trust the company to take your specifications and design the solution you need. This trust is the basis of marketing virtual products—the art of value marketing.

The Value Marketing Focus

Value marketing begins by guaranteeing customer satisfaction. Can you say that about your library marketing efforts? Guaranteed satisfaction only happens when the company knows its customers extremely well and when the customers truly understand what the company can do for them, and what they can ask of the company. In value marketing, the company identifies those customers it can properly serve, prunes away the ones who cannot be satisfied with the company's work, and then focuses its energy completely on the first set of customers.

"Value marketing begins by guaranteeing customer satisfaction. Can you say that about your library marketing efforts?"

"it's five times more expensive to get new customers than keep the present ones."

A virtual corporation may sell few identical items. Think of all the options you have to choose from when you order a new car or a new computer. No two research requests are exactly the same. You may deliver them in standard packages such as statistical reports, market analysis, annual reviews, and so on, but the content of the packages varies by customer. If you're serving multiple corporate sites or a variety of departments, you can customize your products to meet their specific needs.

So how does a virtual corporation sell these products? First, it segments the market into tiny elements. A market segment could be one customer. Intel, for example, has a product division which deals exclusively with IBM. That division doesn't have to think about the rest of the market, but can focus its energy and ingenuity on the one big customer.

Secondly, the virtual corporation markets by trust relationship rather than by product features. Virtual products evolve so rapidly that companies keep customers through faith in their capabilities rather than product features. "The goal of virtual corporations is to maximize the binding energy between themselves and their customers. This is done by maximizing customer satisfaction and by enlisting the customer into a co-destiny relationship," according to Davidow and Malone.

Probably the best example of the strengths and weaknesses of the trust marketing relationship is in software. Whatever kind of software you're interested in, you can quickly learn which software companies do a consistently good job and which ones to avoid. The software developers know this and scramble to get the bugs out of each new software product as quickly as possible—to keep your trust and to keep you buying upgrades.

Value Marketing for Libraries

Library products and services are extremely ephemeral. What you are going to deliver tomorrow may be more than what was requested yesterday, because fresh news has just come in. Clients' needs and your services grow and change in response to available information. Information media are expanding at exponential rates. Information access changes by the moment and your clients form their expectations about what you can do through

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their faith in your abilities and their reliance on your expertise.

In this complex, changeable setting, you want to guarantee satisfaction every time, because it's five times more expensive to get new customers than keep the present ones. What are you doing to ensure that your clients have that faith in your abilities and in your products?

Linking your competencies to big names in information resources bolsters your image. A memorable logo—simple, strong and evocative—reminds your clients of your abilities every time they see it. A consistently accessible presence by phone, email, fax and web site builds trust. Customers know you'll be there for them no matter how they communicate with you.

Interacting with your customers, using the reliable methods of good reference interviews, open communications and acting quickly on client feedback all lead to satisfaction, too.

Educating clients is a big part of value marketing. If you raise expectations you can't meet, your customers can't possibly be satisfied with what they get. Survey customers so that you understand their needs. Teach them precisely what you can and cannot do, then deliver the promised product. This is how trust is built.

The old line in marketing was "Sell the sizzle, not the steak." Davidow and Malone want us to move to selling the trust, not the product. For librarians and cybrarians dealing with virtual products, this approach is worth serious consideration. ■

The Virtual Corporation by
William Davidow & Michael
Malone. Harper Business.
1993. ISBN 0887306578.



Artville clip art
Animated Animals collection

Role of Learning Styles...continued from page 4

In all the teaching and training situations, the key is to know your own strengths, draw on strengths of others to help plan and lead training, and offer visual, auditory and kinesthetic learning opportunities. In an ideal world, you could test people for their learning preferences, then assign them to the right class. Most training budgets don't allow for that, so make sure you are communicating with all the folks in that one classroom by addressing their best learning mode.

A couple of savvy librarians are already putting this information to work. Take a look at the Central Massachusetts Regional Library System training site at <world.std.com/~cmrls/stafftrain/styles.html>. They've applied different learning styles to staff training, bibliographic instruction and use of the internet.

Remember the Three Learning Styles Every Time You Develop Marketing Materials

Whenever you launch a new product or service, make sure you communicate with your entire customer base:

- Show them what your library offers. Whether on visually interesting web pages, eye-catching brochures, colorful in-library displays, or high-visibility posters.
- Give the facts and figures in graphic form. Use interesting fonts and layouts to capture their interest.
- Tell them about your services. Use announcements on the web site, go out and talk to groups about your message, telephone your target list of interested auditory learners, tell the people who come in the library.
- Do something exciting. Conduct interactive web questionnaires, hands-on demonstrations, promotional items, or games. Take a computer demonstration with you when you go to give a talk. Put a demo up on your web site. Invite kinesthetic learners to "give it a test drive."

Whether you're training your staff, dealing with library customers, preparing marketing communications, or teaching, make sure you address each of these three different learning styles. Doing so will help you reach more of your target audience with greater success! ■

Worth Its Weight in Gold

Seasonal Showtime

The holidays are rapidly approaching and more companies are introducing products which help you integrate the holiday themes into your promotions. As the days get shorter and colder, use holiday and seasonal themes to brighten up your messages and spread a little warmth where it's most needed.

Desktop publishing is a great way to implement holiday themes in your written materials. PaperDirect (800-A-PAPERS) and Paper Showcase (1-800-287-8163) have cards, frames, stationery, covers and brochures in seasonal styles.

Thanksgiving is the perfect time to say "thanks" to your best customers, your most responsive vendors or your stellar staffers. In the library, you can decorate a board with a cornucopia and display the staffer who's "the apple of your eye," "a peach of a person," or a "pear of great folks."

Launch a new product or service, and deliver the announcement in a box wrapped with colorful holiday paper and ribbon. Don't feel you have to do that right at Christmas, either. A surprise package in mid-January, decorated with bright colors and a sprig of greenery will be a welcome pick-me-up by everyone on a cold, dreary winter day.

For a wonderful list of holiday resources ranging from clip art to recipes to gift ideas, visit the web site of the Central Florida Library Cooperative at <www.cflc.net/holiday.htm>.

And if you are looking for free holiday clip art that you can use on your web site, check out <www.itsnet.com~highland/clipart.html>. ■

Marketing Forum Scheduled for December 15th in Orlando, Florida.

The Central Florida Library Cooperative has arranged for a panel of library marketing practitioners to share insights into different marketing techniques. Chris Olson will be the keynote speaker. She will be discussing the elements of branding—how your marketplace perceives your library's products, and tactics for managing a library brand to realize its fullest potential. For details about the forum, visit the Cooperative web site at <www.cflc.net> or call Margie Hawkins at 407/644-9050. ■

"A surprise package in mid-January, decorated with bright colors and a sprig of greenery will be a welcome pick-me-up..."

Promotion Gems

How Does Your Library Stack Up?

Your publisher's eagle-eyed father-in-law, Art Olson, sent us a newspaper clipping citing his hometown library, the Prendergast Library in Jamestown, NY, ranked number 2 in reading quotient among 351 U.S. and Canadian city libraries in North America. By taking the number of volumes in the library, adding it to the circulation and then dividing by the population of Jamestown, a 18.6 "reading quotient" was derived. The first place library in Fort Wayne IN had a reading quotient of 19.0. When you realize that the average quotient for the 351 metropolitan libraries was only 6.7, it makes the Prendergast Library reading quotient something to brag about. Serving a community of 30,000 to 40,000, the library has almost a 1,000 people coming to the library everyday. You can check out the other rankings in the **Places Rated Almanac** published by Macmillan Company and determine how your library measures up.

In the July/August issue of **Marketing Treasures** we suggested visiting the web site of the Special Libraries Association to download a transcript of Bill Gates's speech delivered at its annual conference in Seattle. Unfortunately, the speech never made it to the web site. We had a number of readers request copies of the transcript. For your information, a copy of the transcript now resides on our web site <www.chrisolson.com/marketingtreasures/gates.html> It's not too late to use quotes from the speech to enhance your messages. With the end of the year approaching, a quote in your library's annual report would be appropriate!

November 3 - 9 is National Libraries Week in the UK. Sponsored by The Library Association, this week long event features major celebrations involving of all kinds of libraries. This year's theme, "Libraries: The Future. Literally." aims at reinforcing library contributions to the UK society—today and in future. The Association has a web site which provides ideas for promoting libraries during the week. There's no reason why some of the ideas wouldn't work here in the states. Visit <www.lahq.org.uk.nwlnews.htm> and check out the Regional Activity pages.

Sparkling Reviews

Marketing Matters: An SLA Information Kit .
Special Libraries Association. 1997 ISBN 0-
87111-461-5. \$22.00

As a **Marketing Treasures** reader you already know that marketing is critical and you're looking for practical marketing methods you can apply right now. Unfortunately, the Special Library Association has trouble delivering what we think you need. Their kit, **Marketing Matters**, is a melange of reprints, poorly photocopied and comb-bound. Almost every article has footnotes or a bibliography, betraying an academic background which is at odds with the implied practical nature of a kit.

Having said that, there are a couple of good points to the kit starting with the reprint of Herbert White's article "The Politics of Reinventing Special Libraries." In this article Dr. White elaborates on the threats facing libraries in his direct and concise style. His article will reinforce your gut feeling that marketing is important to your library's success.

Two article reprints entitled "Multi-level Marketing at the Penn State University Libraries" and "Marketing Your Valuable Experience" offer practical ideas, but if you subscribe to the **MLS** newsletter, you already have copies.

Beyond those articles, "Promoting the In-house Library" by Grace McCarthy gives a good introduction to the basics of marketing theory: the marketing mix, a definition of marketing, and good pointers about various forms (such as logos and brochures) which effectively communicate specific content (the library identity, and what it can do for customers.)

"Drumming up Business" by Karl M. Pearson and Diana J. Jarvis recounts the experience of Lockheed Technical Operations Company's library in expanding its niche and reputation. Starting with the realization that "most people didn't know LTCO had a library," the article takes you through the experience of marketing a library from the ground up.

In sum, this kit is nothing to rave about. The word "kit" lead us to believe it would be a package of practical ideas and resources. We were sorely disappointed. We suggest, as a **Marketing Treasures** subscriber, that you go back through your collection of past issues with fresh eyes. You'll reap plenty of marketing ideas and save yourself \$22. ■

"Do your customers ask for your products by name? Make sure you're speaking their language when you talk about your products and services."

Treasure Tips

Selling Catfood or Marketing Libraries

No matter what Fluffy or Tom or Cherie tell you, cat food is pretty much the same and a healthy, hungry cat will eat anything available.

But that's not the message you get from pet food companies and their ad agencies—for a good reason. They segment the market and target specific groups for various pet foods. You can do the same with your library services.

You're not going to serve up your research reports in a cut-glass sherbet dish, but you can pamper your customers by appealing to their special preferences. Accommodating particular delivery formats, communications preferences and special needs can win you faithful repeat business. Even if you're distributing the same information in the same format to many different people, you can top it with a hand-written note.

Some cat foods are designed for kittens, some for "mature" cats (there are no old cats). What are you doing to meet the needs of newer employees and win renewed respect from established customers? Novice employees may well appreciate company orientation packets, information about resources which will help them do their jobs or a visit from a library staffer. Established customers will be relying on a few tried-and-true products and services. A special newsletter or email message targeted to their areas of interest, with the latest web sites or hottest new reference sources, can bring you new business from established customers.

Do cats really ask for food by name? Sure, if it's named Meow, Prrrt, Yowl or Prrrrrr. Do your customers ask for your products by name? Make certain you're speaking their language when you talk about your products and services. Customers may not recognize a "current awareness service," but they respond to the idea of "news you need." Thousands of people now refer to "Grateful Med" without even thinking of Jerry Garcia, and Loansome Doc is friendlier than "document deliver service."

Information nurtures the organization. Use the marketing techniques of food companies to get your information across to customers. ■