

MARKETING

Treasures

The newsletter that helps librarians market the services of their libraries and information centers.

ISSN 0895-1799

Vol. 6 No. 3 Jan/Feb 1993

Games People Play at the Library

During most of the year, the Health Sciences Library at Latrobe Area Hospital in Latrobe, PA serves mainly physicians, nurses, and allied health professionals. Like most hospital libraries, the center maintains the sober, dignified air appropriate to a serious medical information center. But once each year, during National Library Week, the library explodes with games, contests, and a spirit of frivolous fun that invites the entire community into the library.

Latrobe librarian Marilyn Daniels orchestrates this fun, and after six years of inventing and refining, she has established a pattern for the events. But even as many of the activities have stood out as favorites that the hospital staff clamors for year after year, she still enjoys tinkering with them—both as an outlet for her creativity and to maximize the enjoyment and participation of the hospital community.

Each year, Marilyn adapts the ALA theme to suit the games and contests that bring National Library Week to the hospital. Over the years, she has developed a fairly intricate point system. (Although Marilyn and her staff enjoy tabulating the points and awarding prizes, she stresses that adopting her ideas does not demand adopting their complexity.) Yet she likes the buildup and repeat visits that her scoring system promotes. And her clients enjoy the prizes that go to the big winners.

Marilyn and her staff put in a fair amount of time and postage throughout the year collecting these prizes, which they solicit mainly from local businesses. "Prizes are as varied as the staff can manage to accumulate," she says, adding that she prefers not to rely on the same sources year after year. Although she gets most prizes through a mail campaign directed at local business, she points out that some donations are not planned. She cites a phone conversation with a local company in which she asked a question arising from routine library work. Somehow the subject of her National Library Week festivities came up, and unexpectedly a new prize source was found. Marilyn looks at these impromptu solicitations with what she describes as a "nothing ventured, nothing gained" attitude. So even if you're short on time and tight on budget, an open mind and the willingness to ask will

bring rewards to your library game players. And an open mind and the willingness to be flexible will help you adapt some of these winning ideas to your own library promotion activities.

A Monopoly on Fun

Although Marilyn organizes her National Library Week celebration with new events every day, the games focus on "The Daily Round Contest." This is always a take-off on a popular game show or board game. Early versions included a Wheel of Fortune and a Win, Lose, or Draw game. But for the past two years a Monopoly-Jeopardy hybrid has proved exceedingly popular. Using familiar games encourages participation and saves staff time explaining and repeating the rules.

The Health Sciences Library at Latrobe is lined with windows that face onto a corridor. Every day of National Library Week, the library staff places five Jeopardy-style questions and a bonus question in the window. Each day the questions fall under a category suggested by the ALA theme. For the "Your Right To Know" theme, categories might include "Writers To Know" or "Songs Titles With The Word 'Right'" or "The Bill of Rights."

Each day, players bring their responses to the questions into the library Monopoly Room. Here, several tables are pushed together and a monopoly board printed onto sheets of 8 1/2 x 11 cardstock (2 squares per sheet) is tacked, piece by piece, around the tables' perimeter. For each correct Jeopardy answer, players roll the dice. When they land on property, they get the deed, plus points to equal the property cost. Acquiring a monopoly merits bonus points.

To add immediate gratification, landing on certain spots, such as the utilities, brings automatic rewards. For the Electric Company, Marilyn might hand out batteries or light bulbs. For Water Works, she might offer an onion or a pack of Kleenex. For Community Chest and Chance cards, players might win a gift certificate for a Wendy's single or passes to the local movie theater. Cards such as "Bank error in your favor, collect \$45" are translated to "Bank error in your favor, collect 45 points."

Continued on page 3

Pearls of Wisdom

An unusual prize for National Library Week contests: A Deed of Land to the United States of America. For only ten dollars, you can award contest winners with a piece of America. The deed, in a flurry of legalese, "conveys unto Owner and Owner's heirs and assigns forever approximately one square inch of each state in The United States of America." Although this is a gimmick, it is not a sham. American Acres, Inc. has bought an acre of land in each of the 50 states and divided them into these minute parcels. Write: American Acres Marketing Corporation, 205 Third Avenue/New York, NY 10003 or call: 212/598-0062.

Do you have a special occasion to commemorate? How about a calendar, invitation, or announcement that can also be used as a coaster! Coasters are available in brass, gold aluminum, or silver aluminum metals, with an all-felt backing (so they won't scratch furniture). They can be 3 1/2" square or round, and are sent out with colored holders and white mailing envelopes. Write The Hirschhorn Co., Inc., P.O. Box 8848, New Haven, CT 06532, or call 800/573-7584 or 203/562-5830. Also available: brass membership cards, name badges, business cards, bookmarks, and rulers.

Sillocks Plastics International, Inc. makes similar products out of plastic rather than brass and aluminum. They produce ID, promotion, and membership cards, rotary index cards, message holders, etc. The items come in bright colors and are laminated. Contact Sillocks Plastics International, Inc. 310 Snyder Avenue, P.O. Box 605, Berkeley Heights, NY 07922; telephone 800/526-4919 or 908/665-0300.

All information centers and libraries depend on somebody: corporate management, public officials—the people who make the decisions about who will get what grants and

funding. Howard J. Rubenstein, a guest speaker at a Library Public Relations Council meeting, had these suggestions for creating the positive perceptions you need in order to get the attention, and the money, you deserve:

- 1) First and foremost, become friendly with management, media, local politicians, and community leaders. This ensures that they'll be there for you when you need them.
- 2) Contact upper management, public officials, or whoever you must directly, and do so *before* budget problems arise. Encourage a visit to your facility. Show off your expertise, activities, and resources. Offer them pertinent information. Don't go on the offense unless absolutely necessary. Finally, never forget to remind them that the services you provide are important to their employees and constituents.
- 3) Motivate civic and business affiliates to help you by attending their events. Give them awards of appreciation at special events.
- 4) Give the media a good story (especially something with human interest appeal) and get editorials written about you. These approaches are more effective than issuing standard press releases. Contact the people who write news stories and ask them for their support.

If you provide clients with both disk and paper copies of your work, Paper Direct has the perfect file folders for you. The sturdy vinyl folder that stores your paperwork has an attached pocket to hold your disk. The combination looks neat, stylish, and professional. Floppy Folders come in vertical and horizontal styles and are available for 3 1/2" and 5 1/4" disks. Call PaperDirect at 1-800-272-7377.

Did you know that Americans discard 250 million tires and use 5 billion pens annually? Pimbyco, a company that makes office products from recycled materials, would like you to consider those numbers next time you order office supplies. The company makes a variety of desk accessories from old tires, including some slick-looking bulletin boards, push pins, scissors, and rulers. They also make their own fair share of those 5 billion pens, which they call "Wheely's," in honor of their previous incarnation. Pimbyco (it stands for "Products in My Back Yard Company") also does its part to relieve the world of its extra soda bottles and coffee cups by turning them into attractive products for your library. Write P.O. Box 240, Purdys, NY 10578, or call 914/277-8872, or fax 914/277-3277.

Olson's Book of Library Clip Art, Volume 1, is now on disk! We put all 204 images on 3.5" PC and Mac disks. Call the office of Chris Olson & Associates for details.

Published bimonthly by Chris Olson & Associates, 857 Twin Harbor Drive, Arnold, MD 21012, 410/647-6708, Fax 410/647-0415. Chris Olson, Managing Editor; Susan Borden, Principal Writer; Kate Daddens, Contributing Writer; and Suzanne Peake, Editor. Copyright 1993 by Christine A. Olson. All rights reserved. No part of the text of this publication may be reproduced in any form, by microfilm, photocopy, or otherwise, or incorporated into any information retrieval system, without the written permission of the copyright owner. Use and reproduction of Cut & Paste Art is limited to subscribers only. Reproducing any portion of Marketing Treasures Cut & Paste Art for the purpose of resale in clip art services or other publications, without written permission of the publisher, is strictly prohibited.

Annual subscription price (6 issues) \$54.00 U.S., \$59.00 Canada, \$66.00 Overseas. Subscription must be prepaid in U.S. dollars, payable to Chris Olson & Associates.

Back issues and samples are available at \$9.00 for U.S. and Canada. Overseas orders add \$1.50. Additional binders are available at \$4.50 each.

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.

Games *continued from page 1*

Play continues daily, and at the end of the week, the players with the most points win prizes. The first year, Marilyn used a silent auction system to award prizes, but has since chosen the simpler alternative of having the top point holder choose a prize first, then the second, and so on until all the prizes have been awarded.

Last year's favorite prize? A "mystery basket" put together by a donor who works at a bookstore. It was a black basket was stuffed with mystery novels, crackers, English teas, and plastic champagne glasses, covered by a black & white tea towel.

Anybody's Guess

Another mainstay of the week is a quick guessing contest that runs on Monday and Tuesday, always variations of the standard "How many jellybeans in the jar?" contest. The library runs this game alongside the more complicated Monopoly game so that anybody in a hurry who wants the chance to play and win can dash into the library and enter a guess.

Each year, Marilyn uses the ALA theme as a jumping-off point for designing the game. When the theme was "Your Right To Know. Librarians Make It Happen.", she turned the word "right" into "write" and the contestants counted the more than 500 pens crammed into a giant jar. The contest was dubbed the "Writer's Cramp Count." Using the 1991 theme "Read. Succeed.", the library wanted to emphasize that reading isn't just novels and newspapers. Much of the reading we take for granted leads to success, such as the reading of a recipe. To illustrate that premise, they filled a jar with chocolate chips—about 1,500 of them—for that year's guessing game, the "Chocolate Chip Challenge."

With the theme "Reach for a Star: Ask your librarian", Marilyn took interlibrary loan requests from other libraries and christened them "fan letters." These were placed in a jar, their number to be guessed. "We really stretch," she explains, almost apologetically, at the jump from star, to fan, to interlibrary loan request slips. But *Marketing Treasures* readers will surely note that this stretch performs double duty for the library. Not only does it tie into the theme, it also, subtly but publicly, reminds patrons that the library's resources are in demand.

Playing With Matches

The guessing game ends on Tuesday, and Patron Match-Up starts on Wednesday. Players receive an answer sheet with a list of "library clients" (doctors, nurses, and other well-knowns in the hospital). Throughout the library, posted on the ends of the bookshelves, are clues, each one numbered, to be matched-up with the library client on the answer sheet.

One year library clients were matched with their pets. The first day, only photos of the pets were shown. On the second day, in an effort to add both clues and fun, and to encourage players to return to the library, each client chose a word to describe both client and pet. Another year the clue answered the question: "If you had not become a physician, what would you have become?" The second day, baby pictures of each person appeared under the alternative occupation.

For the "Reach For A Star" theme, Marilyn took posterboard finished to look like cement and placed stars on it in imitation of the Hollywood Walk of Fame. She chose physicians with the most illegible handwriting and had them write "National Library Week 1990" and their signature on a star. Another successful M.D. Match-up relied on humor to counteract its rather macabre subject matter. The physicians were asked to write their own epitaph. Marilyn's favorite:

Now that I'm gone,
You know what I'm wishin'
Though I no longer can spawn
I hope I'll be fishin'.

When she started running this event, Marilyn worried that doctors would not be interested in participating. She soon found she had nothing to worry about. "Though physicians see themselves as too busy for such frivolity, when a contest is geared to them, they can't resist it," she explains. "And if they know that a colleague is involved, they definitely want to be included."

Cafeteria Contest

The fourth component of NLW celebrations is a contest outside of the library, to include hospital employees who never venture through its doors. Where can you reach the most people? The cafeteria, of course. The contest in the cafeteria runs unchanged all week.

For the "Stars" theme, Marilyn posted scrambled movie stars' names, with one letter in each name circled. These circled letters provided a further scramble, which spelled out the words "information smart," part of the secondary theme of that year—"In a world that is information rich, librarians are information smart."

For the "Read. Succeed." theme, the game was "The Health Sciences Library Words to the Wise." Players made as many words as they could out of "Health Sciences Library." Last year participants were presented with a series of multiple-choice questions about the library—some humorous, some incorporating general facts about the library. A few

continued on page 4

Games *continued from page 3*

words in each question were highlighted. These formed the list of words players need to find in a word search puzzle.

Prose, Pop and Posters

In addition to these standard games, Marilyn often introduces one-of-a-kind activities. One year, after reading an article in *USA Today* about the "Great American Novel", a progressive story that was circulated around the U.S., so people all over the country could add a sentence at a time, she decided to create the "Little Latrobe Legend." She bought a blank book, placed it on a table with signs promoting and explaining it, and encouraged the library users to write their own collective story.

Giveaways are also popular. Finding herself with a surplus of soda donated by a local supplier for another activity, she photocopied labels saying "Pop Into Your Library" and stuck them onto the cans, encouraging everyone to stop in and pick one up. Connecting the soft drink to the theme "Your Right to Know," Marilyn announced, "Sometimes we know a subject; sometimes we need a *refresher*."

The library also holds a poster raffle, giving away posters from ALA and other sources. To stimulate interest in the raffle, she describes the posters in the schedule of events she circulates at the beginning of Library Week each year. Marilyn notes that she writes this schedule when she's in a "punchy" mood. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the poster descriptions. Writing about a Star Trek poster, which was offered during the "Reach For A Star" theme year, Marilyn counsels the hospital community to "reach for the stars as you trek on down to the library." When raffling off a Cat In The Hat poster, she describes the rules of the game this way: "Thing One—The drawing is scheduled for Thursday. Thing Two—All that you need to do is enter!"

One year, to complement the raffle, the library displayed a poster that read "If you love to read, sign here." The poster featured the cartoon likenesses and signatures of such readers as Thomas Edison, Paul Revere, and Peter Rabbit. Library clients were encouraged to sign their names and add the name of their favorite book to the poster.

And The Winner Is . . .

The benefits she reaps? Marilyn doesn't run this extravaganza with the single goal of promoting her own library. She sees this as promotion for *all* libraries, and feels that perhaps the greatest beneficiary of her efforts is the public library. She hopes that the energy she expends to bring library awareness to people, from the hospital's business office staff

to its custodial workers, will make their hometown library more appreciated.

In addition, Marilyn aims to encourage better relations within the hospital. "You tend to know people by their jobs," she says. "This gives you another way to see them—in a different light." She describes members of different departments interacting, talking, even cheating on the answers together. By including everyone in her games—not just library clients—the Health Services Library becomes the focus of good will throughout the entire hospital community.

It Doesn't Take an Arm and A Leg

Although Marilyn's week is a no-holds-barred affair, she stresses that it wouldn't be hard to use any element in a smaller celebration, or to streamline any or all of these activities to accommodate time concerns or an overtaxed staff. "You don't need to spend much money," she says. "Even if you stage just one activity, it's still worthwhile. You've brought libraries to people's attention."

Marilyn offers the following tips to make National Library Week celebrations simple and inexpensive.

- 1) Word Processing—Makes everything easier. Changes can be made up until the last minute, and last year's activities can be modified to fit this year's theme.
- 2) Ample Signage—Takes a little time beforehand, but saves hours of staff time during the week. Good signs explain, direct, and clarify.
- 3) Use Resources on Hand—The chocolate chips, pens and interlibrary loan requests were all free and available when needed.
- 4) Familiar Games—Require less explanation, move things along much quicker.

Libraries Change Lives

This year's National Library Week theme, "Libraries Change Lives" has Marilyn planning a paperback book exchange, to promote reading, encourage book recycling, and give her an excuse to pun on the words "Change" and "Exchange." We, at *Marketing Treasures*, envision a week's worth of library staff end-of-the-day spare change clattering into a jar for the guessing contest. As for a 1993 Jeopardy category, how about "Celebrity Name Changes?"

And what about you? How will you celebrate National Library Week? If it's normally a lackluster affair, we hope that, after reading Marilyn's story, you'll be inspired to make a change for the better.

Worth Its Weight in Gold

By February, the dramatic resolutions you made for New Year's have probably fallen by the wayside. Now's the time to focus on realistic marketing and promotion resolutions to help make 1993 a good year for your library.

- 1) **Resolve to develop a marketing program.** Every business needs marketing power to thrive today. Put on paper a program that will give you the edge. Nothing happens without a road map.
- 2) **Resolve to be more visible in your market.** Don't assume everyone knows you. Work on ways to be seen in your marketplace. Use public relations to attract attention.
- 3) **Resolve to polish your image.** Is your library projecting the right message with its logo and printed materials? Give your library a new look and see how many more customers notice you.
- 4) **Resolve to make sure your clients see you as their first choice.** Don't assume that clients are satisfied just because they use your services. Look for opportunities to communicate why it's prudent to use your library.
- 5) **Resolve to create a new niche market.** Find a niche that you can serve and where you can be the expert. Then work to develop new business. Become the leader in this niche.
- 6) **Resolve to organize and track your leads.** Make certain all leads are database, rated, adequately cultivated, and followed up. This should increase business by 15%.
- 7) **Resolve to think longer term.** You need to worry about who will be your clients two, three and five years from now. Begin communicating with these prospects. Develop resources to meet their needs.
- 8) **Resolve to improve customer communications.** Review the letters you send and think about those you could be sending. Create new, conversational letters that communicate using the word "you" more often than "we."
- 9) **Resolve to let your customers know that you appreciate their business.** It's dangerous to assume that your customers know that you care. Find ways to dramatize your commitment to customers.
- 10) **Resolve to view marketing and sales as an investment in the future of your library.** A constant flow of customers who want use your services is the direct result of investing in an adequate marketing and sales effort.
- 11) **Resolve to be consistent in your marketing.** Out of sight out of mind. It takes a lot of hard work over a long period of time to remain in the mind of the customer and prospect.
- 12) **Resolve to create some excitement!** It's time to beat the drums, turn up the music, and let it roll!

Adapted from an article by John R. Graham, "Ring In Profits in 1993: 12 Marketing & Sales Resolutions." Graham Communications, 1992.

Promotion Gems

Flyers and newsletter ads serve as small, quick announcements of products, events, and services. Follow these guidelines to get your announcements the attention they deserve.

- 1) Research shows that five times more people read headlines than read body copy. Pull readers in with a headline that is clean and interesting.
- 2) Think in terms of what interests the reader. Addressing them singularly as "you" or "your" is guaranteed to capture their interest. Jargon and acronyms can be a turn-off; don't assume too much knowledge on the readers' part.
- 3) Stress benefits. Your biggest one—the message of the ad—should be stated in the headline and reinforced in your body copy.
- 4) Do your research. Take time to understand your product, your reader, and their relationship before you start writing. Be careful to sell only one thought at a time.
- 5) Keep your copy short! Use short words, short sentences, short paragraphs. Use clear language, avoid unusual words. Show off your product, not your vocabulary.
- 6) Resist writing in the future tense. Whenever possible, strike the word "will" from your copy. Present tense is more convincing and leaves no room for doubt.
- 7) Minimize references to "we," "I," "us," and "our." Readers don't care what your library has, they care what your library has *for them*.
- 8) Always close your ad with a "hook," or call to action.

Following these guidelines can make the difference between a flyer that soars and a flyer that bores, an ad that gets clipped and an ad that gets skipped. So go ahead, produce promotion materials that scream for attention!

Is your law library looking for public relations ideas? Call the Public Relations Committee of the Southern California Association of Law Libraries for their tip-sheet "Marketing Your Law Library: Public Relations Tips." Contact Edna Thiel at 619/691-4929.

Remember . . . your *Marketing Treasures* subscription entitles you to borrow any materials reviewed in The Sparkling Reviews column.

Sparkling Reviews

The Information Partnership: Communicating with Upper Management. Mead Data Central, Inc. with The Special Libraries Association, 1992. \$15.00

The main question addressed in this video is, Does management grasp the real significance of information in today's competitive, rapidly changing market? And thus the goal of *The Information Partnership* is to elaborate on ways information professionals can represent themselves to upper management successfully to demonstrate the importance of the products and services they offer. The rewards for effectively communicating with management in this way are, of course, the many avenues through which management can support its information center and staff—not the least of which is monetary.

The means to achieving this goal, the video suggests, are the "Three P's," namely, Positioning, Packaging, and Presenting. During the course of this 19-minute video, these marketing strategies are examined through interviews with information specialists from three different organizations: Nancy James of Digital Equipment Corporation; Mary Ann Skinner and Karen Van Rossem of Newsday and New York Newsday; and Cynthia Hill of Failure Analysis Associates, Inc.

The video shows that the success these individuals had in communicating with upper management depended on their reliance upon the "Three P's":

1) They positioned the information center effectively by making it clear that the center shared the same objectives as the corporation. This meant, among other things, understanding the corporation's needs from the corporation's point of view, attending meetings with management and ensuring that the center had a strong presence in the corporation's affairs whenever possible.

2) They packaged their products and services so that customers had quick access to them, for example through online databases that delivered information directly to the desktop—thereby not only increasing the value of the product (the customer pays less for it by expending less energy to get it), but as Nancy James put it, creating a situation in which the information received at the desktop acts as an appetizer. The customer will come back for more.

3) They presented their information centers as credible, professional, and integral parts of the corporation through, for example, consistently stressing one "look" on all products, accepting projects, and making a point of presenting themselves as professional equals.

The video mixes the interviews with straightforward, unobtrusive narration. It also provides plenty of visual stimulation through graphics and by filming those being interviewed in interactive situations in their information centers and corporations. This format makes *The Information Partnership* easy and interesting to watch, as well as informative. Above all, the video does an excellent job of describing the "Three P's" in terms information professionals will relate to and find useful.

The workbook that accompanies the video is authored by the film's executive producer, Sharon LaRosa. Its guidebook is a useful addition, providing a springboard from which purchasers of the video can get started on their own "Three P's" marketing programs.

The Information Partnership was financed by Mead Data Central as part of its Information Center Support Program, providing educational and promotion tools to help information professionals. A portion of the cost of the video goes to the SLA fund for the advancement of information professionals in business. To obtain a copy of the video, call 800/227-597 and ask for Debbie Norris or Audrey Young.

The Crystal Ball

February 20-23 "Classical and Contemporary Perspectives on Marketing Thought." A four-day conference by the American Marketing Association in Newport Beach, CA. Contact: 312/648-0536.

March 8 "Design for Newsletters." A one-day course offered by EEI in Alexandria, VA. Contact: 703/683-7453.

March 9 "Effective Newsletter Editing." A one-day course offered by EEI in Alexandria, VA. Contact: 703/683-7453.

March 10-11 "Maximizing Customer Satisfaction." A seminar led by Arlene Farber Sirkin at the Business Information Conference in Barcelona, Spain. Contact: 202/363-1671.

March 11-12 "Desktop Design on a Shoestring." A two-day workshop sponsored by In House Graphics in Atlanta, GA. Contact: 800/929-4824 ext. 684 or 301/815-8950 ext. 684.

March 12 "The User-Friendly Service Desk: Improving Staff's Crosscultural Communication Skills." A one-day workshop offered by Rutgers School of Communication, Information and Library Studies in New Brunswick, NJ. Contact: 908/932-7169.

March 22-23 "Maximizing Customer Satisfaction and Marketing Fundamentals." Two seminars led by Arlene Farber Sirkin. Offered by SOLINET in Raleigh, NC. Also March 25 & 26 in Orlando, FL. Contact: 404/892-0943.

March 23 "How To Be A Better Technical Writer." A one-day seminar offered by Keye Productivity Center in Washington, DC. Contact: 800/821-3919.

March 25 "The Information Broker's Seminar: How to Make Money as an Information Broker." A one-day seminar by Sue Ruggie in San Diego, CA. Contact: 510/649-9743.