



The electronic newsletter
with marketing ideas for
information professionals.

compliments of...
Chris Olson & Associates

A Note From Chris

We're back! I apologize for the break in the publication schedule, but it's been rather crazy around here. We moved our home AND office this Spring and I just could not keep up. So, I suspended work on Marketing Treasures until the dust settled. We're finally getting back into our routines and can see over the boxes now. Our phone and address has changed. We can be reached at 410.827.5642, and our new address is: 237 Prospect Bay Drive West, Grasonville, Maryland 21638.

This issue starts off with the experience of holding an [open house by solo librarian](#), Rita Haydar of the St. Mary Medical Center in Langhorne, Pennsylvania (USA). Her comments and observations can be applied to a range of information services.

Under the [Pearls of Wisdom](#) section you'll find links to the slides of presentations I gave at the Special Libraries Association conference in June. The McGoogan Library of Medicine has produced a free health video for children that you'll want to review: "[Following the Clues: A Visit to the Doctor and the Library.](#)"

There was an interesting discussion on COLLIB-L about academic libraries being visible on their organization's home page. The points raised apply to any information service operating under the umbrella of a larger organization. The thread has been summarized and posted onto ACRLLog by Steven Bell and is an enlightening read. (July 223rd entry, <http://www.acrlblog.org/>) Over on the AcademicPR list there's been a discussion about promotion items, signage and branding. They're just beginning to activate a forum to capture the collective wisdom and experience of the listserv members. <http://www.fearless-future.com/prforum/viewforum.php?f=1>

Enjoy!

Chris Olson
Publisher

July 2006
Volume 15 Number 3

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Please forward this newsletter to anyone you know who is looking for ideas and resources for marketing their library. (See "[Forward to a Friend](#)" at end of newsletter.)

Feed Them, and They Will Come: A Solo's Open House Experience

by Rita Haydar

Open Houses, particularly during National Medical Librarians Month, are a wonderful opportunity for libraries to market their collections and services. But how do you hold such an event when you're a Solo, and can't shut down your daily operations to hold the event? Even while providing essential services, it can be a challenge to organize, set up and host an event that includes greeting, answering questions, offering tours, replenishing refreshments, etc. However, as a one-person-library (OPL), I was up for the challenge, as juggling and wearing multiple hats is what we do.

Ever since beginning in my current position at St. Mary Medical Center, I wanted to make my mark on the library. The hospital had been without an on-site professional librarian for approximately three months. My predecessor was charged with both the library and a full plate of CME responsibilities. I inherited a well-located, sunny library that was in a somewhat chaotic phase. Fortunately, the librarian

was no longer expected to also run the CME program, and I was able to pull full attention on the library. After several months of reorganizing, including researching, purchasing and implementing our first integrated library system, figuring out the existing circulation system, meeting the movers, shakers and regular patrons, weeding out a few hundred sorely outdated books and figuring out where to donate them, and establishing a monthly newsletter, I wanted to show off the new medical library at St. Mary. The timing of National Medical Librarians month in October was perfect, as many of my new initiatives would be up and running by then. But how? When? For how long? I wondered how I could pull off such an event without shutting down services while hosting.

In an attempt to glean some ideas from the collective experiences of my colleagues, I sent a message to the MEDLIB-L listserv asking for suggestions on how to accomplish a successful Open House while maintaining a basic level of service. Here are some tips that I found most helpful, and how they played out at my 2005 Library Open House.

1. Recruit hospital volunteers to help. Our hospital is teeming with helping hands, willing and able to help out with any detail in any department. In my case, by prior arrangement, I mainly used volunteers in preparation for the event. At the time, there was no one familiar enough with the library to help with tours or answering questions at the event. Specifically, I had help with manual and clerical tasks such as setting up the refreshments table, creating and putting up signs, and collating pages for the library information packets, and so on. This assistance, and having preparations taken care of ahead of time, was very helpful in not having too much on my plate the morning the event began.

2. Food and prizes are likely to bring people out to the event. It's a fact. Folks will likely make the trek to an event, regardless of location, if there is promise of refreshments and a prize or promotional item being given away. Food was at the center of the event, and I was advised by other departments who had hosted celebrations at St. Mary—feed them and they will come!

Some of my vendors donated promotional materials as takeaways (mouse pads, pens and pencils). I ordered promotional sticky notes with the heading "Your Rx for Quality Health Information", with the hospital logo and library contact information. After all, everyone can use sticky notes; they are useful on any desk or nursing station; and, unlike some items with a limited or single-time use, this promotional message gets seen time after time; as each page gets torn off—there it is again. This has been an excellent promotional tool beyond the Open House. I have used them at health fairs and given them to patrons who go through one-on-one training.

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The grand prizes were a free one-hour massage at the hospital's Holistic Center, a free fitness evaluation, a one-month membership at the hospital gym, and a gift certificate to the hospital gift shop. Certificates for these prizes were packaged in cardboard popcorn boxes along with microwave popcorn bags, sweets and the like.

The event was promoted with flyers sent to all departments, email reminders, and a table in the cafeteria with flyers, signs and balloons. Prizes were awarded from randomly selected entries at the end of the event. The drawing form could only be filled out and submitted at the library. On top of the form was a game requiring a match between a famous person and their quote about libraries. Correct answers were not required to win, but the quotes generated great interest and I received many requests for the correct answers.

3. In a hospital setting, multiple days/times are likely to attract more visitors than a one-time event. Clinical staff have limited opportunities to leave the unit; management personnel have meetings; physicians are always busy. Spreading the event over several days and times can help accommodate more schedules and shifts and encourage higher traffic through the library. My event was held at the end of October, over a three-day period during one week. I held two morning sessions and one afternoon session which covered both day and evening shifts. An early-morning session could have accommodated both the tail end of the night shift and daytime employees. I kept the days adjacent (Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday) to keep up the momentum of the event.

4. Consider the night shift! The night shift can easily be overlooked at hospital events. Our management makes efforts to include the night shift in all hospital events, festivities included. To accommodate the night shift for the Library Open House, a decorated and ballooned table was set outside the library with non-perishable refreshments, promotional items, prize drawing entries, and informational handouts. Even if your library is closed during these hours, staff on the night shift might

still use the library through online resources, e-mail reference, and the like. Some might be taking courses that eventually bring them in to the library during daytime hours. As my night shift prize entries demonstrated, some staff did make the effort of stopping by in those late hours of the night, making this a worthwhile accommodation.

5. Make it fun! It has been my experience that in the minds of many, libraries are restrictively quiet, food-free places where seriousness dominates. It doesn't hurt to insert some humor into the event. A lighthearted atmosphere is always welcoming.

As an added initiative to reclaim those books that wandered off months (and years) before I set foot in my library, I announced Open House week to be Overdues Amnesty Week, with a little gift for any overdue book returned (a bag of sweets since Halloween was approaching), and a larger prize for the person who brought in the most overdue book. Since our library does not fine overdues, and serious approaches in the past did not yield a response, it seemed apt to try for a humorous slant to the problem. Unfortunately, this generated zero responses and I have since given up those books for lost. I am now keeping a strict two-week borrowing period (no fines) and have found that simply reinforcing the due date with each patron and calling all overdue holders has helped tremendously. However, I plan to try the lighthearted approach to overdues again next year.

6. Be flexible. This was my first solo Open House experience. I had an initial plan, which was modified as I got to know my organization's culture and as I thought through the logistics of hosting this event. My initial expectations were altered, and the final outcome of the event differed even from this. As with anything we OPLs do, staying flexible and adapting to the situation are key to making the best of a situation and in planning for the future.

I thought that the formal tour option would not appeal to all attendees, some of whom were on short breaks to attend the event. As an alternative, we had color-copied signs made up identifying each area by name (Reference, Copier, Books, Current Journals, Back Issue Journals, etc.), with a description. This allowed those not interested in a longer, guided tour to walk through at their leisure and still become familiar with the different areas of the library, some of which had been relocated. A sign advertised the new online catalog, which was open on the public PCs to allow people to browse its features. Take-away information included bookmarks with the library's features and contact information, a summary of online resources offered, tip sheets for searching our databases, and recent issues of the library newsletter, among others.

This self-tour option was very popular and allowed me to greet and speak with most visitors individually rather than constantly repeating the tour. Also, it allowed those who wandered in outside of the Open House hours to walk around independently and benefit from the same information.

[Note from Chris: Consider taping a tour of the library and offering it as a Quicktime movie on your web site. Make sure you show people using library resources so the library looks "alive".]

What Would I Do Differently Next Time?

> Have a volunteer man the table in the cafeteria advertising the event, perhaps handing out flyers to passers-by.

> There was a wide variety of staff, both clinical and administrative, that attended, though I would have liked to see more physicians attend. Let's go to them! Next year I plan to set up a satellite table in the physicians' lounge also offering refreshments, giveaways and handouts and be there myself at peak times to answer their questions and promote library services.

> Offer an interactive activity that allows attendees to learn more about the library's collections and services. People might take away more information having learned it in a quick guessing game than by reading about it in handouts. For example, a colleague suggested trivia questions such as the number of ILLs filled in a year, strangest or most obscure reference questions, or the names of institutions with whom we collaborate through ILL or other partnerships.

> As I reflect on the event, new ideas continue to cross my mind, and I am keeping a log of them for reference next fall, when I plan my next, new and improved Open House.

As professionals managing solo libraries, it is easy for us to become so busy in our libraries and become isolated from networking and brainstorming opportunities. Though we work alone, we are not

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**"Creativity is allowing
yourself to make mistakes.
Art is knowing which ones
to keep."**

Cartoonist Scott Adams
The Dilbert Principle

alone in our experiences. Many thanks go to all colleagues who took the time to share their National Medical Librarians Month experiences with others in the MEDLIB-L audience.

Rita Haydar is the Library Manager at the St. Mary Medical Center in Langhorne, Pennsylvania, USA. She can be reached at: rhaydar@che-east.org.

Treasure Tips

What are Pull Communications?

In communications there are two primary models for reaching target audiences. One is called "pull" communications and the other is called "push" communications. We'll outline pull communications now, and in the next issue of Marketing Treasures, we'll talk about push communications.

In talking about the push and pull models, we are not referring to the underlying technology such as RSS, but instead, on the user experience. To embark upon a pull communications strategy is to allow members of your target audience to "pull" your communications at their discretion. In the brick and mortar world, pull communications are used by advertisers to draw customers into retail establishments to receive messages. People elect when and how they will act on the messages in the pull model of communications. In the virtual world, pull communications is exemplified by blogs, wikis, and web sites.

Many library communications strategies utilize the pull communications model. Potential and current library customers are asked to stop by the library. Library open houses like the one described by Rita Haydar in this issue of Marketing Treasures is an example of the pull communications model in action. Like most advertisers, Rita has to rely on her customer to decide and then act on attending the open house before Rita is able to deliver her messages. And like advertisers, Rita employs various promotion tools in an attempt to entice people to attend her open house. Because pull communications rely on the customer's action, some sort of incentives usually accompany the communication to encourage the customer to take the desired action. Discount coupons, contests, and give-aways are examples of incentives that can be used with a pull communications campaign.

The majority of libraries use the pull communications model for their web sites. Library newsletters, announcements, events, and other news is communicated on the web site, giving members of the target community the option of discovering the information at their own pace and schedule. The recent trend towards library wikis is an example of the pull communications model being deployed again by libraries. (See the Bull Run Library wiki at <http://bullrunlibrary.pbwiki.com/>).

Pull-style communications can be combined with push communications to form hybrid push/pull strategies. We'll take a look at push communications next month and discuss the pros and cons of both models.

Promotion Gems

Real-Life Marketing & Promotion Strategies in College Libraries

This book provides a compilation of marketing advice, promotion activities, examples and insights as told by practitioners on the front lines at a dozen college libraries located throughout the United States. Editor Barbara Petruzzelli has assembled a lively and well-versed group of contributors to share their knowledge and experiences in communicating the products and services of academic libraries. You'll find nuggets in every chapter as you browse through the book. I started skimming the contents and then got caught up with reading each chapter as most are entertaining as well as informative. There are lots of photos showing examples and additional reading lists. If you work in an information setting other than academic, don't skip this resource. It's got lots to offer for everyone.

Real-Life Marketing and Promotion Strategies in College Libraries: Connecting with Campus and Community. Edited by Barbara Petruzzelli. Haworth Press, 2005. <http://tinyurl.com/jsb9z>

Pearls of Wisdom

A Visit to the Doctor and the Library

Making a doctor's appointment, visiting a doctor or finding current health information can be confusing for children and adults unfamiliar with the U.S. health care system. The UNMC McGoogan Library of Medicine wants to help with its recently produced "Following the Clues: A Visit to the Doctor and the

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Library," a 12-minute video narrated in English, Spanish and Sudanese-Nuer that shows viewers how to navigate the health care system and find health information at the library. Ramone, the hamster helps young children follow the clues to better health. The story follows Alana as she and her grandmother make a doctor's appointment, see the doctor and find health information at the library.



Narrated in English, Spanish, and Sudanese-Nuer, the movie is available at no cost to librarians, community health providers, immigrant support agencies, and elementary school professionals. The video is in DVD and VHS formats, and can be viewed on the web site.

<http://www.unmc.edu/library/clues>

Customer Relationship Management

In the February issue of Marketing Treasures I quickly reviewed the basic concepts behind the marketing tool known as customer relationship management (CRM). In June, at the Special Libraries Association conference, I was joined by Amelia Kassel in giving an hour long presentation on the topic for the Marketing Section of the Leadership and Management Division. You're welcome to view our slides to learn more and how one library is integrating CRM into their marketing strategies. The following link goes to a PDF file that is 4.8MB.

<http://www.chrisolson.com/slapresent/OlsonKasselCRMPresent06.pdf>.

Branding SOS

At the Special Libraries Association conference in June, I gave a 90 minute presentation about branding considerations in electronic environments to members of the Insurance & Employee Benefits Division. I discussed a wide range of branding opportunities that libraries can leverage in today's growing electronic and virtual worlds. Opportunities include file names, web site names, blogs, signature blocks, videos, electronic exhibits, forms, web site forwarding pages, calendars... and more. The slides include examples, although the links are not live. The following link goes to a PDF file that is 22.7 MB. (Hey, what did you expect? It's loaded with screen shots)

<http://chrisolson.com/slapresent/OlsonBrandSOSpresentSLA06.pdf>

Blogging for Scholars

Emerald Group Publishing provides short, professionally written articles that academic library editors and others can use to fill out their library newsletters. The July article is about the blogs of instructors and professors, and what students can learn from them. To download a free copy of the article for your newsletter, go to: http://www.emeraldinsight.com/info/librarians/filler_article09.jsp

Help This Marketeer

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. We'll invite other readers of Marketing Treasures to share their experience and advice to help you.

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Golden Opportunities

August 15 Libraries and Competition: Intelligence for Management and Strategy, Part I. An interactive videoconference presented by Cynthia Cheng Correia. Sponsored by SWON and the Cincinnati Chapter of the Special Libraries Association.

<http://www.swonlibraries.org/viewevent?id=831>

August 21 Planning Library Promotion Campaigns. A half day workshop by Chris Olson. Sponsored by OCLC CAPCON in Washington, DC.

<http://www.oclc.org/capcon/training/courses/descriptions/M212.htm>

August 29 Libraries and Competition: Intelligence for Management and Strategy, Part II. An interactive videoconference presented by Cynthia Cheng Correia. Sponsored by SWON and the Cincinnati Chapter of the Special Libraries Association.

<http://www.swonlibraries.org/viewevent?id=833>

August 29 Customer Service and Communication. A full day class by Cal Shepard at the Birmingham Public Library. Sponsored by SoliNet.

http://www.solinet.net/workshops/ws_details.cfm?doc_id=3096&WKSHPID=26CSC#

September 11 Creating a Marketing Plan for Academic/Research Libraries. A full day workshop

by Kenneth Marks in Atlanta. Sponsored by SoliNet. <http://tinyurl.com/mlurh>

September 18 Strategic Library Branding: Brand Names and Touchpoints. (Part 1 of a 3 part series on branding) A half day session presented by Chris Olson in Washington, DC. Sponsored by OCLC CAPCON. <http://www.oclc.org/capcon/training/courses/descriptions/M213.htm>

September 19 Writing for the Web. A full day workshop led by Leslie O'Flahavan in Washington, DC. Sponsored by OCLC CAPCON.
<http://www.oclc.org/capcon/training/courses/descriptions/l170.htm>

September 26 Create a Positive Impression in 8 Seconds Flat. A full day, interactive session led by Lauren Burnett. Sponsored by SWON in Dayton, Ohio.
<http://www.swonlibraries.org/viewevent?id=742>

September 28 Exploiting Library Design as a Key Tool in Marketing. A full day workshop offered by Angela Dove in London. Sponsored by CILIP.
<http://www.cilip.org.uk/training/training/2006/mp/Exploitinglibrarydesignprog.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 410-827-5642 or send a note to Chris@chrisolson.com.

All inquiries and projects are held in complete confidence.

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If you want to peruse the newsletter in your browser, you can read it here:

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

Questions? Comments? Ideas? Send your e-mail to MTComments@ChrisOlson.com or call (410) 827-5642. Contact us for reprints/article use at marcom@ChrisOlson.com.

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