

# the visible corporate library

marketing ideas for promoting  
your resources and services

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Dear Colleague:

As the information expert, you have the knowledge and resources to help your organization make effective, timely business decisions based on accurate, relevant information. What you do can have a dramatically positive effect on the bottom line.

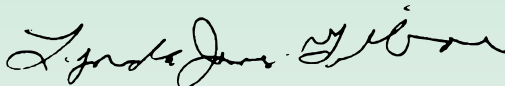
But how many people—other than you—know about your available resources? If the answer is “not enough,” then this booklet and the online tools that accompany it are for you.

This booklet, *The Visible Corporate Library*, contains tips for identifying marketing opportunities, ideas for promoting your services, notes on how to help your users have a good experience when they come to you for help, tips on what to measure and how to communicate your library’s value, and some networking and support ideas.

In addition to this booklet, you will find the “Corporate Library Toolkit” at [www.proquest.com](http://www.proquest.com). Click on “Library Marketing Tools.” There you will find items such as a customizable poster, a sample reference interview sheet, user survey questions, database descriptions you can use on your intranet, and more.

Because of the diversity and uniqueness of corporate and other special libraries, we know that not everything presented here will be applicable to your specific situation. However, we hope that at least some of the ideas will help you increase the visibility, usage, and value of your information center and the services you provide.

Wishing you success in marketing your corporate library,



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# identify users

If your resources and services are underutilized, it's time to do some market research. Start by asking the following questions:

- ▶ Which divisions, departments, or individuals already use your resources/services?
- ▶ Which resources/services do they/don't they use?
- ▶ Which unused resources/services could be helpful to them?

Recording your answers in a table will help you visualize your marketing opportunities. As in Figure 1, for example, list the resources and/or services you offer across the top of a table, and those (e.g., divisions, departments, individuals) who currently use any of your library's resources or services down the side of the table. Indicate which resources they already use. For any blank boxes, determine if they could benefit from the resource ("Opportunity!") or not ("Not Applicable").

Next, look at the organizational chart and ask:

- ▶ Who else could/should be using your resources/services today but isn't?
- ▶ Which of your resources/services could be helpful to them?

Again, record the answers.

If you lack a clear understanding about the types of information people need and use across the organization, there are many ways to find out. For example, you could briefly meet with and interview key department managers, starting with those in departments that are most strategic (i.e., responsible for revenue generation or other significant goals) to the organization. Find out about their major upcoming and ongoing initiatives. Ask what types of information they spend (and waste!) significant time searching for, and what their biggest information-related "pains" are. Position the corporate library to become an indispensable tool for your organization's biggest value contributors.

Other ways to learn about the company or institution's information needs include reviewing corporate presentations and executive speeches. Listen to the questions asked around the office, in meetings, and at the coffee machine. If your company is public and hosts quarterly results calls, listen in and learn what types of questions analysts and shareholders ask.

The more you know about your users and their information needs, the better you can tailor your marketing messages for success.

Figure 1: Identify your marketing opportunities.

	ABI/INFORM®	ProQuest Central	Snapshots Market Research Reports	ProQuest Research Library
Sales & Marketing	x	x	Opportunity!	x
Executive Leadership	Opportunity!	x	Opportunity!	x
Legal	x	x	Opportunity!	Opportunity!
Corporate Communications	x	Opportunity!	Opportunity!	x

# create targeted messages

Having done your market research, you know who could benefit from using which of the corporate library's resources and services—and how you can solve problems for the organization. But one message may not fit all. Marketing's needs are likely different than HR's, although your resources and services can aid both. An executive may need summarized information, whereas mid-level managers may need detailed information. Tailor your marketing messages to each of your target audiences.

In addition, think about the inefficient information tools your target audiences told you they currently use to perform work, and how to position your library's resources and services so that potential users understand their value. If they use Internet search engines to hunt for information, for example, you could explain how your library's subscription databases reduce search time and deliver relevant, accurate results.

Information services organizations are often seen as an expense. Take care, therefore, to always illustrate how you and your library

provide value to each target audience, whether it's freeing people up to get more work done, helping them find answers faster on their own, delivering information that the organization can trust is accurate, or providing some other business benefit.

Once you determine which messages are right for each of your target audiences, use them consistently in all your outreach and discussion.

## idea

**Conduct a survey—via hard copy, email, or Web form—to learn what types of questions your prospective customers must answer on the job, what tools (websites, search engines, etc.) they currently use, how long they search, and their biggest information-related frustrations. Make sure the questions are designed to elicit responses that can help you market effectively (i.e., keep questions focused on areas that your resources and services can address). When you design your survey, include a brief introduction that describes the mission, capabilities, and scope of your corporate library so that everyone can see how your library is positioned to support the company or institution's goals!**

## in your marketing toolkit...

...a comparison of the Internet and your library's subscription research databases. Use this information to illustrate the benefits of your library's resources versus the "wild Web." Go to [www.proquest.com](http://www.proquest.com), click on "Library Marketing Tools," and see "Corporate Library Marketing Toolkit."

# spruce up your intranet

If users will be given direct access to your library's research databases through an intranet, make sure they know how to find it and have any passwords or codes they will need access to the databases.

Just as important, make sure the site is easy to use. Journal articles, seminars, and websites abound on the topic of effective site design. Here are some high-level recommendations:

## in your marketing toolkit...

...ProQuest database descriptions for use on your library's site. The user-friendly descriptions explain the contents and uses of many of the resources available through your library's gateway, and can be customized to reflect your subscriptions.

Also included is a sample user guide. This document explains how to use ProQuest's ABI/INFORM® database to effectively search for information, and how to view, organize, print, and email the information found. You may wish to develop similar user guides for your most popular resources.

Go to [www.proquest.com](http://www.proquest.com), click on "Library Marketing Tools," and see "Corporate Library Marketing Toolkit" to access these resources.

- ▶ Make your design appealing and current, through use of color and visuals. Try not to squeeze elements in or make them look jumbled.
- ▶ Strive for clear navigation, in addition to a look that says "easy to use."
- ▶ Align the library intranet design with that of the corporation or institution, but don't be a slave to this. Take a different tack if it will serve ease of navigation or finding information.
- ▶ Google adheres to simplicity and a white background, nicely offsetting its logo rendered in lively colors. Fans like to watch the way the logo is customized for holidays or times of year, adding to the personality of the site. Is there a simple way for you to add your library's "persona" to your intranet? Maybe add a new quotation from someone known in your industry, or post an interesting, conversation-starting new fact each day.
- ▶ Speak your user's language online so that he or she can easily identify needed resources—especially if the site visitor is remotely located. If your library users don't use the word "databases," don't describe them that way on your intranet. Does your site contain a list of resources, such as "ABI/INFORM®"? If so, will your users know what these labels mean? If you aren't sure, add a description that your visitors will understand.

# get the word out

Once you know your audiences, how you can help each of them, and how to position your research solutions, it's time to get the word out. How? Here are a few ideas:

► **POSTERS:** Hang them in break rooms, meeting rooms, on bulletin boards, and even restrooms— wherever your target audience is likely to see them.

► **TARGETED EMAILS:** Introduce new resources and describe their business benefits to the specific audiences you identified earlier (see “Identify Users”).

► **E-NEWSLETTERS:** Highlight underutilized assets as well as new ones, remind people how to access resources and services, and present case studies that illustrate how the corporate library saved the company time/money/effort or contributed in some other way to organizational success.

► **TRAINING:** Offer “lunch and learn” courses. Invite your customers or prospects to bring their lunch and eat, while you teach skills such as effective search techniques, how to use specific resources available through the corporate library, etc. Establish yourself as the information expert that you are!

► **INFORMATION PACKETS:** Ask HR if they will include a one-page flier that describes your department's mission, resources, services, and contact information as part of their new-hire welcome packets for people who are allowed to use the corporate library—especially managers, directors, executives, and their staffs, the people who can vouch for your value if the budget becomes tight.

Another way to get the word out is to **get on the agenda**. What manager wouldn't give you 10 minutes on his or her department's monthly meeting agenda to show how you can save him or her time, improve the accuracy of the information on which important decisions are based, etc. Bring information “goody bags”—research culled from the library's online resources to help users with their projects. Include the source, intranet address, and any passwords your users will need to access more information.

When publicizing your library, remember that you don't have to reach out to everyone at once or use all the marketing methods you can think of. Pick a target audience and test a few marketing ideas, making adjustments as necessary. Which target market should you start with? The one that represents the greatest revenue potential (or other strategic measure) for your corporation or institution. Position your resources and services as essential components of their success.

## in your marketing toolkit...

...a customizable poster. Simply type in your email, phone, intranet address, or other contact information in the blank box, and then print it out (up to 11”x17”). Ask HR or site leaders to assist in hanging posters in buildings that you can't get to yourself. Go to [www.proquest.com](http://www.proquest.com), click on “Library Marketing Tools,” and see “Corporate Library Marketing Toolkit” to download and customize the poster.

# providing service: a few notes

If your users physically come to you for help, it is easy to convey a sense of friendly, professional service with a smile, firm handshake, and active listening skills. If they send requests for help via email or a Web form, creating that same impression is a little more difficult.

Consider setting up an automated response that thanks your user immediately for submitting his or her inquiry and explains how (and how quickly) the request will be addressed. If the inquiry is going to take some time to address, consider giving your customer periodic progress reports.

Setting expectations is another important element of service. As good as you are, there are types of inquiries you won't be able to address. Establishing those boundaries early saves time for you and your user. A reference interview sheet can help your users frame requests in ways that will help you successfully help them, whether it's a printed document you and your user review together, or whether it's an online form that a user completes remotely and submits.

Once you believe you have successfully fulfilled the information request, follow up to ensure that the user feels the same way. You may want to follow up with a brief survey not only to measure user satisfaction, but also to gain opportunities for case studies. See "Measuring: It Matters" for more on this.

By setting expectations early and communicating clearly throughout the research process, you can deliver the best service possible and make this a good experience for your user. He or she will see the value of the corporate library and will want to come back again.

## in your marketing toolkit...

...a sample reference interview sheet, which you can modify and use to help guide your users through the information inquiry process. Depending on your users' preferences, print it out, incorporate it into (or attach it to) an email, or use it as the basis of a Web form. Go to [www.proquest.com](http://www.proquest.com), click on "Library Marketing Tools," and see "Corporate Library Marketing Toolkit."

## idea

**Enlist help.** If you like the idea of getting the word out through an employee-focused newsletter but don't have time or enough new information to publish your own, ask HR or other departments to let you contribute articles to theirs. They likely will be happy to have another contributor!

# measuring: it matters

Like all departments, the corporate library budget is under scrutiny. You probably already track and report on library usage information, such as user name/division, inquiry topic, and resource/services used. But it also is useful to measure—and publicize!—user satisfaction and value to the organization. Did a fact that you found prevent the company from making an unwarranted, expensive investment? Did it influence a product decision that earned thousands of dollars for the company? Did it provide insight that led to changes that improved user satisfaction?

Capturing the information regularly and consistently will give you the data needed to illustrate the value of your department at a moment's notice. This information can be gathered via surveys distributed and collected as hard copies or emails, but if you have the ability and resources, consider setting up an online survey, where information can be captured and reported on easily. A variety of survey applications are available to help you set up your own surveys and reports online, with little or no help needed from IT. SurveyGizmo (<http://www.surveygizmo.com>) and

## in your marketing toolkit...

...sample user survey questions. Use some or all of them to create your own survey aimed at quantifying the value your resources or services contribute to the company or institution. Also included is a case study template to help you turn the information you gather into a success story. Go to [www.proquest.com](http://www.proquest.com), click on “Library Marketing Tools,” and see “Corporate Library Marketing Toolkit” to access these resources.

Zoomerang (<http://www.zoomerang.com>) are just two examples.

If the feedback is positive, don't hide it! If it isn't positive, determine what the problems are and begin making improvements as necessary.

## idea

**Create case studies.** Did the corporate library help a department improve its key performance indicators or make a big sale? Tell someone! Gather the specifics (who, what, when, where, why, and how), and create brief case studies to market your service to others—the “we helped them and can we help you” pitch. Include these stories in your newsletter, make them part of your

emails, add them to information packets, or include them in PowerPoint presentations when called on to provide training or to promote—or defend—your department. If you don't have the time to write them yourself, perhaps you have a PR department or creative services team you can tap for assistance.

# networking

Nobody understands the challenges and stresses of your job better than someone who shares your profession. So, take advantage of the organizations, publications, websites, and social networks available to help you. Here are just a few examples:

<b>The Special Libraries Association (SLA):</b>	<a href="http://www.sla.org">www.sla.org</a>
<b>Reference and User Services Association (RUSA),</b> a division of the American Library Association:	<a href="http://www.ala.org/rusa">www.ala.org/rusa</a>
<b>Business Librarians</b> , an online social network:	<a href="http://businesslibrarians.ning.com">http://businesslibrarians.ning.com</a>
<b>IntranetBlog.com</b> , a site that features intranet best practices, case studies, and articles:	<a href="http://intranetblog.blogware.com/blog">http://intranetblog.blogware.com/blog</a>
<b>“Marketing Library Services,”</b> a subscription-based e-newsletter that provides practical how-to tips for those who work in corporate, special, academic, and public libraries:	<a href="http://www.infotoday.com/MLS/default.shtml">http://www.infotoday.com/MLS/default.shtml</a>

# setting the course

Effective marketing is an ongoing commitment that gets easier over time. Think of it as part of your library’s daily operations. Just as you set a course for the development of your online collections, marketing these resources requires goals and planning, too.



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