

Promotion Ideas From The Retail Marketplace

In this article, *Marketing Treasures* visits the retail marketplace—bookstores, malls, and department stores—seeking promotion ideas. We'll also stop in at the supermarket to glance at the checkout line tabloids and product displays that scream for attention.

The Mall: Marketing Tips at Every Turn

Visit the mall with your marketing glasses on, and what will you see? Signs. You'll see an awful lot of signs. Signs hung inside of stores, outside of stores, framed on walls, suspended from ceilings, hovering above racks, glued to checkout counters, and propped up on easels. These signs convey many different messages and serve a variety of purposes.

As conveyers of information, signs stand in for a sales staff at times spread thin, and they answer questions for independent shoppers. As attention grabbers, signs serve as advertisements. As instruments of suggestion, they give buyers a desire for merchandise. Signs advertising brand names say "trust me" to buyers who look for security. Signs promoting sales say "you can afford this" to those looking for bargains. Signs declaring money back guarantees say "this is safe" for people looking for reassurance before making their purchase.

But whatever the signs say, one thing is certain. They are everywhere. The proliferation of signs reflects two marketing strategies. First, signs take into account that clients are not searching for your advertising. Signs everywhere give even the least attentive clients ample opportunity to see your message. Second, they support the marketing rule that repetition breeds credibility. The more you see a shirt advertised for \$37.50, the more that seems to be an appropriate price.

The varied messages of signs are reminders of the simple truth that different things appeal to different people. If you alone bear the marketing responsibility for your information center, you will tend to use marketing strategies that would appeal to you as a client. This certainly should be your starting point. But never forget that people are moti-

vated to buy a product or use a service for many different reasons. What will close the sale for one person will not work for another, or even for that same person on a different day.

You, for example, well aware of the value of research, know that it's not cost-effective to price-shop when you've found a first-rate researcher. But even your shrewdest client, wandering into the library after a torturous budget-cutting meeting, will be attracted to a sign advertising "Buy three hours of research time and get fourth hour free!" Use signs to promote as many marketing features as possible. Signs can cost next to nothing to produce, and when attractive, they can add to the appeal of your library.

A popular sign trend is simply to feature the name brands that the store carries. If you do this in your library, the credibility of *Dialog*, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, and *Grateful Med* will stand behind your information services.

Silent Selling: The Display

With so much passing traffic, malls are all about display, a modern version of the barker imploring passing consumers to come in and spend. The first rule of display seems to be "neatness counts." Just drop into the Gap and watch the care they use in folding their clothes.

A widespread display basic is product repetition. A display of six identical handbags has more appeal than a row of one each of six different bags. For librarians, applying the product repetition principle is simple. Multi-volume reference works, for example, fit well into this scheme. And for products that don't bear a single look, you can sometimes create one yourself. Identical protective bindings and covers for magazines serve this purpose. Or you can display individual journal covers, matted on the same size and color paper, taking advantage of the product repetition strategy with a variety of periodicals while marking their places on the shelves.

Displays are typically organized around a theme. A kitchen

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Pearls of Wisdom

National Library Week is upon us again, observed this year April 17-23. Continuing with last year's theme, "Libraries Change Lives," ALA has added three 16" x 34" theme posters, bookmarks in 13 languages and Braille, quote cards to use as miniposters or postcards, prism pencils, and a t-shirt to their promotional materials. Call 800/545-2433 to order.

Join the SLA salute to the global community on International Special Librarians Day, falling on April 21. This year's theme is "Building a Better World with Information." SLA merchandise (t-shirts, mugs, posters, notepads, and buttons) features this year's celebration logo (shown at right) in attractive shades of green, gold, and violet (it looks a lot better than it sounds).



The American Association of Law Libraries contributes to promotion resources with products such as a combination ballpoint-and-highlighter pen that announces "Law Librarians Make Your Work Stand Out!" They also offer a tip card that reads "The Best Tip—Call Your Law Librarians" and a letter opener that says "For an Open and Shut Case—See a Law Librarian!" as well as buttons and bookmarks reminding readers that "Law Libraries Change Lives." For information, call AALL at 312/939-4764.

Medical libraries can join the celebration with posters,

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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.

bookmarks, buttons, and t-shirts from Highsmith. Posters and t-shirts declare "Knowledge: The Prescription for Achievement." Buttons read "Medicine and Libraries/Partners in Research." Bookmark messages include "Information: No Limit on Refills" and "Medical Libraries Bring Research into Focus." All materials have colorful icon-type graphics. To order, call 800/558-2110.

Does customer service rank high on your agenda? If so, circle Thursday, May 12 on your calendar to participate in the ALA video teleseminar on breakthrough service. The teleseminar, broadcast live to over 500 meeting sights, "offers librarians the opportunity to learn about customer service strategies from one of the world's leading experts. The fact that the breakthrough service model will be presented through release of a library management system makes it extraordinarily valuable for our members," says ALA President Hardy R. Franklin. Congratulations to the Seward Public Library of Nebraska, a case study in the public library segment of the program For registration information, call ALA at 800/545-2433.

Idea Art has published a spring catalog full of preprinted papers for summer events. They feature six different designs for the Fourth of July, including a waving flag, fireworks, and the Liberty Bell (headed "Bell Ringer!") as well as an assortment of summer themes, including pink flamingos, the beach, and the always popular nap-in-the-hammock. Their brochure designs continue to be fun, active, and eye-catching, yet, for the most part, suitable for business. Call 800/433-2278.

What's more dynamic than a chart but more convenient than a slide rule? An interactive slide-chart. These custom-designed charts can illustrate search paths, help users determine the appropriate resources for a wide variety of subjects, or quickly and independently learn the answers to the library's most frequently asked questions. If you're ready to develop an innovative information source with the user appeal of a toy, call American Slide-Chart at 708/665-3333 or 800/323-4433.

Looking for eye-catching packaging with built-in protection? Try Bubblopes. These envelopes in metallic brights are lined with packing material bubbles and give a ho-hum industrial material a place in a stylish delivery system. Sizes available include diskette, #10 envelope, and portfolio. For the name and location of the distributor nearest you, call Design Ideas at 217/753-3081.

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supply store might present a theme display featuring a Chinese cookbook, a wok, wok utensils, decorative chopsticks, and a Chinese tea set. A library can easily adopt this technique. How many of you have featured the latest computer and software book and journal acquisitions in a display surrounded by the “guts” of a computer? Wouldn’t you be drawn quicker to a table heaped with microchips, logic boards, screws, wire cabling etc. than to a bulletin board with dusty book jackets?

With a little imagination all types of libraries can create interesting displays that feature their information services. We noticed how record store tie their wares into the latest news by featuring “Buy the Grammys” promotions, selling music that has just won Grammy awards. A law library could do the same with, for example, last year’s Babygate scandal, in which unpaid Social Security taxes for domestic workers soured the appointments of several federal nominees. A display featuring the headlines of that case and the appropriate legal guides could work wonders in a law library, even if the firm doesn’t handle such matters. After all, how many firm members and employees may have domestic employees themselves? How many will be casually asked for legal advice about the matter by friends and acquaintances? Keeping clients informed about current issues creates interest in the library and establishes its relevance.

Wine stores, knowing that an educated client is a good customer, often display reviews of their wines underneath the bottle or hanging from the shelf. This technique is a natural for the library. A laminated or matted review from *Library Journal* or *Assistant Editor* will catch the eye and introduce a perspective client to another resource.

Our vote for overall best type of display is the future agenda display. The strategy is simple: Contact management to obtain agendas for upcoming meetings. Gather and display background, support, and new information materials on the projected subjects. If possible, review the material with the meeting chair before the meeting, but if not, send a list or summary of items in the display. Have the meeting chair mention the display at the meeting.

Future agenda displays benefit the meeting chair, since attendees who have browsed the display before the meeting will be primed for more productive and insightful discussion. They help the attendees, because the motivation to gain information and take action is strongest just after a meeting and they’ll know that the information they need is waiting for them at the library. The library, therefore, also benefits from the display. From a marketing viewpoint, fu-

ture agenda displays put the library on the meeting chair’s team and promote library usage.

The library reaps another practical benefit. Rather than demanding extra work, composing future agenda displays before meetings takes care of most of the work you would do later when post-meeting requests came in. The display allows the library to amass resources before they are requested, permitting staff more time to be thorough and creative in their research.

Okay, so creating displays about other meetings isn’t feasible. What about displaying information from a meeting that a library staff member attended? What about the seminar you attended on the Internet, the conference on the “Library of the Future,” the dinner meeting on networking CD ROMs, the product update meeting on a database service. These are all viable topics for any library display. The idea is to generate interest in the library and its services, and to show how your library supplies a vital service for the organization.

Face To Face: Customer Interaction In The Mall

We’re all (unfortunately) familiar with the “Hello, can I help you?” clerks attacking as we cross the threshold of a store. A distasteful custom to many, it is nevertheless helpful to some. You can choose a more tasteful way to greet your customers and offer them help. Instead of the rapid-fire, prescribed greeting, staff can acknowledge clients with a smile or nod of the head. Allowing staff to use their own style makes this initial greeting helpful rather than intrusive. Look to your corporate culture for insights to the best and most appropriate greeting styles.

At the mall we observed clerks requesting the customer’s zip code as each sale is being rung up. This rudimentary market research works because it is only a single request. Information service professionals can likewise use this quick encounter to expand their market research. If an interesting finding emerged from your earlier research that demands further exploration or clarification, the checkout question could do the work for you. Or if you find that the respondents to your surveys consistently represent only a small segment of your target population, you might prefer to question people who visit your library between April 20 and May 20, rather than sample only those who are willing to fill out and return a survey. If you have a database of all possible clients, for example in an organization library, you could make it your goal to get an answer from every single

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potential user, checking off the names of those encountered as the month goes on, then printing out a list of those not spoken with in the library and following up with a phone call.

Frequent Inquirers

A growing bookstore trend is the frequent user pass, adapted from the airlines' mileage programs. Bookstores reap many benefits from this scheme. The customer must first pay for the pass—bringing in a profit before a purchase. Unless you have a well-rooted fee-for-service system, you won't even consider charging for the pass. However, bear in mind the principle behind this charge: by purchasing a pass, clients make an investment in the library, giving them motivation to use its services. Clients will then always consider using your services when they have information needs, because they have invested in you and gain an advantage whenever they use the pass. When they do use your services, they will perceive additional value, because they will pay less for the same service. In non-chargeback libraries, you might consider offering the frequent user pass to clients who use the library's services a given number of times in a single month, or to those who use each kind of library service in a single quarter. This structure will turn the acquiring of the pass into a promotional activity of its own.

Marketing Treasures Goes to the Moon for Its Readers

And finally, for the highlight of this month's feature article, we examine the tabloids to find attention-grabbing hints that we might use (with taste and moderation, of course) in our own publications.

Have you ever noticed that the sensationalist headlines of the tabloids are never content to be mere summaries. Often they tell stories, complete with identifiable characters and drama, as in "Little Guy Sues Disney," a story with David-and-Goliath appeal. Just as the tabloids make free and easy use of celebrities to draw in readers, the library newsletter can attract readers with names from within your organization. A hospital library newsletter headline "Staff Member Contributes to Panel" could be changed to "Joe Smith Speaks His Mind," creating interest by suggesting a more intriguing story. Another tabloid technique is exaggeration: "Ted Danson to Wed—for 10 Million Reasons." The story that followed revealed that Danson's alimony would be reduced by \$10 million when he married. If you're reporting on a Griffiths-King finding (see *Sparkling Reviews*) of savings nearing \$600 per reading of journals, books, and internal reports, you might use the headline "600 Reasons

to Visit the Library." You could even jazz it up a little with clip art graphics of \$100 bills, or attach fake money to a display running the headline.

Although we're all familiar with the tabloid's eye-catching page layout, careful examination shows a purpose for this design beyond ensnaring readers. Everything on those screaming pages helps the tabloid tell its story to even the casual skimmer. It accomplishes this by using not just headlines, but also subheads, captions, pull quotes, and a larger-print first paragraph to increase chances of readers getting the drift of the story, even if their eyes just glance over the page. And then there are the photographs. Many times they tell the entire story. Notice how the tabloids use photos to break up the presentation of a page of print. Nothing boring there. Your eye is lead from page to page, gleaning the juicy tidbits. If you don't have photos, use our clip art to enhance your articles. And don't be shy about using large graphic images. Even though you may not want your library newsletter to look like a grocery store tabloid, you can use their visual tricks and layout techniques to capture the attention of your readers.

Successful promotion techniques are displayed almost everywhere we go. Marketing lessons are available free from department stores, malls, tabloids, bookstores, record and tape emporiums, wine stores, gift shops, and kitchen boutiques. When you go out on a shopping trip, put on your marketing glasses. We think you'll find the retail marketplace full of promotion ideas that you can adapt to your library's marketing efforts.

Send Us Your Library Orientation Materials

Marketing Treasures would appreciate receiving any library orientation materials that readers are willing to send to augment an upcoming feature article. Paper handouts, video tapes, overhead slides, computer software (Windows or Mac), guides—whatever you use to introduce new customers to your library's services will be eagerly reviewed by our editorial staff. If you want us to return any materials, just let us know. Send your materials c/o *Marketing Treasures*, Orientation Paks.

Worth Its Weight in Gold

Editor's Note: Marketing Treasures originally came with sheets of library clip art and this column provided ideas on how to use the graphics. The clip art images from Marketing Treasures are now available from www.LibraryClipArt.com

This issue of *Marketing Treasures* includes your new Cut & Paste Clip Art Sheet. The sheet presents original artwork in camera-ready form. If you would like previously published clip art sheets, ask for the Cut & Paste Clip Art Order Form. It shows all the clip art sheets that have appeared in *Marketing Treasures*.

Cha-Cha-Cha. These dancing feet can adorn any library sign. They bring charm to any set of directions or training session announcement. And, of course, they're a must if the information center plans to host tango lessons.

Fortune Cookie. Information lies in everyone's future, and it helps reveal the future. Illustrate this concept with pizzazz by placing this graphic in flyers and ads promoting library trend-watching capabilities and the forecasting functions of research. Good fortune comes to those rich with information.

Streetlamp. This elegant lamp announces that the library is ready to shed light on any subject. Use this graphic with the caption "illuminating" to light up your next promotion campaign.

Flying Hourglass. Whether you label it "tempus fugit" for the scholarly crowd, or "time flies" for those who maintain that dead languages should remain buried, this graphic is sure to get the point across. Use it for overdue announcements, hours signs, ads promoting deadline help, and a wide array of scare campaign ads designed to draw clients to the library whenever they hear time's winged chariot drawing near.

Credit Card. Remind clients that using the library is always to their credit. This graphic is perfect for financial information, billing reports, or just to say that access to a library is like money in the bank. Don't take on a new project without it.

Birth of Venus. This version features Botticelli's Venus (sometimes referred to as Venus on the half shell) non-chalantly perusing a book as she rises from her watery bed.

Trophy. "Be a winner. Use the library." "Library patrons finish first." "Information puts you in first place." Any of these captions conveys the message of this graphic.

Be sure to stop by the exhibit booth (# 409) of Chris Olson & Associates at the Special Libraries Association conference in Atlanta. We're celebrating our 10th year anniversary and we'll be offering discounts and commemorative goodies to all our customers.

Promotion Gems

In an article in the December 1993 issue of *Inprint*, public relations expert R. E. Martin presents the basic steps for writing a news release. He emphasizes that the key to writing a publishable release—rather than one that languishes on an editor's desk before meeting its ultimate fate in the recycling bin—is understanding the editor's needs. Think of the situation as Martin explains it: "Editors have the responsibility of filling up space in their publications with editorials that will both interest and educate their readers. Their primary concern is the readers, because without them, they don't have a publication . . . What do readers want? Readers want answers to their problems. They read newspapers and magazines to find these answers."

This is surely good news for information service providers, whose work revolves around delivering answers and solving problems. A one-person library can find the subject for a publishable release by addressing a problem from the business press. The corporate or organizational librarian can highlight its resources for upcoming projects. A public library can seize on a community problem as a hook to entice readers into the library. Giving readers a jumpstart on the future is always newsworthy.

As for the body of the press release, Martin breaks it down as follows:

- The title should grab attention by announcing a benefit. A public library might write "Free Money For College—Find It in the Library." A one-person library might write "Let the Information Store Identify Your Hundred Best Prospects Before You Make a Single Call."
- The first paragraph should state the problem; the second paragraph should announce the answer—the library, of course.
- The next couple of paragraphs explain why the library is the answer. Here Martin wisely cautions to educate your reader, but not to reveal all your secrets. Hint at everything, but hold something back that the reader will want. After all, your intent is to become sought after.
- In the final paragraph, repeat the benefits, this time aimed at your prospect. Say "If college lies in your future, but money doesn't lie in your bank account . . ." or "If you're finally ready to sell to those who are ready to buy . . ."
- The final step for any news release is an informational sidebar, presenting the "meat and potatoes" of your article in its simplest form. This master touch will make your article complete and the editor eager to publish.

Sparkling Reviews

Special Libraries: Increasing the Information Edge. Jose-Marie Griffiths and Donald W. King. Special Libraries Association, Washington, DC, 1993. ISBN: 0-87111-414-3

When professionals consult libraries in order to win an advantage over peers or competitors, they use the information edge. Librarians have long touted this edge in their marketing campaigns, but nowhere has it been better researched, quantified, and analyzed than in this new book published by the Special Libraries Association (SLA). Using data from 27 independent studies that involved over 10,000 statistical survey responses, authors Griffiths and King present a picture of libraries as cost-effective centers for professional achievement and organizational success.

This book contains 64 tables and 44 charts for librarians to use in marketing campaigns and as bench-marking aids, to see how their information centers rate in customer service and satisfaction. Tables include "Average Importance Ratings of Resources Used by Professionals

for Various Work Activities by Type of Resource," "Break-Even Point of Purchasing Journal Versus Document Delivery Service, by Journal Subscription Price," and "Principal Purposes of Use of Database Searches Done by Library Staff and Current Awareness Services." Charts include "Average Quality Ratings by Professionals of Activities With and Without Information Read in Journal Articles, Books, and Internal Reports," and "Relative Trade-off Value to User of Online Search Relevance and Turnaround Time." Interesting, thorough analyses accompany the statistics.

Special Libraries: Increasing the Information Edge might be the single most valuable reference book for a library marketer. What better source to consult when designing marketing survey questions, evaluating a marketing audit, devising a marketing plan, or writing an annual report? The Special Libraries Association, which helped to fund this book, is to be commended. The authors and researchers are to be congratulated. And the librarians who use its wealth of information will surely be rewarded.

The Crystal Ball

April 18-20 "Redefining Research for Today's Marketing Realities." A three-day conference sponsored by the Advertising Research Foundation in New York, NY. Contact: 212/751-5656.

April 22 "Tough Times: Six Suggestions." A talk by Alice Sizer Warner sponsored by the California Council of County Law Libraries in Sacramento, CA. Contact: 415/554-6823.

April 26 "Design for Desktop Publishing . . . an Advanced Perspective." A one-day seminar given by Lou Williams Seminars in Philadelphia, PA. Also given May 4 in Minneapolis, MN and May 18 in Portland, OR. Contact: 312/565-3900 or 800/837-7123.

April 28 "The Habit of Being . . ." Two sessions given by Kaycee Hale in Silver Spring, MD. Contact: 202/457-0246.

April 29 "Sources of Cost-Effective Promotion: Public Relations for Marketers." A one-day seminar offered by the George

Washington University Center for Career Education in Washington, DC. Contact: 202/994-5299 or 800/947-4498.

May 3-5 "The Selling & Marketing MegaShow." A three-day show in New York, NY. Contact: Miller Freeman Inc., Selling & Marketing Megashow, P.O. Box 939, New York, NY 10108-0939.

May 4-6 "Marketing Value-Added Services: How to Compete Against Price." A two-and-one-half-day seminar offered by the American Management Association in New York, NY. Contact: 518/891-0065.

May 5-6 "Low-Cost Multimedia." A two-day seminar given by Seminars in Usable Design in San Francisco, CA. Also June 16-17 in Denver, CO. Contact: 303/232-0659.

May 9-11 "Strategies and Techniques for Profitable Service Marketing." A three-day seminar offered by the American Management Association in Chicago, IL. Contact: 518/891-0065.

May 12 "Achieving Breakthrough Service In Libraries." A national video teleseminar on customer service sponsored by the American Library Association. Contact: 800/545-2433.

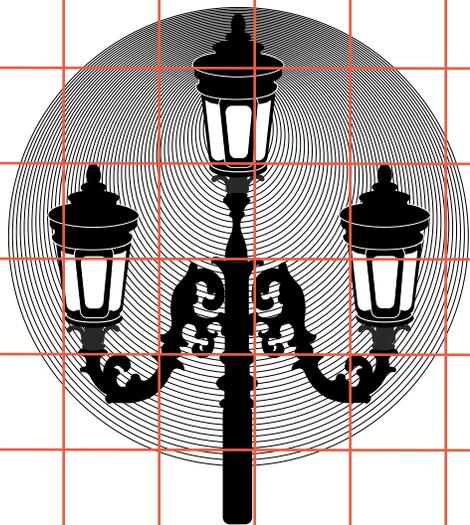
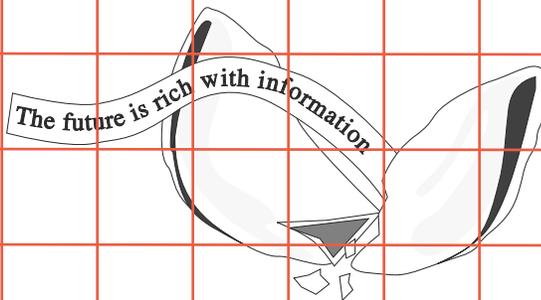
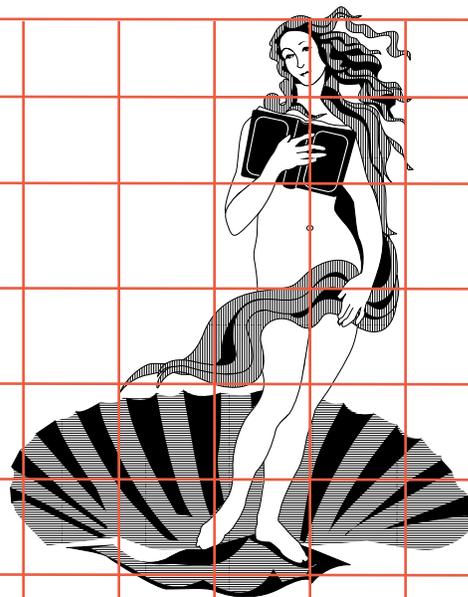
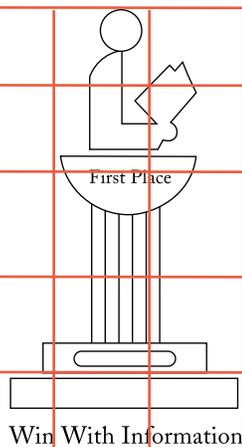
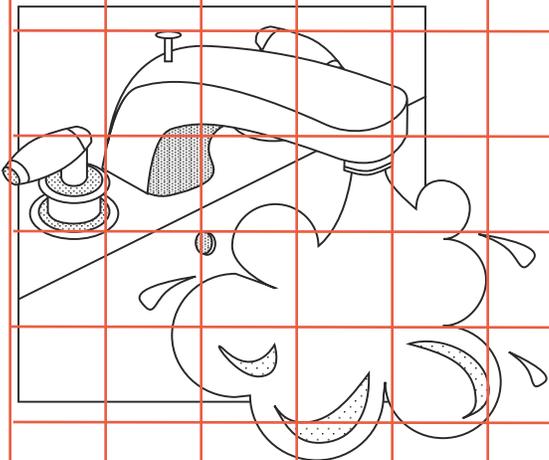
May 13 "The Information Broker's Seminar." A one-day seminar presented by Sue Ruggie of the Information Professionals Institute in New York, NY. Also on June 12 in Atlanta, GA. Contact: 713/537-8344.

May 22-25 "Putting It All Together—Creating Value." The 4th Congress on Customer Satisfaction, a four-day event sponsored by the American Marketing Association. Contact: 312/648-0536.

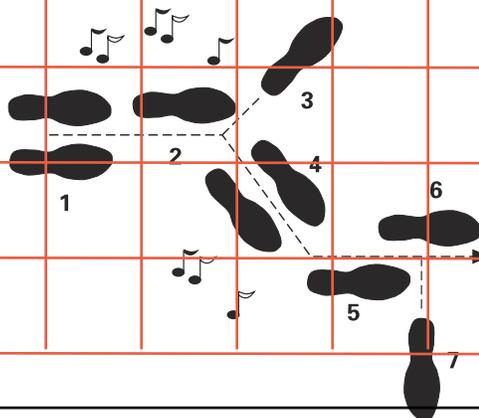
June 10-11 "Marketing and Public Relations." A two-day continuing education unit offered by SLA's Middle Management Institute in Atlanta, GA. Contact: 202/234-4700.

June 11-16 "Information Business." SLA's 85th Annual Conference in Atlanta, GA. Contact: 202/234-4700.

Turn On Information



Follow These Easy Steps



Shed Some Light on the Subject!