Factors Affecting the Public Relations and Marketing of Libraries:
An Annotated Bibliography

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Introduction and Scope

The following bibliography provides information about factors affecting the public relations and marketing of libraries. While marketing and public relations strategies are readily used and evaluated in the business world, nonprofit, especially library, marketing and public relations techniques are often overlooked. The articles included fall under four main categories: librarians’ opinions and reactions to the public relations and marketing of libraries; adapting and evaluating service quality concepts to libraries; analysis of marketing techniques; and user evaluation of library services. The articles were published between 1995 and 2009, with the majority of the articles published in the last five years. User needs are constantly changing, warranting an emphasis on up-to-date marketing and public relations research. The articles included were published in American and British scholarly journals.

Description of Topic

Although marketing and public relations strategies are a main aspect of any business model, these important techniques are often overlooked in library operations. As with any organization, however, being able to promote and assess user satisfaction is essential. Library staff members and administrators can be wary of the terms “public relations” and “marketing,” associating them with business and the importance of turning a profit (Marshall, 2001, pg. 119; Singh, 2009, pg. 25). It is important to show librarians how drawing from the business world can help build a more successful library. Marketing and public relations education has a large impact on librarians’ perceptions and execution of these strategies (Marshall, 2001, pg. 119; Singh, 2009, pg. 30; Shontz, 2004, pg. 77). Concepts, such as the service quality model, can help libraries to reduce the gap between the customer’s expectations and their perception of the quality of service provided (Quinn, 1997, pg. 359). Evaluation of library services in relation to the changing needs of users is essential to the success of any marketing and public relations strategies (Holt, 1996, pg. 548).
Summary of Findings

With economic and social aspects of life changing constantly, the quality expected by consumers is always variable. The needs of library users are no different: new library services and programs must be developed to keep up with changing individual and community needs. Without strategic marketing and public relations techniques, it is extremely difficult for any business to keep in touch with the changing perceptions of quality. Librarians, however, may feel immune to this truism, if they only consider marketing and public relations as methods for selling the library. They may not realize that these strategies refer to a total organizational effort to attract and serve library users (Shontz, 2004, pg. 66). The collection of articles that follows analyses the factors that contribute to positive and negative attitudes librarians have toward marketing and public relations strategies. The articles provide methods for the execution and evaluation of the library’s adaptation of the service quality concept, a business model that can assist libraries in improving the user’s perception of the quality of service. They also include research on specific marketing strategies, as well as, user perceptions of the library and changes made to specific libraries as a result of these studies.

While library literature is filed with theoretical discussions and how-to manuals on the marketing and public relations of libraries, few studies have been conducted to understand librarians’ attitudes towards these techniques. Shontz’s article (2004) on the attitudes of public librarians toward marketing shows a generally positive trend that differs significantly between specific departments. Shontz finds that high-level employees (administrators) with more library experience rated the most pro-marketing. These librarians were also the most likely to have attended library marketing or workshops. Singh’s article (2009) on the attitudes of academic librarians towards marketing and Marshall’s article (2001) on the attitudes of academic librarians toward public relations, however, show different results. In both cases, the academic librarians and directors had more negative attitudes towards marketing and public relations. They were less inclined to implement strategies, or even seek assistance from the associated university’s public relations department (Marshall, 2001, pg. 120). Marshall (2001) notes that none of the libraries included in her study had formal, written public relations plans in place. Both articles confirm Shontz’s conclusion that further marketing and public relations education would be beneficial for library administration and staff.
Developing a product that is desired by, or better yet essential to, consumers is fundamental to a successful business. The perception of that product is an important aspect of creating a successful marketing and public relations strategy. Quinn, in his article on adapting the service quality concept to academic libraries (1997), notes the importance of closing the gap between customer expectations and perceptions. Gaps may stem from librarians inaccurately perceiving customer expectations, library service standards not reflecting customer expectations, libraries inaccurately promising services, or services falling short of expectations (pg. 360). These gaps are all results of miscommunication between the user and the library.

Communication issues need to be fixed by improved public relations, which is where the service quality concept is applicable. Librarians can learn to better handle customer interactions through training programs, like those offered in the business sector (pg. 367). Libraries can also improve the environment in which they provide services, by adapting merchandising techniques that make the library more appealing (pg. 368). Holt (1996) also stresses the importance of creating a user-friendly environment, especially in terms of the use of technology. Marketing the library as a destination experience is another way to attract users and provide an environment perhaps beyond the user’s expectations. Nitecki’s article (1996) provides a method for the evaluation of the service quality concept in academic libraries. Nitecki finds that the SERVQUAL, a marketing research instrument, can be used to monitor the effectiveness of training efforts on improving user defined quality of service (pg. 188). While librarians’ attitudes may be wary of adapting business practices, these articles provide successful methods in which they can be incorporated and evaluated.

In MacDonald’s article on the impact of a virtual reference marketing campaign (2008), the author mentions that little empirical data has been provided on the success of marketing strategies. MacDonald is able to show the positive effect of the campaign through gathered research, but notes that there is a need for more systematic and quantitative analysis of the impact of marketing strategies (pg. 383). Welch’s article on the use of the academic library website as a marketing and public relations tool (2005), provides data on the use of direct links. Welch notes that the majority of library websites do not include links to a friends or associates group, links for donations, or links to information on exhibits or library programs (pg. 227). Including these links and others could help libraries to increase their marketing and public relations efforts, especially in times of smaller budgets and increased need for additional support.
These articles are included to demonstrate the types of techniques libraries can use to improve their marketing and public relations efforts.

The final articles are included to provide specific concerns of library users and examples of libraries’ strategies to fix these problems. Ho (2003) and Sobel’s (2009) articles focus on surveying focus groups to gain information. Ho interviews students on the reliability of the Texas A&M University library, while Sobel speaks with first year students at the University of North Carolina to get an understanding of their use of reference services. Both researchers note issues the students had with using the library, while Ho’s article gives examples of the library’s methods to fix these problems (Ho, 2003, pg. 86). Vondracek’s article (2007) discusses the tendencies of a population often ignored: library non-users. Vondrackek develops a list of qualities library users and non-users would like to see change in the library (pgs. 287 – 288). She also discusses specific changes that the library implemented as a result of her focus groups. These articles provide valuable information on specific user concerns that any library would be able to learn from.

The information provided in these articles is presented to help librarians and researchers better understand the factors that effect library marketing and public relations. Techniques that are usually applied to businesses can assist libraries in closing the gap between user perceptions and expectations. Before librarians can be expected to utilize these techniques, it is important to understand their attitudes towards marketing and public relations. It is also important for librarians to be provided with specific examples of marketing and public relations techniques so that the librarians themselves can evaluate them. Finally, gaining a better understanding of user needs through surveys and focus groups is a key way to begin the implementation of a marketing or public relations plan.
Bibliography

Entry 1:


Abstract:

This research set out to explore the attitudes of school, academic and public librarians towards marketing libraries. The main question that was examined is whether personality characteristics such as empowerment, extroversion and resistance to change influence librarians' attitudes towards the marketing of libraries. The research tools included: a personal details questionnaire, extroversion/ introversion questionnaire, attitudes towards marketing a library questionnaire, a resistance to change questionnaire and an empowerment questionnaire. The most important finding of this research was the positive correlation between personal characteristics: empowerment, extroversion and resistance to change and attitudes towards marketing libraries. The results of the current research emphasize the idea that librarians of all branches should be exposed to marketing concepts in order to maintain their central position as information providers despite — and within — the new technologies.  (Excerpt from published abstract)

Annotation:

Dr. Aharony’s article is significant in that it provides empirical analysis of librarians’ characteristics that effect marketing the library. Its findings show that older, more empowered librarians are less open to change, but are pro-marketing and carry out more marketing activities than less experienced librarians. Aharony attributes this anomaly to older librarians’ theoretical understanding of the importance of marketing. Aharony’s research shows that school librarians demonstrate more positive attitudes towards marketing than public or academic librarians. This data stands in contrast to that of Shontz et al. (2004), which shows that most public librarians have positive attitudes towards marketing. Aharony attributes this discrepancy to her survey of Israeli librarians, noting that Israeli school librarians face budgetary constraints and limited employment. Dr. Aharony’s research builds on that of Sontz et al. (2004), expanding research on librarians’ attitudes toward marketing to school and academic librarians, as well as public librarians.

Search Strategy:

I used Dialog to search ERIC because it has a variety of scholarly articles on education for library and information science. I am familiar with using this database, but, because this was my first search for the project, decided to execute a very general keyword search to get a sense of what kind of information was available on library public relations.

Database:

ERIC [Dialog File 1]
Method of Searching:

Keyword searching

Search String:

s librar? and public()relations

Entry 2:


Abstract:

Student perceptions of dependability and accuracy of the Texas A&M University Libraries' services are explored through focus groups. Users reported difficulty in locating materials, found inaccurate catalog and circulation records, encountered inadequate signage, and received late notifications. The results have helped the library identify areas in need of improvement. (Published abstract)

Annotation:

Ho’s article is unique in that it focuses exclusively on user perceptions of the reliability of a specific library. Previous studies have shown that reliability is a key factor in customer satisfaction. The article provides critiques from users that will assist libraries in understanding user needs and influence their marketing and public relations strategies. Ho provides specific accounts of changes made to the Texas A&M University Libraries because of the recorded user comments. Ho’s research is limited by a small population derived from one university’s campus. The survey does not reveal any quantitative information.

Search Strategy:

After reading through Singh’s article (2009) on librarians’ attitudes towards marketing, I wanted to search through his references. I searched the Web of Science’s Social Sciences Citation Index for “Singh R*” in the author field and “marketing” in topic field. I clicked on the link to the information about his article and then browsed through the list of references.

Database:

Social Sciences Citation Index [Web of Science]

Method of Searching:
Footnote chasing

Search String:

Marketing (in topic field) AND Singh R* (in author field)

Entry 3:


Abstract:

Changes in the social and economic fabric of American life have prompted public libraries to develop services and programs that are more in tune with the needs of individuals and communities. Among the strategies that public libraries have employed to improve their quality and both meet and anticipate new markets are defining the organization’s core values and mission, capitalizing on new user-friendly information technologies, defining the library as a visitor destination, and bringing a customer locus to staff training and development. The author emphasizes the need for more effective public relations and marketing strategies and the importance of listening to the customer as keys to building an organization characterized by exemplary quality. (Excerpt from published abstract)

Annotation:

Dr. Holt’s article is unique in that it provides a variety of examples of specific public relations strategies executed by specific libraries throughout the country. Holt notes that the definition of quality in the library is constantly changing. Inconsistency, however, is the downfall of the public library. Libraries need to adopt a holistic strategy to balance the changes in services expected by users and the consistency of quality service provided. Holt emphasizes the importance of forming partnerships to build the effectiveness and quality of the library. He notes that there is a willingness to pay libraries to expand their essential materials. With the dwindling economy of today, this statement is out of date. The data in support of increasing computer services is also out of date.

Search Strategy:

I decided to search Web of Science because I knew that it would be a great resource for scholarly articles. I limited my search to the Social Sciences Citation Index because I knew that it would have the most information pertinent to library and information science. I performed a keyword search for the term “user friendly”. I wanted to find information about strategies used to make the library more user-friendly. Looking back, I should have revised my search to <librar*> to account for other forms of the word.
Database:

Social Sciences Citation Index [Web of Science]

Method of Searching:

Keyword searching

Search String:

Library AND libraries AND user friendly (all in topic fields)

Entry 4:


Abstract:

Current information science literature says that library services need to be marketed to users. While the literature has a lot of advice on how to develop a marketing plan, there have been few reports on the actual implementation of a marketing campaign and the resulting impact on academic library services. This case study describes the design, implementation, and evaluation of a marketing campaign to promote the use of a new virtual reference service at Texas A&M University. The overall impact of the marketing campaign on the use of the service is discussed.

Annotation:

MacDonald’s article is unique in that it provides a first hand account of the execution of a specific marketing campaign. The article provides empirical analysis, which is rare in other studies of marketing campaigns. MacDonald gives specific accounts of branding, advertising, and strategic planning. The article also provides a specific example of a virtual reference that increases the library’s visibility. MacDonald acknowledges the need for more systematic research on marketing strategies. The article is limited in that the data comes from one university.

Search Strategy:

Although I found informative article on library public relations and marketing, I wanted to find an article that evaluated the implemented strategies. I decided to search the Library Literature and Information Science database through Dialog because it contains many scholarly articles on library research. I searched the database’s thesaurus to find the descriptor, “public relations of libraries”. I also expanded “evaluation” in the descriptor field, but did not find a more specific
term relevant to my search. Searching “public relations of libraries” AND “evaluation” in descriptor fields yielded this result.

**Database:**

Library Literature and Information Science Full Text [Dialog File 438]

**Method of Searching:**

Controlled vocabulary and field searching

**Search String:**

e evaluation
s e3
s s2/de
ss s3 and public relations of libraries/de

**Entry 5:**


**Abstract:**

The need for public relations in academic libraries has often gone unrecognized. This article analyzes the results of interviews with 13 library directors on the subject of public relations. While most grasped the importance of establishing a strong public image, many have not actively pursued an organized public relations program. (Published Abstract)

**Annotation:**

Marshall’s article provides unique data on the public relations activities of academic libraries. Marshall notes that none of the library directors interviewed had formal public relations policies, and that only one of the directors had taken courses in public relations. Most of the directors did not target community members outside the academic population for public relations. Academic library directors need to build their knowledge of public relations and expand their public relations activities and target audiences. The library directors surveyed were all from Upper Midwest colleges and universities. While the college and university sizes and types differed, the locations were not diverse. Marshall also notes that limitations to her research include interviews with library directors, and not library staff or library users. The same sample size and lack of qualitative data are also limitations to the research.

**Search Strategy:**
I decided to search Web of Science because I knew that it would be a great resource for scholarly articles. I limited my search to the Social Sciences Citation Index because I knew that it would have the most information pertinent to library and information science. I performed a basic keyword search since this was my first time searching the Social Sciences Citation Index for this project. I was interested in getting a sense of what information the database had to offer. Looking back, I should have revised my search to <librar*> to account for other forms of the word.

**Database:**

Social Sciences Citation Index [Web of Science]

**Method of Searching:**

Keyword searching

**Search String:**

Library AND libraries AND public relations (all in topic fields)

**Entry 6:**


**Abstract:**

New ways to evaluate libraries are needed. The SERVQUAL is a diagnostic tool to measure service quality, defined as the difference between customer perceptions and expectations of service. This article discusses implications for library management and future explorations of a tool applicable to academic libraries. (Published abstract)

**Annotation:**

Nitecki’s article is unique in that it applies a marketing research tool to academic libraries. Very few previous articles have discussed the concept of service quality in libraries. Nitecki provides specific results of the SERVQUAL and analyzes how the results can assist academic librarians in developing a strategy of service quality. When read in conjunction with Quinn’s article (1997), the pair of articles relays the benefits of a service quality model and a strategy of evaluation. A population from one library limits Nitecki’s research.

**Search Strategy:**

After noticing Drexel’s Dean of Libraries, Dr. Danuta Nitecki, was referenced in Quinn’s article, “Adapting service quality concepts to academic libraries” (1997), I decided to perform an author
field search for Dr. Nitecki in the Library Literature and Information Science Full Text database through Dialog. I expanded “Nitecki, Danuta” in the author field, and then searched for her name with “public relations.

Database:

Library Literature and Information Science Full Text [Dialog File 438]

Method of Searching:

Field searching

Search String:

e au=nitecki, danuta

s e4 and public()relations

Entry 7:


Abstract:

Some of the limitations and possibilities of the service quality model for academic libraries are discussed. The model was originally developed in a commercial environment and may require some adaptation to the non-commercial environment of the academic library. Various ways in which the model might be adapted are suggested. (Published abstract)

Annotation:

Quinn’s article provides a unique examination of the academic library in terms of the service quality model. Quinn notes the conflict between the idea of “user as customer” and the librarians’ desire to service students by teaching. He suggests that libraries and library schools should adopt policies that ensure better training of staff involved with the public. Academic libraries can also improve by adopting merchandising techniques from the bookstore model. Quinn notes that this is an initial attempt to combine the service quality model and didactic model of the academic library, but that more research is needed. Although this article provides a specific example of a library model, it is from 1997 and not completely up to date.

Search Strategy:

I decided to search the Library Literature and Information Science database through the Hagerty Library website because it contains many scholarly articles on library research. I searched for
“bookstore model” in the keyword field. I was interested to find any articles concerning the bookstore model and library marketing, after reading an article provided by a student in INFO 521. I limited my search to “peer reviewed” because it was a requirement for the bibliography’s article.

Database:

Library Literature and Information Science Full Text

Method of Searching:

Keyword searching

Search String:

“Bookstore model” as: keyword
Limit to: peer reviewed

Entry 8:


Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to identify attitudes of public librarians toward the marketing of library services and relate these attitudes to selected independent variables. A questionnaire was mailed to individual members of the New Jersey Library Association. Although most of the respondents had generally positive attitudes toward library marketing, there were some statistically significant differences between subgroups. (Excerpt from published abstract)

Annotation:

Shontz’s article is unique in that it analyzes the attitudes of librarians towards marketing. When read in conjunction with Aharony’s article (2009), the two articles provide an in depth look at a side of marketing that has gotten little attention. Most of the writing in the field of marketing libraries consists of guidebooks or discussions on the role of marketing in libraries. Shontz notes that before her survey, no empirical study on librarians’ attitudes towards marketing could be found that surveyed a substantial population of public librarians. The article includes successful graphical representations of the questions answered in the survey. Although the study focuses on public librarians, those surveyed include administrators and many types of librarians. Shontz notes that her sample population includes only public librarians from New Jersey, and that most of the librarians who responded were relatively older.
Search Strategy:

In my search of the Library Literature and Information Science Full Text database through Dialog, I came across an article by Doherty et al. (1995) in the *Journal of Information Science*. While waiting for the article to come through Interlibrary Loan, I performed a cited reference search for the article in the Social Sciences Citation Index through Web of Science.

Database:

Social Sciences Citation Index [Web of Science]

Method of Searching:

Citation searching

Search String:

Cited author: Doherty NF
Cited work: J INFORM S
Cited year: 1995

Entry 9:


Abstract:

This paper attempts to find if there is any connection between the marketing attitudes and behaviour of librarians in thirty-three different libraries of Finland. Based on market-oriented behaviour, three kinds of libraries were found: strong, medium and weak. The findings indicate a positive relation between the marketing attitudes and behaviour. Furthermore, this paper attempts to explore the underlying factors behind the positive marketing attitudes and behaviour and discusses their managerial implications for the librarianship profession. (Published abstract)

Annotation:

Singh’s article is unique in that it addresses an overlooked aspect of marketing, a popular topic in the library profession. Singh adapts Lozano’s market orientation scale (2000) by modifying the different dimensions in terms of libraries. His data is effective due to his acknowledgement that many factors affect behavior. He notes that the majority of directors of strongly market-oriented libraries had taken courses or attended workshops on marketing. Of the directors of weakly market-oriented libraries, only one had taken marketing courses or attended workshops. Marketing seminars and education can help to deplete conceptual and operational barriers for
library staff. Singh’s research focuses on the attitudes of library directors and does not account for other library staff. His population is small and specific to Finland, which affects its value to any United States research.

Search Strategy:

I decided to search the Library Literature and Information Science database through the Hagerty Library website because it contains many scholarly articles on library research. I searched for “public relations” in the keyword field. I performed a basic keyword search so that I could browse through the databases materials dealing with public relations. I limited my search to “peer reviewed” because it was a requirement for the bibliography’s article.

Database:

Library Literature and Information Science Full Text

Method of Searching:

Keyword Searching

Search String:

“Public relations” as: keyword
Limit to: peer reviewed

Entry 10:


Abstract:

Most academic libraries have limited budgets for promoting their reference services. Understanding which promotions best reach current and potential patrons is crucial to budgeting funding, as well as time, effectively. This article describes a study that sought to answer three questions: (1) What percentage of first-year undergraduate students are aware of reference services? (2) What percentage of first-years seek information from reference librarians? (3) Through which media are first-years comfortable communicating with reference librarians? To answer these questions, the researcher surveyed 237 first-years during their first semester at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC). Strong trends related to peers' and educators' recommendations of reference services also emerged. (Excerpt from published abstract)

Annotation:
Sobel’s article is unique in that it analyzes reference services from the user’s perspective. Sobel discusses the factors that influence a student’s decision to use reference services. The research shows an anomaly in that the majority of students felt that librarians could “probably” or “definitely” help them with their questions, while librarians at other libraries had not successfully helped them. The population, which is drawn from fourteen sections of the English 101 class, some of which are taught by the same teaching assistant, limits the research. Sobel also notes that the survey was conducted early in the semester, before many sections of the English 101 class had received their library instruction session.

Search Strategy:

Although I found informative articles on library public relations and marketing, I wanted to find an article that evaluated the implemented strategies. I decided to search the Library Literature and Information Science database through Dialog because it contains many scholarly articles on library research. I searched the database’s thesaurus to find the descriptor, “public relations of libraries”. I also expanded “evaluation” in the descriptor field, but did not find a more specific term relevant to my search. Searching “public relations of libraries” AND “evaluation” in descriptor fields yielded this result.

Database:

Library Literature and Information Science Full Text [Dialog File 438]

Method of Searching:

Controlled vocabulary and field searching

Search String:

e evaluation
s e3
s s2/de
ss s3 and public relations of libraries/de

Entry 11:


Abstract:

Oregon State University (OSU) researchers surveyed 3,227 undergraduate students to identify how many students use or do not use the physical and virtual OSU libraries. Most importantly, we wanted to determine the alternatives to the library that students choose for typical library activities, such as studying, research, and research assistance, and why they prefer those
alternatives. Two hundred seventy five (29 percent) of the 949 respondents identified themselves as infrequent or non-users of the physical and/or virtual library. The researchers conducted focus groups with both library users and non-users, and surveyed 95 (35 percent) of the infrequent and non-users. The results suggest that students seek comfort, convenience, and quiet in extra-library and library environments; rely on knowledgeable individuals for research assistance; and conduct the majority of their research online from home. (Published abstract)

Annotation:

Vondracek’s article is unique in that it examines user’s attitudes towards alternatives to the library, and why they choose them. When read in conjunction with Sobel’s article (2009), these two articles provide an in depth look at users’ attitudes toward reference services and their alternatives. Vondracek’s article focuses on non-users of the library, a population that has been given little attention, because it is generally difficult to identify. Understanding students’ reasoning for choosing alternatives to the library is useful because it helps libraries to evaluate the services or environment these students feel the library does not provide. Vondracek lists specific changes to the Oregon State University library that were influenced by her research. This research is limited by a very small focus group. A follow-up survey, however, was implemented with better turnout.

Search Strategy:

After reading through Sobel’s article (2009) on promoting library reference services, I wanted to search through her references. I searched the Web of Science’s Social Sciences Citation Index for “Sobel K*” in the author field. I clicked on the link to the information about her article and then browsed through the list of references.

Database:

Social Science Citation Index [Web of Science]

Method of Searching:

Footnotes chasing

Search String:

Sobel K* (in author field)

Entry 12:


Abstract:
This article explores the potential and reality of using the academic library Web site to market library resources and services, for fundraising, and to market special events. It explores such issues as the placement of a link to academic libraries from institutional home pages and the use of a library Web site to include links to news, exhibits, programs, and fundraising. This article includes a survey of the Web sites of academic libraries that serve general undergraduate populations. (Published abstract)

Annotation:

Welch’s article provides a unique look at web resources used to improve public relations. The survey shows that the majority of college and university library web sites do not provide links for library gifts and donations, links to a “friends of the library” group, or even links to information on library exhibits and programs. Welch notes the success the New York Public Library has had with links for fundraising, and advises colleges and universities to do the same. Welch’s survey expands on Roberta Astroff’s article (2001) on the placement of ARL (Association of Research Libraries) library links on universities’ homepages. Welch includes non-ARL libraries and alternative categories of links in her survey. While useful in categorizing college and university libraries’ online public relations practices, Welch does not make any definitive conclusions and notes that further research is needed to determine a link between library-sponsored events attendance and public relations links on the college or university’s homepage.

Search Strategy:

I decided to search Web of Science because I knew that it would be a great resource for scholarly articles. I limited my search to the Social Sciences Citation Index because I knew that it would have the most information pertinent to library and information science. I performed a basic keyword search since this was my first time searching the Social Sciences Citation Index for this project. I was interested in getting a sense of what information the database had to offer. Looking back, I should have revised my search to <librar*> to account for other forms of the word.

Database:

Social Sciences Citation Index [Web of Science]

Method of Searching:

Keyword searching

Search String:

Library AND libraries AND public relations (all in topic fields)
**Conclusion and Personal Statement**

My interest in library public relations and marketing is the result of my previous work as the assistant to the director of a youth orchestra. With only two employees, I was required to execute many of the public relations and marketing aspects of our strategic plan. There is nothing more important than being recognized by developing a positive public image as a non-profit organization. If your audience does not know you exist, there is no way you can succeed. I understand how marketing and public relations work in the arts world, but was unsure how these strategies would affect libraries. I was curious to learn about the strategies implemented, as well as techniques for evaluation and user and staff opinions.

When I began my search, I was unsure of what sorts of information I would find, and thus performed very general keyword searches for terms, such as “public relations” and “marketing.” Because the scholarly literature available is limited, these basic searches were relevant to my research. I had particular success with the Web of Science’s Social Sciences Citation Index. I found it very useful to browse the listed references and execute citation searching within the database. I preferred the general browse-ability of the Web of Science to the needed specificity when using Dialog. While Dialog allowed me to immediately pinpoint the article by Dr. Nitecki, I appreciated the Web of Science’s user-friendly interface and conduciveness to citation searching even more.

From this assignment, I learned that I need to improve the directness of my searches. Because I found browsing and basic keyword searching successful, I did not challenge myself to develop direct and specific search statements that may have gotten results in a faster more efficient way. If I were to complete this assignment again, I would utilize more database resources. I focused on four databases, which provided me with plenty of information. In the future, however, I would make more of an attempt to explore all available resources.

This assignment was very successful as a final project. It gave me enough freedom to choose and develop a topic I was interested in, while providing enough guidance to ensure a varied and effective search. I learned what search strategies work well for me, and how I can improve my search techniques. I enjoyed learning about a subject that interests me, while improving my abilities as a reference specialist.