The Library's Commodity for Economic Development

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Bally Leases Former Wrangler Facility.

Bally Engineered Structures, Inc. of Bally, Pennsylvania, announced that it has leased the former Blue Bell, Inc. plant outside Morehead City. Bally is the nation's leading manufacturer of walk-in coolers and freezers. Last year the company had approximately $50 million in sales. Initial employment will be approximately 35, all of whom will be hired locally. "One of the key factors in our decision to relocate in Carteret County was the responsiveness of the community. Carteret Community College has been outstanding in providing needed information"

(Tom Pietrocini, Bally President and CEO).[1]

*I*n March 1994, Bally announced that its corporate headquarters would relocate to Morehead City and would employ three hundred people within two years. Carteret Community College's library has been an active partner in providing the information for attracting industries such as Bally to its service area.

Carteret Community College (CCC) is located in a rural/resort area overlooking Bogue Sound next to the Atlantic Ocean. Many people pass the college "on the way to the beach." The college has approximately twenty-five hundred full-time and part-time students. CCC is one of the first community colleges to have a Small Business Center (SBC), and the first where the library and the SBC actively cooperate to provide business information.

When the Department of Community Colleges created the SBCs, it stipulated that each center must provide business information services. The library director at CCC saw this as an opportunity to develop a program which has become a model duplicated by other community colleges in North Carolina. He suggested to the SBC director that the library provide electronic business information services and that the SBC use its funding to provide small business programming. The SBC sent the library director to a three-day workshop on using electronic resources for business and purchased the library a modem to access those resources. The library provides business information for small business entrepreneurs as well as assistance in general economic development.

Howard McGinn, the former State Librarian of North Carolina, urged libraries to take the initiative and change the paradigm of libraries from an "enhancement to the infrastructure" to a "business information utility" providing information as a core service similar to other utilities in their service area. Libraries must serve business and government segments if they are to contribute to the economic life of the community, and are in a unique position to do so as publicly supported institutions.

In order to become a business information utility, libraries must market themselves to business and government entities. In *Marketing for Nonprofit Organizations*,[2] Philip Kotler discussed the four "P's" of marketing and explains how non-profit agencies can benefit from a marketing plan. They are

1) **Product** — the most basic of marketing decisions. What to offer the target market? Most organizations offer a product mix which is periodically modified by product additions and deletions. A library's product mix includes special collections, tours and/or bibliographic instruction, and access to electronic information resources. In essence, our product is information.

2) **Price** — the *real* price of everything. Organizations proceed through a three-stage process to determine pricing. First, they determine the *pricing objective*, whether it is profit, usage, fairness, or some other objective. Second, they determine *pricing strategy* — whether it is cost-based, demand-based, or competition-based. Third, they determine when and whether a *price change* is warranted. In libraries, it is necessary to add a fourth stage, *philosophy*. Should libraries provide all services "free" or should they charge for special services like electronic resources? Most librarians need to determine their philosophical stance on this question before they can determine a pricing strategy.

3) **Place** — product availability and accessibility. This is the place or distribution decision, and it is a key element in the marketing mix. Is the library readily accessible to the business community? The business community requires information fast — *when* they need it. Network access to the catalog, facsimile service to businesses, and online reference service to a business person's computer are a few ideas to provide a quick turnaround time for the business clients.

4) **Promotion** — communicate to and motivate various markets and publics. Organizations develop a communication program that has impact and is cost effective. A communication program not only targets specific consumers (e.g. the business community), but also commu-

nicates to other publics, such as government agencies, the press, and financial/governing boards. In other words, it "sells" library services for increased funding. A library uses many promotional tools such as space/time advertising, mailings, speeches, demonstrations, contests, free samples, catalogs, films, exhibits, and endorsements. Many of these tools are easily targeted to the business community: write a monthly article or list of new business books for the newsletter of the Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) and the Economic Development Council (EDC); design a brochure on library services and use the Chamber's and EDC's mailing list for distribution; speak at various civic and other professional clubs and organizations; *join* civic and professional organizations; provide free business information at clubs to show what they can receive from the library; provide computer access to the catalog and a facsimile reference service to the business community and government agencies; write letters of support for business inclusion on the information highway and Internet access. Let the business community know the the library is a source of information they can depend on and use in their business for growth.

The 4 P's in Carteret County
The Carteret Community College library uses the four "P's" concept to position itself as a business information utility in a rural/resort area.

Product
The library's partnership with the SBC has created information as a product. The following brochure describes the Business Information Connection (BIC) which utilizes computer databases as its primary resource. (See Figure 1.)

The library at CCC provides information to clients who contact the SBC for developing business plans. In a business plan, demographic information is essential. The source used for demographic information is the LINC information system provided by North Carolina's Office of State Planning (OSP) and the State Library of North Carolina. This system contains census information from every county, city, and municipality in the state. It also contains statistical data from other state and federal government agencies.

The Employment Security Commission (ESC) provides data on monthly employment in North Carolina. State departments of treasury and revenue provide information pertaining to county and municipal finance. Data is provided from various federal agencies on agriculture, county economic development, building

permits, federal funding, and economic census. These sources are accessed by a dial-up service provided by the OSP.

LINC has standard statistical reports such as county profiles. Special reports can be created by combining variables (data fields) from the census. The information contained in LINC is vital for entrepreneurs and businesses relocating to the library's service area. In Carteret County, the CCC library and access to LINC are considered a vital asset for economic development.

When Carteret County's Economic Development Council (EDC) needs statistical data to entice a business to relocate, the CCC library provides the information. In a recent example, a multi-million dollar manufacturing facility relocated its plant to Carteret County. The CCC library did the background information search on the company for the EDC. Since the company is privately held, it is not listed in any standard print directory. The library used a Dun and Bradstreet database called *Dun's Market Identifiers* to locate information on the company.

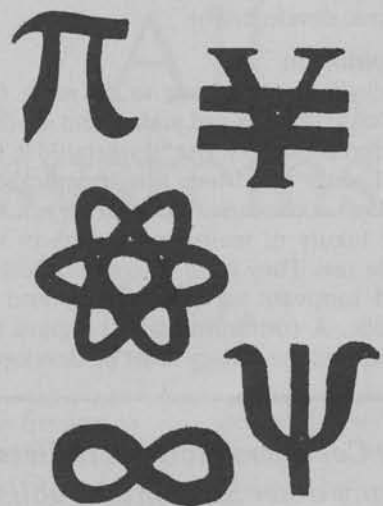The following scenario demonstrates how the library provides information to the

EDC quickly and efficiently. A company is interested in locating in the county. The owners are meeting with the EDC director at !0 a.m. EDC calls at 9 a.m. and requests statistical data on Carteret County for this meeting. LINC is accessed, and the Carteret County Statistical Profile is printed remotely (using a printer adapted to a pc). A copy is faxed to the EDC, and a print copy is in their hands by 9:45 a.m.

The key to providing information for economic development and businesses from CCC's library is telecommunications and access to remote databases. Without the ability to access and print materials stored in these databases, the information provided would be dated and virtually useless for development and entrepreneurs. Again, business requires information that is timely, to the point, and readily available.

This same company requests a report showing the average annual wage per worker and the property tax rate per one hundred dollar valuation in Carteret Count. Again, LINC is used to create a special report with the previously mentioned variables. It is forwarded to the EDC and then faxed to the company.

Figure 1

THE
BUSINESS
INFORMATION
CONNECTION

AT
THE LIBRARY
CARTERET COMMUNITY COLLEGE
(919) 247-3134

SBCC
Small Business Center Connection

The Small Business Center, located in the Economic Development Center Building located on the Carteret Community College Campus, provides assistance to the small business owner. This assistance is in the form of counseling, referral service, and special interest programs/seminars. Most of these services are at no cost to the business owner. Provided also by the Small Business Center are:

--- Management Training
--- Upgrading and retraining of employees
--- One-to-one assistance in business planning

Contact Gary Plough, Director of the Small Business Center at ext. 220 for further information.

Business Teleconferencing Television Connection
The library will provide your business with a video/satellite downlink connection. The library will:

• Copy off-satellite programming for your business. Usage/copyright fees are applicable.

• Set-up video teleconferencing to receive satellite programming for a group. Equipment and room usage fees are applicable.

The FAX Connection:
For a minimum charge, the library will receive and transmit FAX items for your business concerning materials in the Business Information Connection.

Source: Carteret Community College Library/LDC, 1989

The company decides to relocate a manufacturing facility in the county. It will employ approximately fifty workers. Carteret County was in competition with the Norfolk, Virginia, area for this company. When the company announced the relocation, it indicated that the timeliness of the information received was one of the factors for choosing Carteret County.

Price

Economic developers understand that information is not free. They are willing to pay for information if it is current and immediate. Does the library charge for special information reports accessed from electronic resources? Each time a Dun and Bradstreet database is searched, there is a charge. The following policy is in place at the library concerning business information using remote databases:

For-profit businesses pay the full cost of a computer search plus a ten dollar handling fee. Nonprofit agencies, governmental entities, and schools/colleges pay a subsidized cost depending on the database used, and they pay no handling fee.

The SBC at Carteret Community College refers many clients to the library for business name searches. One of the most important aspects of establishing a new business is an identifiable name. Is the name of the proposed business copyrighted by someone else? A quick search in a database on trademarks reveals its copyright status, and the owner and expiration date of any copyright.

A search of this type is quick and documents the requested information. The library charges a subsidized fee because the client is referred from the SBC. The price is usually less than ten dollars. The search is given to the client with the caveat that for legal purposes, it is not authorized by a copyright attorney. It is known that attorneys use the same database and charge several hundred dollars for a name search.

Place

Most of us have little control over the physical location of the library. "Place in marketing" is defined as the availability and accessibility of the product being marketed. As previously mentioned, business people need information *when* they need it They cannot wait until the library opens and then visit the facility.

There are several ways to provide immediate information services for business. The library is becoming a "virtual library" with accessibility anywhere and anytime. Business people have used our library at 11 p.m. on Sunday evenings via a dial-up service to our online public access catalog (OPAC).

Electronic reference is another service of the virtual library, and reference service is essential for serving businesses. Several libraries are using electronic bulletin boards (BBs) for reference. A client can leave a reference question on the BB. When the messages for the day are read, the reference question is answered and the information is forwarded to the business via fax or modem.

One of the least utilized telecommunication devices for reference is an automated answering machine (AAM). Most libraries have an AAM for announcements concerning library hours, holidays, etc. It can be used in reference by encouraging clients to call and leave questions. Reference personnel review the call-in questions and call back with answers.

With the virtual library, location is no longer a factor in providing quick, reliable information. The public needs to know that you can provide this service for economic development.

Promotion

Today's libraries have to do more than develop services and make them available to the consumers. The "if you build it, they will come" syndrome is not applicable in today's economies. Libraries do not have the luxury of maintaining services with little use. They have to communicate to and motivate various markets and the public. A communication program that promotes the library must be developed.

Basic tenets of communication programs include target marketing, raising money, gaining support for the cause, and identifying other publics in the market area. Kotler identifies four groups of promotional tools for use in a communication program:

1. *Advertising*: Any form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services paid by a sponsor.
2. *Sales promotion*: Short-term incentives to encourage purchase or sales of a product.
3. *Personal selling*: Oral presentations.
4. *Publicity*: Planting of significant news about services in a published medium usually not paid by the sponsor.[3]

To use these tools effectively, they must be viewed as a communication process or framework. All elements should be present for promoting library services to business and other pertinent publics.

The CCC library uses most of these tools to promote its service to business. Before advertising begins, decisions must be made concerning target market, positioning, and mix. When CCC library started its Business Information Connection, contacts were made with the SBC, EDC, Chamber, and other professional organizations and clubs to ascertain their information needs. This led to the development of the BIC brochure which was distributed to all the previously mentioned agencies. Members of these groups were encouraged to take the brochure back to their places of business.

For short-term promotion, the library displays its services at meetings of professional organizations and conferences. Usually, the display demonstrates computer access to information. A recent example is the North Carolina Rural Teleforum, held January 5, 1994. The teleforum was on the CONCERT network for interactive telecommunication meetings and distance learning. Eight hundred people participated in the teleforum at sites in Boone, Charlotte, Greenville, Raleigh, and Wilmington. The purpose of the teleforum was to show how

telecommunications could be used in rural economic development.

The CCC library displayed its BIC at the teleforum by accessing LINC on demand and printing county profiles. LINC was accessed twenty-eight times for free prints of county profiles. The CCC library was the only library with a display at the Wilmington site. The teleforum served as vehicle for the CCC Library to identify target publics (economic developers) in eastern North Carolina with a short-term promotion.

Speaking at meetings, being interviewed by local radio and cable TV, and participating in forums are some of the ways a librarian can personally sell the library's service. It is critically important that one becomes an activist in promotion of the library. If the image of the library needs changing to that of a business information utility, it must be done. Active promotion is the key to this change.

Publicity, the last group of tools for promotion, is making your message heard — usually without charge. The CCC library provides public service announcements for local radio and cable TV. Articles are written for SBC, EDC, and Chamber newsletters. CCC's library director is a guest speaker in classes on starting a small business. Presentations are made at library workshops and conferences.

Promotion is being personally involved. We cannot assume that someone else will do it. Leaders today promote their services and products. Television has many commercials where corporate chairmen sell their products. We have a personal stake in the success and promotion of our library. We receive the blame when we fail; why not receive the accolades for success?

Summary
A library needs to be a proactive participant in the economic development of its community. The following steps are suggested:

- develop specific resources for businesses and economic development
- advertise the resources
- create a policy on charging for information
- automate the library (use automated answering and facsimile machines)
- join the Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Council
- provide information services for the small business center
- advertise library services at places of business and professional associations
- speak at meetings of business associations
- write articles for the local newspaper and business newsletters

The CCC library's role has been recognized by the college's administration with increased line-item funding for its service to the community. This has permitted the library to purchase additional CD-ROMs and several computer workstations. The library has five six-disk CD-ROM changers and three single CD-ROM players. Each changer has a variety of CD-ROMs, including *Moody's Financial Services*.

Other direct benefits to the library include having:

- workshop fees, new serials, and specialized equipment such as modems paid for the Small Business Center
- gift books and journals donated by the business community
- gift books and journals donated by the community at-large
- recognition and promotion by the EDC as an information provider
- recognition by the community at-large as the place to get questions answered

The library as a utility provides the commodity of information to its publics. By providing this commodity, it becomes a viable partner in economic development.

References
[1] P. Gilster, (1987). "New Network Connects Businesses with State Libraries," *Triangle Business*. (July, 1987): pp

[2] Philip Kotler, *Marketing for Nonprofit Organizations*. 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1982), 163-223. Kotler cites E. Jerome McCarthy, *Basic Marketing: A Managerial Approach*, as the source of the term, "four P's."

[3] Ibid.