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Systematic Marketing Facilitates Optimal Customer Service: The Marketing Audit of a Rural Public Library System

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The Marketing Audit of a Rural Public Library System

Short Title: Marketing Audit of a Rural Public Library System

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Abstract:

This article presents a case study of a marketing audit of the Lee County Library System, a rural public library system located in southwest Georgia. Marketing audits are an underutilized but needed tool for public libraries. In this audit, the library system's mission, goals, environments, community and employee demographics, and a SWOT analysis were evaluated, resulting in several recommendations. These recommendations include a new mission statement, regular SWOT analyses, and potential market segments for targeted library services. Through this case study, the complexities, challenges, and opportunities unique to rural public libraries can be understood.

Introduction

The Lee County Library System is a rural public library system located in southwest Georgia and serves a population of 28,298.¹ The system is composed of four libraries: Oakland, Leesburg, Redbone, and Smithville. The current headquarters library, Oakland Library, opened its doors to the public in October 2012. The Lee County Library System began as a branch of Kinchafoonee Regional Library System, but separated into its own library system in 1995.² The Lee County Library System is part of the Public Information Network for Electronic Services (PINES), an almost statewide “borderless” library system in Georgia.³

What is a ‘Marketing Audit’?

The purpose of this paper is to provide a working example of a marketing audit conducted for a rural public library. Ideally, someone independent of the organization would produce the marketing audit.⁴ However, the author produced this audit while employed in the library system as part of coursework for a master’s level marketing course in Florida State University’s School of Library and Information Studies (SLIS). As a case study of marketing for a rural public library, this paper will reveal the marketing complexities, challenges, and opportunities that are specific to rural public libraries.

A concise and clear definition for a ‘marketing audit’ can be found in a 1977 article by Kotler, Gregor, and Rodgers:

“A marketing audit is a comprehensive, systematic, independent, and periodic examination of a company’s - or a business unit’s – marketing environment, objectives, strategies, and activities with a view to determine problem areas and opportunities and recommending a plan of action to improve the company’s marketing performance.”⁵

This paper will attempt to respond to each aspect of Kotler, Gregor, and Rodger's definition through an evaluation of Lee County Library System's mission, environments, community and employee demographics, as well as providing a SWOT (strengths/weakness/opportunities/threats) analysis for the system. For libraries, marketing audits reveal not only what types of services and resources should be developed, but also suggest strategies to effectively and efficiently promote current and future services and resources to the community.⁶ A major benefit of marketing audits for small and rural libraries is the detailed look at characteristics of the different populations served by these libraries. Small and rural libraries are uniquely tied to their communities and a thorough evaluation of their users could only improve existing library services and resources.

Community Demographics

The community the Lee County Library System serves is conservative, religious, and mainly Republican. Lee County has a large homeschooling population with strong evangelical views. The area has a quickly growing population segment of young middle-class families. Each library within the system has its own distinct user group: Oakland Library's users are a mixture of young upper middle class families, retirees, and students. Residents of two mobile home parks located within walking distance of Oakland are regular users of the library. Leesburg Library serves a mixture of young adults, retirees, and middle class families. Redbone Library's users are largely working class families who use the library after work and in the evening. Smithville Library serves lower income, minority families who usually walk to the library from their homes. Relatively recently Lee County Library System struggled with its external environment due to the controversy over the building of the newest library, Oakland. Small groups within the

community were not supportive, yet the majority of the community demonstrated an enthusiasm about the proposed library.

Staff Demographics

The Lee County Library System has 23 employees: 8 full time employees and 15 part time employees.⁷ Currently, the majority of the employees work part-time. For this particular library system, it is ideal to have the majority of employees work part-time. This hiring practice aids in keeping salary costs down and allows for more flexibility with staffing.⁸ There are currently three professional librarians employed in the library system. As a result of this impressive number of librarians, the library is able to provide its community with high quality programming and professionally developed adult, young adult, and children's collections.

The part-time employees in the Lee County Library System are a combination of retirees and college students. The internal environment of the library is close knit, friendly, and welcoming. Employees feel comfortable reaching out to their supervisors and co-workers. There is a level of trust between management and employees. With little turn over, employees feel secure in their jobs and confident in the work that they produce. The Director has demonstrated little patience for gossip or back talk among the staff. Gossip can be deadly to any organization, particularly a library system with small library branches such as those in Lee County. Employees are encouraged to stay positive and speak highly of one another and management, especially to the public.

Marketing Budget

There is not a formal marketing budget for the library. Instead, materials are purchased or created as needed. In 2011, the Director hired a marketing company to assist in developing a

logo for the library to be used in promotional materials. Brochures, flyers, and other marketing materials are normally created and printed in-house to cut down on costs and to avoid appearing to misuse funds for “glossy” expensive advertisements. The majority of the marketing for the library is free or very inexpensive. Newspaper advertisements, television appearances, and social media postings are of little cost to the library aside from staff time.

The Mission and Goals of the Organization

Mission of the Lee County Library System

The mission of the Lee County Library System is to provide educational and recreational materials and programming to the residents of Lee County⁹. This mission statement has not been revised since 2006. A marketing consultant may look at this mission statement as clearly describing the purpose of this organization – providing its services to the community of Lee County. However, the current mission statement of the library system could be used for any public library system in America. It does not express the organization’s distinctiveness, which a quality mission statement should have. A mission statement should inspire people within the organization and those who use the organization.¹⁰ A more tailored mission statement reflecting the uniqueness of the Lee County Library System and the services it provides to the Lee County community is needed.

One recommendation would be for the library system to consider revising its mission statement. The Lee County Library System should develop a clear, concise, and dynamic message that can be used to better market its services and resources to the community.¹¹ To maintain the focus on this new mission statement, the library system must develop a formalized list of goals and objectives. Management may decide to share these with the staff or reserve them

for their own use. These goals and objectives should be reviewed and adjustments made at least every five years.

Goals of the Lee County Library System

The Lee County Library System has three informal goals that it uses to accomplish its mission. The first goal is to develop a well-trained and friendly staff that is focused on delivering quality customer service. The second goal is to serve the community by developing a collection and programming that meets the community's wide range of educational and leisure needs and interests. The third goal is to promote the library and its services and resources to the community so that all members are aware of their ability to access these services. The goals and objectives of the Lee County Library System support its mission by focusing on collection development, programming, and customer service. By hiring and training high quality staff, the best materials and programming are acquired and provided to the citizens of Lee County.

The library system's goals may change in small ways periodically, but the objectives are a strong indication of the system's internal and external environments. For example, one objective for the third goal of promoting the library may be that the young adult librarian must carry out a designated number of class visits at local schools each semester. Since Facebook has become such an influence among young adults, the young adult librarian may adjust the objective to reflect the influence of social media. A new objective could be that this librarian creates a Facebook group for local young adults and updates this page daily about young adult focused activities and events.

Evaluation of Environments

External Environment

The Lee County Library System is constantly evaluating its environment to determine what may have an influence on the system and what responses could be needed. Many different environments affect the library, particularly political, social, competitive, and economic forces. One competitive force in the macro environment is the neighboring library system with a popular and well-located branch. Some of Lee County Library's regular patrons may prefer to use this library, because it is conveniently located near stores, residential areas, and schools. One social influence the library must acknowledge is the large homeschooling population in the area with conservative views of what should and should not be on the library's shelves. The library must carefully build a collection that is useful to this population while still reflecting other population segments with differing opinions.

Internal Environment

In addition to the external environment, the library has an internal environment which shapes how the organization operates. The library staff is an important influence on the library system since they are the face of the organization to the public. The front desk staff can affect the organization by altering their attitudes towards patrons, their coworkers, and the library. The policies and procedures that management produces for the library system and its staff shape the organization. Certain policies may feel too restrictive or lax to some employees. This could influence their attitude and behavior while working with their supervisors, other staff members, or with patrons. These policies and procedures can be a strength or weakness to the organization, which will become apparent during the SWOT analysis below.

The Lee County Library System has done an impressive job of scanning its external and internal environments thoroughly. The Director is aware of all the political, social, and

competitive influences that exists in the community and uses this knowledge to determine if a response is needed. I would suggest that the library system review more secondary data sources such as Lexis-Nexis Database and Marketresearch.com. These sources would give management a better view of macro environments. However, the library system is not as successful scanning its internal environment. A recommendation would be for the library system to improve this by carrying out a SWOT analysis every three years. Through a regular SWOT analysis management would be aware of any changes in its external and internal environments and possible obstacles that may emerge in the near future.

The Organization's Stakeholders

The director has an informal list of stakeholders that she considers when making decisions for the organization¹². Several of the most important stakeholders she focuses on are funding agencies for the library. Georgia Public Library System (GPLS), the Lee County Board of Education, Lee County Board of Commissioners, City of Leesburg, and City of Smithville are all funding agencies and therefore stakeholders.¹³ The library board is another stakeholder of Lee County Library System. The statewide library system, PINES, of which the Lee County Library System is a part, is another stakeholder. The library system must work with other library systems in the state so that the citizens of Georgia are served by an innovative and top-notch state library service. However, the most important stakeholder to the library system is the public. The Lee County Library System serves the recreational and educational needs of its community. A positive and healthy relationship between community and library system must be maintained and considered.

Existing Conflicts for the Organization

Currently, the Lee County Library System is involved in conflicts and more may occur in the future. There are political and economic elements to several of the above listed stakeholders that may cause tensions and frustrations. The difficult financial times have made some of the library system's funding agencies look more closely at their budgets. The library must demonstrate to the school system, city, county, and state that they have a vested interest in the success of the local library system. Some groups and individuals may question the decisions made by or plans of the library system, the library board, or the Director. These groups and individuals could bring these questions or issues to the attention of the City of Leesburg or Board of Commissioners, both key stakeholders. A recent example of this was the resistance to the plans for the construction of the new headquarters library, Oakland, in the county. Certain individuals regularly came to Board of Commissioners, and City Council meetings to express their disapproval of the money to be spent on the new library. The director has successfully dealt with all of these conflicts, and library's stakeholders maintained their support.

The library system is clearly aware of the various stakeholders and their interests in the library. The director works hard to assess these stakeholders and their changing interests in the library system. A recommendation would be for management to create a formalized list of these stakeholders to share with staff. This would provide management with an idea of the different organizations or groups that have an influence on the library. Library management may want to reassess these stakeholders every few years for any changes and add any additional stakeholders as they appear.

SWOT Analysis for Lee County Library System

The director routinely does her own informal survey of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the organization.¹⁴ After talking with the Director and staff, the author incorporated her thoughts, reflections, and recommendations into a SWOT analysis along with theirs.

Strengths

The first strength of this organization is the customer service focus of the staff. Management reinforces this strength by closely monitoring staff interactions with the public and immediately addressing issues as they appear. During quarterly staff meetings, the director and staff discuss any issues or concerns that may be detrimental to the library system's work with the public. Excellence in customer service is what the director strives to achieve in the library system.¹⁵ The second strength is willingness of management to listen to ideas and suggestions from staff. Management excels at working with the staff to create an environment where employees feel valued and respected. The third strength is the positive work environment that is created. In some organization workers gossip or criticize other employees or their supervisors, which can cause problems in the work place. Instances of these problems rarely occur in the Lee County Library System. Because of this positive work environment, employees are able to focus on customers and healthy interactions with co-workers.

The fourth strength is the ability of employees to find their niche within their library and use their interests to improve the library. If an employee is interested in running a book club or creating a display, the director is willing listen to the proposal and test the idea out. Unlike larger and more regimented library systems, Lee County Library System, because of its small size, is flexible enough to allow employees experience many different aspects of working in a library.

The fifth strength of the Lee County Library System is the types of employees that management hires. The majority of employees are part time workers, some of whom are retired or have families. This allows for an interesting mix of workers with a variety of experiences and strengths. While this may not work for all library systems, it provides the library system with more freedom in planning events, developing work schedules, and working with the public.

Weaknesses

A weakness shared by many rural and small libraries is that fewer employees must carry a heavier workload. There is little time for continuing education or funding for the same, and so there may be resistance to change from some employees. The director of the Lee County Library System is very forward thinking and understands the value in change for the library to keep up with the times. She recognizes ultimately innovation and creativity are necessary in the work place, yet understand too many changes may cause employees to feel uncomfortable in their work environment and come to fear the next change.¹⁶ The director's leadership attempts to facilitates change along with these obstacles is laudatory. Rural and small libraries may benefit from the newer trend of virtual workshops sponsored by many state or national professional groups.

Opportunities

Lee County is a quickly growing and ambitious community. As a result, there are many opportunities for the library. The first opportunity is the new headquarters library in the county. Oakland Library is located in a burgeoning section of the county with a completely different population from the other three libraries. The second opportunity is the new marketing tools, Twitter, Facebook, and Pinterest, which the library is just beginning to use to their fullest

potential. The director sees social media as the primary way to market the library to a younger population group within the next five years.¹⁷

The third opportunity is this younger population group, mainly the tween (9-12) to young adult (12-18) groups. For the past five years the library has been creating tailored programming for these groups. Now is the time to begin to target to this audience even more through anime/manga book clubs, Teen Advisory Boards, Maker Spaces, and other programs. The fourth opportunity is the quickly growing retirement age group of Lee County. Over the last few years this age group has increased greatly in Lee County. The library system can focus more on developing a relationship with this community at all the system's branches by purchasing more large print books and offering programming that is geared towards the interests of the community. The fifth opportunity for the Lee County Library System is the rapidly changing technology. The director has been an outspoken supporter of emerging trends in technology. Now that the library system has downloadable eBooks, audio books, and magazines, they can look forward to more innovations that their patrons can access.

Threats

The director is well aware of the threats to the library system from the external environment. Some of these threats come from the stakeholders described earlier. The first threat is the competition for the attention of library users. Dougherty County Public Library System, a neighboring library system, is the primary competition for the Lee County Library System's services and programs. Local coffee shops, book stores, media centers, and other organizations are also competition for the library system.

The second threat is the shift from the library as a primary place an individual goes to find books, audiobooks, magazines, and other materials. The changing technology has made it easier than ever to access books instantly and inexpensively. The library system must find its new place in this evolving world. Finally, a third threat to the Lee County Library System is the difficult economic times for the county and the nation. This is a threat shared by urban and rural libraries alike. With looming state and local budget cuts, libraries are face the near certainty of making do with less. Like public libraries systems across the country, Lee County Library System has regularly seen its budget reduced, making it difficult to provide the services and materials that patrons deserve and demand. Now, more than ever, libraries are needed in their communities but are forced to make sacrifices because of tight budgets and political pressure.

SWOT Recommendations for the Lee County Library System

After evaluating the library's strengths and weaknesses, the best recommendation for the Lee County Library System is to do a formal SWOT analysis. By undergoing a regular SWOT analysis, the library system can better plan its direction and continue to stay customer focused.¹⁸ Management would be able to get a clear and honest look at how well the organization is operating and discover areas for improvement. A suggestion would be for management to organize a group that would work together to create this SWOT analysis. A variety of viewpoints would raise ideas, criticisms, and suggestions while someone working alone would find this difficult.

Lee County Library System performed a formal survey of its customers in 2009. This survey consisted of a short set of questions in which patrons were asked to give their opinion of the services the library system provides and what they would change if they had the opportunity.

Patrons were given these surveys at the circulation desk of the Leesburg Library, over a period of four months, as they checked out materials.

One recommendation would be to conduct another survey with some modifications. Instead of simply asking library users to complete the surveys, another possibility is for administration to look outside the library walls to organizations and gathering places in the community. Sending out surveys with the Pre-K classes or taking them to the local YMCAs would be two places that would be ideal to find everyday library users and non-users. This would give library management a better sense of the community's view of the library and those of regular library users. Another suggestion would be to form a focus group or use groups already in existence to find additional insight into the library system's position in the area. Creating a Teen Advisory Board or speaking with the adult book club would be a great way to gather a wide variety of viewpoints.

Sources of Information

The Lee County Library System examines a range of sources to collect information on customers. Internally, the 2009 customer surveys were helpful, because they highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the organization from the customer's view. Quarterly staff meetings are another way the library system is able to identify segments of customers. As a whole, the staff is able to discuss customer trends and any emerging opportunities to market the library to new customer groups. Circulation reports are created monthly and e-mailed to all library staff. For staff and management, these reports quantify the use of library materials and programs by customers.

The director makes extensive use of secondary resources (e.g. the U.S. Census Bureau).¹⁹ However, the library staff does not use secondary resources. Instead, staff relies mainly on local sources such as area newspapers, such as The Albany Herald and Lee County Ledger, and local television stations, such as WALB and FOX31. In these sources staff members find statistics, reports, and other information on local events that may have an impact on the library system as well as its patrons. The director is in regular contact with the Chamber of Commerce, the local school board, nearby library systems, and city and county officials for additional current local information. Through these sources the director is able to make well-researched decisions for the library that serve the best interests of the population.²⁰

The director subscribes to multiple organization-related sources, including *Library Journal*, *Publishers Weekly*, and *American Libraries* from the American Library Association (ALA), for information on current and emerging library trends.²¹ These sources provide the director with a nationwide perspective on the challenges and possibilities in public libraries. A recommendation would be for the director to incorporate more marketing resources, e.g. marketresearch.com and US Public Library Geographic Databases, to develop a richer understanding of the people within the Lee County community.

The psychographic and lifestyles information are difficult for the library system to obtain due to the expense. By evaluating these local sources over time, management will develop a picture of the community that they are serving, including their views, opinions, concerns, and interests. Data from the Chamber of Commerce as well as U.S. Public Library Geographic Database would be helpful in analyzing the lifestyles and attitudes of the community. The library system can use these inexpensive resources and combine them with their knowledge of the community to develop more customized psychographic and lifestyle information on customers.

Market Segmentation of Lee County

The library system uses segmentation regularly to successfully market to target populations. Each library in the Lee County Library System has specific market segments. The library management evaluates its customers and tries to determine their patterns of use. Library users can then be divided into segments and properly marketed. The prioritization of these segments is informal; the library system does not want to appear to cater to one group more than another. However, there is subtle prioritization by library management and staff.

The three primary markets of Lee County Library System are children, adults, and young adults. One recommendation is for these markets to be broken down further. For children, the discrete segmentation would include homeschooled children, story time or after-school children, and children who regularly use the computers. Adults could be divided into those working from home, retirees, stay at home parents, and non-traditional students. Young adults could be divided into tweens, genre specific readers, graphic novel readers, and video game interested teens.

The market segment of children and its three discrete segments would be ideal to prioritize because of the importance of the children's services to the community. Story time and children visiting regularly after school are two key segments to market. These children are heavy users of the library, are accompanied by the parents and relatives, and often bring others to the library.

Another suggestion is a positioning strategy of building upon the strengths of the children's librarian and the children's services and resources. The library system should position itself as an excellent source for educational and recreational materials and programming for children that is free and available to the public. The best way to build upon these strengths is to

add to the current children's services. One suggestion would be to partner with the local schools to create programming, develop a semi-technology focused Makerspace, or have regular weekend craft sessions. Library management must determine what makes the children's department so successful and market this heavily to teachers, parents, local politicians, and local media sources.

The library system has effectively used market segmentation to deliver quality services and programming to the public. Through its external environment and stakeholder evaluation, the library system has a solid understanding of which markets should be appealed to at any given time. The library system should reevaluate its market segments annually to ensure that it is targeting the appropriate markets. Over time the market segments may change and library management must be aware of any shift in its population.

Current Marketing Tools

Currently, the Lee County Library System promotes its products and services to the public through a mixture of media (e.g. flyers, word of mouth, social media, library website, local television and newspaper announcements). The library system makes an effort to schedule programming during the most convenient times for the public. These times include after-school and early morning for children's programming, after-school and weekends for young adult programming, and after work for adult programming. All library programming and services are free and open to the public, a statement that is included in all promotional materials for the library. The locations of each library, Oakland, Leesburg, Smithville, and Redbone, are in areas of high traffic flow. The hours of the libraries are such that there is a library in the system opened late and on the weekend.

Illustrative examples of two possible product mixes and their related product lines for the Lee County Library System follow:

Product Mix: services and programming

Two Product Lines: Young Adult Services; Adult Services

Example #1

One Product Line: Young Adult Services

Three Product Items: Young Adult Collection, Makerspace, Young Adult School Book Clubs, Young Adult Library Programming

Product Item: Young Adult Library Programming

Primary Customer Market: Middle School to High School Aged Children who have transportation to the library

Price: Travel to the library; scheduling challenges at home; competition from other activities

Promotion: Flyers, school announcements, Facebook/Twitter/Tumblr/Instagram/Pinterest postings, blog postings, newspaper and T.V. announcements, word of mouth

Place: Leesburg Library

Recommended: hold some programming at schools; test out different times/days to hold programs

New Customer Market: lower income teenagers who live within walking distance of the library who may not be aware of this free programming

Example #2

One Product Item: Adult Services

Three Product Lines: Adult book collection; adult computer programming; genealogy collection

Product Item: Adult computer programming

Primary Customer Market: Middle age and older adults who may be beginners at computers and/or computer programs

Price: Transportation to library; scheduling issues at home; may interfere with work

Promotion: Flyers, community announcements, Facebook/Twitter postings, website, newspaper and T.V. announcements, word of mouth

Place: Leesburg Library

Recommended: Offer same programs at other library locations; offer programs at community gathering places; test out different times/days to hold the programs

New Customer Market: unemployed adults looking for continuing education type computer programs to improve their computer skills for work

The library system has successfully marketed programs and services by using a variety of methods. One recommendation is for management to focus more on online marketing, either

through social media or website promotions, instead of the more traditional methods.²² Newspapers and flyers do not match the reach of Facebook, Twitter, and other social media. Library users are becoming internet savvy and may prefer to stay up to date with the library through these sites. The internet enables libraries to engage more than ever with their target audience and get their message across.²³

Typically, program level evaluation methods include attendance at each program, number of repeat program attendees, and short questionnaires (at the end of adult programs). The questionnaires usually consist of a rating scale of satisfaction with an area for comments or suggestions. Children and young adults programs are evaluated in informal ways as well. These methods include feedback from children/young adults, their parents, or other adults, and if attendees invited or encouraged friends to come to the program.

Illustrative examples of two potential population specific programs and their related evaluation methods are provided below:

Example #1 – Young Adult Library Programming (Teen Advisory Board)

1. Customer Behavior Measures

Criteria:

- Number of YAs attending program
- Number of YAs that previously attended a program
- Number of YAs that brought others to the program

Objectives:

- Increase attendance by 20% in 6 months

- Develop a Teen Advisory Board to assist in YA programming

Methods:

- Keep a count of YAs at each program
- Take names and contact information of YAs interested in future library programs and/or Teen Advisory Board

2. Customer Satisfaction Measures

Criteria:

- Enjoyment of YAs during program
- Feedback from parents, guardians, and other library patrons
- How participating YAs heard about the program

Objectives:

- Increase YA enjoyment by 20 % in 6 months
- Increase positive feedback from adults by 20% in 6 months
- Increase interest of YAs in program by 25% in 12 months

Methods:

- Short surveys of YAs that attended programs
- Short surveys of parents or guardians of YA attendees
- Feedback on YA Facebook, Twitter, and other social media pages

Example #2 – Older Adult programming (Computer Tutorials)

1. Customer Behavior Measures

Criteria:

- Number of adults who registered for program
- Number of adults that attended the program
- Number of adults who have attended previous computer programs

Objectives:

- Increase percentage of adults who registered for program actually attending by 25% in 12 months
- Increase returning adult attendees by 30% in 12 months

Methods:

- Keep a list of registering adults, adult attendees, and return attendees

2. Customer Satisfaction Measures*Criteria:*

- Feeling of attendees that they have acquired new knowledge or skills
- Confidence that attendees can apply their computer knowledge to work and/or home

Objectives:

- Increase acquired knowledge feeling by 25% in 12 months
- Increase confidence of knowledge by 20% in 12 months

Methods:

- Short questionnaires after program for attendees to rate satisfaction with the program and offer comments or suggestions

One recommendation would be for the library to increase its use of evaluation methods, through surveys, questionnaires, or comment cards. Currently, the evaluation of programs and services is conducted infrequently, which does not provide a concrete description of customer satisfaction or program success. By requiring staff to give evaluations out after each adult program, the library would be able to measure a program's performance accurately. A suggestion would be for the library to conduct another customer satisfaction survey at each library branch over a period of three months. After management has reviewed these surveys, a larger scale survey or questionnaire should be taken of the community's thoughts, critiques, and recommendations for the library system. These surveys or questionnaires would be distributed at community gathering places, churches, newspaper and available online through the library system's website and social media.

Conclusion

A periodic, independent, structured, and extensive marketing audit is an underutilized but vital tool for public libraries, particularly rural libraries that are so closely tied with their community.²⁴ This article presents a case study of a marketing audit for a rural public library, which illustrated the usefulness of an audit for public libraries and specifically, rural libraries. Through a careful and methodical evaluation of Lee County Library System's mission statement, goals, environments, and demographics, the marketing opportunities can be better understood and addressed by library administration.

Recommendations for the Lee County Library System have been made based on this evaluation and the accompanying SWOT analysis. Any marketing plan developed from these recommendations should focus on improving how the library system's services and resources are

promoted within the local community. A recent Pew Research Center survey revealed how important and vital public libraries are within their communities.²⁵ However, the survey also discovered that the public is not aware of the numerous services and resources provided by their local library.²⁶ Conducting a marketing audit is the first step a library system can take to promote these unknown resources and services, improve their understanding of the populations served, and identify which marketing approach would best encourage library use within their community.

¹ "American Fact Finder", United States Census Bureau. Accessed October 17, 2013.

http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml.

² Claire Leavy (Library Director) in discussion with the author, February 11, 2011.

³ "PINES – Public Resources," Georgia Public Library System. Accessed February 13, 2011

<http://www.georgialibraries.org/public/pines.php>.

⁴ Philip Kotler, William T. Gregor, and William H. Rodgers III, "The Marketing Audit Comes of Age." *MIT Sloan: Management Review* (1977): 50.

⁵ Philip Kotler, William T. Gregor, and William H. Rodgers III, "The Marketing Audit Comes of Age." *MIT Sloan: Management Review* (1977): 50.

⁶ Linda E. Bunyan and Evelyn M. Lutz, "Marketing the Hospital Library to Nurses." *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association* 79, no. 2 (1991): 224.

⁷ Lee County Library. *Lee County Library Annual Report 2010*. Approved by the Lee County Library Board August 2010, 5.

⁸ Claire Leavy (Library Director) in discussion with the author, February 11, 2011.

⁹ Lee County Library. *Lee County Library Policies and Procedures*. Approved by the Lee County Library Board 2006, 11.

¹⁰ Alan R Andreasen and Philips Kotler, "Strategic Marketing for Nonprofit Organizations." (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008): 284.

¹¹ Wallace, Linda K. "Libraries, Mission, and Marketing: Writing Mission." *Library Mosaics* 15, no. 4 (2004): 21.

¹² Claire Leavy (Library Director) in discussion with the author, February 11, 2011.

¹³ Lee County Library. *Lee County Library Policies and Procedures*. Approved by the Lee County Library Board 2006, 11.

¹⁴ Claire Leavy (Library Director) in discussion with the author, February 11, 2011.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Joe Fernandez, "A SWOT Analysis for Social Media in Libraries." *Online* 33, no. 5, (2009): 35.

¹⁹ Claire Leavy (Library Director) in discussion with the author, February 11, 2011.

²⁰ Michael Porter and David Lee King, "Marketing and the Web." *Public Libraries* 50, no. 1 (2011): 22.

²¹ Claire Leavy (Library Director) in discussion with the author, February 11, 2011.

²² Michael Porter and David Lee King, 2011, 22.

²³ Ibid 23.

²⁴ Philip Kotler, William T. Gregor, and William H. Rodgers III, 1977, 50.

²⁵ Kathryn Zickuhr, Lee Rainie, and Kristen Purcell, "Library Services in the Digital Age." *Pew Internet & American Life Project* Accessed October 7, 2013 <http://libraries.pewinternet.org/2013/01/22/library-services/>.

²⁶ Ibid, 18.