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Marketing to Libraries

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Marketing to Libraries

A Discussion with Maria Fitzpatrick, Manager, Wholesale, Library and Corporate Sales, Academic Press

by Vikki Medaglia (Bates College)

Friends, Librarians, Countrywomen: At the 1994 Charleston Conference there was a discussion about marketing approaches by various publishers to libraries. Vikki Medaglia, our new column editor (hooray!) recently asked Maria Fitzpatrick of Academic Press about their marketing program. — KS

V. Briefly describe Academic Press: what you publish, how big you are.

M. Academic Press was established in 1942 and has been owned by Harcourt Brace & Company since 1969. Academic Press offices are located in San Diego, London, Orlando, Boston, Japan, and Australia. AP publishes (research) scientific, technical, and medical titles. In 1993, under the imprint AP Professional, a line of professional computer titles, was launched. AP publishes approximately 400 books a year, with a back list of about 8000 titles.

V. What would you like us to know about yourself and your work at Academic?

M. I am AP's US manager of Special Sales which include wholesale, library, catalog, book club and corporate accounts. Two assistants, a catalog product manager, and myself, are responsible for sales, service, and many of AP's promotions, to these customers The four of us are kept quite busy.

V. Sometimes the term "marketing" is used so broadly that its meaning becomes vague. How would you define "marketing, from a publisher's point of view, and how does AP market to libraries?

M. For Academic Press, "marketing" means providing our market with comprehensive and relevant title information. Librarians, professors and students (who request titles and drive library purchases) are considered when AP designs a marketing plan. AP markets new works to libraries through direct mail, advertisements in library journals, and via cooperative promotions with wholesalers. AP also uses telemarketers to inform libraries about upcoming releases, especially major reference works. We send exhibits and attend major library conferences, and our catalog can be accessed through the Internet. Academic Press has formed a marketing research group to identify the current and future requirements of our major customers, the library market. We expect the group to begin meeting this spring. Librarians from the university, industry, and government sectors will be invited to participate. The North American Council will continue on page 52

Profiles Encouraged:

Vikki Medaglia

How I got to where I am: I was raised a bedroom suburb of New York City. I went to Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts and spent my junior year at St. Andrews, Scotland. After completing my M.L.S. at SUNY Albany, jobs were tight. Where I did it: My first position was as a dental assistant (in Pittsbrugh, NY) to a classmate of my father's from Columbia. I felt fortunate to get a position at Thayer Public Library in Braintree, Massachusetts, within a year. I stayed for eight years, had my midlife crisis early, and moved South for a change of perspective. I spent most of the next decade as a trailing spouse, doing "odd jobs," including retrospective conversion at SOLINET, automation at the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta Research Library, and reference at Chattanooga-Hamilton County Bicentennial Library. The last was Technical Services Librarian at the Oak Ridge Public Library. Then what: Facing the end of spousehood, I lucked into a six-month contract at the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee. I was doing work I'd always wanted to do. We were bringing up their first integrated system (VTLS), and I was cataloging some wonderful stuff, including a 1549 Book of Common Prayer and 19th-century evangelical pamphlets. (Sewanee is an Episcopal school with a seminary.) Fortunately, Pat Bliips and David Kearly were as happy with the arrangement as I was (or else they can't count very well), and I stayed for 2 years.

Current job: As the grey hairs increased, I began to yearn for a little more security so I accepted a position, complete with benefits package, as Serials Librarian at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine. The job is a challenge, not just because it's serials, but because I'm the first. After 2 1/2 years, we're still working on the job description. I'm also "very" nappy to be back in New England, at last.

Activities: I'm distribution editor for the NASIG newsletter, and am now editing the "Marketing to Libraries" column in ATG.

Family: My son, Towner, and I live with two cats: Gnarly Carly and Billy Dous (that's a pan), one gnuia pig: Misha and innumerable dust bunnies.

Most recent accomplishment: Completing my first interview for ATG by deadline. (Thanks, Maria!)

Literary tastes (Since I can never remember what I've just read...): I have several books going at a time, and generally manage not to finish the most worthy. My old standbys are Oscar Wilde and Wili Kelly, always good for elegant language and/or a laugh. I also highly recommend James Thurber's A Ride With Olymmpy.

Pet peeve: The artificial intensity of modern life, which often pressures people to choose between relationships and work. There shouldn't have to be a choice.

Pastimes, hobbies, interests: Music. I'm beginning to sing again after a long hiatus. Towner also sings with a children's chorus and I'm looking forward to duets with him. You can't live in Maine and not like the outdoors: hiking, cross-country skiing, biking, swimming. I have a loom and two spinning wheels, but very little time to do more than accumulate ideas (and fragment) fleeces.

Where I see myself in 5 years: Managing a collection development team in a setting similar to Bates. But first I want to enjoy the luxury of staying somewhere more than 2 years!

Had I but world enough and time: I'd cruise the Alaska coast in summer. And hike the Pyrenees. One other thing I want to do—spend a couple of years in a library in China.

Single most important piece of advice: Rudi, pagliaic!
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include participants from across the US and Canada. The European Council will include members from a number of European countries. The goal of the Library Council is to gain information useful to Academic Press, which will help us develop products, systems, and services to meet the changing needs of our valued customers.

V. Can you address some of the forces currently driving the library market? What developments do you see in libraries and publishing in the next few years that might have an impact on our working relationships?

M. We continually ask ourselves about the future of libraries. Where the library market is headed is not always clear to publishers, or to librarians, for that matter, which makes our task all the more challenging. AP wants to publish works in their most useful format, be that print or electronic. Academic Press has recently entered the field of electronic publishing. It's a risky venture at the moment. Librarians say they want CD-ROMs, but then hold-off on making purchases, or they're only willing to pay prices that don't take into account new product research and development. New technology brings with it expensive startup costs. Existing print editions were generally not produced with subsequent CD-ROM reprints as an option. Therefore, the time and expense it takes to reformat these works must somehow be recouped.

Another issue created by the new electronic media is site licensing. How many licenses should be included with a product? There are no restrictions if six students are looking at a book together, but what if they're at separate computer terminals? How many concurrent users will be permitted per license? Should publishers allow buyers to network products? One of AP's purposes in setting up the Library Council is to work through some of these issues.

V. John Steinbeck's father lost his shirt trying to ship iceberg lettuce back east from California in railway cars full of ice. Now, everyone has access to lettuce year-round. Maybe we're in a similar position: in ten years the issues we've been discussing will be standardized and incorporated into our lives. Maria, thank you for talking with me.