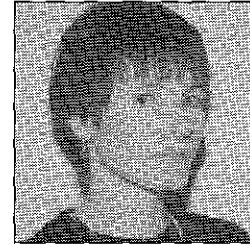


## *Marketing the Supreme Court Library of South Australia*



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Marketing has become a very familiar theme in library literature. Many users value the concept of the library, but have only a vague idea of what is required to operate one successfully. Our profession itself is often misunderstood, and this can lead to the downgrading of the library, and lack of professional recognition of the librarian, within an organisation. Librarians know only too well the need to present a clear and positive image of ourselves and our work, and marketing is the tool which we use.

Most librarians will be familiar with the concept of the marketing mix - price, product, place and promotion - so I won't repeat what has been presented very well elsewhere. I was fortunate to attend Beatrice Doran's keynote address at the Sixth Asian Pacific Specials, Health and Law Librarians' Conference in Sydney in 1995, and I would recommend to you her excellent paper *There is more to marketing the special library in the 1990s than promotional wizardry* in the conference proceedings. In this paper, I would like to present a brief review of what we have done at the Supreme Court Library in Adelaide, and some of our plans for the future.

### ***Background***

The Supreme Court Library provides a comprehensive service to the Judges of the Supreme Court, staff of the Courts Administration Authority, the legal profession and law librarians. Government departments and agencies, students and members of the public also use our resources. The main collection occupies two floors of the Supreme Court Library Building, with additional collections maintained in the Judges' chambers and for the Court of Criminal Appeal. Current holdings exceed 100,000 volumes, including approximately 1,200 serial titles. The CD-ROM collection comprises 27 databases, accessed through two networked PCs in the main library.

Current statistics indicate more than 150 people enter the library each day. In addition, staff handle approximately 50 enquiries a day at the reference desk or over the telephone. Activity at the library's three photocopiers averages 900 pages copied per day, not including court use.

In 1992, faced with the dilemma of too much work, not enough staff, and too few hours in the day, the decision was reluctantly taken to reduce some client services and to close the library for one hour each afternoon. This enabled staff to perform those essential operations - looseleaf filing, accessioning serials, cataloguing, classification and processing of monographs, and a myriad of other functions - which are transparent to most library users but crucial to maintaining the availability of the most current information.

Understandably, this move was not popular with our external users.

Since the creation of the new position of Reference Librarian in mid-1995, increasing the staff to three librarians, two library technicians and a part-time library assistant, the library has been able not only to restore previously curtailed services, but also to plan a wider range of client focused services. However, our recent history, and our plans for the future, meant that serious consideration had to be given to actively marketing the library

### *New services*

The first task to be undertaken was to develop the product. We needed to identify services which could be established quickly and easily, would be valued highly by clients, and could generate both goodwill and income. Document delivery seemed an obvious starting point, so a protocol was developed for processing requests for judgments or other materials to be photocopied for posting or collection, or to be faxed within Australia.

The fee schedule was established after consultation with other libraries offering similar services. We also fixed an hourly rate for legal research and online searching.

At the level of core services, we have been able to make improvements by virtue of the fact that the larger staff has more time to spend assisting clients. We are now able to offer a full telephone reference service; if somebody needs an hour or so training in CD-ROM use, we can provide this.

Library publications had also suffered during the cutbacks. In the past, an index to the judgments of the Supreme Court had been sold by subscription but was discontinued after 1993 as staff simply did not have the time required for production and marketing.

Early this year, the index was reintroduced with a single volume for 1995, and the first quarterly issue for 1996. The index itself was improved with a completely redesigned format which provides multiple access points to judgments and more informative subject entries, as well as a more attractive, clear and easy to read page.

### *Promoting the library*

The next step was to inform our clients about the changes taking place in the library, and to this end we held a launch. Representatives from all sectors of the legal community joined us over late afternoon refreshments for general discussions of services and resources, and demonstrations of our CD-ROMs and the Internet.

We also prepared a brochure describing the library's services and facilities for distribution at the launch. Something which becomes clear to any librarian trying to produce pamphlets and other publications inhouse, using basic wordprocessing software, is the difficulty in creating distinctive materials. We are all, by now, familiar with the most common clip-art images - bookends, scales of justice, etc. - which come bundled with Word or WordPerfect. We see them repeated on booklists and bulletins from a variety of sources, and it becomes difficult to distinguish one library's publications from another. We wanted to have a 'look' which would be unmistakably 'Supreme Court Library'

Luckily, the Courts Administration Authority has a public relations department whose manager was only too pleased to assist. Based on an original drawing by one of our staff members, a series of related graphic images was created for use on posters, brochures and other promotional materials, as well as letterhead, business cards and cover sheets for library publications. Our fridge magnets are being distributed to library users to encourage them to make use of our special services.

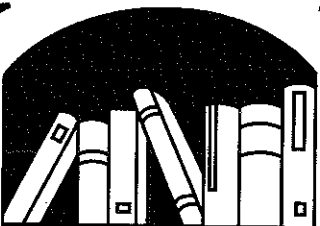
Our design fits in well with a general concept which had already been developed for use throughout the Authority. All information pamphlets conform to the pattern, echoing the facade of the Supreme Court Building, of two columns below a stylised pediment. The images appearing between the columns, and the colour of the brochures, are specific to the department. For example, the Supreme Court colour is red, and the library image includes a shelf of books positioned above two figures, one of them holding a book, the other seated at a computer terminal. Variations of the design are used on all of the library's publications and stationery.

Does this sound very much like promotional wizardry? Perhaps, but we feel that when clients receive their SDIs, current contents lists, bulletins, and any other materials which appear on their desks regularly, and somewhat anonymously, a strong, easily identifiable image serves to remind them that this is a professional service provided by information specialists whose activities are essential to the clients' work.


In addition to using those sorts of promotional devices, we try to maintain a presence through occasional articles in journals and the local press, and providing tours for community and special interest groups. Plans are under way to make the library's unique historical collection accessible to the public by housing it in an area where the material can be organised, preserved and displayed appropriately and securely. In addition to the wigs and gowns of many retired Supreme Court Judges, including those of Dame Roma Mitchell, this material includes photographs of legal identities and historical documents relating to significant developments in the history of the legal profession in South Australia

Place is the fourth element of the marketing mix, and its meaning is steadily evolving. Our library houses rows of long tables running alongside rows of shelves almost overflowing with bound volumes, and this scene is not likely to disappear in the foreseeable future. However, it will be modified. Computer terminals will appear on the tables to allow access to the CD-ROMs which we hope will help to conserve valuable shelf space for those materials which are not likely to become available in electronic form


**Supreme Court Library**



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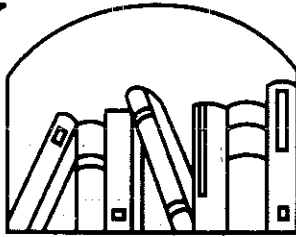


Open Monday to Friday  
9 am to 5.30 pm  
Enquiries, Research,  
Judgment Photocopying and Fax Service




**Courts Administration Authority**  
*Linking Courts and Community*

**Supreme Court Library South Australia**



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Facsimile (08) 204 0461



**Courts Administration Authority**

Before the end of the year, we will have a PC network throughout the Supreme Court bringing the CD-ROM collection into the Judges' chambers. This will necessitate the development of a fairly intensive, and ongoing, training program for library users, both within and external to the organisation.

### *Moving into the future*

Our greatest opportunities for marketing probably exist in the areas of user education, current awareness and publications. Judges' associates in the Supreme Court are employed on a one year contract; most of them are heavy users of the library, yet there is no formal orientation program for them. We would also like to develop a program for the newly qualified solicitors admitted to practice each year. These programs would include instruction in the use of various electronic and hard copy resources, a review of library procedures (for example, loans, photocopying, general library rules), and an introduction to the full range of the library's resources and services.

Publications could be targeted to specific segments of our client group: the judiciary, private practitioners, librarians (law and non-law), court staff, community groups, and schools. They can also highlight specific areas of the collection: CD-ROMs, historical material, overseas materials.

We also need to review our physical surroundings. As we struggle to accommodate the relentless expansion of the serials collection (the paperless library is still a long way off!), we will have to turn our attention more closely to the way we use our existing space, our display area, notice board and signage.

While I believe that one of our best and simplest marketing devices is the high quality personal and personalised service we offer our clients, it is not enough to rely on this to maintain the position of the library. Our field of expertise has become more complex, management techniques more sophisticated, and client expectations higher. In order to remain relevant to our changing environment, we need to take a more reasoned approach to the way we present our services. Unfortunately, time, space and money are in shorter supply than ideas, and I'm sure that many of us are left with the feeling that we're not doing all we should be.