

INFORMATION SERVICES - MEETING THE MISSION:  
A LITTLE EXTRA. A LITTLE BETTER. A LITTLE FASTER.

Marge Kars, Librarian  
Bronson Methodist Hospital  
Health Sciences Library  
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007

Changes in the healthcare delivery system have caused hospitals to rethink their mission and their customers. Hospitals have discovered that to survive change they must expand their horizons and look beyond the walls of the hospital. Health sciences libraries in hospitals are no different than their parent organizations. A great deal of what we believed about libraries in hospitals has been challenged.

We have been reminded by staff and budget reductions that if there is a future, it is not necessarily there for all of us. We have discovered that within our institutions we are not the only source of information. We have discovered that many people within our institutions view libraries differently and separately from information services. As health sciences librarians we have had

to rethink our mission and our customers. We have had to visualize a need for healthcare information beyond the primary clients in our own institutions.

Gifford Pinchot, in his book Intrapreneuring, states that "an intrapreneur is the dreamer who figures out how to turn an idea into a profitable reality". An intrapreneur works within an institution developing creative options. As information specialists in health care institutions, we can be intrapreneurs. As intrapreneurial information specialists we have several options to be creative in providing information services.

At Bronson's Health Sciences Library we've used marketing techniques to develop our options. That is, changing the way we do some things, not changing what we do. We looked at who our clients are and thought about who our clients could be.

As our parent institution moved from hospital to healthcare corporation, we moved from library services to information services. Bronson's Health Sciences Library is in the business of providing information services, part of which is providing library service. We are doing some things differently to meet the needs of our clients.

Our first task was to target some areas to market our information services. We looked within the corporation and the institution, outside the institution to other healthcare providers, to non-healthcare organizations that need healthcare information and to

consumers. We have dealt with all of these clients previously in some manner. Now, we would provide information services with a little different focus.

The Health Sciences Library has traditionally provided library service to the medical staff, residents and medical students, nursing staff, administrative and management staff and nursing students. Attending and house staff were considered our primary client groups. We began to focus our attention to other members of the hospital/corporation. We began to actively seek information requests from our Research & Development, Planning and Marketing Departments; areas that frequently require statistical information we didn't normally provide. Responding to these requests took a little extra effort and time on our part - but we did it, and we did it right. These departments are now clients who come to us first when they need information. At budget time adding these departments to the list of clients helps to support a request for funds.

We offered the Basics of Medline Course to medical staff members. The course was offered on two consecutive Saturday morning sessions for a \$90 fee. Offered twice in the Spring of 1986, the response to the course was so great that we are offering it again this Fall, with the added attraction of 8 hours of CE credit.

We've used already existing hospital publications to enhance the awareness of the Library. Pediatrics, Critical Care and Trauma

Services each publish a quarterly professional newsletter highlighting a specific clinical topic. The bibliography at the end of each newsletter contains the following statement:

"The above references and additional information are available at the Bronson Health Sciences Library."

We plan on publishing one issue of the Library's own Current Awareness List with highlights of our information services offerings.

A modem and printer has been purchased for an Apple IIe microcomputer owned by the library. With the addition of communications software, library users will be able to access databases with their personal ID/Passwords, using the library's microcomputer.

And finally, we used the Bronson inhouse computer system to develop some programs that enable us to get information to the patrons a little better, a little faster. Initially, with the cooperation of the Information Services Department, we developed an interlibrary loan system allowing us to process loans faster. We are now in the process of implementing an online catalog of our books, journals and audiovisuals. When the system is completed sometime next year it will be possible to access the library's collection from anywhere in Bronson and its subsidiaries. The online catalog will tell users whether the library owns a particular item and whether that item is on the shelf or on loan.

As health sciences librarians we deal with special information. We need to think of making the leap from providing that special information to a select patron group, to marketing that same information to anyone who might have a need for it. The obvious move is to provide information to other healthcare institutions. But what about organizations not in the business of healthcare that need healthcare information. What about insurance companies; personnel departments, occupational health services, research and development departments of medical/surgical equipment companies. And, what about the lawyers? At Bronson we have actively marketed our information services to all of the groups I have mentioned. We see ourselves as information brokers working within our institution, utilizing the special information within our collection to serve new clients. Working with our corporate marketing office and using such sources as the AHA\_Guide, the Michigan\_Manufacturing\_Index and the Yellow Pages, we identified possible clients in Southwestern Michigan. We developed a pricing structure that is compatible with our cost of providing information. We offer online database searching, document delivery services and library consultant services on a fee for service or contract basis. We have contracts with industry and healthcare institutions, and provide fee for service database searching and document delivery to law firms. We have been able to recover the cost of providing information and have been able to recover some hours lost during a staff reduction.

The library has for a number of years offered its health information services to people within the Kalamazoo community who have expressed a need for health information. We maintain a collection of current books and pamphlets on medical information geared to people who are not familiar with medical terms. Recently, we printed a brochure about this service and distributed the brochure to local public libraries and health groups. Our Public Relations department arranged for the local newspaper to run a story on this health information service in the weekly health page. Working with the hospital's Media Center, we produced a two minute commercial inviting the public to use the service. The commercial runs on our inhouse patient education station and will soon run on a local community access cable station. A column about the library was published in the GoldenCare Plus, a newsletter for the 65 and over age group in Kalamazoo. The response to all this effort has been a steady stream of requests for health information from consumers.

Because of this response and because we believe this service fills a community need, Bronson will open an Community Health Information Library in 1987. This library will be located in an area separate from the Health Sciences Library, close to the public pharmacy, in a highly visible, high traffic area. The 600 square foot area will include books, pamphlets and audiovisuals, geared to the general public. The Community Health Information Library will be staffed by one professional librarian and by volunteers. We hope eventually to include patient educators on

the staff and to include interactive computer programs on health topics.

The Health Sciences Library at Bronson has made some changes in how it provides information services. We did this to maintain our present status within our institution, to change with the changes within the corporation and to recover some of our costs in providing services. We have been able to market healthcare information beyond the traditional client in our own institution. We've utilized what we already knew as librarians and drawn on the resources of various departments and people in our corporation. We have been able to provide information services with a little extra, a little better, a little faster.