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# Marketing the public library service to the full-time employed: future directions?

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*Andrea L. Wadley  
Judith E. Broady and  
Tim E. Hayward*

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## The authors

**Andrea Wadley** is Assistant Librarian (Retrospective Cataloguing) at the John Rylands University Library of Manchester.

**Judith Broady** is a Lecturer and **Tim Hayward** a Research Assistant in the Department of Information and Library Studies, University of Wales, Aberystwyth.

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## Abstract

Develops an earlier discussion in which the authors argued that the public library service fails in a number of ways to provide an effective service to the full-time employed. Suggests the characteristics of an effective service for such a market segment using the marketing mix framework. The methods examined concentrate on distribution systems which have the potential to minimize cost to the consumer and to maximize timeliness and convenience of location. Contends that such methods fall into three main categories: in-house, outreach and remote access. Examines these three categories of service for their suitability, and considers funding, methods of publicity and the control processes necessary to continuity of service effectiveness.

## Introduction

The importance to public libraries of the consideration of the special needs of those in full-time employment is linked to the importance of fulfilling service mission statements. Having adopted the statutory and socially desirable objective of provision of a comprehensive and efficient library service to all who wish to use it, libraries are bound to consider the needs of all the many patron groups which make up the communities they serve. The full-time employed have a statutory right to a comprehensive service and, if they choose to exercise this right, should find such a service available. The size of this group, comprising over one-third of the population and hence one-third of the community which the public library system serves, makes effective service to this segment very important.

It has been argued previously[1] that the public library fails to provide an effective service to the full-time employed in a number of ways. A service which effectively provides for the full-time employed is one which accords with a specific marketing mix. An extensive product range based on user wants and needs is a necessary starting-point, for no service will be used unless the product is necessary or desired. Two other features on which use is predicated are low user cost, particularly in non-monetary terms, and high customer convenience; these two elements of the marketing mix are highly interactive. Careful choice of service presentation and distribution is also vital to the creation of effective service. A further marketing-mix element which must be strategically managed is promotion. This element exists in symbiotic relationship with the other elements of the mix, and encompasses both the publicizing of the service to current and potential users and the projection of a positive image, making service use as desirable as possible.

Achievement of effective service to the full-time employed can be facilitated by a heightening of convenience for such users in terms of both location and time. Practical means of implementing the marketing mix include opening hours spanning evenings and weekends. Convenience of location may be achieved not only through judicious siting of main and branch libraries but also through the institution of deposit collections, mobile library visits and the facilitation of access from the home or workplace. Technological

innovation is making remote access an increasing possibility, and one which offers the public library user the ultimate convenience of both time and place.

The marketing approach has contributed greatly to the process of determining the shape of effective service to the full-time employed. As a managerial approach it creates an emphasis on customer needs and orients public library organization around the identification and satisfaction of those needs. It is this orientation which is vital to the library's achievement of its statutory and social objectives. The marketing planning process provides a clear framework for service planning which enables a public library to create the most effective form of service for its patron community.

Thus, the effective marketing of the public library service to the full-time employed hinges on satisfying the needs of this market segment. This can be achieved by formulating the marketing mix with these needs in mind. The key characteristics of such a mix include:

- high convenience in terms of access and use of the service;
- a price which is low in terms of both monetary and, more importantly, non-monetary costs;
- a product line with width and depth, regularly reviewed and updated;
- extensively targeted promotion to publicize the service and its improvements, and to modify consumer attitudes; and
- successful marketing of the benefits of effective service provision to staff and stakeholders.

The marketing-mix recommendations set out above can be given practical form in many different ways. This article will present some methods of library service delivery which fulfil the organizational and marketing objectives which must be successfully met to produce effective service to the full-time employed.

Since the most important considerations for service to this segment are ease of access and convenience, the methods examined will concentrate on distribution systems which have the potential to minimize cost to the consumer and to maximize timeliness and convenience of location. Such methods fall into three main categories:

- (1) *in-house* methods, which are concerned with aspects of the main library buildings and the central library service;

- (2) *outreach* methods, which consist of designated programmes carrying library services into the community; and
- (3) *remote access*, which involves the utilization of technology and communications to enable direct user access to the library service from a remote location.

Since each library operates in the context of different internal and external environmental influences, the suitability of these methods of service delivery will vary in different situations. They all, however, have the potential to contribute to the practical achievement of the marketing mix formulation specified above. Consideration will be given also to methods of publicity and funding, and to the control processes which are necessary to continuity of service effectiveness.

## In-house methods

### Opening hours

An effective service to the full-time employed must be based on the provision of library service at times when members of this segment are available and willing to use it. Convenient opening hours have an impact on both convenience and cost to customers, and, if designed with marketing objectives in mind, can do much to contribute to ease of use of the library by working adults.

There are many possible arrangements of library opening hours which enable access to the service outside the usual working day. Hours of access can be extended into the evening, allowing full-time workers to visit the library after work. An alternative, as one user has recommended, is staggered opening hours:

Opening hours, I suggest could be staggered from 12 o'clock in the morning until 8 o'clock at night rather than 9 to 5. A lot of people are working during the day or on shifts and it would be more suitable for those people who wish to use the libraries, and not necessarily more expensive to run[2, pp. 135-6].

This suggestion may overcome the inherent funding difficulties of simply extending rather than moving opening hours, but will disadvantage those users who prefer to visit the library in the morning. In addition, evening opening may not significantly lower the costs of service use for the full-time employed. Their free time is at a premium on weekdays, and sufficient leisure time to use the public

library may not be available during weekday evenings.

A further option is Sunday opening. Evidence suggests that this idea is enjoying popular support. A Sunday opening trial in a Woking library saw 200 visitors per hour, and a high level of support from local retailers who recorded higher sales while the library was open [3, p. 6]. The London borough of Barnet conducted a survey which revealed that nearly 70 per cent of those questioned supported Sunday opening [2, p. 107]. Also in support of the opening of libraries on Sundays is the consideration of the multicultural nature of the UK: members of some religions and cultures may find Sunday a more convenient day than Friday or Saturday to visit the public library [2, p. 14]. Kisbye [4, p. 25] has pointed out the advantage that:

large sums of money have been invested in buildings and materials, and the cost of extending the opening hours would in fact be minimal. If new borrowers, more families, more people who are at work on weekdays, lonely pensioners, etc., might be induced to visit the library, a great deal would be gained.

Since a service cannot be stored, time in which it is not in use cannot be recovered. With the library service infrastructure (the building and stock) in place, it makes good marketing sense to maximize the hours of its availability.

However, there is a potential problem with Sunday opening in the UK. Trade union agreements compel libraries to award staff increased rates of pay for working on a Sunday, and if Sunday opening is to become the norm, renegotiation of agreements will be necessary or substantial extra finance must be sought.

Ideally, in order to maximize access for the full-time employed, the public library should not close at all. As Weingand [5, p. 99] comments: "If indeed, information is a personal, community, and national resource, should access not serve a 24-hour-day?" The full-time employed would then be able to access the service at any hour convenient to them, and, if the service is adequately staffed at all times, their access needs would be fully met. This arrangement would benefit also the community as a whole.

There are, however, problems concomitant with the 24-hour opening paradigm, in that the personal safety of users and staff may be jeopardized during night-time hours, and a

library located in a town centre which is deserted at night may not attract users. Judicious planning would be needed to solve these problems.

The General Consumer Council of Northern Ireland recommends that library boards should:

increase and extend library opening hours ... [and] amend opening hours to reflect more closely the public's own leisure time and leisure activities including: more evening opening, more opening which coincides with late-night shopping and Sunday opening [6, p. 15].

A library service which fulfils these recommendations will be placed in a good position to realize the marketing mix formulation necessary for effective service to the full-time employed.

### Location of library buildings

Libraries, like many public buildings, must serve for a number of decades and can use every possible advantage of site to be sure the library's full public service potential is realized and maintained. The location of the library and its relationship to the present and future social, transportation, and business patterns, will have a direct effect on the extent to which the general community will make use of its library resources, convenience of access will build up and increase the volume of use and achieve a greater activity level for the library and a resulting lower unit cost for service [7, p. 47].

Rohlf and Smith's words sum up the importance of library location theory. In the case of the full-time employed, the location of static library buildings ideally would take into account the locations of workplaces and commuter routes, as well as the locations of residential and retail areas. A few areas with a high density of workplaces may warrant a library building designed to serve the needs of employees, but it is likely that positioning a static library on a popular commuter route, with parking space or close to public transport stops, would be a more viable option in service to the employed. Each library authority must consider its own situation. As Palmer [8, p. 347] suggested: "Careful matching of the site and the community it represents can provide more effective service within the resources available to the institution".

Library location theory can be applied not only to static library buildings but also to more flexible extension services, and the criteria for efficient service delivery to the full-time employed can be fulfilled by various

outreach projects. These may be more suited to provision of effective service to this group than would a permanent physical structure.

### **Outreach programmes**

#### **Deposit collections**

A deposit collection takes the form of a collection of books and other materials from the public library's stock which is placed in a remote location, such as a shop, community centre or workplace, and is periodically replaced. Such a collection will bring the public library service into closer contact with the community it serves and can greatly increase convenience. Philip [9, p. 54] has observed:

McDonald's, banks and other retail outlets do not locate in the city centre and wait – neither can tomorrow's library assume everyone who needs information service will seek out the central or even a branch library.

Carefully located deposit collections have the potential to advance the delivery of effective service by contributing to the satisfaction of the needs of those people who are unable, or do not want, to seek out the main library building. The collections must, however, be well administered and maintained:

To be effective, such collections need to be serviced and maintained on a regular schedule by a central library facility. McCallan (1980) points out that deposit collections are "totally at the mercy of the host facility" and often "revert to an unattractive and unused pile of old best sellers" [10, p. 119].

If designed to avoid this danger, a programme of deposit collections could increase the efficiency of service to the full-time employed through increasing access and convenience.

#### **Workplace libraries**

As the full-time employed spend the majority of their weekday time at work, it would be to their advantage to locate public library services in workplaces. If the library is on-site, no travelling is necessary and the effort, and therefore the cost, required to use the service is minimal.

Workplace libraries have long been common on the mainland of Europe where services are often organized by or in conjunction with trade unions. Such services are most widespread in eastern Europe, with 14.6 million book loans from workplace libraries in East Germany in 1987, and a network of 5,000

workplace libraries in Hungary – a figure which exceeds the number of public libraries in the country as a whole [11, pp. 444–5].

In France, a law which has been in operation since 1985, regulates the entitlement of employees to culture at the workplace, and this has encouraged the setting up of workplace libraries [11, p. 444]. Similarly, workplace libraries are being encouraged in Sweden, where there are 1,000 such libraries spread across 170 of Sweden's 248 local authority districts [11, pp. 441–2]. In the UK, however, workplace libraries dedicated to employees' personal use do not appear on such a scale. One substantial workplace library project is documented in the library science literature. Instituted in Cleveland in 1974, this scheme successfully supplied three factories with books from the public library [12]. Yet few other references are to be found to workplace libraries, and none to specific programmes, indicating either a lack of reporting or a lack of such schemes in the UK.

To be efficient, a workplace library will consist of a broad collection of carefully chosen items and will have the assistance and support of library staff. Problems created by the separation of the deposit collection from the main library can be overcome by the presence of a trained librarian at key service hours (such as the lunch hour), by importing the library's catalogue in the form of a CD-ROM or online, and by instituting a reservation service for any item from the main library which can be brought on request to the workplace. In these ways, convenience to the user can be significantly raised, and the marketing-mix formulation stipulating low cost, high convenience and a wide product range, can be achieved.

There is much scope in the UK for an increase in effective service to the full-time employed through the institution of workplace libraries. This would require negotiation with management, though lack of co-operation from employers could be a major obstacle to the introduction of such a service. However, if agreements can be made with large employers, benefits would include a heightened awareness of the public library in the private sector and, hence, a sounder basis for the negotiation of sponsorship deals which may form an important source of library funding in the future.

### **Mini-libraries**

Public library deposit collections need not be confined to the workplace, and full-time employees may also benefit from the introduction of mini-libraries to other locations which they regularly visit. This is an idea supported by Aslib's *Final Report*:

Our findings suggest that public library users would benefit from the introduction of libraries in village shops, and kiosks or micro-libraries in many new locations. These could include shopping centres; railway, bus and motorway service stations; and other places that attract sustained flows of people[2, p. 14].

The US set a precedent for such libraries, and the adoption of mini-libraries in the UK could be made more efficient through the study of fully-fledged US systems. One lesson which has emerged from experience of such outlets is that they cannot provide a full library service, but function best when concentrating on a single service. For example, one successful mini-library is the "popular reading outlet" which lends paperback fiction only[13].

Yet while the scope of mini-libraries may seem to be limited, they are subject to the same possibilities as are workplace libraries in terms of taking advantage of new technology to bring library catalogues and services online to any location. In the UK, Norfolk County Council provides public library service points in village shops, and has linked these to the main library's computerized issue and return system, with further plans to introduce public access terminals networked to a CD-ROM-based data service[2, p. 87].

The potential of well-located mini-libraries to reach sections of the community which do not make heavy use of the library service has been shown by the fact that in 1983 67 per cent of the users of a lending library established in Lavigne metro station were new public library users[14, p. 50]. A mini-library service could reach the full-time employed if located on commuter routes, close to workplaces, close to homes, or in retail areas where users could combine a library visit with shopping. Such a service requires only low investment, has the potential to reach many people and is, above all, flexible and easily modified in response to changing needs.

### **The 24-hour book dispenser**

In June 1996, the first 24-hour video dispenser began operation in the UK. Modelled on a format common in Italy, where there are

4,000 video dispensing machines, the dispenser allows 24-hour access to a choice of 520 videos and 910 CD-ROMs, with facilities for booking and reserving any item[15, p. 7].

It is possible that the cash-dispenser model also could be adapted to issue books and items in other media. Although only holding a small stock, the machine would have the advantage of continuous access, low running costs, and convenience of location: it could be sited in any street or building which the full-time employed regularly use. The 24-hour book dispenser has yet to be invented, but it could form a useful supplement to static library buildings, bringing service to new locations and increasing temporal availability.

### **Mobile libraries**

According to Pestell[16, p. 1]: "The overall objective of mobile library services is to promote equity of service provision by enhancing the opportunity of access to library services". In a manner similar to deposit collections, mobile libraries can be utilized to carry public library service to the full-time employed by locating services in places which can be visited easily. Mobile service provision conforms to the required marketing-mix specifications by making access to the service easier and, hence, raising convenience and lowering cost.

Mobile services to individual workplaces or to industrial estates could reach the full-time employed in much the same way as do workplace deposit collections. Elliott de Saez[17, pp. 45-6] considers that this could be a very successful venture:

The traditional industrial estates and the new high-technology parks are obvious targets for mobile services. These are concentrated populations, often served by banks, post offices and sandwich shops, but rarely considered by the libraries. The nature of such industrial estates and parks is that they are on the outer fringes of urban development and working hours tend to be extended for employees due to travelling difficulties. Equally, as lunch breaks tend to be short since there is nowhere else to go, the unfortunate employee has little opportunity to visit branch libraries in normal opening hours. The lack of competitive facilities on such estates means that any library making its services available would be highly successful.

However, mobile services to workplaces, while a seemingly ideal means of effective service to the full-time employed, are not without their problems. Andros[18, p. 50] discovered that employers may be unwilling to agree to such a service. Telephoning

companies in New Jersey in an effort to set up such mobile provision, he found that “corporate spokespeople often cited liability limitations, lack of security, inadequate parking space for a 30-foot Moroney book truck, and fear of lost productivity among employees as reasons to say no”. As with deposit collections, negotiation is necessary. Nevertheless, a successful service will raise library profiles throughout the business community.

In addition to providing a service to places of work, mobile libraries could also stop in the evenings and at weekends in shopping centres or residential areas. The advantage over deposit collections of a mobile service is that it enables a greater flexibility and can bring a fully-staffed service to a greater number of people. Staffordshire County Council discovered that mobile library services also maximize stock usage. One mobile library which replaced four part-time branch libraries, achieved triple the number of issues of a similar volume of stock [19]. This indicates that well-placed mobile libraries can attract more users than do static branches in poor locations.

Mobile libraries can be equipped with the latest technology in order to increase the effectiveness of the service. Introduction of information and communications technology may pose more of a problem than it does in static locations, but Alsbyer's [20, pp. 4-9] list of possibilities shows just what can be achieved: the mobile library can be equipped with a PC to store the day's transactions, the library catalogue on CD-ROM, mobile telephones for enquiries and fax transmission, and there is even a suggestion of a dedicated “bookmobile satellite” to enable online searching. All this is powered by onboard generators or by direct connections to power cables at stops. These innovations greatly increase the product range which can be offered by mobile facilities, and also heighten convenience (for staff as well as for users).

The flexibility of the mobile service in terms of duration and location of stops, the products it offers, and its ability to adapt to shifting and emerging needs, makes it a valuable vehicle in the provision of effective service to the full-time employed.

### Remote access

All methods of remote access have the advantage of circumventing the users' need to visit

the library in person, and their potential 24-hour availability can greatly increase convenience. For these reasons, such methods have much to offer the full-time employed.

There are, however, disadvantages to the provision of public library service through remote channels. The service encounter can become impersonal and separated from the professional expertise with which the service exchange is accomplished in a main library building, and there is a danger of compromising service quality and lowering the satisfaction gained by the consumer through service use. This risk may be overcome in several ways: for example, by providing a telephone helpline, or by instituting periodic visits by librarians to users, or by running user training courses. Remote access systems must be backed up by efficient support services in order to maximize their effectiveness as means of service delivery.

### Telephone

The telephone has limited use as a means of public library service delivery, since it does not enable the full product range to be presented; nor does it allow a comprehensive service exchange to take place. Its most useful role is as a means of delivery of information enquiries, which can be answered by library staff on the user's behalf. The advantage of a telephone information service to the full-time employed lies in the fact that it minimizes effort and lowers the time which may be necessary to visit the public library in person. In order to heighten convenience as much as possible, the service should be available in the evenings and at weekends as well as during the day.

While such a system can form a contribution to effective service for the full-time employed, it must be undertaken in conjunction with other services which facilitate provision of the full product range on offer.

### Books by mail

A “books-by-mail” programme (as it is named in America) is one in which users request books and other items from a catalogue sent to their homes. The items are sent to users and returned to the library by post. Usually postage both ways is paid by the library, and special book bags are provided for safe carriage. Diane Friese is of the opinion that books by mail “can service certain types of individual users – elderly, bedridden,

working adults – more effectively than bookmobiles” (quoted in Schillinger[21, p. 5]). The convenience of selecting and receiving items in the home is very high, and this convenience is attractive to users who are employed full-time.

To be successful, such a programme requires a comprehensive and attractive catalogue. There is a possibility that funding for the service could be supplemented through the sale of advertising space in the catalogue, but since the service requires no publicly accessible premises and little staff time to administer, the cost of mounting a postal library service should not be prohibitive. It could be reduced further through the institution of special postal rates for library materials, as in the USA where in 1987 the special library postal rate saved libraries \$22.2 million[22, p. 30].

Problems with this system include the fact that the service encounter becomes impersonal, and that a satisfying outcome may be hampered by lack of professional advice; a further disadvantage is put forward in the survey findings of Boyd and Benson[23, p. 67]:

Books-by-mail users are somewhat less satisfied with their choice of materials than bookmobile users. Much of the dissatisfaction seems traceable to the fact that the value of browsing can never be completely replaced and also to the reticence of books-by-mail clients to request books not listed in the catalogue.

It seems that while convenience is high, the satisfaction gained by service use may be lower than for other forms of service delivery. Careful construction of a marketing plan for a books-by-mail service, taking into account the mix necessary for service to the full-time employed, may overcome some of these problems; but it is difficult to present the totality of the public library's product offerings through such a scheme.

However, as a supplement to the static library building or in conjunction with other forms of service delivery, books-by-mail may prove a useful system. As with mini-libraries, it may be a system best-suited to a single function, such as lending paperback fiction. In such an area, it could be a highly convenient means of bringing public library service to the full-time employed.

### **Electronic communications**

The major obstacles to effective public library service provision to the full-time employed are

time and place of access to the service. With the rapid growth of new telecommunications technology, these obstacles may be permanently overcome. As yet, such technology is in its developmental or infancy stage, and many of the innovations on the horizon are as yet impractical for use in public libraries. The potential, however, is vast:

The rate of technological development is accelerating so rapidly that new possibilities for distribution are continually entering the marketplace. Today's world includes cable television, interactive video, computer networks, teleconferencing, broadcasting systems, satellite transmission, facsimile transmission, videotex, and many combinations and permutations of these technologies. New information formats are also continually emerging in the arenas of audio, video, and optical technologies, to name a few[24, p. 313].

Public libraries could utilize electronic forms of service delivery in several ways. A current possibility is access to the library's OPAC via the Internet. This would allow users with computers and Internet connections to search the library's holdings and view the loan status of items from their own homes or offices. Hertfordshire Libraries have already mounted a user-friendly OPAC which could form a model for other authorities (see Figure 1). PICA, the Dutch public library union catalogue, also incorporating a journal article database, provides a good example of a more comprehensive online OPAC system[25]. If a reservation facility were incorporated into the OPAC, as it is in many university libraries, convenience of the service would be increased.

Another possibility opened up by electronic access is the posing and answering of reference enquiries by E-mail, possibly fronted by a standard search form to be filled in by users and presented on a home page. Such services could enable 24-hour access, and each of these methods would entail high convenience and low user cost.

Electronic communications could be used also as a means of presenting the public library's product – information. Many databases are available online, and reference works and community information add to the resources available on the World Wide Web. Electronic publishing would be one means of making the contents of a library's holdings directly available to a remote user, and the virtual library, or the library without walls, would enable the full-time employed to access

Figure 1 Hertfordshire Libraries Home Page, showing access to the OPAC or Resources Catalogue (July 1996)



the library service instantly and without leaving their homes. In such a scenario, the local public library could be expanded to global proportions, widening its own product range by facilitating access to networked information resources around the world. Information in electronic format as yet comprises only a minute proportion of the totality of information which exists in printed form, and so such access is not yet a realistic option. Were it to become a feasible option in the future, then such a public library service delivery system would benefit the full-time employed by raising convenience to a level which would be hard to surpass.

A further possibility in service delivery is use of interactive cable television. Pilot projects of this nature have occurred in Ohio, Colorado and Iowa, offering users the opportunity to interact from home with the library catalogue and reference service [26, p. 56]. This forms yet another contribution to effective service to the full-time employed, with 24-hour availability.

Although remote access seems to offer almost unlimited possibilities as means of effective service delivery, it is not without concomitant problems. One obstacle to be overcome is the establishment of the infrastructure requisite of an electronic communications network. In the UK only 30 per cent of households are covered by cable television

networks [27, p. 22], and few homes are connected to the Internet:

At the moment, there are an estimated 300,000 subscribers to consumer online services and perhaps 100,000 signed up with Internet service providers (ISP) – a tiny proportion of the British population [28, p. 7].

The expense of buying the equipment and connections necessary for remote electronic access may be a prohibitive factor for those of the full-time employed with low disposable incomes. This problem possibly could be solved through the use of facilities provided by employers, but much negotiation would probably be necessary before agreement could be reached on this issue. A further problem with the growth of remote access is the establishment of interfaces and systems which are user-friendly and easy to navigate. If these characteristics are absent, then ease of use will be lowered and the potential of remote access services to create customer satisfaction may be jeopardized.

Such problems with electronic access poses problems not just for users, but public libraries too have encountered problems in setting up such services. A Library and Information Commission survey [29] reported in December 1995 that only 3 per cent of individual public library service points had some form of Internet connection. The expertise and funding which are necessary for the

launch of an electronic service are being accrued only slowly, and while collaborative experiments such as Project EARL[30] are under way, it will be some time before remote electronic access is an efficient reality. While it may have much to offer to the full-time employed, such service delivery cannot currently fulfil their needs to any significant extent. When designing services for the future, however, the potential of remote access should not be dismissed.

### Promotion

Promotion, or communication, is a key component of the marketing mix for services. The institution of new or improved services must be advertised to the target segment, and aspects of current service of which members of the segment may be unaware should be promoted in order to encourage use. While promotion is a diverse activity, covering many aspects of library service, it is the publicity function, in particular, which must play an important role in completing the cycle of provision of effective service to the full-time employed.

Methods of publicity and designs of the message content are many and diverse; in the context of communicating with the full-time employed, only a few practical means of publicity distribution will be considered. Pestell[16, p. 44] has compiled a list of useful ideas for publicizing mobile library services. Figure 2 is based on this list, but with adaptations for the specific targeting of the full-time employed. One important theme of the suggestions in Figure 2 is the workplace, and successful co-operation with employers is an important step in achieving effective publicity for library service to this segment.

Design of the actual message content will vary according to the precise form of service offered and the value which it has for this group. However, if designed with the promotional marketing-mix objectives in mind, and if distributed through channels which allow maximum exposure of the message to the employed full-time, then an important element of the marketing process will have been achieved.

### Funding

When designing effective service, every public library authority must work with the

Figure 2 Possible distribution channels for publicity material to the full-time employed

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Means of publicity distribution
Production of calendars containing details of services
Distribution of broadsheets listing schedules and services to workplaces, households, post offices, banks, etc.
Use of notice boards in workplaces, commuter centres (e.g. railway stations), shopping centres, etc.
Use of newsletters and magazines produced by employers, companies, trade unions, staff associations, etc.
Articles and adverts in local and trade newspapers
Information printed on government circulars and notices which are sent to all households or workplaces
Production of bookmarks listing services and schedules
Use of mail order centres to distribute flyers
Letter drops by local milkman, postman, etc.
Radio announcements of schedules (which could be timetabled to coincide with commuter hours)
Displays in workplaces, shopping centres, community centres, etc.

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Source: Adapted from [16, p. 44]

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environment in which it is placed. One significant environmental influence is the level of funding. Ideals of effective service, however desirable, may not be attainable within the financial constraints which currently surround the public library service. The public library hoping to provide effective service to the full-time employed must thus examine alternative methods of finance, and the following suggestions describe some ways of possibly gaining funding for future service.

Commercial sponsorship of libraries is an emerging solution to the funding problem. Current examples include Huyton Library in Knowsley and Ferndown Library in Dorset, which are sponsored by Asda and Tesco, respectively[31, p. 139]. This can be a mutually beneficial arrangement in which the library enjoys another source of income and the sponsor gains valuable advertising. However, acquiring sponsorship entails a long process of negotiation, and many companies, under financial pressure themselves, may be unwilling even to consider such a scheme.

A related possibility is that of franchising. In this scenario, the franchiser provides the product and the expertise, and the franchisee provides premises and personnel. A pilot

project running in Hertfordshire showed one possibility of such an arrangement:

For example, one rural parish council is currently served only part-time by a mobile library. Under a franchise arrangement, HLAI [Hertfordshire Libraries, Arts and Information] could license the parish council to provide a full-time service based in a local community centre. The parish would provide premises and personnel, the council would provide loan materials, training and access to support services [32, p. 9].

Although public librarians may express doubts about the devolution of service in this manner, such systems should be assessed for their ability to contribute to effective service to the full-time employed. If carefully monitored and controlled, such arrangements could play an important role in the fulfilment of marketing-mix criteria.

### Control and review

Once decisions have been made concerning the marketing mix and the practical shape that the mix will take as a form of service provision, plans can be implemented. This requires the co-ordination of human, financial and material resources within an allocated timespan, and is a marketing function just as important as those which have preceded it in the planning process. The marketing cycle is completed by the evaluation, review and control of services to maintain their ability to produce consumer satisfaction over time.

Lancaster and Massingham [33, p. 325] define the control process as consisting of four essential aspects:

- (1) setting of performance standards;
- (2) locating of responsibility for achieving those standards;
- (3) evaluating performance against the standards which have been stipulated; and
- (4) taking corrective action if necessary.

These activities aid the efficient running of the chosen form of service and, as such, form a necessary part of the evaluation process; but in addition, a more far-reaching monitoring of the changing environment and of changing user needs is necessary. Effective service to the full-time employed hinges on the fulfilment of *their* needs and wants, and as these change and develop, the shape of effective public library service will alter also.

The most popular evaluation tool in the public library service is the survey, which if carefully designed, can reveal much about the library's environment and its ability to satisfy user needs. If dissatisfaction is detected, then the marketing cycle will revolve back to its beginning and objectives must be re-examined and if necessary reset, and the marketing mix must be altered to take into account the changes responsible for dissatisfaction. Subject to a dynamic environment, the public library should be responsive to the ever-changing communities which it serves. The institution of an efficient evaluation system is thus a vital aspect of the continued provision of effective service to the full-time employed.

### Conclusion

This article has presented some of the ways in which a public library service may be designed and delivered in order to produce effective service to those in full-time employment. The core service itself should be designed with specific user needs in mind, and this should be reflected in the opening hours and the location of library buildings. In addition, outreach activities may be organized to take public library service to the workplace or other convenient locations. A further consideration is remote access, a possibility which has not yet reached its full potential but should be carefully considered as a future means of service delivery. As Walters [34, p. 467] writes:

As libraries prepare to assume a new and expanded role in the information age, their building forms and the internal packaging of their services must be flexible and responsive to change.

The degree to which user needs are being met and the extent to which users are deriving satisfaction from use of the public library service should be constantly monitored and plans adjusted to reflect change.

The marketing of the public library to the full-time employed thus can serve as a conduit to the marketing of the public library to the whole community, opening up the wider issue of the provision of effective service to the UK population in its entirety. The marketing approach, providing as it does a framework for organized evaluation and decision-making, can aid the resolution of the shape of effective service by providing the tools with which to approach this task.

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