Circulation data was the most compelling factor in determining success. While the trend among these libraries was the decline in circulation for regular library materials, circulation of textbooks as part of these reserve programs was up, sometimes outperforming the whole of a library’s regular circulating collection by upwards of fifty percent. Additionally, student feedback from survey data and focus groups helped libraries to identify strengths and weaknesses of their programs and to identify why students use the program, which overwhelmingly had to do with cost savings to the student. This data provides libraries with an avenue not only to demonstrate the success of a much-needed program but also to illustrate the need for a larger conversation on textbook affordability in higher education.

The authors of these studies realize that there are limitations to this service. Although not addressed in depth, access to Open Educational Resources (OERs) is where many of these institutions are looking for solutions to the problem of the sustainability of this program, plus overall affordability to students. The advantages of a library offering a textbook reserve program are many, including increased value and increased circulation, but more importantly, it places the library in the position to introduce and provide leadership into the area of OERs. A nice companion book to this text would be another of Diaz’s books, Affordable Course Materials: Electronic Textbooks and Open Educational Resources (ALA Editions, 2017), also reviewed in this issue of LRTS.

Each of these essays is well-written and makes good on Diaz’s claim that “if you are interested in building a textbook program or have one but are interested in new insight for increasing efficiency of your workflows or impact on campus, these case studies will help you collect and manage college textbooks” (ix). Many of these studies offer a blueprint on how to manage a program start to finish, and they all offer their own insights and experience that are helpful to any library considering this program. This book is a must-read for any library interested in building or retooling a textbook reserve program as it offers fresh insight into strategies for maintaining the program and where the conversations should go from there.—Sue Maszaros (sue.maszaros@belmont.edu), Belmont University


This how-to manual for librarians provides valuable information on how libraries can use marketing to increase usage and better serve patrons. While it discusses electronic resource (e-resource) examples and issues, the true focus is on larger concepts that apply to marketing any type of library resource. It provides a valuable reference for librarians seeking to implement a marketing plan. The second edition has new examples of marketing plans from real institutions. The authors’ stated goals are to “give colleagues the specific means of developing, implementing, and assessing marketing plans for e-resource collection management,” and to improve awareness of the value of e-resources among library users (xvi). They succeed in providing content that will help library practitioners of all levels of experience in marketing e-resources.

The first six chapters, grouped as part 1, discuss concepts, practicalities, and assessments of marketing plans. Several of these chapters include recommended reading lists. The authors contend that essential questions must be considered before haphazard marketing is attempted and that all marketing activities should take place within the structure of a marketing plan that addresses nine vital components. The book guides the reader through creating a comprehensive marketing plan. Chapter 1 is introductory and discusses concepts that should underlie all marketing attempts. One central theme, which is reinforced throughout the book, is that e-resources marketing must be integrated into all workings of a library. Staff, librarians, and assistants all should be involved in marketing, which must be integrated into the whole e-resources lifecycle. The next two chapters define the nine components, describe their recommended sequence in the marketing cycle, and present examples of each component with evidence to support them through a literature review. These chapters also include a valuable library-specific list of questions to guide readers through completing each element of a SWOT analysis. Chapter 1 recommends how to formally write a marketing plan for the library or its administration. Chapters 5 and 6 address assessment and revision of each plan component, but include asides on assessment of the library website and of existing e-resources collections. These essential, valuable discussions might fit better in earlier chapters that address the evaluation of the library’s strengths and weaknesses since these assessments are not necessarily linked to particular marketing plans. The text emphasizes the importance of measuring marketing outcomes against clearly defined goals, and provides a number of suggestions that will help libraries meet assessment requirements of parent institutions or funding organizations.

The nine components are at the heart of the book and define how Kennedy and LaGuardia discuss both theory and implementation of marketing. They are presented as roughly chronological steps that can be applied to develop any marketing plan, from an overall library communications
plan to one that promotes a particular resource. Throughout the book, these components are treated both as practical steps in marketing and as elements in a report of a marketing plan, blending planning and implementation in a way that sometimes feels a bit awkward. Due to the authors’ choice to address each component iteratively in most chapters, a reader may need to resort to flipping between the chapters to review different sections addressing the same component. Despite this structure, not much of the content is repetitive, and what repetition exists seems to speak to the nature of marketing as a continuous back-and-forth flow of work and planning.

Part 2 of the book has seven example marketing plans, including three plans not included in the first edition. All of these plans can be downloaded for free on the ALA Editions website as Word documents or PDF files to allow readers to re-use or modify sections. These plans are among the book’s most valuable sections, particularly for librarians already familiar with marketing concepts. The report formats, components, strategies, and assessments in these plans are a trove of information that can be mined to help inspire projects. The main text refers to all plans, with commentary and recommendations for use. In addition, one example plan uses a helpful online marketing plan template. The template is a great way to help beginners get started on their plans as it breaks down daunting tasks into smaller, more manageable questions.

In addition to the extra plans, the new edition includes short discussions of each plan in the main text. Other updates are minimal, but mention current issues such as social media. This text is perfect for any practicing librarians seeking ways to formalize their marketing. It is most useful as a reference for beginners unfamiliar with marketing concepts who want library-specific advice. In this text, readers will have the tools to articulate their marketing efforts with others and to conceptualize existing efforts in a strategic, thoughtful context.—Christine McEvilly (Christine.McEvilly@csi.cuny.edu), College of Staten Island