Marketing in the Forest Service: A Focus on Agency Image

by

Gwen N. Hirsch

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APPROVED:

J. Douglass Weilman, Chairman

Joseph W. Roggenbuck

Daniel R. Williams

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Gwen N. Hirsch

J. Douglas Wellman, Chairman

Forestry

(ABSTRACT)

This paper examines the issue of a popularly held negative image of the USDA Forest Service. Examples from a variety of media vehicles are included to support the claim that a negative image is prevalent. There is also considerable anecdotal evidence to suggest that many people have only the vaguest idea of what the Forest Service is all about.

The adoption of a marketing perspective is proposed to increase awareness of the agency and its functions. An agency-wide customer service orientation is suggested and a public relations effort is proposed. The goal of a public relations campaign for the Forest Service is to provide an accurate depiction of the agency.

Suggestions are offered for implementing a marketing perspective in order to overcome the Forest Service's negative image. These suggestions include adopting a customer service orientation, implementing an internal marketing program, providing more information to the public, and making changes in Forestry education.
Acknowledgements

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INTRODUCTION

In this paper, I will discuss the concept of organizational image as it relates to the USDA Forest Service. I will examine how popular media trends as well as changes in American society have contributed to a negative image of the agency. Because the Forest Service is funded by Congress and therefore requires a certain level of public support, I maintain that a positive agency image is essential. The focus of this paper is to suggest the use of marketing to improve agency image. I will demonstrate that by specifically focusing on the promotional and public relations aspects of marketing, the public can become better informed about the Forest Service. I maintain that more and reliable information can greatly diminish misconceptions about the agency. I believe that these misconceptions are perhaps the greatest barrier to public support.

Image is a powerful concept. It shapes human and industry behavior in many ways. Just as humans seek to project a positive image to the outside world in order to enhance their self-esteem (Sirgy 1985, 1982), businesses, organizations, and agencies seek to project positive images in order to generate revenues, loyalty, and support. For both individuals and organizations, the projected image affects how outsiders behave toward them. Because it is more difficult to get to know an agency than an individual, an agency's image is critical. An image-conscious agency should seek to project an image which invites interaction, so that people will want to approach that agency. This
process will ensure that people receive information directly from the agency and not from second-hand, potentially inaccurate sources. In the absence of personal contact, image becomes all the more important and can supersede all other communications issued from the agency. This can be a disastrous situation if the agency image is less than positive.

Before going on, it is necessary to define more precisely what is meant by the term image. The concept of image is more complex than it may first appear. Jenkins (1982) describes five types of images that an organization may have as follows:

the "mirror image" is that held by management, which may well be different from that held by outsiders who have a "current image" based on their knowledge and experience of an organization. The "multiple image" occurs when different representatives of a company, such as salesmen, present personal images rather than a uniform image of their organization itself. The "corporate image" is that of the organization itself, based on its reputation, activities and behavior. A "product image" is that based on the quality, performance, selling points, or distinctiveness of a product (p. 201.)

This paper will focus primarily the corporate image. However, because one of the purposes of developing a good corporate image is to produce good current images, I would like to make clear the difference between current and corporate images. A current image comes from having some personal experience with an organization. This experience may be first-hand or it may be quite far removed, such as that which is related by a friend or relative. In any case, a current image comes from knowledge of some kind of personal interaction with the organization.

A corporate image can be held without any personal experience with the organization. One might know, for example, that IBM is a famous company and that its stock sells for a lot of money. One need never have spoken to an IBM employee or have purchased an IBM product to hold a corporate image of IBM as a reputable manufacturer of quality products.

As concerns the Forest Service, it is my belief that a positive corporate image is the first step in inducing people to learn about and approach the agency. People with a positive corporate image of the agency are more likely to use its services or participate (through public involvement) in the
management of the National Forests. In this fashion, a positive corporate image can help the agency provide and maintain the services that are needed and desired.

I maintain that the Forest Service is afflicted with a corporate image that is considerably less than positive. One reason for the poor image is due to the media coverage experienced by the agency. True to the adages that "good news is no news" and "bad news is good news", most news items are concerned with disasters, foul-ups, cover-ups, and tragedies. These stories seem to be particularly newsworthy when they concern a government agency, as they seem to satisfy the national pastime of "bureaucrat bashing" (Kelman 1987).

The U.S. Forest Service has by no means been exempt from the plethora of negative media coverage. Although Clarke and McCool (1985) describe the Forest Service as a "bureaucratic superstar," this characterization does not translate into popularity or general support. Much of the recent press coverage of the Forest Service has been negative, and this coverage has likely contributed to the agency's present negative image.

One of the most damaging articles to the corporate image of the Forest Service is Skow's (1988) "Forest Service Follies" which appeared in the widely read magazine Sports Illustrated. Given this magazine's prominence (circulation 2,875,000 as compared to the Journal of Forestry's 20,500), this article has the potential to affect the opinions of a wide cross section of the American public.

Skow's article details the cutting of Alaskan old-growth timber. Because much of the timber cut in the Tongass National Forest is sold to Japan, Skow (1988:78) refers to the Forest Service as a loyal ally of the Industrial Bank of Japan. He accuses the Forest Service of having "long since stopped faithfully serving the forests or even the timber industry. If [the Forest Service] seems committed to nothing except its own steady growth," (Skow 1988:78). Skow feels that the timber activities in the Tongass are representative of the Forest Service's administration of the rest of the country's national forests, and states that these resources, "... are being mismanaged as tree factories".

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by the Forest Service, the huge and obstinate bureaucracy that is supposed to preserve them' (Skow 1988:78).

On August 13, 1989, the Sunday edition of the Washington Post (circulation 1,112,802) presented a full-page article entitled, "Tree Slaughter: Your Taxes at Work" (Young 1989). This article describes controversial logging practices in the Pacific Northwest. Despite the title, this particular article does not viciously criticize the Forest Service, but many people don't bother to read past headlines. Although the article only states that the Service is the managing agency and that they are having difficulty in carrying out their multiple use mission, the negative connotations in the title are likely to be associated with the agency.

Articles which are much less kind in their treatment of the Forest Service include Hamilton and Yeager's (1986) "Paradise Leased", and Hanson's (1986) "The Rise and Demise of Forest Service Planning." Both of these articles appeared in Sierra (circulation 375,000).

Hamilton and Yeager accuse the Forest Service of giving little to no thought to environmental consequences as they encourage oil and gas developers to proceed with exploration activities on the boundaries of Yellowstone National Park. "The Rise and Demise of Forest Service Planning" Hanson (1986) is subtitled "The dream: to produce long term plans for the wise management of national forests. The reality: scores of road maps to resource abuse." Hanson (1986:46) quotes an editorial from the Portland Oregonian which states,

Multiple use has been the cloak in which the Forest Service has traditionally wrapped itself to answer critics, but the cloak has become tattered and threadbare. For other than commercial values, such as logging, multiple use of the nation's forests looks more like multiple neglect.

Hanson's article, which also includes statements such as "the Forest Service has not been responsible to the public" (p. 40) and "Congress gave the Forest Service its day in the sun and the agency blew it" (p.40), does little to instill public confidence in the agency.

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Sierra's readers are even more critical of the Forest Service than its writers. In a letter to the editor, Fritz (1986:9) comments,

For those of us who have tried that approach [sitting down and talking with the Forest Service] for seven years while the Forest Service continued to maim our national forests with massive clearcuts, it would be naive--nay, derelict--to place any more hope in those smooth-talking butchers of ecosystems.

Criticism of the Forest Service goes beyond simple differences of opinion as to which uses of the forests should be emphasized. Disputes often focus on the decision processes used to formulate planning alternatives and consequently on the alternatives selected. The use of FORPLAN, the agency's primary planning computer program, has been widely criticized (Alston and Iverson 1987, O'Toole 1983). The profitability of timber sales is questioned (NY Times 1988), and the issue of below-cost timber sales has been highly controversial. Hanson (1986:45) cites a General Accounting Office study which concluded that, "the Forest Service lacks an accounting system capable of indicating which sales make economic sense and which do not", and Skow (1988:82) states that, "whacking the Forest Service for fiscal wastefulness is so satisfying that it is easy to forget the harm its policies are doing to the environment."

In addition to the copious outside criticism of the agency, individuals in the Forest Service itself derogate some of the agency's own programs. In response to heavy logging emphasis in the Pacific Northwest, Jeff DeBonis formed the Association of Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics. This association publishes a newsletter called the "Inner Voice" where employees can write in anonymously. As one might guess, the anonymous letters are usually critical, to say the least.

Zane Smith, leader of the task force which created the National Recreation Strategy (a program initiative of the Forest Service) described current recreation programs as sloppy and run-down. Smith admitted that the Forest Service is doing less than it could, and that it does not strive for excellence (Smith 1988). Noting a growing lack of recreationist satisfaction, Smith declared, "we need to and can improve customer satisfaction, we don't have to live with what we've got, it can be improved, it's possible" (Smith 1988).
The above presentation should indicate that bad press about the Forest Service abounds, and has led me to speculate that a significant percentage of the American public possesses a negative image of the Forest Service. By no means do I mean to imply that all Americans think poorly of the Forest Service, for certainly there are many agency supporters. However, in my research of widely available publications (mainly magazines and large newspapers), I did not find any articles praising the Forest Service.

Given the following anecdotal and cited evidence, I would also speculate that there also exists a large percentage of Americans have only the fuzzyest image of the Forest Service. Clarke and McCool (1985) support a claim that I have often made, which is that many people can not distinguish between the National Park Service and the Forest Service. Countless times I have described school projects that I’ve worked on involving National Forest recreation issues only to have the person I’m talking to nod and begin telling me about this or that National Park. I always say, “That’s the Park Service, I’m talking about the Forest Service”, only to have the person either look puzzled, or quickly say “right”, leaving me with the distinct impression that they feel I’m being overly nit-picky.

A friend of mine was well aware of my studies in the Forestry department, and was most anxious for me to meet her cousin who works for the Forest Service. I finally met the man, and when I asked him to tell me just what he did in the Forest Service, he replied, “actually I work for the Park Service."

When I tried to get details of a Roper Public Opinion Poll which ranked 15 Federal agencies and indicated that the National Park Service had the most favorable rating, I called the Roper Center and asked if the Forest Service was included in the poll. The gentleman who was helping me replied, “Is that different from the Park Service?”.
Clearly, a lack of awareness is not nearly as deleterious to the agency as are the barbaric images held by many environmentalists; however, the fuzzy image situation does nothing positive for the agency, either. Those with no awareness or image of the Forest Service represent potential supporters if the agency could initiate some interaction or dialogue before they are captured by prevailing negative images.

If, as Clarke and McCool (1985) suggest, the Forest Service is a "bureaucratic superstar," backed up with funding, personnel, and power, and the Park Service is an agency which only "muddles through", why do so many Americans focus on and actually prefer the Park Service?

Many reasons might be offered; including: some Park Service areas are scenically spectacular (e.g. Grand Canyon); some areas are important historically (e.g. Gettysburg, Booker T. Washington home); some are strongly associated with wildlife (e.g. Yellowstone, Denali); and many are associated with annual vacations, relief from work and daily cares, and family togetherness. However, another important reason, I would submit, is that the Forest Service does not have a well defined image. The questions "Who are those people and what exactly do they do?" are most likely asked by members of the public with no image of the Forest Service, while those with negative images are more likely to be thinking, "Why are those people doing what they're doing, and how can I stop them?"

These are questions which must be answered. No matter how brilliantly the superstar gleamed in the past, the new age of participatory democracy (Naisbitt 1982) has arrived, and with it has come the power to change what has gone before. Environmentalism, judged by memberships in such organizations as the National Wildlife Federation, the Sierra Club, National Audubon Society and others, is on the rise. Hendee (1983:77), quoting Naisbitt's "Megatrends", describes the impact of these environmental groups as follows:

Their grass roots activities, stimulating public involvement, citizen action, voter initiatives, and referenda are examples of ways in which local publics can 'leapfrog traditional representative processes and mold the political system with their own hands.'
The emergence of these vociferous and often militant interest groups leads me to believe that the Forest Service superstar has become seriously tamished. Important elements of the population do not trust The Service to manage the National Forest System in a way that responds to their interests.
ORIGINS OF THE FOREST SERVICE IMAGE PROBLEM

Criticism of the Forest Service did not evolve simply because Americans suddenly decided they didn’t like clearcuts or below cost timber sales. Rather, public disillusionment with the Forest Service intensified as the agency continued on in the vein which enabled it to become a large and powerful agency in the first place.

In a detailed study of the factors which make natural resource management agencies successful, i.e. long-lived and relatively well funded, Clarke and McCool (1985) indicate that agency success is dependent on expertise, control of information, and political support. Clarke and McCool (1985:37) strongly maintain that one reason the Forest Service has been able to grow and become relatively powerful is due to its commitment to a scientific basis of expertise. “The Forest Service, like the Corps [Army Corps of Engineers] has sustained itself over a seventy-five year history by its adherence to utilitarian and pragmatic values.”

Clarke and McCool (1986:5) break down expertise and control of information into the following components, in all of which the Forest Service has had strength:
1. the nature of the mission originally given the agency;

2. the extent to which the agency embodies a highly regarded profession;

3. the degree to which the leadership of the agency can capitalize on the knowledge base of the organization; and

4. whether a sense of *esprit de corps* permeates the organization.

I contend that many of these same components which historically gave the Forest Service power are now giving it problems. The Service's utilitarian mission and technical expertise are at odds with growing environmentalism; and its internal orientation, which helped it develop its renowned *esprit de corps*, is challenged as closed mindedness. This paradoxical sequence of events, i.e. the denouncement by the public of the very factors which carried the agency so far forward for most of its existence, is a reflection of changes in American society.

These changes began in the years following the Second World War as discontent with many forms of government surfaced in the form of growing citizen activism. Beginning with the Administrative Procedure Act of 1946, requirements for citizen involvement have become the norm for administrative policy making in all levels of government (Rosenbaum 1978).

Rachael Carson's (1962) *Silent Spring* was instrumental in launching the environmental movement of the 1960's and early 70's. This movement culminated in the passage of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1970. This act was passed in response to a growing awareness of the environment and a sharp decrease in trust of the government agencies who were supposed to be protecting it. Where in the past people were content to let the government take care of such things, by 1970 this was no longer the case. Also during this time, "A pervasive distrust of politicians and their lackeys, the bureaucrats, was sharply heightened by the war in Southeast Asia" (Wright 1988:3).
Clarke and McCool’s components of expertise provide a helpful framework for looking at how the elements of support have become elements of derision. The first element is the nature of the agency’s mission. The Forest Service has always had a strong sense of mission, but as non-commodity uses of the forest began emerging, Gifford Pinchot’s goal of providing “...providing the greatest good for the greatest number of people in the long run” became increasingly vague, so the agency officially adopted the slogan “Caring for the Land and Serving People.” Unfortunately, many people felt they were not being served, and most special interest groups regarded the new mission statement as meaningless. The reason special interest groups formed in the first place was due to “a loss of public trust in the professionals’ ability to accommodate their interests” (Wellman and Tipple 1990:7).

One reason that the Forest Service could not accommodate the public’s interests was that they were increasingly out of touch with who the public was. As an internally-focused and professionally-oriented agency (Kaufman 1960), differing viewpoints did not have much opportunity for expression. This homogeneity contributed to leadership’s ability to capitalize on the knowledge base of the agency (Kaufman 1960). While lower level employees had more field knowledge than higher level employees, their similarity in science-based education allowed everyone to speak the same language. Unfortunately, with everyone speaking the same language, outsiders with differing viewpoints were not heard or attended to.

Table 1 (Clarke and McCool 1985:6) shows sources of agency power divided into two parts, expertise/control of information and political/constituency support. The authors indicate that in the past, attention to the poor and ethnic minorities correlated negatively with federal resource agency power. Certainly, this is no longer true, and this realization is now causing the Forest Service and other agencies to consider a broader constituency.

The second component of expertise is the extent to which the agency embodies a highly regarded profession. For the most part, “science” is well respected in American society. At the turn
### Table 1. Sources of Agency Power

**1. Expertise/Control of Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1a Nature of Mission</th>
<th>1b Dominant, Established Profession</th>
<th>1c Astute Leadership</th>
<th>1d Esprit de Corps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+ pro-development multiple-use; utilitarian values</td>
<td>+ scientific, military bases of expertise</td>
<td>+ scientific or military leadership</td>
<td>+ coherent public image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ created by an organic act</td>
<td>- interdisciplinary; melting pot or professions</td>
<td>+ a strong founder</td>
<td>+ well-defined agency character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ contains a mission that is expandable</td>
<td></td>
<td>+ recruitment from within</td>
<td>+ integrated organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**0 Age of Organization**

- the product of executive orders or reorganizations
- narrow or esoteric mission; dominant use; preservationist values

- political appointments to head agency
- lack of a competitive edge

- servile attitude; inferiority complex

**2. Political/Constituency Support**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2a Constituency Size</th>
<th>2b Linkages to Majoritarian Interests</th>
<th>2c Services or Regulatory</th>
<th>2d Intra-governmental Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+ large; evenly distributed</td>
<td>+ concrete, economic interests</td>
<td>+ service orientation</td>
<td>+ congressional support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ well-educated, well-funded</td>
<td>+ defense contractors</td>
<td>- regulatory functions</td>
<td>+ presidential support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- narrow exotic interest
- broad, amorphous interest

- the poor;
- ethnic minorities

*Note* + = positive influence or characteristic; - = negative influence or characteristic; 0 = no discernible effect
of the century, the idea of a "scientific elite" to guide the development of the nation's natural resources (Wellman 1987a) seemed ideal. These technically trained managers were to be "above the political struggle, with their loyalties to their professions rather than to their localities or interest groups" (Wellman 1987a:86). Unfortunately, the "scientific elite" became, in effect, bureaucrats applying a scientific approach, and as bureaucrats they have been unable to disassociate themselves from the political realm in which they operate.

Because the Forest Service often finds itself in the role of mediator between vastly polarized user groups, it is important, in the interest of fairness, that the Service operate in as neutral a fashion as is possible. For years, many environmental groups have held that the Forest Service was biased toward timber interests. In 1989 Twight and Lyden reported on an empirical study to measure this alleged bias. They found that instead of occupying the desired neutral position as to land use preferences, Forest Service personnel scored on average much closer ideologically with forest utilizers than with environmentalists.

Clarke and McCool's last component of expertise and control of information, esprit de corps, has been a strong contributor to agency power. Esprit de corps has historically been very prominent in the Forest Service. It is this spirit which amazed Kaufman (1960:x) as he marveled at how the Forest Service was able to produce "field behavior consistent with headquarters directives and suggestions." Kaufman goes on to state, "field compliance in the Forest Service is not total, naturally, but it is so high despite powerful factors tending to reduce compliance, that it cries out for study" (p. xi).

The exceptional esprit de corps is nurtured by a traditional policy within the entire forestry profession, including forestry education, and private forestry, of hiring and encouraging like-minded individuals. Twight and Lyden (1989) feel that the Forest Service's bias is a result of the agency's socialization process. This process was first described by Kaufman (1962) but is most eloquently articulated by Fromme (1984:54) quoting Duscha (1962) as follows:
Over the last half century the Forest Service has developed an *esprit de corps* that detractors refer to as priesthood or a classic example of the faceless organization-man system. Made up almost entirely of forestry school graduates, the Service has an ingrown merit and promotion system that covers even the Chief Forester and permits practically no transfusion of new ideas or new blood except at the very bottom. And the man who comes in with ideas soon submerges them in the interest of regular and choice promotions or else quickly leaves the Service in a revulsion against its monolithic structure.

This type of homogeneous organization is usually not well equipped to deal with opposing viewpoints. Twight and Lyden (1988:40) cite two studies by Pfeffer which indicate that “rather than change when presented with evidence that a belief is wrong, members of such institutionalized organizations escalate their commitment to the action that is not working.”

Laycock (1987:120) feels that this behavior is seen in the Forest Service’s handling of the controversial logging of the Tongass National Forest in Alaska. Despite the overwhelming criticism of the action in the Tongass, Laycock describes the Forest Service’s defense of its work there as “beating its dying mule.”

I do not believe that the Forest Service does not address opposing viewpoints; on the contrary, I feel that they have a good reputation at least for soliciting public involvement. However, I do feel that they are reluctant to admit mistakes and are often in the position of “beating a dying mule” to avoid this type of admission. Skow (1988:88) is a good deal more critical of the Forest Service as he states, “Giving the public its say and then patiently and politely ignoring objections is something they do very well.”

Magill (1988:296) explains that the forestry profession’s reluctance to actively incorporate public input is due to strong sentiment that “… our knowledge is scientifically sound, serves their best interests, and should therefore prevail regardless of public desires.” The preoccupation with science and scientific training is a real obstruction to important social issues that need to be addressed by the Forest Service.
Miller (1987:112) believes that the quest for scientific objectivity by environmental professionals can be so extreme as to be pathological. He states most environmental professionals do not feel that psychopathology is found among those whose work requires "probity, rationality, and scientific objectivity" as theirs does. In their view, "Psychopathology may be seen as marginally relevant only in the sense that it is out there amongst the lunatic fringe of the environmental movement." In other words, Miller is describing the environmental professionals who see themselves as just trying to do their jobs as people with opposing viewpoints get in their way. I suspect that there are a number of foresters who would fit this description.

Miller states that extreme objective behavior is characterized by excessive detachment, a preoccupation with power and control, and an hostility toward introspection. While I do not feel that these behaviors characterize the U.S. Forest Service, their traces can be seen in the agency and in many other many environmental organizations. Recognition of these behaviors may help to avoid them and the obvious problems they can cause.

Perhaps the most prevalent of the "pathological" behaviors in the forestry profession is detachment.

One way of detaching yourself from those with whom one disagrees is to ridicule or diminish them in some way. This can be seen in the case of warfare when the 'enemy' are characterized as non-persons, both ridiculous and vicious, certainly less than human 'untermenschen' (Miller 1987:113).

We are all familiar with the term "tree-huggers", and there is little doubt that this term is meant to ridicule. Perhaps a more serious example can be seen in the Pacific Northwest where the conflict between loggers and environmentalists does approximate warfare. In a local parade in a logging community, a float was constructed which portrayed a volkswagen microbus (a stereotyped environmentalist mode of transportation) with a huge spike through it (Salwasser 1989). Although this exhibition was created by loggers and not by the Forest Service, the agency is perceived to side with logging interests. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to assume that many people might feel the incident represented Forest Service sentiments as well.
There is little question that in this volatile situation, dangerous delineations have been made. The fact that Miller singles out the forestry profession as one in which these types of incidents are common should be a cause for concern.

Miller (1987:112) raises the question: if the employees of an agency are pathological*, then can't the entire agency be so as well? "If one takes this approach to psychopathology, it raises the possibility that pathological people can find a congenial niche in pathological organizations, their illness submerged in the pathology around them." The traditional practices of hiring like-minded individuals to work for the Forest Service could contribute to the vicious cycle that Miller describes.

Finally, I feel that the preoccupation with pragmatic and utilitarian values has caused the Forest Service to seriously under-emphasize the field of recreation. Magill (1988:297) cites a California study (Willhite et al. 1973) which found that beginning forestry students had attitudes which could be described as preservationist, non-forestry, and non-logging. However, by the time these students became seniors,

...they have accepted a highly technical value system and have reversed their orientation, probably in response to a group norm in which deviant behavior is not tolerated. Students increasingly use learned technology because this approach is accepted by their peers and a few highly favored professors.

Although Wilhite's study took place at a university and not in the Forest Service, the attitudes displayed by the seniors are similar to the utilitarian attitudes of Forest Service personnel measured by Twight and Lyden (1988).

One way to change the image of the agency's utilization/forest products bias is to place more emphasis on recreation as a desired and legitimate use of the National Forests. Evidence that recreation is not treated as such is provided by the relative amounts of money spent on recreation as compared to other uses of the Forests and by the amount of space devoted to recreation versus other uses in forest management plans.

ORIGINS OF THE FOREST SERVICE IMAGE PROBLEM
In 1987, Chief of the Forest Service, F. Dale Robertson, reported that the National Forests have "...a 44% market share of the time people spend in recreation on Federal Lands." This figure is more than twice the share of the National Park Service. These facts support the notion that indeed recreation should not be considered a secondary or peripheral use of the National Forests.

There are many people who feel that in the future, recreation will be the stronghold of the Forest Service and that private forests will supply more and more of the nation's timber. Now is the time for the Forest Service to look ahead and seize the opportunity to become the largest provider of quality recreational experiences.

The lack of recreation-oriented professionalism in the Forest Service is a direct result of the traditional scientific approach to National Forest management. Wright (1988:5) states that a good indicator of the state of professionalism within the Forest Service is the Recreation Management Shortcourse. "Surveys of class participants have revealed that about 80% had trained in forest management, 40% were unwilling to be considered recreation specialists, and nearly all had learned about recreation management 'on the job'."

I think that the above difficulties have deterred the Forest Service from investing more effort in developing the recreation uses of the Forests. Only when external pressure is applied, as in the recent Presidential proposal to abolish below cost timber sales, is the agency finally motivated to action. As this is written, the Forest Service is conducting an experiment whereby on 12 national forests, money that would have been spent arranging unprofitable timber sales will be invested in enhancing recreation and wildlife management (Edwards 1990).

This experiment is a credit to the Forest Service, but agency critics feel that it has been overlong in coming. The fact that it has taken years for this initiative to become a reality is another indication of the agency's utilization bias.
The Forest Service should not let difficulties in valuing recreation diminish its role as a provider of quality recreation. Like art and music, recreation has tremendous though perhaps unmeasurable benefits for mankind. If Beethoven had been discouraged from composing music because authorities did not know how much to charge for admission to his concerts, the world would have lost an asset of inestimable value. I know I am not alone in thinking the same about recreation.
MARKETING AS A SOLUTION

In the previous two sections, I have described the image problem of the Forest Service and how it evolved. In this section, I will address an approach to solving the problem. This approach is primarily a detailed discussion of marketing and its relevance to improving agency image.

Marketing? Why marketing? What is marketing? “Marketing is two things. First it is a philosophy, an attitude, and a perspective. Second it is the set of activities used to implement that philosophy” (Crompton and Lamb 1986:1). Dommermuth (1989:2) defines marketing as “the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives.” And finally, no attempt to define marketing would be complete without Kotler’s (1975:5) definition:

Marketing is the analysis, planning, implementation and control of carefully formulated programs designed to bring about voluntary exchanges of values with target markets for the purpose of achieving organizational objectives. It relies heavily on designing the organization’s offerings in terms of the target markets’ needs and desires, and on using effective pricing, communication, and distribution to inform, motivate, and service the markets.

Marketing can also be looked at as a social process in which the material needs of a society are identified, expanded, and served by a set of institutions.

There is some discussion as to the appropriateness of government agencies’ adopting marketing principles and practices. On the one hand, there are those who believe that the question is not
whether or not to use marketing, but what is the best way to do so (Enis 1981). On the other hand, there are those who feel that an incompatibility exists between government agencies which are supposed to provide services for "all" citizens, and the central concept of marketing which is market segmentation (Achabal and Backoff 1981).

Market segmentation is the process whereby the general population is divided into groups having certain similar characteristics. Marketers have found they can achieve greater efficiency by targeting those groups most likely to be interested in their products. In terms of segmenting users of government services, at least in the field of recreation, research has shown that there is no such thing as the "average" user (Roggenbuck and Lucas 1985, Shafer 1969). While it is the goal of government agencies to serve all citizens, this task is possible only when groups or individuals make their needs known. Presumably, all citizens have the chance to interact with the agencies and therefore become part of a segment which can be addressed. In this light, the practice of market segmentation should not be used as an argument against marketing for government agencies.

Based on the literature on the adoption of innovations by organizations, Achabel and Backoff (1981:65) analyzed general purpose government agencies in terms of which types of agencies should adopt a marketing perspective in their operations. They describe target agencies as those that:

- have a large federal program and are mandated to conduct needs assessments, program evaluations, and active citizen participation as requirements for ongoing funding;
- involve a significant degree of joint private-public interaction including contracting with private firms for service delivery;
- currently provide, or have the potential to provide, differentiated services to segmented markets rather than undifferentiated, essential services;
- face a turbulent environment and rapidly changing client needs;
- have problem agendas which give high priority to cutback management strategies or have slack and/or discretionary resources; and

MARKETING AS A SOLUTION
• have a high degree of professionalism—chief executive support for innovation and utilization of advanced management techniques for integrated planning and control (PPB, MBO, etc.).

I feel that the above characteristics describe the USDA Forest Service quite accurately, and therefore give additional support for the proposal that the Forest Service look to "marketing as a perspective for problem solving, a management technology, and a bank of theories" (Mokwa 1981:23) to provide direction.

In the field of recreation, there is currently great interest in marketing among many Federal agencies, as evidenced by the 1989 Southeastern Recreation Research meeting, the title of which was "Research and the Recreation Marketplace." Federal agencies providing outdoor recreation, including the USFS, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Army Corps of Engineers, have expressed a desire to incorporate marketing principles and strategies into their recreation operations. In their hurry to jump on the marketing bandwagon, however, it is not immediately apparent exactly what these agencies expect from the incorporation of marketing. In some of the agencies that are just starting to look into marketing, there is an almost desperate air of trying to "get marketing", whatever it is: "we want some." Unfortunately, what commonly happens in this kind of situation is described by Bloom and Novelli (1983:77) as follows:

The management may decide to try out some of this "new stuff" called marketing by hiring a few employees or consultants with marketing backgrounds. These marketers are generally assigned to work with Public Affairs or Public Information Offices. The results the marketers can achieve are quite limited as they have little influence over program development and administration and must restrict themselves primarily to telling people about the features of the program.

One reason many service agencies, both private and government, have resisted the help of marketing strategies is that they are not quite sure what it is they are selling.

Valid definitions and characterizations of most sociopolitical markets and public products are lacking. Thus, relatively few public and third sector decision makers have actively embraced marketing, and their educators have neither researched nor studied it. (Mokwa 1981:17)
While I believe the first part of this statement is true, I am happy to say that educators are now making an effort to study marketing and are encouraging their students to do so. I am certainly an example of this new trend.

The Forest Service has a little more experience in marketing than the other federal agencies which provide outdoor recreation. They have at least been thinking about trying some marketing techniques for several years. The National Recreation Strategy (NRS) specifies marketing as a major theme for improving customer satisfaction. The realization that customer satisfaction is something to be concerned about makes logical the link between government agencies and marketing.

In 1975 Kotler authored an entire textbook on the subject of marketing for non-profit organizations, so the practice can hardly be called novel. Still, 15 years later many government agencies including the the Forest Service are only beginning to grasp the significance of adopting a marketing perspective. This 15-year time lag does not necessarily represent foot-dragging by the Forest Service. Most government agencies just did not see themselves (mirror image) as the types of organizations that could make use of marketing principles.

Unfortunately, despite the explicit definitions of marketing, the term often conjures up images of big business and profit seeking. This extremely narrow definition of marketing implies a lack of understanding on the part of those who cling to it of the many forms and goals of marketing. This narrowness of perception is exemplified in Schultz, Dustin, and McAvoy’s 1988 article, “What Are We In Business For?” According to Schultz et al.(1988:52),

Our professional magazines, journals, and conferences formerly focused on strategies to better serve the leisure needs of people. Those same magazines, journals, and conferences now feature marketing and merchandising strategies designed to cater to the recreation wants of customers who choose to pay.

It seems to me that Schultz et al. have missed the obvious point, which is that "marketing" is a strategy to "better serve the leisure needs of people." Payment has nothing to do with it. Certainly
there are more commercial recreation opportunities becoming available, but marketing has a large part to play in non-commercial recreation as well.

Schultz et al. equate marketing with "the march toward commercialization" (p. 52). Marketing does not equal commercialization. Are churches, universities, or the American Red Cross commercial institutions? No, they are non-profit organizations who use marketing to better serve their customers.

I think that Schultz et al. just cannot bear to think of recreationists as consumers. Whether they pay a fee or contribute tax dollars, they are still involved in an exchange of values which constitutes the situation in which marketing occurs. Schultz et al.'s real contention is with commercial recreation versus publicly funded recreation, and not with the use of marketing at all. It is unfortunate that they associate marketing only with commercial recreation, for their misconception serves only to fuel the fire of resistance to a strategy which can actually help to advance the causes they believe in.

As Soderberg (1989) points out, in his rebuttal to Schultz et al., marketing is a means to an end, and not an end in itself. Marketing techniques can be used to inform customers about opportunities, what they are, and how to get them. This informative function of marketing can hardly be called commercial, and without doubt serves to "enhance the human condition" which is Schultz et al.'s proclaimed goal of recreation.

Before proceeding with this discussion, it is necessary to define a basic marketing paradigm known as the "4 P's" of marketing. The 4 P's represent product, price, promotion, and place, and the term 'marketing mix' is used by strategists when deciding which P or P's should be emphasized in order to best facilitate the exchange between buyers and sellers.
Place and price are self-explanatory, and while product is usually not an abstract notion, in the case of trying to describe the products of the national forests, it does become quite complex due to the intangible nature of many of these products. Wood and wood products are easy to describe, but the products of recreation are not only intangible, they may be different for every user of the forests. Usually the Forest Service describes recreation products as opportunities for experiences, and I will not attempt to improve on this description.

The fourth P is promotion and is defined by Dommermuth (1989:2) as follows: "Promotion involves any technique under a seller's control that can communicate favorable, persuasive information about that seller's product to potential buyers."

When I use the term marketing in this paper, I am primarily but not exclusively focusing on methods of promotion and public relations. Unfortunately, some Forest Service personnel immediately balk at the idea of agency self-promotion. One public affairs officer states, "My contention is that if we have good programs and good relationships with constituents, our programs will sell themselves." His justification for avoiding promotion is that the public would not want their tax dollars to be spent on such self-serving agency maneuvers. Certainly promotion is self-serving, but it is necessary to look one step further and realize who is ultimately being served when a public agency (i.e., one that provides services for the public) acts in a self-serving manner. It is the customer who will ultimately benefit from agency promotion "if", and this is a big if, the agency is fulfilling its role as a service organization and is providing the services that the customer wants and needs. In order for the Forest Service to know what these wants and needs are, there must be communication between the various publics and the agency. This communication is usually handled in the public involvement part of the Forest Service planning process.*

* For a detailed discussion of the Forest Service's public involvement process, see Blahna and Yonts-Shepard (In Press) and Gericke (1990).
I maintain that if the agency is providing services, and no one knows about them, then the agency might as well not exist. I contend that "good programs and good relationships with constituents" come about through promotion and delivery of a good product. Certainly there is a possibility for abuse of promotion; however, unless the Forest Service is trying to sell products that are not desired by customers, the dangers are few.

Critics should realize that marketing is not some kind of behavior modification tool which has hypnotic powers over unsuspecting victims:

Certainly the aim of marketing is to influence and persuade people, and unabashedly so, but it is not as powerful as is often imagined. Marketing is helpless if individuals are not already favorably predisposed to the basic idea that the marketer is trying to push. (Mauser 1983:2)

What I think the above mentioned Public Affairs Officer fears is that promotional campaigns will become the predominant or perhaps only type of agency information presented to the public. I agree that this would be a dangerous situation, one which would seriously erode the credibility of the agency; and when trying to improve the image of the Forest Service, credibility is a major issue.

Anything which can affect the way the agency is seen to operate can be construed as marketing. In this sense, I am less concerned with what the agency does than with what it looks like it is doing in the eyes of a particular target market. I hope I am not misunderstood here; I am not advocating doing one thing and making it look like another. Rather, I want to make sure that when the agency does something, popular or unpopular, it is viewed in a way which is supportive of the agency objectives. One of these objectives should be agency openness. Given the current emphasis on public involvement, it is time for Glasnost in the Forest Service. This goal includes both accepting blame and taking credit where it is due. The role that I see for marketing and public relations in terms of enhancing agency image is to provide an accurate perception of the agency so that the corporate image, i.e. that held by most people, is a true depiction of the agency.
I hope the reader at this point does not say “this sounds like the usual PR fluff to me.” I am equally concerned with promoting the good actions and owning up to bad ones, but I feel that the former category has been neglected. I believe that the Forest Service has many achievements which are obscured when the more popular “timber-travesties” are popularized. Either the Forest Service is overly cautious about taking credit for the many positive things it accomplishes, or it does not feel that it is particularly important to do so. This attitude must be changed, for as we see from the media, criticism is cheap, but praise can be priceless both in terms of corporate image and agency morale.

The following poem illustrates, in a humorous manner, an important lesson for the Forest Service.

The codfish lays a thousand eggs, the homely hen lays one.  
The codfish never cackles to tell you what she’s done.  
And so we scorn the codfish while the humble hen we prize.  
Which only goes to show you that it pays to advertise.

Anonymous

The Forest Service manages some of the most spectacular recreation areas in the world. While management of these areas is often criticized, I believe that these national treasures are the greatest asset the Service has in terms of gaining public support. I feel strongly that a marketing effort is needed to inform and attract customers to recreation opportunities available on the National Forests. The existence of quality recreation programs can do much to improve the agency image. Recreation and general support are linked in a cyclical relationship; a good image leads to increased participation in recreation programs, while increased participation in recreation leads to a good agency image. In other words, HAPPY CUSTOMERS TELL THEIR FRIENDS. It is important to realize, however, that an image is only that; sustained support can only come from actual attainment of good experiences.

In addition, support for other functions of the Forest Service can be greatly enhanced by marketing. We all use wood products, need clean water, and many Americans eat beef or use other
animal products that come from animals grazing on Forest Service lands. Informative promotional techniques can support the concept of multiple use by explaining in detail the wide range of uses of the National Forests that the Forest Service administers.

Ignorance of the many functions of the Forest Service is one of the greatest barriers to support that the Service encounters. This problem was recognized by Gifford Pinchot in 1904 when he was trying to push the transfer of the recently created forest reserves from the Department of the Interior into the Department of Agriculture. Pinchot stated, "I'm of the opinion that much of the opposition to forest reserves comes from a misunderstanding of the government's intentions." (Ponder 1987:31). By 1907, Pinchot had figured out that marketing could be used to correct these "misunderstandings". Pinchot maintained an impressive mailing list of 781,000 people who were regularly updated as to the activities and philosophies of the Forest Reserves (Wellman 1987a). In addition, Pinchot relied on the media to help reduce misunderstanding of "his" agency, and stated, "Action is the best advertisement. The most effective way to get your cause before the public is to do something the papers will have to write about" (Ponder 1987:32).

INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC RELATIONS

One way to involve the media is through public relations. As with marketing, there is a great deal of misunderstanding surrounding the field of public relations:

To many, public relations is at best synonymous with a cover-up or white wash—and some workers have contributed to this reputation by shady acts or outright deceit. However, such practices do not constitute public relations any more than the fabrication of survey plot data could be considered forestry or wildlife management. (Fazio and Gilbert 1981:6)

Fazio and Gilbert (1981:6) cite Cutlip and Center (1978) to provide a definition of public relations for natural resource professions as follows: "Public relations is the planned effort to influence public opinion through good character and responsible performance, based on mutually satisfactory two-
way communication." The emphasis on two-way communication is what distinguishes public relations from promotion. True public relations efforts rely on facts and issues, and are not focused on image improvement alone. To confound things further, I would submit that the fact that an organization has good public relations is something which could be promoted. Good public relations implies good relationships with consumers, and this is a goal specifically outlined by the Forest Service in the National Recreation Strategy.

Jefkins (1982:200) vigorously maintains that the role of public relations is not to create a favorable image. In order for public relations to play the vital role that it is capable of, it is necessary for both the Forest Service and the public to take Jefkins' words to heart:

Reference has been made to the image and to the nonsense of talking about a favorable image. An image can only be what it is, favorable or unfavorable. An image can not be invented or polished, although it can be changed. If through bad behavior, products or services a poor opinion results, this can be changed to a good one if it is deserved by good behavior, products or services. You can not pretend something is what it is not, for the deceit will be discovered sooner or later. An image can also be changed if there is a change in policy or activity. And the image (impression or character) can be developed as people learn more about its subject.

Used honestly and correctly, public relations can facilitate the transfer process described by Jefkins and illustrated below:

- Hostility → Sympathy
- Prejudice → Acceptance
- Apathy → Interest
- Ignorance → Knowledge

Any agency that can boast of accomplishing this transfer process should feel immensely proud of its public relations efforts. More basic than pride, however, is survival. Because (at least theoretically) agency and program survival depend on Congressional and therefore public support, agencies successfully completing the PR transfer process will have a more certain future than agencies which do not.

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There are many people who dismiss the role of public relations. People who have a good understanding of the complete process of getting goods and services from buyers to sellers can appreciate the superordinate importance of public relations in the marketing mix. Quite often it is public relations which can ensure the survival or failure of an organization. If the reader feels that the above statement is too sweeping, I submit two corporate examples which lend it support.

It was good public relations which enabled Johnson and Johnson, the makers of Tylenol, to recover from the worst kind of corporate disaster imaginable. Eight people died as a direct result of using their product, yet the long term effects of the poisoning incidents have been minimal. In 1986, four years after the first poisoned capsules were discovered, the nightmare recurred and more tainted pills were found. Six months after this second incident, Johnson and Johnson maintained a 31.7% share of the market as compared to 33% before the tamperings (Stevenson 1986). ‘I don’t know that there’s a case on record of a brand that has taken two shots to the head like that and come right back,” said Benjamin Lipstein, the chairman of National Brand Scanning Inc., a market research concern. “It’s amazing” (Stevenson 1986).

“Amazing” is hardly enough to describe the Tylenol turn-around. Any lesser handling of this crisis would certainly have resulted in the loss of the Tylenol brand and very likely all of Johnson and Johnson as well.

What did this company do so right? It was a combination of three elements. First, there was an immediate response to the crisis. Johnson and Johnson immediately acknowledged that there was a serious problem. Second, they showed true concern for the public’s well-being. Johnson and Johnson’s chief executive later stated, “The public knows if you’re being straight with them, and they usually sense it if you aren’t” (Powell and Kasindorf 1986). Finally, they took action which demonstrated their greater commitment to public safety than to corporate profits. Even after the second bout of tamperings, 52% of Tylenol users wanted Johnson and Johnson to continue making capsules, but they decided to stop manufacturing them (Powell and Kasindorf 1986).
The above series of actions is public relations at its best, and it resulted in a level of public confidence difficult to believe after eight deaths. Public confidence comes from good personal experiences with an agency or from the agency's reputation of providing good interactive experiences. That is, public confidence comes from the current image (derived from personal experience) and corporate image (derived from reputation.) The fact that "Nobody blamed Tylenol, nobody blamed J&J" (Stevenson 1989:34 quoting Langer) indicates a major public relations triumph.

At the opposite end of the public relations spectrum is Exxon's handling of the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill. One could almost believe that Exxon officials carefully studied Johnson and Johnson's crisis handling technique, and then did exactly the opposite. I'm reasonably certain this is not the case, but I find the poor results achieved by Exxon so predictable in light of Johnson and Johnson's experience that it is hard to believe that no specific pattern was adhered to. Failure to do the same three things that the makers of Tylenol did directly led to Exxon's current poor corporate image.

In terms of response time, Exxon was notably slow. In terms of demonstrating concern over the incident, general opinion is that Exxon was seriously remiss:

The biggest mistake was that Exxon's chairman, Lawrence G. Rawl, sent a succession of lower ranking executives to Alaska to deal with the spill instead of going there himself and taking control of the situation in a forceful, highly visible way. This gave the impression that the company regarded the pollution problem as not important enough to involve top management (Holusha 1989).

In terms of action, at a time when quick action was critical to minimizing the extent of the spill, Exxon was again notably slow.

Perhaps the worst thing that Exxon did was to send out mixed messages about the severity of the spill. This action could only lead the American people to think that Exxon either didn't know what they were doing, or that they were not being honest about the situation. It became evident that the information being disseminated was not accurate, and as a result, public confidence plummeted. This situation is public relations at its worst.
It is this aspect of accuracy in public relations which should concern the Forest Service. Because the Service is a multiple use agency, and because the agency is so large, information from one source is not always consistent throughout the organization. Many articles are written about the Forest Service, and depending on who’s doing the writing, the “data” used to back up the various claims made are rarely consistent and are, therefore, almost always suspect. For example, it is almost impossible to get accurate information on how much money is made or spent by the Service in a given year. Environmentalists use data which support their views while the agency or timber interests use different data to support their views. This situation leads to serious credibility problems.

Terry Seyden, Public Affairs Officer for the Jefferson National Forest, describes three levels of credibility which all combine to contribute to the agency’s overall credibility. The three types of credibility are personal credibility (of Forest Service personnel), process credibility, and product credibility. Seyden (1989:2) astutely summarizes the importance of agency credibility as follows:

You know, this business of credibility is a fragile thing. Credibility is something you earn slowly over time. Trust builds slowly. BUT CAN EVAPORATE OVERNIGHT? A single instance of a constituent being misinformed or misled, can set you back years.
HOW TO "DO" MARKETING

In the previous three sections of this paper, I have described the nature of the Forest Service's image problem, explained how the problem evolved, and in general terms suggested how marketing can be applied to improve the present image. In this final section, I will offer some specific suggestions on how to begin implementing a comprehensive marketing perspective. These suggestions are not meant to be used as roadmaps; they are not detailed action plans. They are simply the first steps in getting the Forest Service to begin thinking about marketing as a guiding philosophy for all of its operations.

Suggestion One: “Look Beyond the Marketing Plan.”

My first suggestion is to look beyond the marketing plan. A marketing plan is a written document which is intended to guide an organization throughout all its operations. A marketing plan is in many ways similar to a forest management plan in that it lays out in writing the direction of the venture in question for a specified number of years. In addition, a marketing plan identifies target markets, strengths and weaknesses, and issues and opportunities. Finally, the plan includes an analysis of the competition.
The Forest Service has accepted the concept of marketing as it is relatively easy to see the benefits of such documents. What the agency must realize is that there is more to marketing than writing plans. The goal of a marketing plan is to help the organization provide better customer service, but it is imperative to note that customer satisfaction does not magically appear simply because of the existence of one of these documents.

I am deeply concerned that too much pressure is placed on the marketing plan as a cure-all for customer woes. Exclusive reliance on this one marketing tool will not guarantee success, and I do not want to see the Forest Service abandon its quest a few years down the road because the existence of plans has not changed things for the better.

My fear that this might happen is justified by conversations with Forest Service personnel on the subject of marketing. When the topic is broached, Forest Service employees are quick to mention (if applicable) that their particular forest has a marketing plan. Perhaps they are just excited and proud of their new direction, but more realistically, I feel they are just using marketing as a "buzz-word", and have little idea of the commitment that a marketing perspective involves. Even if they believe that a marketing plan will be helpful, too much is riding on the implementation of one element in the overall scheme of marketing.

It is not my intention to diminish the contribution of marketing plans; quite the contrary, I am thrilled to see them being adopted. The Forest Service has shown praiseworthy action in this regard and should be proud of its accomplishments. I want to make the point, however, that the marketing plan is just the beginning. Marketing must be embraced as a philosophy that influences all aspects of Forest Service operations if the agency really wants to give the idea a chance to work. Organizations that are guided by the "marketing concept" seek to enlist a total company commitment to serving the customer. Peters and Waterman (1982:15) quoting Thomas Watson Jr. make the following point: "the basic philosophy of an organization has far more to do with its achieve-
ments than do technological or economic resources, organizational structure, innovation and timing."

It is essential that the Forest Service demonstrate its service orientation in all aspects of its operations. Forest Service employees need to remember that the agency was created because management of the National Forests is a service desired by the American public. The agency was not created to provide employment for people who like to work in the woods.

**Suggestion Two: "Implement an Internal Marketing Program."**

One way to spread the new doctrine throughout the ranks is through what is known as internal marketing. This concept involves “selling” the idea of the marketing concept internally, that is to the Forest Service employees. If the agency can’t sell marketing to its own employees, they’ll never sell it to the public, since one of the components of the marketing concept is total company commitment.

Customers know when an organization is committed to customer service. It is an attitude which pervades the best companies. One does not have to be supremely perceptive to know if an employee actually cares about one’s question, problem, or about oneself in general as a customer. The reason it is so critical for all Forest Service employees to understand the customer’s perceptive ability is that any employee can personify the agency to someone who may have no other contact with it. A rude or surly employee can leave the visitor with a negative impression of the entire agency, while by the same token, a helpful and pleasant employee can foster a very positive image.

In my personal dealings with Forest Service employees, I have been mightily impressed. From the ranks of local recreation officers up to an Assistant Director in the Washington D.C. office, I received careful attention, concern, respect, and more help than I could have hoped for. On several
occasions, I called Forest Service employees and spoke to them at length (often 30 minutes or more) and never did one of them indicate that it was a bad time for them to talk or indicate in any way that I was inconveniencing or interrupting them. Certainly, none of these people could be considered "reluctant public servants" (Magill 1988).

The point of trying to improve the corporate image of the Forest Service is to attract more people to experience the very good customer service that I was exposed to. A negative corporate image works to discourage people from approaching the agency. Because the Forest Service is very impressive in their one-to-one communications, failure to promote this outstanding attribute would be like trying to sell a product without describing its best features. In other words, it doesn't make sense.

The number of people who would go to the effort to engage the Forest Service should be an indication of its reputation for responsiveness. Responsiveness is, of course, a key element in a service organization. The orientation towards defining itself as a service agency is crucial for the Forest Service in adopting a marketing perspective. Internal marketing can clarify and emphasize this orientation throughout the agency. Peters and Waterman (1982:168) found that "In fact, one of our most significant conclusions about the excellent companies is that, whether their basic business is metal bending, high technology, or hamburgers, they have all defined themselves as service businesses." This kind of organizational self-definition lets customers know, "You are important to us", and "You are the reason we are in business."

Another function of internal marketing is to boost morale and to increase agency cohesiveness. Previously, I stated that the Forest Service has historically been very cohesive and, when the organizational environment changed, this characteristic contributed to its poor image. The cohesiveness brought on by successful internal marketing is of a very different nature. Internal marketing seeks to unite employees in a philosophy of how the organization sees itself and its customers. The goal of an organization that has successfully internally marketed the marketing con-
cept is to serve customers, not to produce board feet of timber, animal unit months of grazing, or visitor days of recreation. It is the common goal of serving customers which can link all aspects of a multiple use agency if the whole agency buys into the philosophy. As Zane Smith (1988) said, "we're not looking for a spectacular event, we need little things performed by everyone."

Certainly, this type of organizational "attitude adjustment" is not easy and will not happen overnight. Nor do I wish to imply that all employees should be identical robots reciting the company line. Rather, the Forest Service is to be commended for its encouragement of diversity among its employees. Different backgrounds facilitate creativity and innovativeness, qualities which can both enhance customer satisfaction. Zane Smith, inspired by Peters and Waterman's (1982) principles of excellence, realized this contribution to customer service and called for all employees to be given "... an advance bankroll of permission to be innovative, creative, and enough autonomy" to bring about excellence in recreation programs.

Because criticism of the Forest Service is abundant, employee morale should be a prominent concern. Unless one lives totally isolated from the outside world, constant criticism of one's work is bound to take its toll. Admissions within the agency that programs are not what they should be further contribute to morale problems.

If one is never or only rarely praised, it is possible for one's behavior to stray from that which is desirable. There is a branch of social psychologists, known as symbolic interactionists, who "adopt the view derived from Mead's (1934) social philosophy that individuals learn to play roles and take on identities related to the roles they play," (Tedeschi & Reiss 1981:4). If Forest Service employees are thought to be technocratic, incompetent, or unprofessional, a dangerous situation can arise which is best described by by labeling theory:

Labeling theory is one aspect of symbolic interactionism and deals primarily with deviant behavior. The basic idea is that when a person is described by a deviant label, it affects not only how others behave toward him, but also constrains his behavior in such a way as to make it support the deviant identity attributed to him." (Tedeschi & Reiss 1981:4)
In the Forest Service, the "deviant behavior" that may apply is the extraordinary cohesiveness described in the second section of this paper. Criticism of the agency has in some instances led to a "circle-the-wagons" (Seyden 1989) stance by the Forest Service, and contributed to its poor corporate image.

Peters and Waterman (1982) discovered that excellent companies used internal marketing to unify employees by satisfying two somewhat paradoxical human needs. These needs, which were described by psychologist Ernest Becker, are the need to be affiliated with a successful group and the need to stand out as an individual. According to Peters and Waterman,

The best managed companies and a few others act in accordance with these theories. For example, the manager of a 100-person sales branch rented the Meadowlands Stadium (New Jersey) for the evening. After work, his salesmen ran onto the field through the players' tunnel. As each emerged, the electronic scoreboard beamed his name to the assembled crowd. Executives from corporate headquarters, employees from other offices and family and friends were present cheering loudly.

The company is IBM. With one act (most non-excellent companies would write it off as too corny, too lavish, or both) IBM simultaneously reaffirmed its heroic dimension (satisfying the individual's need to be a part of something great) and its concern for individual self-expression (the need to stick out). (Peters and Waterman 1982:xxiv)

In order for internal marketing to boost morale, there needs to be some kind of reward program that truly is rewarding. The Forest Service has a peculiar way of rewarding excellence. Not surprisingly, excellent employees are promoted, but in many cases, promotion involves relocation as well. This type of policy seems to say "You've done a great job, now go somewhere else." Moving one's residence can be very stressful especially when it is coupled with starting a new job (Holmes and Rahe 1967). For employees who do not wish to relocate, this may be a strong incentive not to demonstrate excellent performance. Although the Forest Service is not as forceful about moving people around as it once was (Leman 1981), relocation is still a consideration, especially for individuals unfamiliar with the agency and those who may be considering Forest Service employment.

As demonstrated by IBM, rewards do not need to be extrinsic or tangible. Given the current state of the Forest Service image (one Marketing Specialist told me that in some areas of the Pacific Northwest, Forest Service employees are afraid to wear their uniforms to the grocery store because
of local feelings about the agency), I would imagine there are quite a few employees who could benefit from a “run through the tunnel”.

Suggestion Three: “Keep the Public Informed.”

Even if all Forest Service employees shared the philosophy of devotion to customer service, the question in a multiple use agency becomes “Which customers should be served?” The answer ideally is all customers, but it is not easy when the customers resemble greedy shoppers fighting over the same item at a bargain basement sale. I don’t feel that this analogy is overstated as some of the most recent conflicts (e.g., the spotted owl) have been surrounded by parties with all-or-nothing attitudes about resolving the conflict. Popular bumper stickers which read “Save a logger, shoot a spotted owl” and “If it’s hootin’, I’m shootin’” illustrate one side of this controversy. Both sides rush off to court where disputes are settled according to whichever side has the most innovative lawyer.

This situation brings me to my next implementation suggestion which is to keep the public better informed so that more people know what the Forest Service is “selling” and where they can get some. One way to do this is to provide information not just when there is a crisis, but continually and predictably.

Perhaps the easiest way to do this would be with a weekly or even daily newspaper column. This type of column could provide brief summaries of what the Federal agencies were doing each week. Most agencies probably would not want to publish a news brief every day, but four or five could be featured each day in a regular schedule so that readers would know that the Forest Service brief would appear on Monday, the FBI on Tuesday, etc. This type of a column would be easy to find, quick to read, far reaching, and user-friendly. If more in-depth coverage is available, the news briefs could contain a note to see story on an indicated page. Stories about the Forest Service
are often found all over the newspaper in no predictable pattern. A directory to related stories would be helpful to interested readers.

Apparently, I am not the only person to think of this idea. Region 8 Public Affairs Officer Hal Glassman (1989) told me that this type of column had been tried, but the only place it had been successful (how success was determined was not clear) was in Washington D.C. According to Mr. Glassman, local papers are reluctant to print this kind of continuing information column because of low interest. This attitude is consistent with the "issue-attention-cycle" described by Downs (1972) which explains how issues fade from public interest. Only when a local area is directly impacted by an agency decision or policy would the paper give space to this kind of a story.

The distinction between interest and impact is something to be concerned about. Judging by nation-wide memberships in a number of special interest groups, it is incorrect to assume that policy and implementation decisions are only of interest to those who are directly impacted. Certainly, those who are directly impacted have a special interest, but editors should not assume that these are the only people who wish to be informed.

The proposed news briefs could provide a wide variety of information. Both good news and bad news must be presented in order for the source to be considered reliable. According to Glassman, press releases are neither tools for promotion nor derision, they are "just the facts." My concern is that the facts need a wider distribution. The following example illustrates my point.

In 1988, I conducted a survey of the personal recreation histories of Blacksburg, Virginia residents. Of the 83 people I interviewed, only 16 percent had visited the nearby (two hours drive) Mt. Rogers National Recreation Area. This 154,000 acre area, used primarily for camping, sightseeing, hunting, and fishing was originally created to serve the large metropolitan populations around Washington D.C. Of the 84 percent of Blacksburg residents who had never visited the NRA, almost all commented that they'd never heard of it. When I relayed these results to one of
the forest’s employees, he was astonished. He replied, “But it’s the highest point in the state!” My answer was, “no one knows that”.

Besides a few pamphlets and one sign on interstate 81, promotion of the NRA is minimal. Given the lack of awareness of the area by Blacksburg residents, it is likely that Washington D.C. area residents, who are located seven hours away, are even less aware of the NRA. This example should demonstrate that in any field, it is easy to assume that certain operating assumptions are universally recognized, but this assumption can be erroneous at best. Making information easily available is a logical and fundamental step in implementing a marketing perspective.

Keeping more people informed and letting them know that their concerns will be taken seriously are essential for facilitating public involvement efforts. It must be made evident to those who seek to participate in the planning process that public involvement is not just a term to which much lip service is paid. The agency must seek to dispel the image of “consultative public involvement”, the “rather passive arm’s-length proposition in which managers ‘consult from time to time with an amorphous public’ seeking responses to initiatives developed or modified in-house” (Behan 1988:47).

Seeking to enlist public involvement is an important form of customer service, and it implies a realization that there are more customers to serve. Taking steps to serve these customers means considerably more work for the Forest Service. More people wanting service means a greater demand for Forest Service ‘products’ (not to be confused with wood products). In other words, business is booming. However, it is necessary to realize that businesses are judged not by the number of customers waiting to be served, but by the number of successfully completed transactions. McDonalds has been counting theirs for years (over 75 billion served).

The process of customer satisfaction for the Forest Service will no doubt be slow, for it takes considerably longer to build a campground or settle a dispute over a forest management plan than
to serve a McD L.T. But in the long run, the process will speed up as consumers learn to trust the Forest Service and to view the agency as a fair and reliable arbitrator among competing interests. This image should be the goal of a corporate image campaign for the Forest Service.

**Suggestion Four: “Market the Profession of Forestry.”**

My final suggestion, which is directed at the Forestry profession at large and not just at the Forest Service, is to market the profession of Forestry. Wellman (1987b) describes forestry as "something of a mystery to high school students making tentative career choices." Citing work done by Woods (1965), Wellman writes, "In an urban society where few young people have first-hand forestry experience, recruitment of capable students depends largely on public image." This statement should signal concern to readers of the present paper.

The mysteriousness of forestry as a profession does little to encourage students interested in popular fields such as business, social science, computer science, and engineering to seek careers in the forestry profession (Wellman 1987c). I can attest to the low level of comprehension of the relevance between business and forestry. Having focused my course of study on marketing, I took many classes in the business school at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. In almost all of these classes I had to explain to the professors and the students what I was doing there. Similarly, in my own department, I was considered something of an "oddball" at best for taking all those marketing classes.

I must admit that once my explanations were over, I was welcomed in the marketing department. Those in my academic home base (Department of Forestry, Outdoor Recreation Section) had encouraged me to go off in the direction of the business school in the first place, but I am not sure that other divisions of the Forestry department were quite as enthusiastic. Marketing and
wood products have traditionally been associated, but a broader incorporation of marketing into other aspects of public forestry must be encouraged.

Progress is beginning to be made in trying to combine non-traditional fields with forestry. Attempts to continue these mergers should be accelerated so that there are more examples of the procedure's being successful and satisfying. People such as myself are the best possible promotion for integration as we are living examples of the new conceptualization of forestry education.

In addition, the more fields that become associated with forestry, the more people will become familiar with what forestry actually is. In an attempt to familiarize more people with forestry, many forestry schools now have introductory forestry courses for non-forestry majors. One such course at the University of Vermont is intended to educate future civic leaders about forest history and the forestry profession. Armstrong (1990:24) states:

To sell forestry, we should not miss the opportunity to reach out to future civic leaders at all major universities. Considering the extent of forests in most states with forestry schools, general forestry should be the most popular elective on campus. If it were, we would have many more good friends in Congress, our state houses, and other civic positions.

Armstrong's scenario would make the Forest Service's work considerably less arduous as the previously mentioned burden of dealing with an uninformed public is diminished.
CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that improving the image of the Forest Service cannot be accomplished without substantive changes in the organization itself. The agency cannot develop a corporate image of being responsive if it does not demonstrate responsiveness.

Because every employee can affect the image of the entire agency, it is necessary to keep the customer service element of the marketing concept foremost in mind. Employees who do not assimilate this orientation may feel uncomfortable and that they are perpetually on stage. Employees who do buy into the marketing concept will be happier in their work. Find these people.

No one expects perfection. People are not perfect. Despite all the potential inaccuracies, the time has come to take a people-oriented approach to carrying out the duties of the Forest Service.

Americans are show-me people. Show them a good product and they will buy it.
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Gwen N. Hirsch was born in Baltimore, Maryland on December 21, 1960. She graduated high school from the McDonogh School in 1978 and went on to attend the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, VA. Ms. Hirsch graduated from the University of Virginia in 1982 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Biology. From 1982-1987, Ms. Hirsch worked as a Laboratory Specialist in the departments of Biochemistry and Pathology at the University of Virginia Hospital. In 1987, Ms. Hirsch matriculated at Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University where she completed this paper in partial fulfillment of a Master of Forestry Degree. Ms. Hirsch was married to Mr. Gregg David Oberlander in 1984.