

UC Santa Barbara

GIS Core Curriculum for Technical Programs (1997-1999)

Title

Unit 53: Communicating About and Distributing GIS Products

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UNIT 53: COMMUNICATING ABOUT AND DISTRIBUTING GIS PRODUCTS

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Context

This unit will look at the three major methods of communicating about and distributing GIS products:

- Advertising
- Presenting demonstrations
- Providing training and support.

The student will learn that developing GIS technology is only part of the overall job of a GIS vendor. Often overlooked as trivial is how to tell potential customers about your product. This sounds obvious, but it is often overlooked in the technically oriented GIS business. Simply relying on word of mouth advertising rarely will generate significant sales. This is particularly true in the competitive market for GIS software.

The student will learn that marketing GIS is not unique. The art of promoting products is well known. The basic advertising principals of AIDA: Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action hold true for GIS.

Students will learn how to properly demonstrate GIS technology, and what to look for when watching product demonstrations.

The last task for the student is to learn how to service the GIS customer after the sale, through product training, and support.

Example Application

You and three of your classmates have created a new GIS software tool. The idea for the new product came from your own insights and needs as a GIS user. No outside

marketing research was conducted. The product is called GeoWiz and as far as you can tell, everyone who is in the GIS market needs the product. It runs under Windows and is in every way compliant with Microsoft's suite of products. You wrote the graphics software, but use Microsoft Access as your database. GeoWiz is a desktop mapping system that not only provides spatial analysis, it supports full motion and picture files, door-to-door routing, has an automatic geocoder and address finder, and come packed with nationwide maps, and data. You plan to sell the software for \$99.00. You will develop a marketing plan that addresses advertising, product demonstrations, and training and support. Your projected income in your first year is \$100,000. Your financial backer wants to reach sales of \$500,000 in the second year.

Learning Outcomes

The following list describes the expected skills which students should master for each level of training, i.e. Awareness/Competency/Mastery.

[Awareness:](#)

[Competency:](#)

[Mastery:](#)

Preparatory Units

Complementary:

- Unit 51 - Preparing Digital Presentations
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Awareness

Learning Objectives:

The student will:

1. Explain the basic principals of developing a marketing plan for GIS software
2. List the issues involved in determining what audience to reach, and how
3. Demonstrate the importance of listening to the customer
4. Name the media available for product promotion
5. Outline what to look for when developing a training program
6. Explain the reason for participation in GIS associations and trade shows
7. Describe the key factors in demonstrating software
8. Use of the worldwide web as an advertising and demo site
9. Relate the importance of training and follow-up

Topics

1. Advertising

Develop an advertising/promotion schedule

- What is your budget?
- State the objective of your advertising campaign.
- State why you will or will not use: magazine ad, radio, TV, billboards, direct mail, E-mail, Web site, word of mouth only.
- List the top three GIS magazines that accept advertising, and their rates, and their circulation. Pick one to place your ad, and tell why. Show the cost, and the size.
- Identify software catalogs that may accept your product
- Outline the procedures for placing your product in the Tiger Software catalog
- Identify free, or near free sources of publicity, how will you get GeoWiz mentioned in the free sources?
- What is your target market?
 - Is it determined by product use?
 - Company size?
 - Computer equipment?
 - Industry segment?
 - Do you want to reach GIS technical experts or end users?
 - How would your approach differ based on the target audience?
- Develop an ad for two target markets, using the principal of AIDA
- Until your ad-campaign kicks in, how will you sell your product?
- What is the role of a Web site?
 - Product awareness?
 - Product demos?
 - Test drive/sample download?
 - Secure commerce site?
 - What other sites will be cross linked?
- Will you use internal staff, or hire outside an ad agency?
- What staffing levels will be needed to handle your marketing plan?
- Can your original budget support these activities? If not, from where will the money come?

- Provide your financial backer with a timeline for these activities, showing associated costs and benefits.

2. Product Demonstrations

Divide the class into two or more even groups. One group will represent the prospect, the other group will represent the vendor:

- Determine the key buyer decision makers.
- List how the determination is made, and why you think they are decision makers
- What questions should be asked before the demonstration begins?
- What policies do you have for demos? Are they always the same, or customized?

Outline the key points of the demonstration, and how long each section will take to demonstrate.

- The buyer group should evaluate the demonstration. They should establish a checklist of key points. They may share this information with the demonstration group, only if asked.
- Does the software work?
- Is the demonstration on live data, or canned?
- How large is the demonstration database?
- Is it running on the equipment similar to what you plan to use?
- Does the demonstration team understand your organization, and its way of operating?

3. Trade Show Participation

- List 3 major GIS trade shows and associations
- Determine the trade show schedule for the next two years, and the cost of acquiring a booth. The costs should include staff time and all associated expenses of travel, and lodging.
- What objectives are set by demonstrating at a trade show? Should you go at all?
- Estimate the cost ratio of presentations to sales.
- Outline a plan for using the worldwide Web for a demonstration site.

4. Training and Support

- Determine the level of training required for GeoWiz?
- What are the staffing needs, and other costs for training.
- What role does distance learning (tapes, live, Internet) play in training?
- How will you authorize trainers?
- Did you build on-line help within GeoWiz? Why?
- Describe the pros and cons of user groups.

- How should you charge for support?
 - Is there a free period?
 - Will you try to sell a maintenance and support package for GeoWiz?
How much will it cost?
 - Will telephone support be via direct dial, toll free line, or 900 line?
 - Will your company be the exclusive training and support center for GeoWiz? If yes, why? If no, who else will support the product.
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Competency

Learning Objectives

The student will:

1. Select where to advertise GIS software.
2. Show how to determine the best impact per advertising dollar.
3. List the terms and conditions for advertising, and catalog placement.
4. Describe how to develop and advertising plan.
5. Explain the role of the worldwide web in product promotion.
6. Discuss the importance of understanding how to reach a target market.
7. Demonstrate how to interact with a prospect during a demonstration.
8. Contrast the costs and benefits of trade shows.
9. List the key elements of establishing training and support.

Generic List of Tasks:

1. Find information about GIS magazine ad rates, sources of free publicity, and procedures to place product in software catalog.
 2. Outline an advertising schedule with associated costs and benefits
 3. Determine additional staffing needs
 4. Determine the target market
 5. Understand trade show planning
 6. Incorporate demonstrations with the overall marketing plan.
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Mastery

Learning Objectives:

The student will:

1. select appropriate advertising media.
2. develop an advertising schedule.

3. understand the following specifics:

- costs of advertising.
- target market differences.
- an advertising schedule.
- requirements for placing ads.
- requirements for catalog placement.
- how to use free publicity sources.

Mastery Tasks:

1. Develop an objective for the advertising plan
2. Select a magazine for advertising
3. Learn how to place an ad in a catalog
4. Develop a method of measuring the effectiveness of advertising
5. Develop a two year ad schedule

Follow-up Units

Resources

[Outdated links have been removed.]

<http://www.esri.com>

<http://www.geoint.com>

GIS World
The Harlow Report-GIS
Government Technology Magazine

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