What is marketing? What are some of the differences between marketing and advocacy in terms of methods and goals of each? Use examples from the readings, videos, etc. to support your answer.

From the readings and slides, I learned marketing “is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large” (American Marketing Association).

Moran, Stueart, and Morner state “marketing is a valuable tool available to librarians in demonstrating their organizational effectiveness” (115). According to Moran, Stueart, and Morner “effective marketing of library and information services is a vital segment in every type of library and information services organization today” (107). MSM reveal ten important factors for marketing library and information services. I agree that these ten factors are all important and understandable, yet four really stand out to me:

- Competition for customers and resources,
- Maintaining your relevance,
- Stop being taken for granted
- Valuable community resource (110-111).

With all the changes taking place in society, it is important that the “library’s value” is promoted (MSM 110). However, as MSM also warn “marketing is not just publicity or promotion, product creation, public relations […] The ultimate success of this comprehensive process is customer satisfaction” (111). Through marketing, we serve or try to best serve the community, thus bringing awareness of the importance of the library for the community members, hence advocacy for the library becomes effective. In addition, libraries serve the community, so librarians need to know about their community and understand how they can better serve them. If a relationship is built between the community and the librarians, then there is someone to help defend/advocate for the library in times of need. In order for this defending or advocating to occur a “public understanding of why libraries are vital” (MSM 110) is required. Moreover, as I learned in LIS 701 and in this course, “the best advocates for the library are not the librarian or the library staff, but the people and community groups that the library serves: the library’s constituency” (Professor Stewart slides). I like Drucker’s thoughts on marketing: “Marketing is looking at business through the eyes of the customer.” Marketing focuses on the needs of the customers, consumers, patrons, community, etc.

The difference between marketing and advocacy is that with marketing strategy we ensure “that libraries responding effectively to what their public wants and needs” and it “addresses the question of ‘How are we doing?’” (115-6). In addition, as the slides reveal that “Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large,” whereas advocacy is “turning passive support into educated action by stakeholders.”

In marketing the methods and goals, aim to answer the questions WHO? WHAT? WHERE? and WHY? In marketing one identifies the goal or what they want to do such as the example in the slides, bringing more people into the library, research what other organizations have done, and
plan and execute a plan that will work for one’s situation. The goals in marketing research identify the needs and demands of users, moving a step forward and understanding the needs and demands of the user, etc. Similar to advocacy, establishing communication channels and relationships are important in marketing. Marketing is important because in marketing the library, we claim the library is vital to the community, and convincing the community/patrons that our services can help solve problems and help them in ways the other services may not be able to help.

Whereas we think of the community and patrons when marketing for the library in addition to the current unfulfilled needs and wants, when we advocate for the library, we can “educate others to advocate on our behalf” (Merola/Stewart slides). I see marketing as a means to serve the community, a marketing strategy can help bring patrons into the library or buy new technology for the needs of the patrons and advocacy is turning the passive support into action. By marketing for the library through the eyes of the customers, libraries win the community member’s support and thus, they have people advocating for the library. The slide that asks “Where would you be without your library?” shows strong thoughts and feelings from different community members.