

Marketing Strategy for Information Products and Services in Library: In view of the Ranganathan's five Laws of Library and Information Science

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Abstract

The paper emphasises the need of information products and services and marketing strategies five laws of LIS have been amended to match the marketing of Library Services.

Keywords: Marketing; Library Services; OPAC; Blogs; Five laws of library science.

INTRODUCTION

With rapid advancement in on-line technology sector the libraries and information centres are experiencing radical changes in library operations. Particularly while providing information services to users. In the profession world, and growth in market space, the library

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and professionals must assume a pro active role to cope with increasing competition. The new demand brings forward a number of unanswered questions. What is the nature of this competition? How can libraries and information centres attract alternate sources of funding when government spending are at low ebb? What are strategies for expanding the customer based and fulfilling their requirements? And finally, what is preventing library professionals from developing successful marketing of services? Marketing strategy of information services in the line of their provisions through new information technologies particularly in Internet (Web) responds to these questions.

Marketing in Library

According to Philip Kotler "A social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating, offering and exchanging products of value with others",¹ Adam Smith says "Marketing is a



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stance and an attitude that focuses on meeting the needs of users."² one commonly believes that the key to achieving organizational goals consists in determining the needs and wants of target market and delivering the desired satisfactions.

Marketing is a process that can help managers of libraries and information centres in achieving self-sufficiency in their resources, It aims to provide an optimum level of services to reach more potential users and to encourage the use of library resources.

3. Levels of Marketing

Primarily these are two levels of marketing:

3.1. Strategic Marketing: Strategic marketing attempts to determine how an organization competes against its comp Strategic editors in a market place. In particular, it aims at degenerating competitors.

3.2. Operational Marketing: Operational marketing executes marketing functions to attract and keep customers and to maximize the value derived from them. It also aims to satisfy the customer with prompt services and meeting the customer expectations. Kotler opines that the "Business success is not determined by the producer but by the customer."

In the process of conceptualization, the customer orientation already embedded in. Dr. S.R. Ranganathan's concept of the five laws of library science are still valid. These can be for the moulded as under:

First Law: (Maximize the use of library products/ services);

Second Law: (Every customer must meet his/ her demand);

Third Law: (Find customer for every library library products/services);

Fourth Law: (Keep the pace with emerging trends and technologies);

Fifth Law: (Competitiveness every lasting).

4. Marketing Strategy in the field of Information:

A Strategy/Planning is only an articulation of what is planed to achieve. In the field of information marketing strategy is based on a set of key principles. These can be underlined as:

4.1. Knowledge based Organization: The libraries is knowledge based organization. Information is critical to the success of the library and needs to

be managed as a strategic resource. Library system should enable people to create, analyse, publish, store and achieve data/information.

4.2. Access: Potential users of library should have ready access to the stored Information, whether in the campus or off the campus.

4.3. Information Infrastructure: The University Institute will provide an information infrastructure to facilitate information handling processes and procedures across the University and to ensure that they are coherent and coordinated.

4.4. User of Information: All users should be fully aware of their rights and responsibilities in the handling of information.

4.5. Communications: The library/information centres should provide a communication system for the rapid distribution of information with staff, students and external stakeholders.

4.6. Ownership: Each area of information or data should have a custodian who will be responsible for ensuring the quality of the data and for implanting the access policy.

5. Factors Influencing Information Market

Following are factors that will influence the information market:

5.1. Market Size: The market networks coming up at local, regional, national and global level. The marketing and promotional activities associated with them will increase awareness of information at all levels among potential users.

5.2. Information vendors: It is not expected that there will be an exponential growth of information suppliers because it involves specialization, financial backing and enormous efforts.

5.3. Services and strategy: Services and strategy are the heart of the future information that will define the scope of the market and to which suppliers must orient both their operations and their planning.

6. Marketing Strategy of Information in Libraries and Information Centres:

A library is a social and service institution providing information to its members. Its traditional functions include selection, acquisition, storage, processing, circulation and reference. Over a period of time, due to change in nature of demands by the clients, libraries have expanded their document delivery systems. Today translation,

editing, publishing and reprographic services have been added to the traditional services mentioned in the following table:

Activities	Products/Services
Selection of documents	Bibliographies, Current awareness.
Indexing and abstracting	Indexed bibliographies, Abstracting bulletins, Custom searches.
Extraction	Digital extracts, Descriptive reviews/ state of the art report.
Evaluation	Critical review of area, critical compilation of data, criteria for experimentation etc.
Other activities	Translation, editing, publishing, reprographic services.

7. Marketing Research in Information Services:

Due to importance of marketing strategy in Information Services many studies have been conducted in this area. Some are as under:

Khali Klaib (2004)³ conducted a survey of libraries and information centres in Jordan to examine the application of the marketing concept to the products and services of LIS and to investigate users attitude towards free or free -based service.

Vaishnav (2017)⁴ did a case study of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University Library and pointed out that the university library uses marketing process to satisfy the needs and demands of user.

Panday (2021)⁵ conducted a survey of the M S University of Baroda to explore the feasibility of marketing library and information services and products.

Sharma and Choudhary (2022)⁶ conducted a case study of All India Management Association library. The author found that experience in marketing of information services and products is very encouraging at the AIMA library.

It can be safely concluded that marketing methods if applied appropriately can make a vital contribution to library and information work.

8. Marketing Information Services Globally:

There have been so many new methodologies for promoting information services of a library. Some are mentioned below:

8.1. OPAC: An Online Public Access Catalogue is a computerized online catalogue of the materials held in a library, or library system. The user in the library can search the bibliographic database and find specific information online. The search facility also apprises the user about the availability of each item for circulation, including current status of individual copies of a title and reserve status. The

scope of these services include:

8.1.1. Online Catalogues: The catalogues of Title, Author, Subject, Classified, KWIC Index, Publisher. Etc. are available online.

8.1.2. Current Serials: To provide online information on holdings of current serials including recent issues received in library.

8.1.3. Recent Additions: To make available new additions to the library, to the users.

8.1.4. Multiple Databases: To support the definition of multiple databases based on types of documents for searching in OPAC.

8.1.5. Other services from OPAC Client: Updating subject interest profile for SDI by users themselves; request for acquisition of a document; while browsing/ searching various catalogues, facility to develop request online for putting a specific title on reserve, etc.

8.2. Web OPAC⁷: Web OPAC is a web-based search platform, developed with advanced information technologies for serving information to the users at the fingerprints, regardless of physical location whether the member is in the library or at remote location. Following are some of the library services can be made available through WebOPAC:

- Library Catalogue
- Search facility on entire database
- New Arrivals, Current Awareness Service
- Selective Dissemination of Information
- Current Journals
- Online Journals
- Popular Documents based on circulation and reservations
- Place reservation/hold on certain documents
- Outstanding list renewal facility optional.

8.3. Library Blogs⁸: Blog is a website, usually maintained by an individual, contains chronologically the brief entries of commentary, descriptions of events, etc. Promoting library's services, resources, and programs online becomes a lot easier with the help of a blog. Blog can be very effective tools for reaching online audiences.

8.3.1. Marketing library services: Many libraries/Information centres have already been using blogs in various ways for different purposes. The most obvious applications of blogs are for propagating library news, notices and services, which are needed to be updated frequently and easily. Blogging software helps in making the job easy enough for anyone to do it. Besides this there are other ways of using blogs in a library, some are here:

8.3.2. Promoting library events: A blog created for a library can promote its regular events and programs. The blog reaches out beyond the visitors of regular Website of the library. The RSS feed can be set up for the blog to alert everyone in the community to include the headlines of the library on their sites or can use an RSS newsreader to see what is up at the library. Libraries can also try E-commerce sites to turn each visitor into a repeat customer.

8.3.3. Supporting Users: Most of the library visitors hunt the library on-line to find out what new materials like books, videos, CDs, have been added to the collection. Regular updating of the information may serve the clients by setting up topics on your blog for each genre: mysteries, science fiction, romance, and so on. The college and university libraries can prepare special alerts about new resources for particular departments or colleges through blog.

8.3.3. Community Engagement: In a library blog, new book reviews and book lists can be posted for information as well as selection for users. An online book discussion area can be created for readers to recommend books. The users community can also be invited to comment and suggest for inclusion and modification in the blog.

9. Challenge of Marketing of the Information Products and Services in the library

1. Inadequate budgetary allocations for library services
2. non-automation of library operations
3. Inadequate infrastructure
4. Understaffing

5. Low computer/digital literacy among staff

9.1. Inadequate budgetary allocations for library services.

Uzoigwe (2004)¹⁰ study revealed that the failure of policymakers and fiscal managers to make adequate budgetary allocations for library services compounds the funding problems of Nigerian libraries. She adds that the perception of the library as a social and non-profit service provider has greatly undermined the ability of library administrators to identify, develop and exploit alternative sources of revenue. For marketing to take place, money must be involved, effective marketing involve reasonable amount of money. Resources must be available which marketer will be focus on, most especially current resources. To acquire current resources involve money, and for marketing to be effective library need money to stock their information resources, therefore inadequate budgetary allocation remain a challenge.

9.2. Non-automation of library operations

Uzoigwe study further reveals that another issue is the issue of non-computerization and non-automation of library operations and services. Inline with the above, Asemoah-Hassan (2002)⁹ in his study maintain that very few Nigerian libraries are fully computerized and automated. As a result of inadequate telecommunication 13 facilities, low level of computer literacy among library staff, dearth of computer gadgets and poor level of internet capabilities, clumsy and error prone manual procedures are seen as threats in marketing services in Nigerian libraries.

The most trend in the information world of today is information and communication technology (ICT) services. Most research aid are found online, and recent number one information product to market to attract patron still remain ICT. This is mean for library to market their product and services they need to upgrade their service to include ICT based services (library automation). Most library are not automated, the automated ones still have to up their services and when this is done their product and services will sell once marketing take place. Therefore, non automation still pose a challenge to marketing of information product and services.

9.3. Inadequate infrastructure

People like modern infrastructure facilities and this is enough to market information product and services, but inadequate infrastructure is a

challenge. One will prefer to enter new vehicle than old vehicle while on transit, same goes with information product. Marketing usually involve new product and services, meaning that for library to market, they need to acquire new information product and introduce new services that will attract the user to patronize their services. There will be no need to market old outdated product, to market and see 14 result, new product have to be in place, new services have to come in, and old services have to be upgraded to meet the need of the users. The state of infrastructure facility in most Nigeria library is inadequate and this pose a great challenge in the marketing of information product and services.

9.4. Understaffing

For library to carry out the marketing of information product and services, there must be adequate staff that will render the services when the user respond to the call that will be put across during the marketing. There is serious unavailability of professional staff in almost all the library in Nigeria. Like staff to perform indexing services, abstracting services, creation of webpage, building of database, editing service, packaging service are just few. There is no need to market when there is no staff to carry out the service, the need to employ professional librarian becomes an urgent need before marketing will take place. Having adequate professional librarian is enough to market library product and services, while unavailability of staff remain a huge challenge.

9.5. Low computer / Digital literacy among staff

Automated library need computer literate librarian to manage the services. Electronic indexing and abstracting, webpage and database creation need one who is computer competence. To advertise/market the inclusion of ICT based services in the library, there is need to have librarian who have computer knowledge and skill. Low computer literacy among the library staff is a challenge.

10. Recommendations

Therefore it is some recommended as follows:

- Library should look inward and take advantage of fee-based library services to augment inadequate budgetary allocation coming to them for effective library services.
- Library should as matter of urgency automate

their library and make it functional to attract good number of users once marketing is done.

- The money generated from internal source should be adequately used to acquire solar energy and power generating set to keep ICT unit functional and attractive
- Modern computer gadget should be acquired to serve ICT user, and money made from sells of internet service access code, and reprographic services should be used to acquire more gadget, service the gadget and use to acquire current information resources.
- Government should come to the rescue of library, by employing enough librarian to manage service provision library.
- Periodic staff training should be made mandatory to train staff at periodic interval to acquire most library needed skills. Library management should take it upon them to always acquired current needed information resources from part of money made from internal source, to attract new and more user coming to library to satisfy their need.

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