

## Marketing of Library Resources and Services

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### Abstract

Marketing of products is very much necessary to enrich sale and to get the profit for business but in library and information science it can be used for promoting library resources services. To maximize the usage and the importance of libraries, libraries are adopting the different marketing strategies. Marketing helps fulfill the objectives of libraries. This paper provides a inclusive outline on disparate marketing strategies adopted by various libraries. library to increase the awareness and usage of services. There are different types of strategies which are adopted by library like college website, library orientation programme, e-resources, e-mail, self-check in/out, social media, OPAC etc.

### Introduction:

Effective dissemination of valuable information is a key instrument for the development of any nation. No country can grow without adequate information. Laws and regulations are made to protect the people who are the policy holders of the education industry, and their interest, to keep the market afloat and observe some professional ethics. Library and Information Science is an educational industry that creates awareness to individuals and corporate organization that needs to market its services to the customers who need them.

Libraries are treasure of knowledge. It is also familiar as store house of knowledge. In all the libraries, reading materials are available in different formats like books, journals, manuscripts, audio –visual materials etc. in which knowledge was recorded, Prime task of all libraries is to preservation of knowledge. But due to ICTs there is need to market these resources and services so that they can be accessible by users.

Marketing in libraries is not a new phenomenon. Marketing is applicable both for profit generating and services to the customers that have value for them. Libraries are both a creation and a servant of society. A library operates routinely with a known set of customers. A library also operates on trust. When a client walks into the library, he trusts that he will get the material or information that he needs. The library, in turn, trusts that the client will return the items within the specified borrowing period. The specific structure of a library with its strict requirements as to efficiency demands a focus on the quality of value-adding processes. If a library is to be managed according to quality criteria, quality needs to be defined and made measurable. The indicators found must be captured in a measuring system for the sectors "cost and performance", "customer satisfaction", and "staff satisfaction" that facilitates quality controlling and provides staff with controlling parameters for everyday work. The most important condition of effective library services is to support continuous enriching dialog between the library and society by agreeing upon quality targets, which relate to the maintenance or improvement of quality standards. The library staff carries the responsibility for the results of their work and for reaching the agreed targets.

### Concepts of Marketing Library Resources and Services-

The history of marketing library services began long before the concepts was born. Samuel Swett Green in his often-quoted speech at the ALA Conference in 1876 advocated 'Improved personal relations between librarians and readers.' It could be said that today's marketing of library services has its roots in parts of the USA and Northern Europe, in countries with few illiterates and more money, libraries and library schools than the rest of the world. This certainly does not mean that the idea of libraries reaching out to "the common man" has not occupied librarians in other parts of the world. For instance, there is the example of the "library movement" in India at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Renborg, 1997)

Today since the advent of the world Wide Web (WWW) in particular, information has rapidly grown in volumes, and has become more accessible, especially in digital format. The two disciplines of Library Science and Information Management have been converging towards a common focus on information discovery, organization and management. The significant contribution of external experts into the teaching of the programme helps keep it

topical and oriented towards practice therefore the effective marketing of library and information science cannot be overemphasizing.

### **TQM in Library and Information Services:**

Application of TQM approach in the context of library and Information services seems to be comparatively of recent origin. Library and Information Managers are these days over flooded with advice as to how to acquire and organize learning resources and satisfy the complex and ever increasing information needs of their users. However, to achieve their goal, the question of a resources constrained regime has to kept in mind without sacrificing the interests of the users. The services offered accordingly, have to be internally efficient and externally effective. It is in this context that the question of Total Quality becomes relevant in the Management of Library Services. In a research library the valuable added information services can only provide the conformance to the requirements of the users and user satisfaction. The value added service can only be achieved by implementation of Total Quality Management principles in libraries and information centers in our country. For implementation and achieving total quality for the system, the library workers have to understand the core concepts of Total Quality Management themselves and have to be trained in this new philosophy and techniques.

### **Relevance of Marketing for Librarians and Information Managers**

To use the concept "marketing" librarians have brought over some management tools from the commercial world. That has been advantageous for the global library world. It has forced librarians to look at the libraries as the enterprises they are. In the early conceptualization of a Library and Information Centre's business, Dr. S. R. Ranganathan had the concept of customer orientation embedded into it. He described a library as..... a public institution or establishment charged with the care of a collection of books, the duty of making them accessible to those who require the use of them and the task of converting every person in its neighborhood into a habitual library user and reader of books.

### **Promotion of Library Products and Services:**

Nowadays, it is not enough if we just provide a good service. We need to 'broadcast' what we do and this message should reach the customer quickly. Promotion consists of providing a means of persuasive communication to the greatest number of potential customers in the most cost-effective method in order to persuade them to choose/use the services. The aim of promotion is to increase the customer base besides retaining the existing customers. Broadly speaking, the purposes are:

- Creating a proper mindset among the customers favorable to the library;
- Telling the potential customers the availability of the service;
- Convincing the customers the benefits of using the service;
- Prompt the customers to accept the service.

There are various promotional methods and some of the important ones are given below:

**-Mailshots** -Mailshots contain customer friendly introduction letter accompanied by relevant brochures about the services offered by the library. The letter is to be personalized and has to be short and simple.

**-Personal Visits** -Personal visits by the library staff to customers help establish personal contacts with them. The visit could be used both for getting a new customer and for getting feedback on library services.

**-Presentations to Customers** - Librarians can visit gatherings of customers and make presentations about library services. Small library displays also can be arranged on the occasion and this enables the audience to pick up the brochures.

**-Brochures, Leaflets, Posters** -Design of brochures, leaflets and posters is very important. Nowadays, everyone is flooded with attractive product literature. Therefore, unless our brochures are well designed, they will not catch the eye of the customer. The wording should be carefully coined, the presentation be interesting and the final product should be attractive in order to stand out. The brochure should highlight the benefits to the customer and should keep the customer absorbed till the end. It should finally prompt the customer to act. There are a number of books available to help libraries design good brochures and posters. With the

availability of easy-to-use software, reasonably good quality brochures/posters can be designed in house.

**-Newsletters** -Library newsletter serves as a media to let the member know the range of library activities, either those that have taken place or those that are being planned for the future, list of important books added, etc. Newsletters can serve as excellent marketing tools, apart from being PR material.

**-Extension Activities** -It is important that our libraries project an image of active centers of academic and cultural activities. It is useful to organize periodic activities such as special book displays, lectures, quiz programs, debates, seminars, poetry reading and so on to project the library as a social organization. Social impact is the spin off. Also libraries can organize topical book displays on the occasion of seminars, conferences etc., being held in the parent institution.

**-Cultivating the Press** -Media always have a close association with libraries and information centers. Therefore, cultivating the press does not require much effort for librarians. Libraries may regularly pass on interesting stories to the press.

**-Media Advertisements** -Newspaper advertisements are useful if we wish to get a quick publicity and for a large number of people at a time. However, newspaper ads are usually expensive and therefore, libraries should not resort to this unless they have a good budget for publicity.

### **Marketing of E-resources**

While the e-resources are much sought after nowadays, a lot of efforts need to be put in so that they get noticed and their awareness gets enhanced. Apart from the traditional marketing methods, the following additional activities are suggested. Library website is a shop window to the e-resources and it has enormous potential to attract people to the e-resources, yet it is very poorly used globally.

According to a survey conducted by OCLC in which over 3300 online information seekers participated, only one percent of them used library websites as a source to begin the information search. There are many guidelines for the development of library websites (BHAT, 2008). The following are some specific points which help in increasing the use of e-resources.

Provide link to the library homepage from the parent organization's homepage;

- Provide links to e-resources from the library homepage, prominently;
- Provide both alphabetical and subject wise journal lists as well as vendor wise lists;
- Provide telephone numbers and email addresses of library staff for any help;
- Provide subject guides to online resources; and
- Provide facility to register online for training sessions.

As the library website showcases the library, it is important that it is promoted well so that we can ensure good traffic to it. Therefore, it is ideal if the link to the library website is given right from the homepage of the parent organization.

### **Conclusion:**

While quality service is a prerequisite for the effective use of library, there has to be a well-organized plan for the promotion of use. Various methods need to be explored in order to make the library resources visible. Traditional methods such as launch events, personal visits and training workshops need to be continued. Printed brochures, posters, newsletters do create awareness and provide the much needed publicity. E-mails and alert RSS alerts bring the information for the personal attention of the user. Newer methods by using Web 2.0 which include Blogs, Facebook, Wiki are interactive and they increase the user's involvement. Finally, the impact of promotional activities need to be measured regularly by examining readers' attendance, usage statistics, surveys and conducting user meets.

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