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Marketing of Library Services: an Over View

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ABSTRACT

This paper discuss about the marketing of library and information services in the global era. It discusses about the marketing concept of today's library and information centres covering various topics such as management of libraries and commitment to customer's satisfaction. It is defines the marketing & its current approach to library & information services. It's also discuss about the need of LIS marketing, marketing as a philosophy, strategic planning for LIS marketing, customers' expectations, priority, relationship, consumer analysis. It is also discuss about the5 Ps of marketing mix, i.e. Product, Price, Place and Promotion. The marketing should aim at effective library and information services. In the modern age, the library and information services are user oriented. Therefore, users' priorities, expectations and needs should be taken into account. It is concluded that the modern libraries are information markets and the library users are consumers of information. The ultimate objective of the marketing of library and information services should be the dissemination of the right information to the right user at the right time.

KEYWORDS: Rank based test, Nonparametric test, KW test.

Introduction

Marketing is frequently viewed as a set of strategies and techniques that belong to administrators outside of librarianship. However as librarians we are all involved in the process of marketing. The challenges to library services from changes in educational approaches, the impact of technology, new methods for information provision and declining budgets have meant that marketing is now so essential that it cannot be considered a separate function. Many libraries have come to appreciate the contribution and application that marketing concepts can make. Marketing is a process, which carries goods from producers to ultimate consumers. Marketing, in its broader sense, is the social instrument through which the material goods and culture of a society are transmitted to its members. Marketing, in the library context, refers to that instrument through which information both raw and processed are transmitted to its members. According to Kotler, "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 reties heavily on designing the organization's offering in terms of target markets needs and desires, and on using effective pricing, communication, and distribution to inform, motivate, and service the markets." Marketing of Library services is the process of planning, pricing, promoting and distributing library products to create exchanges that satisfy the library and the customer.

Marketing Meaning

There is a new meaning of marketing in library and information sector. There is still considerable misunderstanding in most of the library and information sector as to what constitutes effective marketing. To some, it is still primarily equated with selling and the pursuit of sales, rather than customer satisfaction. Many libraries are still reluctant to make the change necessary to focus on the marketplace, even when the need for more active marketing is generally agreed. As such, the developing marketing initiatives of libraries and

Understanding of the total marketing concept among library and information professionals need some basic marketing frameworks that they have taken so far.

Needs for LIS Marketing

According to Rang Nathan's 5 laws "Library is a growing organism". Due to global information explosion, more information comes every second and today's information is old very fast for tomorrow. Libraries continue to face continuing changes in the environment strategies and outcomes. Library services have long been perceived as free. But in Today's modern economy nothing comes free. Libraries are in business of providing information services to its clientele. Thus the libraries core activity resides in the intangible services of facilitating access to information and they seek to influence the use of their services.

Today libraries are facing a whole lot of problems; their funds are shrinking, cost of resources like Journals, etc. are increasing rapidly and reading habits among people declining due to reasons such as onslaught of television and Internet.

A study conducted by Oldman had identified some of the reason why people do not use libraries:

- Ø It is quicker to obtain information from sources other than the formal systems.
- Ø Talking to people is regarded as preferable to reading books.
- Ø Individuals do not realize that they have an information problem.
- Ø Potential users are not aware of the library's facilities.
- Ø Users have had bad experience with past or present service.

Today we leave in era of competition. Library's competitors include Internet, Television, FM Radios, Exhibitions, Fairs, Leisure services, Holiday services, Computer games, Family retreats, Sports events, etc. The library & information services sector operators in an environment, which is undergoing constant evolution and change. Library service professionals are realizing that the delivery of effective services must be based on strategic planning. Today's libraries need a marketing knowledge to operate effectively. Snoj and Petermance give the

following reasons for the libraries to have marketing strategies:

- Ø To improve their organizational status.
- Ø To develop new services or change existing ones to satisfy their users.
- Ø Improve their performance in general like timely procurement of books.

Marketing as a Philosophy

It was less than three decades ago that marketing came into the field of library and information services. Integration of marketing into library philosophy is helpful in reinforcing and reiterating the basic values of the profession in a changing environment. In one sense, it implies commitment to shared professional beliefs. The most widely agreed beliefs are aboutlibrary services "to provide the right information to the right user at the right time". Thisinvolves reducing barriers to access and use information and empowering users in making

use of their own, particularly with the use of modern technologies.

Marketing help us the following aims of the library and information services:

- Ø A focus on the users own purpose and on helping the individual user to articulate these at every level.
- Ø A focus on the users, giving them an environment in which they can sit, study, work and on giving them an experience of good service.
- Ø A belief that every individual user has different needs, requirements and expectations when s/he visits/approaches the library.
- Ø A commitment to helping the user in acquiring skills in obtaining the information from various sources and means.

Strategic Planning for LIS Marketing

Strategic planning is the process of defining the purpose and pursuits of an organization and the methods for achieving those. Strategic planning is required for achieving success in marketing on sustainable basis. Strategic planning is involves formulation of vision, mission and goals setting.

A vision statement describes what the organization is to become in the future. Thus, vision is a statement about what your library wants to become. It should say what you want to see at certain point in future. A vision should stretch the library's capabilities and image of itself. It gives shape and direction to a library in coming times. Mission reflects the essential purpose of the organization. In the other words, while the vision statement says 'where we will be going', the mission statement will say 'how we will get there'. The mission statement flows directly from the vision statement. Goals represent the desired general ends toward which efforts are directed while objectives are specific and often quantified versions of goal.

It is essential that libraries need a proper strategy for successful marketing and to meet its

Objectives. The key elements of such strategy are:

- Ø Understand your client.
- Ø Identify your client market.
- Ø Identify your strengths as a competitive business.
- Ø Know the products your clients want and where they want to use it.
- Ø Develop effective and efficient procedures and systems that facilitate outcomes for clients.
- Ø Employ and train staff in both works skills and client relationship marketing.
- Ø Communicate the benefits and advantages of your product over competitors, such as chaos of the internet.

Customers - Top Priority

The new customers do not know about library rules and regulation, therefore it is duty of library staff to give orientation for maximum utility of library. They do not care about rules and ways of doing business. They care to adapt its products and services to fit their problems. This represents the evolution of marketing to the customer-driven.

We must always remember the following points:

- Ø Customers are the most important people to be served in library and information centres.
- Ø They are not dependent on the library; rather the library depends on them.
- Ø They are not just from outsiders but part of the library.
- Ø They are not just statistics, but also they are human beings.
- Ø They are the people who bring their wants and needs and we are there to meet their information needs exceedingly.

Customers - Expectations

Library and information professionals should strive hard to gain a far vision of 'who our customers are', 'what they want', and 'what are their social characters, values, desires, and aspiration'. The advancement of information and communication technologies has enabled education and technology in self-help and do-it-yourself activities in libraries. The 21st century customer will place high value on self-reliance, adaptability and survival under difficult conditions and the ability to do things of his/her own.

Consumer Analysis

Librarians about the consumers make too many assumptions. Examples are given below:

- Ø Collections of books and resources is inherently desirable
- Ø It is in the user's own interest to use the library.
- Ø Library needs to have all old classics.
- Ø Our scholars are too proud to visit the library.
- Ø Library has to be located in the most silent corner in the campus, user's convenience is secondary.

Relationship

To measure customer satisfaction, the relationship between the customer and the library must be understood. A customer relationship comprises of a hierarchy of encounters through facilities, resources, services and service providers.

According to Ranganathan:

- Ø Give service with full attention and sincerity.
- Ø Give him/her service to the best capacity at your command.
- Ø Give him/her service in all modesty and in full freedom from any touch of prestige or ego.
- Ø Give him/her service in full measure there should not be any offence to the laws of library science.
- Ø Acquire the best knowledge and information for giving him/her your best service. We cannot retain customer unless given prompt and relevant service in a personal way. She/he is human; and human personality alone can keep good humor, make the appreciation of the value of books which blossom in him/her and transform him/her into a willingness beneficiary of the library.

Marketing Mix for LIS

Marketing today embraces an integrated value proposition. This in effect, would mean that with making a decision about using a particular service or evaluating a marketing relationship a customer not only looks at the product or value related to it, but she/he also evaluates the process, the total transaction cost. Marketing mix is the blend of four "P's" namely PRODUCT, PRICE, PLACE, & PROMOTION, used to reach a target market.

- Ø Product: Information resources and research services.
- Ø Price: Free to employees. In other words, company sponsored. This is particularly important in an R&D environment where research budgets are tight and the company may not realize Return on Investment (ROI) in a project for some time.
- Ø Place: Not necessarily a physical location anymore. A strong web presence is necessary. Libraries are virtual as well as physical spaces now and the possibilities in both these worlds are endless.
- Ø Promotion: Internal bulletins, e-mails, the company intranet, the library web site, newsletters and poster campaigns are all effective promotional vehicles for highlighting new tools and advertising events.For the library to remain competitive, or even more fundamentally, to remain relevant, it has to change its image A library that can survive and thrive in the Internet age is a knowledge-based social structure.

Conclusion

The modern library is now generally called an information market and the library user is a consumer of information. Information is a vital resource for research and development of any nation. Today user has many options with regard to accessing timely information. The rapid growth of internet has especially changed the information paradigm. To continue to remain relevant, libraries need to market their services as per the target market needs. Marketing is essential in making the proper planning, designing and use of such services and products for the better and optimal use of information. The library should give priority to provide excellent customer service enhancing its image as information provider in the information era. The library and information services should be user oriented in order to satisfy their information needs effectively. Marketing of library and information services includes customer (users) priorities, expectations, individuality, responsiveness, relationship, quality of services, professional skills and competencies, value-added services, etc. The ultimate aim of marketing here is to provide the right information to the right user at the right time.

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