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## Marketing Spreads its Wings in Library Services A Study of Role and Strategies of Marketing Information Products and Services

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## **Marketing Spreads its Wings in Library Services**

### **A Study of Role and Strategies of Marketing Information Products and Services**

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**Abstract:** *In a globalized world where library and information services remain as one of the most important asset of the knowledge schemes, marketing of library and information services has become an important professional medium to reach out to the end-users. Marketing has spread its wings to library and information science and its strategies are proving very helpful in managing these knowledge systems. This paper focuses on the role of marketing strategies and examines the concept of 7Ps (Product, Promotion, Price, Place, People, Process and Physical Evidence) and also discusses library marketing through website outreach and client base. The paper also throws light on the constraints that the library systems face in the present world of enormous data and information.*

**Keywords:** Marketing, Information Products, Marketing mix, Library & Marketing

### **Introduction**

In an interconnected world, where information has utmost primacy, one of the key means to success and productivity is the optimal use of library and information systems. Accordingly, their outreach is now taking a new dimension with the increased focus now being given to marketing of library services and resources. This can be seen as a paradigm shift as library and information services transform public or private utilities to user-centric entities. Notwithstanding this slow and steady transformation, marketing activities may tend to be disappointing at times due to the lack of synergies between the various activities across the library verticals. These activities may not be well connected structurally owing to organizational gaps as libraries today are yet to substantially engage in comprehensive service planning and are largely confined to select few conventional initiatives. Thus, it becomes an imperative for library professionals and leadership to

take up the responsibility of reviewing and addressing these gaps in order to identify and implement synergies to initiate transformations.

It is essential for library professionals to market their services after understanding their roles and responsibilities in the present world of information. Publicising about a library, its resources and services is a major step in marketing which entails disseminating information about and generating public interest towards the institution and propagating their worth towards the community and society.

While marketing library and information services, it is very important to build an image of the organization as a brand that would drive the users to its website and place it at a distinct position when compared to its competitors. The main aim of marketing is not just spreading a word about the organization but also adding a unique feature to its image that places it far ahead of its competitors.

### **Statement of the problem**

According to Arthur, (2019), the concept of marketing was introduced in the field of the library in the late 1970's but then it was encircled between the thought of publicity and marketing. With the mixed views over marketing of library services and the utter newness of the concept raises a number of queries in one's mind as to what exactly marketing is, what it actually covers, is there any appropriate strategy for setting it up, who would set it up and under what parameters would its quality be defined and so on and so forth.

### **Review of Literature**

The expert professional service industry is one of the biggest and most diverse sectors of current economies. The regular trait that all organizations inside it share, regardless of whether they are business-to-business or customer oriented organizations, is that expert aptitudes frame the premise of what they offer to customers and the capabilities required are for the most part a boundary section for yearning for newcomers. The manner in which each organization approaches its market and the procedures it develops, the range of abilities, its size, the proprietorship structure and the kind of undertakings it takes up. This introduction to the industry details its relevance to the organizations and also deals with each of these attributes of the firm. It likewise analyzes the job that expert administrations promoting ought to progressively play in what is, on numerous

occasions, a developing business sector. For marketing professionals who have been trained in a conventional product marketing has to face the challenge of developing and executing the idea of marketing in an organization where its concept is as still young (Zibani and Kalusopa, 2019). Regardless of whether you're the firm pioneer, marketing pioneer, deals pioneer, or individual patron on the group, with the correct reasoning in addition to the correct experience one will have the capacity to settle on the best choices as fast as one should, perceive the ways of progress from the ways of peril, and have the capacity to receive most extreme rewards from your drudge. (Regardless of whether great reasoning in addition to encounter yields the capacity to thin cut or outright capability, who is to state?) (Shultz and Mike 2009). Marketing is all over the place, formally or informally, individuals and associations take part in an immense number of exercises that we could call marketing. Marketing significantly influences our everyday lives and good marketing has turned into an undeniably imperative element for business achievement. It is implanted in all that we do from the garments that we wear to the sites we go through on, to the advertisements we see. Careful, close planning and execution of the strategy is the key for good marketing (Kotler *et. al*; 2015).

According to Kotler (2015), monetary success habitually depends on marketing capability. If there is a lack of ample demand for product and services, finance operations, accounting and other business functions will not really matter, and so the company can't make a profit. Bottom line is very important as it forms the base for the decision of the top line as marketing can turn out to be a tricky endeavour. It isn't easy to make a decision during the course of change. The features of a new product design must be decided by the marketing managers. The marketing manager also has to decide about the price, product of goods and services offered to the clients as well as the amount to be spent on marketing, advertising, sales or the internet. The importance of the marketing of services in the business structure of the nation has been measured for the first Time in connection with the 1933 Census of American Business. This census covered not only wholesale and retail trade but also that large class of establishments engaged in selling services rather than commodities. Places of amusement and hotels were also included in this survey and were grouped with service establishments in our general tabulations (Ruff; 2014).

According to the American Marketing Association (2015) marketing is an authoritative capacity and an arrangement of procedures for making, imparting and conveying esteem clients and for overseeing client connections in manners that advantage the association and its partners.

In this way it can be said that the marketing management as the craftsmanship and investigation of picking target markets and getting, keeping and developing clients through making, conveying and imparting unrivalled client esteem. Advertising individuals showcase different kinds of entities such as goods, experience, services, persons, events, organization, properties, and information and ideas.

Strategic Planning: Each organization must locate the blueprint of its own so that in the long run and during the course of development which obviously characterizes its particular circumstance, openings, targets and assets. Kotler and his associates (2015) characterized it as the way toward creating and keeping up a strategic fit between the organizations objective and capacities and its changing marketing opportunities.

### **Marketing of Information Products and Services**

Among the crucial agencies needed to bring about social developments: libraries play a major role and so it is very essential to vitalize marketing in the field of library information science. For decision makers or the end users marketing possibilities through the Internet, lobbying politicians, campaign etc are very important. Sissel Nilsen (2006) is also of an opinion that there is further need to put in a concerted effort that is visible even to the community it serves.

In the context of library information sciences, information professionals view the term marketing cynically as the term has a business connotation. Thus it becomes relatively very difficult to conceptualize and define the term marketing with reference to LIS. While there are still some library experts like Melvil Dewey, S.R. Ranganathan whose philosophies are marketing oriented. Ideally, in the field of library information services, one's behaviour change can be promoted through marketing strategies. Several terms such as relationship marketing, technological marketing, internal marketing, emotional marketing, interactive marketing, and experiential marketing have slowly and steadily crept into the world of LIS and have begun to establish itself. If we take a close look in the past it seems to appear that the term is not at all a new concept but rather as old as modern librarianship. The philosophies, opinions and approaches of several library experts, who existed as early as the 1870s, seem to have and support the concept of marketing in their field.

In the present world of fast-flowing information through the internet, that has an enormous effect on the concept of library and information services, anyone, at any time of the day, sitting in

any corner of the world can access and retrieve information (Gupta; 2006). Thus with the advent of the internet and easy accessibility marketing of library services becomes even more crucial and interesting subject of study and implementation. The different streams of marketing focus into integrated library information services.

According to the Tang *et.al.*, (2017) the article entitled “Marketing for non-profit organizations” by Kotler and Levy which gave way to the idea of using marketing techniques in non-profit organizations after which the information professionals started taking interest and debating on the topic. Prior to this period librarianship merely meant promotion and public relations of library services. The debate began in the late 1940s and went until 1960s.

During these years, while marketing was being introduced, it was believed that marketing is additionally relevant to libraries and customary advertising procedures will likewise be helpful for non-benefit organizations including libraries. The concept of marketing within the libraries and information system was first embraced by the public libraries. The 4 P’s concept was used and major emphasis was given to strategic planning as a method of marketing, advertising and promotion of developing technologies; and new services portraying the amplified technological needs of the users. Academic libraries also used the concept of 4P’s of marketing in their services. Gradually it was felt that there was a need to increase the employee’s competence in customer satisfaction and customer service. In order to satisfy the users and clients, some special libraries significantly employed marketing. Presently, the focal point of the library and data service promotion is on relationship marketing, branding, client devotion, web advertising, internal marketing, network marketing etc.

Marketing is a section of strategic planning and utilizes a similar sort of instruments and methodologies. It implies that marketing has a lot to do with different examinations of clients and users and also with the potential clients. It additionally has to also work with market entrance, market penetration and assessment of the need and advantages of new data administrations and products. Comprehension of the basic objectives, mission and vision of the organization is one of the essential characteristics that need to be clearly understood by the marketing and library personals. The basic regulatory principle of any organization is stated within the mission and vision of the organization which may act as a guiding principle of the strategic plan as a basis of starting and building up the procedure of correspondence and marketing of the library and the services it

offers (Figure 1). In this way, the most imperative controlling standards as of now have been recognized for the library association. For good information service, which is a major aspect of marketing strategy, the library personnel must be highly focused. The primary factor in customer satisfaction is upon the knowledge and worth of the information as well as the promotion of information. It includes the employment of a wide range of instruments and methodologies like consumer loyalty examinations, picture investigations, and assessment of the connection between data services significance and their quality, evaluation of contending items and so forth. Branding and corporate identity are newer concepts related to marketing. The major key part of the whole planning process of any organization is strategic marketing (Pors; 2006).

However, Ranganathan's Five Laws rationality given in the 1870's is found in light of the present advertising ideas. Be that as it may, the improvement of formalized library information system showcasing is tied up with the accompanying suppositions:



**Figure 1. Process for developing a marketing strategy**

- Philip Kotler's theory of promulgating the idea of marketing into the field of non-profit organizations which has a marked effect on the development of the concept, in the field of library information services as since ages libraries were viewed with the concept of being non-profit institutions.
- The attributes of product marketing widely vary from that of service marketing as services are intangible, heterogenic, perishable and inseparable from those providing it and libraries are involved in providing service operations to the society.
- Libraries play a main role in catering to the needs of users or the potential users along with which it also needs to gratify others for their efforts/resources that are being used by the community for their benefits. Thus, libraries have to set up a relationship with not only the users and suppliers but also its parental organization, fund providers, government agencies and so on and so forth. Relationship marketing seems to have direct dealing with library information services, for example, the relationship between the economic and non-economic elements of the library to its stakeholders and fund providers.
- Libraries being involved in the dealing of information are not just the only ones to provide the same but rather have to compete with the others. The added trouble is that the services that they majorly provide *i.e.*, information, is inconsumable, non-transferable, invisible and accumulative.

### **7Ps of marketing strategies of libraries:**

The basic philosophy of the library system is cooperation and not competition, so it has been said that let all the flowers blossom. Marion, (2019) proposed that promoting technique is an exhaustive, incorporated and composed arrangement that joins four marketing components, usually called the 4P's. They are Product, Price, Place, and Promotion and 3P's of the advertising blend which involves Participants, Physical proof, and Process. Table 1 defines the 7P's of the marketing mix (Koontz and Rockwood's 4Ps plus Rafiq and Ahmed's 3Ps). Building client connections, marking and corporate personality, promoting correspondences, budgeting and pricing policy, estimating arrangement, gathering advertising information and marketing system, strategy, planning and policies all come under the array of marketing (Hollensen, 2010). In the present day scenario which is full of information and provides easy access to several databases, including journals, diaries and other resource of data and information, and even to the various



portals that are fully customized, and such customization turns out to be significantly more imperative with the virtual library somewhat existing outside the physical library.

Progressing advertising and marketing is the best apparatus for disclosing to the general population the qualities that all libraries and data and information centres possess. Earlier marketing correspondence was a restricted, no-reaction approach. Notwithstanding, in the present intuitive media, including websites, online communications, blogs etc empowers the library professionals to create and maintain a more interactive, responsive exchange with their clients. For marketing to be successful, it requires distinguishing reasons that clients utilize and potential clients may utilize the data and information services of a specific sort of library, in a specific area, at a specific time, in a specific arrangement, for a specific reason.

**Table 1: 7Ps of Marketing strategies of libraries**

7P's	Definition
Product	Services, products and information of the general reference and information service division. The value may be added by the use of information, reference, and auxiliary services that include individual help, referral service, online database searches, report conveyance, and interlibrary credit.
Price	Pricing of utilization of the library is typically that of the time and exertion the client spends making a trip to the library, and in addition, the time and exertion spent searching in for the significant and relevant data.
Place	The endless supply of the market of a library, it is basic with the end goal to recognize clients and their discrete data needs and requirements. To expand the administration territory, the library may have branches, bookmobiles, or electronic access, and so forth.

Promotion	Promotion incorporates using enticing data about general information services and conveying this data to target market portions that are potential clients. There are five sorts of promotion which incorporates exposure, advertising, personal representatives, publicizing, and sales promotion.
Participants	All human components which have an impact in reference and information service conveyance, in particular, the library professionals.
Physical evidence	The condition in which the reference and information services are conveyed that encourages the execution and correspondence of the services.
Process	The methods, systems and stream of activities by which the reference and data services are obtained.

The way toward recognizing a portion of those immaterial qualities is troublesome, in light of the fact that it requires creating profiles of different client bunches that are proposed to be the beneficiary base for administrations. It requires perceiving diverse needs in various gatherings that may utilize data benefits in various ways. It requires creating distinctive items and administrations to meet those shifting needs. With this investigation set up, different techniques can be utilized during the time spent getting the message crosswise over to the presumable clients so the administrations will legitimize the methods.

The most essential component that influences the primary concerns and effects the bottom line results in staff assurance, upgrades profitability, makes solidarity, builds the morale of the staff and brings about team spirit is internal motivation. The marketing objectives and goals distinguished in the vital arrangement present a chance to move from the purported drive attitude of influence to a force mindset of recognizing what is required, a procedure that has been done in the vital arranging process. This enables associations to oversee change with the end goal to remain

focused and effective. In this way, an accomplishment in this exertion starts with an educated, positive, devoted staff focused on data administrations.

Marketing approaches are turned out to be compelling in helping libraries to conform to changes in its customer base and will guarantee that service conveyed keep on befitting in the necessities. Knowledge and learning accessibility, research support, printing services as well as the arrangement of information aptitude and skills, upheld by one on one help and exhortation are the various products and services provided by the libraries. Systems analyzing the dispersion and conveyance of services and their fruitful advancement ought to guarantee that the individuals who require data receive it (Janine Schmidt, 2007).

According to Barbara, and Gaynor, (2006) market introduction is more than shallow. It is an administration technique that centres around the association's arranging, planning, operating and executing activities. By keeping a close look at the 7 P's of information and service management, a framework of quality management can be developed by the libraries. The most essential components of such procedure are to

1. Understanding of the customer (Market investigate),
2. Identifying the customer market (Segment and target),
3. Identifying the qualities as a focused business (Position),
4. Gathering the information about the customers or users, their necessities and place of utilization (item and place),
5. Creating successful and capable techniques and frameworks that would smoothen the results for the customers (Processes),
6. Training, educating and employing of the staff in both the field i.e., workability and customer relationship (People),

7. Conveying the advantages and preferences of the products and services over alternate contenders, (integration of market communication).

### **Library marketing through its website outreach**

One of the ways in which library marketing is done is through its website. Information is being obtained on the website after a certain amount of clicks has been made by the user on a particular webpage in a stipulated period of time. Not necessarily a marketing specialist is needed to keep a watch over it but it is important to have an eye over it. Mutual satisfaction can be obtained by a customer and a librarian as well with the use of an effective website. The large quantities and diversity of formats in which the information services are available today have made libraries and information services very complex, competitive and alert. With the advent of internet and website outreach, a revolution has occurred in the world of information and this revolution has created a significant amount of pressure on the libraries. The information professional are forced to adopt the various marketing techniques and tools to improve the management of libraries and information centers as they have to face an array of challenges beginning with increased user base, budget cuts, competition by database vendors, the rapid growth of material, rising costs, networking demands and complexity in information requirements. The benefits of marketing in libraries includes several benefits to its users such as

- a) Convenience
- b) Ability to control information and technology
- c) Increased ability to select information
- d) Increased ability to analyze
- e) Increased time of access
- f) Increased sense of certainty
- g) Decreased human error
- h) Decreased need for interaction

Further, the benefits of marketing for specialist (librarians) are

- a) Facilitating the tasks
- b) Saving time and reducing the communication gap
- c) Reduction in the response time
- d) Fulfilling individual requests
- e) Offering services round the clock
- f) Capability to carry out various tasks simultaneously
- g) Developing an affirmative picture of the library in the eyes of the community

### **Marketing and Client Base**

Fulfilling the needs and requirements of the users is the basic function of the library information system, while the marketing of information services is mainly concerned with showcasing the client satisfying the needs. Information is of utmost importance at all the different stages of programme planning and execution. At the national level, decision making is a very crucial step for a programme or policy to become successful or unsuccessful. Right and adequate information provision through libraries can play a key role in decisions taken by government, industries and corporations. A country can't accomplish substantial improvement on the off chance that it neglects to saddle, activate and use all its accessible data assets. Marketing intends to distinguish the customer base and to decide and fill its needs and requests by structuring and conveying proper items, products, information and services. The fundamental focal point of the idea is the customer, and the objective is customer fulfilment. According to numerous journal advertising is the way toward arranging and executing the origination, estimating, advancement and dissemination of products, goods, ideas, information and thoughts to bridge the gap between the source and customer and to trades with target groups that fulfil clients requirements as well as organizational objectives.

Library and information services play a very crucial role in the dissemination of information and effective utilization of these resources but at times its role is either unnoticed or ignored A conceivable purpose behind this oversight is the supposition that clients would look for data or information only when such data is required, overlooking the need to cognizance among

the users. It has been observed that several users are unaware of the facilities, resources and services the library and information centres cater. Along these lines, it is critical for the 21st-century library and library information system and professionals to find out the data needs as well as the conduct of users of library and data focuses in various settings.

Singh (2006), advocates that the libraries are quite successful in developing a deeper relationship with their customer base *via* e-mail and mobile phone services although some of the library personals are not happy with the home pages of their libraries and aim to make it more informative, attractive and customer friendly so that libraries' visibility could be enhanced in their clients' minds. In most of the libraries (except few), no construction of a service philosophy exists on paper, but in some, it's under construction. In order to survive the library and information sectors have to market their products systematically and aggressively through the acquisition of appropriate skills and making it an integral part of their operations. This is necessary for at least justifying their existence and at most proving their worth like any other department of any organization, be it a service or profit-making organization. Just like any other unit of an organization even libraries need to prepare strategies for planning programs and creating monetary value (Nawe, 2006).

### **Promoting in scholastic libraries**

The marketing division is a vital idea for the library administrator since it centres around making items accessible to address the issues of various gatherings, or sections, in the conceived market. By and large, while doing this, it is conceivable to distinguish inclines in the fragments which might not have come under the purview of any individual or organization. Market examination and market studies will likewise reveal the qualities and shortcomings of items delivered by different associations, thus empowering the advertiser to enhance his own envisaged items and use them to the benefit of his own organization portraying his organization as unique and different to that of others. In an educational setting, with the advancements and research inputs the data and information needs of the network keep on changing from time to time and are thus neither static nor constant. In an educational organization the diverse sections of individuals like the instructors, heads, college understudies, postgraduate understudies and others have different needs and so demand different services from the library and library personals. Each of these market fragments and sections has essential qualities and so there is a need to discover what these qualities

or attributes are so that these can be reflected the library services with the end goal to draw in the distinctive portions to the library. Bookkeepers, cataloguers and librarian in scholastic or research environments need to keep a close eye and must constantly screen the scholarly and research situations and conditions with the basic aim to provide client-centered services so that the research scholars are able to look in for the exact bit of information needed. The better and efficient the nature of a library's assets, the more prominent will be the number of users and the services and customers always go hand in hand.

Proper assets and service methodology is an essential component since client's needs must be fulfilled so that the users return again to use the services. Administrators ought to back up their enthusiasm for client's needs with incorporated advertising endeavours and promote their organizations by successfully satisfying the needs of students, scholars, academicians and researchers. As a satisfied group of education professionals and individuals do recognize the need for a good and a decent library and accept it as something they can't stand to be without. One should be told in clear and exact terms what benefits the library brings to the table them.

Researches often tend to be interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary, so a good library must be able to cater to the needs of scholars and provide customized services to the individuals by keeping an account of their necessities. Professionals and librarians in scholarly research world need to be multiparous and multi-faced with a constant eye over the changing world as they are in a field that keeps on changing with time and being abreast with information is of utmost importance and demand. In order to remain vital and relevant, they need to be informed about the new researches and technologies, the new changes and the new information's. Novel subjects are being developed and one has to go past the trial of hunting down the latest searches for fitting references and refreshing the collection. Accumulation advancement ought to be a functioning procedure of adding to the traditional knowledge as well as surveying its qualities and shortcomings with an arranged perspective of adjusting the shortcomings and keeping up the qualities. References ought to be assessed no less than like clockwork to guarantee that they are dynamic, powerful, cover research and educating, and deal with all partners. Non-relevant materials ought to be segregated and pertinent ones coordinated into the framework to make the gathering substantial, more meaningful and recent. Prasad and Saigal, (2019) advocates that for a library and a librarian to be

befitting and relevant, they should encircle around the data user/provider relationship. Showcasing monetarily helpful data in a more engaging and lucrative way is the need of the hour to package, customize and market it economically. Inability to do this will empower others into the commercial centre, who may assume control over the data distributing job of custodians as providers of data. Effective fabrication between information and recent researches is the key for any library to remain viable or fruitful as the idea of a library as a place for looking for data is changing with time.

### **Constraints on marketing information services**

According to Busari *et.al.*, (2015) people expect information to be free and the mere idea of it being priced results in a resistance which results in a negative impact on the idea of marketing information. In most developing countries this is one of the major constraints being faced by LIS. This majorly hampers the budget of the organization and as a result, the libraries suffer. Although it has been found that all most all the organizations are aware of the importance of a good and effective library they seldom give the priority and importance it deserves owing to which the end users suffers. When the funds are limited, or there is a question of restricting the finances, it is mostly seen that libraries are the first unit whose budget is being slashed down and thus the libraries information services are compromised. Yet another constraint under which the library services seem to crumble is the inadequate infrastructure which requires stable electricity supply, proper electronic networking, cables and wires etc. With the help of such networking, libraries can be linked to other satellite libraries thus enabling easy access and transfer of information from one geographical location to another which otherwise would have been practically very difficult and expensive.

### **Conclusion**

In a globalized world with information being one of the main assets being considered in the scheme of things and knowledge, library marketing is one of the important subsets of the way libraries happen to outreach to the clients (Kumar and Singh, 2015). With the advent of information technology new horizons have opened up for information services and this has revolutionized the role being played by a librarian since ages. This new innovation has become an essential component of every library today and is a much-needed component to serve the goal of information services. Libraries can demonstrate its effectiveness to disseminate any kind of information needed



by a community via effective marketing strategies. The evaluation of these strategies may act as an accountability check ensuring whether the public needs and wants are being met. Moreover, this may act as a potential method of establishing a relationship with governments, media outlets, donors, corporations, and publishers as well. Library staffs and seekers and users of information and knowledge thus seem to value marketing, as an important component of libraries.

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