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THE MARKETING OF THE INFORMATION PRODUCTS AND SERVICES IN THE LIBRARIES

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ABSTRACT

This work, study the marketing of the information products and services in the libraries, with aim of finding out the prospect and challenge of marketing of the information products and services in the libraries. Literature review method was adopted to collect and analyse related findings of researches with views to marketing of the information products and services in the libraries. Various promotional tools use in marketing of information product and services in the library were identified by the study in. Library resources and services that are available for marketing was also identified. The prospect of marketing information product and services in the libraries includes, improve library services, improve the economic base of the library, create value, make the library profession known, brings about sustainability, improves patronage/usability and encouraged feed back. The study reveals that challenges facing the marketing of information product and services includes, Inadequate budgetary allocations for library services, Non-automation of library operations, Irregular power supply, Inadequate infrastructure, Understaffing, Low computer literacy among staff, Lack of professional training in marketing, Limited media access, Death of library materials to market, lack of marketing policy. Based on the finding the study recommended that, Library should look inward and take advantage of fee-based library services to augment inadequate budgetary allocation coming to them for effective library services. Also, Library should as matter of urgency automate their library and make it functional to attract good number of users once marketing is done.

Introduction

Services providers around the world devises a means to make their business and services known to their old and potentials customers. This help them remain relevant in the midst of competitors, and library services is not exceptional. With advent of 21st century information explosion, many has joined the business of information services. Despite that, library still remain the most relevant and recognized information providers. The need to made their service well known to their patron become inevitable. The ICT has revolutionized the way and manner most services are being rendered, and information users has joined the trend. It becomes absolute necessary for library to be at forefront of the ICT based information services delivery to meet the need of their patron. This work will study the marketing of the information products and services in the libraries, using literature review method. The work started with introduction, and will discuss the statement of the problem, looking at the aim and objectives of the study, conceptual review of the related literature, the various promotional tools and strategy use in marketing of information product and services in the library, Library resources and services that are available for marketing, prospect of marketing information product and services in the libraries, the challenge of marketing of the information products and services in the library, summary and conclusion.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEMS

The target goal of library is to satisfy the information need of its users by providing effective and efficient services. The traditional library has filled in the gap for ages by standing as information containers and providers. Library generate, store, and disseminate information to users. The academic environment can not function well without the presence of library. This singled out library as an engine room of all academic study. With modern days automated library, library still remain number one information container and provider. From my personal observation as a result of consultation of related literature on marketing of the information products and services in the libraries, and discussion with some librarians, there exist numerous challenges facing the marketing of the information products and services in the libraries, and if not solve will affect the services' delivery of library. The challenges include: Inadequate budgetary allocations for library services, Non-automation of library operations, Irregular power supply, Inadequate infrastructure, Understaffing, Low computer literacy among staff, Lack of professional training in marketing, Limited media access, Death of library materials to market, lack of marketing policy.

All these mentioned constitute the issues in marketing of the information products and services in the libraries, if not solve will greatly influence the services' delivery.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study aim is to specifically find out the prospect and challenge of marketing of the information products and services in the libraries. While its specific objectives were to:

1. Define the concept of marketing of the information products and services in the libraries.

2. Find out the various promotional tools and strategy use in marketing of information product and services in the library.

3. To identify the library resources and services that are available for marketing.

4. To find out the prospect of marketing of the information products and services in the libraries.

5. To find out the challenge of marketing of the information products and services in the library.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Marketing method is mostly useful to academic libraries to enhance their image and to attract more and more patrons. Patange (2013) stated that, the main purpose in marketing is attracting and retaining a growing base of satisfied customers. Canzoneri (2015) opines that, Marketing is the link between the library user's needs and its resources and services; as a library marketer, you create that link. Your skills will help connect the library to its users, who know that they can get information many other ways without even coming to the library building or interacting with a librarian. This point to the fact the librarians are link creator who link the information user and information resources together, which can successful done through marketing. Kotler and Armstrong, (2014), defined marketing as, the process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships in order to capture value from customers in return.

The aim of marketing is informing the users (active and potential) of the multiplicity of services that a Library has provided (Kumar, 2017). American Marketing Association (2013) viewed marketing as, 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. Studies have revels that there are various strategies for promoting library and information services in this digital age. Yi (2016) in his study stress that, librarians can use personal contacts, circulars, memos, telephone calls, meetings, direct mailing, displays, talks, newsletters,

library tours and leaflets, websites, podcasts, blogs and Web applications to promote their products and services. In line with the above Dantus and Park, (2018) maintains that, Marketing tools such as the Library website, emails, bookmarks, posters, flyers, table tents, and social media are widely used among Libraries in order to extend outreach efforts.

In order to remain relevant in the competitive environment with some intruders in the business of information providers library must take lead in web-based commercial services, Libraries must market their services to the public to make strong connection with community of users, as viewed by Yi, (2016) in his study he maintains that for Libraries and information services to stay viable in the current climate, it is necessary that library adopt marketing strategies to help meet organizational mission, goals and objectives.

McCarthy (1975) in his study, summed up twelve elements of Borden's marketing mix into 4Ps – Product, Price, Place and Promotion. As explain by Patange (2013),

> ➤ Product: It is anything which is offered to the market for exchange of consumption. It is tangible (which can be seen and touched). Product is the most important thing in the marketing system.
> ➤ Price: Pricing is another variable of the marketing mix. It is the most difficult issue. Lot of things are to be kept in mind while fixing the price. Three types of pricing are suggested (i) Cost recovery, by which the libraries cover only budgeted cost. (ii) Commercial pricing, where the libraries make a profit. (iii) Premium pricing, for a service which is in demand or of such high quality that the libraries are justified in asking customers to pay more.
> ➤ Place: Place is the process of getting the goods or services from the producer to the consumer. In this business it is a matter of access. It is the channel that links product and consumer. Place includes both the geographical location where the product is offered and the (type of) distribution channel.
> ➤ Promotion: It is yet another important factor in marketing. It can only be successful if the other factors of the mix have been considered.

Janse and Van Vliet (2020) in their study stated things to consider when working in marketing to include:

> ➤ Target market analysis: A company's target market is the group of people it focuses on when selling products or services. It is significant to know everything about this group before even creating a marketing plan, let alone a marketing strategy.
> ➤ Reaching target audience: A crucial part of researching demographics is examining how the target audience communicates and how it exchanges information. To develop a highly personalized strategy, it is essential to understand how the target audience uses which type of communication media.

- Differentiation: Once the target audience has been defined and researched, it is significant to focus on the product side of this marketing mix. A way of finding this out is to conduct research among existing customers. Ask them what makes the company unique. The information revealed will help understand what makes the company different from the rest.

- Problem-solving by customer service: Any organization, where contact between customer and organization is sometimes necessary, needs good and effective customer service. This is an integral part of almost all organizations. From a marketing perspective, solving customer problems is crucial. This importance is growing, especially at a time when the influence of social media is very strong. From buying products to buying services, customer reviews often play a huge role. Solving customer issues is the first step. It is also essential that the feedback that is released during the customer contact is analysed. Analysing customer feedback allows a company to grow and adapt. Marketers should take customer feedback seriously and investigate promptly to ensure a potential problem never recurs. If a problem is not resolved in a timely manner, it is possible that negative reviews will be shared on social media, which can affect the reputation of both the product and the company.

- Collaborations: This last basic element is the most essential and applies to all phases and activities of marketing. It is during collaborations, where employees come together to share their creative ideas and develop an effective marketing strategy. Additionally, planning is significant.

Marketing of information products and services required enough effort, this is to build users confidence, and to get high percentage of patronage, and to ensure effective services delivery in the library by satisfying the customers' information need and to successfully achieved the library set goal.

Cooperman (2015) in marketing your library maintains that the following should be done.

- Mission Statement: Management Should clearly define the role of the library, the needs the library satisfies, and the benefits it provides. Should also include a distinctive competence that sets this library apart from others and an indication of future direction.

- Summary of Performance: (a) Define library broad practices: What general services do we already provide?, What markets do we serve?, What types of marketing communications do we already use?. (b) SWOT analysis: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.

- Overall Assumptions: (a) Can make some assumptions based on what we already know about our services and how our patrons use them. (b) These assumptions should be taken into account when making marketing (and other) decisions.

➢ Audience: (a) Need demographics about who our broad community of users are: Students, Faculty and External community members (especially this group as we prepare to market the library to customers outside the school). (b) Then, need more specific data about who our core customers are: Surveys (online), Focus groups?, Reference question and circulation statistics. (C) Information we require from a community assessment: Who are our customers?, What do our customers want from us?, Why do our customers use us?, What do they use us for? (d) Use above information to identify a "core" group of customers.

➢ Overall Marketing Objectives and Strategies: (a) An objective is what you want to achieve and should be quantified: Assessments helped us to determine that our student core customers want a searchable catalogue to make finding resources easier, The OPAC is up and running, but usage is low, We want to increase use/traffic to the OPAC by 50% in the next academic year. (b) A strategy is how you plan to achieve your objectives: Increase awareness of the OPAC (by: Visiting classrooms of those core customers most likely to use it and telling them about it face to face, Visual displays by the physical location of the resources, Notices on the library website and the LibGuide about the collection), Measure awareness of the OPAC by Using web analytics to determine changes in OPAC traffic, Analysing ref question data to see if people have asked how to use the OPAC. Lastly, Budget.

On the reason for marketing of information product and services in the library, Kumar (2017) stated the following reason:

➢ Marketing enables librarians or information managers to understand the real needs of users for taking good management decision, which will in turn help in providing maximum information services to users more efficiently and effectively.

➢ Librarian and information manager is not only interested on the users who use the services regularly. But he is also interested on non-users groups. Marketing plays a vital role to identify the information needs of non-users and helps to provide them with necessary information.

➢ Librarian and information manager need to present to their users services as an indispensable part of the organization and try to justify the claim that their clients/users cannot do their job efficiently or effectively without a Library services. In this way, marketing technique and tool will help Libraries and information services receive more funding for their patrons.

➢ Marketing may help to improve the image of the Library and information profession through collection of revenue performing different services to users.

VARIOUS PROMOTIONAL TOOLS AND STRATEGY USE IN MARKETING OF INFORMATION PRODUCT AND SERVICES IN THE LIBRARY

Dantus and Park, (2018) stated that promotional tools for library services includes, Library website, emails, bookmarks, posters, flyers, table tents, and social media, and they are widely used among Libraries in order to extend outreach efforts. Yi (2016) discovered those traditional tools, to include: flyers, brochures and posters, which can be used to promote events and programmes.

Kumar, (2017) outline promotional services which are cost-effective such as, Digital media which include: Library Website, E-mail services, Web page alert, Library portal, OPAC, Online survey, Webcasts and Web announcements, Online advertising Social Network site such as Facebook, Twitter, Flicker, YouTube, Blogs, Wikis, RSS, Web; Also Print media, which include: Booklets, Flyers, Banner/Posters, Bookmarks, Newspaper alert and Newsletter, Use Statistics, Library publications, Annual calendar, Feedback form, Postcard/Letters, survey. He as well includes Events and Activities, which involved: Workshops, Seminars, User-Education and Orientation, Word of mouth, Classroom Instruction, face-to-face events, Library tours, Training session, One-to-one conversations. Aderibigbe and Farouk (2017) Strategies to enhance effective marketing of library services in academic libraries include; publicity and public relation strategy, pasting of new information on the notice board, enhancing the image of libraries, using user's orientation as a strategy, devising training programme, advertising in print media or directories, sending out newsletters, brochures and flyers, word of mouth endorsement and also personal sales by the librarians.

In this new millennium library website, email, web page, OPAC, online survey, online advertisements, social media platform can effectively serve as a tools used in promoting information product and services most especially in the library, while strategy including reaching out to the users through word of mouth by moving round the campus on a fixed day, visiting lecture hall, use of current awareness services, advertising in print media, pasting of new information on the notice board, internet advertising, social media advert, all these efforts put together will increase the level of library usage, and if properly manage will lead to effective service delivery and users satisfaction.

LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES THAT ARE AVAILABLE FOR MARKETING

Janse & Van Vliet (2020) while explaining "p" product in work of McCarthy, maintains that, ´P´ is called the 'product mix'. This applies to both physical products and services. This show that the library resources and services are their product.

Popoola and Haliso (2009) maintain that, Library information resources that can be found in any type of library are in both print and electronic formats such as textbooks, journals, indexes, abstracts, newspapers, magazines, reports, CD-ROM databases, Internet, tapes, diskettes, computers, microforms etc.

Iwhiwhu and Okorodudu (2012) in their study listed the information resources available in the library to include: fiction books, non-fiction books, textbooks, newspaper/magazines, pictures and posters, records and tapes, audio and video.

Joshua and Michael (2020) in their work maintain that, Library services are those Activities or functions which are offered in the Library to assist users with their information needs. These services include, but not limited to, Circulation /borrowing services, Reference service, Bibliographic verification services, Current Awareness Services (CAS), Reprographic services, Extension/community services, Inter-Library Co-operation. When these services are effectively and adequately marketed, it will attract more patron to the Library and also help them to meet their information ends needs. Chegwe and Anaehobi, (2015) explained some services offered in the academic Library as indexing and abstracting. This is a means of such description to provide access to their identification and retrieval.

Igbeka (2008), outline the following, which form part of the services available in the library: Indexing services, Abstracting services, Retrospective conversation services, Cataloguing and Classification (Contract cataloguing) services, Literature reviews services, Online literature search, Print searches for users, bookshop (bookseller), Packaging of information, Editing and publishing, Developing hyper media –products, Translation, Marketing management of library, Organization of seminars, conferences, and workshops services, Presentations (e.g. Microsoft PowerPoint) Creating databases and website design.

Therefore, the information resources available in the library appeared in print and non-print resources available to meet the users need, include textbooks, journals, indexes, abstracts, newspapers, magazines, reports, CD-ROM databases, Internet, tapes, diskettes, computers, microforms. And services includes, Circulation/borrowing services, Reference service, Bibliographic verification services, Current Awareness Services (CAS), Reprographic services, Extension/community services, Inter-Library Co-operation, Indexing services, Abstracting services, Cataloguing and Classification services, Presentations (e.g. Microsoft PowerPoint) Creating databases and website design, editing and packaging services.

Library goes an extra mile to make these information resources available and services rendered attractive to user for effective service delivery, and these products are what the library markets.

PROSPECT OF MARKETING OF THE INFORMATION PRODUCTS AND SERVICES IN THE LIBRARIES

- Improve library services

- Helps to improve the economic base of the library

- Creates value

- Help to make the library profession known

- Brings about sustainability

- Improves patronage/usability

- Encouraged feed back

Improves library services

Marketing of information products and services, will help to educate the university community about the services rendered by library, the awareness will let the students know various information products and services available for them in the library, the marketing will increase the number of library user, and librarians that carried the marketing activities as stakeholder will do their best to see that new users are satisfied as been told. By so doing there will be greater improvement in the library services.

Improves the economic base of the library

When users turn in mass to patron the library services, the usage will cut across the free and fee-based services, enough money will be generated at ICT unit when huge population of the students uses the services, in the area of buying ticket to browse the internet, printout into hardcopy the useful information content obtain online, do the photocopy, binding and lamination when needed. The economic base of library will improve as a result of internally generate revenue. Also, when indexing and abstract contract offer to the library as a result of promotional activity carried out, library generate income, users will through marketing of information products and services know about library bookshop and patronize them, all these activities will help to improve the economic base of the library.

Creates value

Any library that fail to put the interest of its users first, with time will become valueless. Library will become irrelevant when the services' delivery is at cross road or in coma, but when services rendered by library is effective and efficient, the value of the library will be superb. At marketing proper there is always discount to the customers on fee based services. The services provided will have a new look, the different unit, of the library

will be updated before carrying out the promotional activities. This will contribute in adding more value to the library services delivery.

Make the library profession known

Many users were unaware of different product and services available in the library to served their information, need. Some see library profession, as only book custodians, they see library as place where only textbook are kept for the students without knowing the other of their promising profession. By the activities of marketing, people will know more about the library profession, like indexing, abstracting, setting up of new library. Marketing will make people know that librarians are, ICT specialist, webpage developer, database builder, online literature searchers, information packager, editor, proofreader, bookshop owners, business centre owner, most importantly, the information manager, also help them know that library services include free base services and fee-based services.

Brings about sustainability

This is to constantly keeping and maintaining the high value, marketing activities help an organization to always maintain its lead. The services provided will remain high, the target of any marketer is to make their product and services rendered to retain it leadership position in the marketing environment. Therefore, library marketing of information products and services is aim at high sustainability of services to remain number one information provider.

Improvement of patronage

Another important of marketing of information products and services is to increase number of library users. Through marketing students desire to use the library will be reawakening, with advertisement for new product and services introduced by library, it will encourage the students whose lack apathy in usage of library to start having enthusiasm of library usage again. Those unaware of existence of e-library unit and discount they suppose to be enjoying as a student, will hurriedly activate their usage of library mode. This move will increase number of the library patron.

Joshua and Michael (2020) stated in their work that, Marketing indexing and abstracting services by academic Libraries will enhance user's awareness on how to locate materials in the subject area they need as well as providing summaries of the contents of reading materials in the Library thereby serving as time - saver for Library users, also if Current Awareness Services (CAS) are marketed, it will maximize patronage and further satisfy their needs in the mirage of published materials.

Encouragement of Feedback

Library through marketing activities will introduce opinion box, distribution of questionnaire, to gather feedback to know area they need to work on for effective services delivery. When library patron notice that their feedback are welcome and work up, users will be encouraged to submit more feedback.

CHALLENGE OF MARKETING OF THE INFORMATION PRODUCTS AND SERVICES IN THE LIBRARY

- Inadequate budgetary allocations for library services
- Non-automation of library operations
- Irregular power supply
- Inadequate infrastructure
- Unavailability of staff
- Low computer literacy among staff
- Lack of professional training in marketing
- Understaffing
- Limited media access
- Death of library materials to market
- Lack of marketing policy.

Inadequate budgetary allocations for library services.

Uzoigwe (2004) 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.

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. In inline with the above, Asemoah- Hassan (2002) in his study maintain that very few Nigerian libraries are fully computerized and automated. As a result of inadequate telecommunication

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.

Irregular power supply

Power failure is a challenge, marketing will not be effective, when power failure will still persist as user turn in mass to use the library as they respond to marketing outcry. There must be steady power supply that will attract the user. When there is 24/7 power supply, the ICT unit of library will be functional, users will be fully assured that at all library official hour as they visit library they can always have access to online services offer by ICT unit. In relationship with automated library, library need money to buy big power generating set, or solar energy, they also need money to fuel and services them regularly. But with poor fund, most library find it difficult to meet up, some depend solely on power supply by power holding company of Nigeria which service always left their user in darkness. Also, library users require cool atmosphere in the library environment which fan and air-conditioning can provide, and power is needed to power them. Irregular power supply still remain an issue.

Aderibigbe and Farouk (2017) in their work concluded that, the major problem hindering effective marketing of library services were inadequate fund, irregular power supply, inadequate infrastructure like photocopier, computers, air conditioner for the marketing of library services, unavailability of staff, low computer literacy among staff, lack of professional training in marketing, understaffing, limited media access, death of library materials to market, and also library management do not have marketing policy.

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

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.

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.

Low computer 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.

Death of library materials to market

Most library stocks are outdated, which can be view as death material. For instance there are some books that discourage stigmatization of people with HIV, the book advice people not to run away from people with HIV, with idea that body contact alone can not cause infection, and it was valid, not until recent outbreak of COVID-19, nearness and body contact become an issue, people were ask to maintain social distance, this mean that teaching of HIV based on body contact is not valid again, but recent one that demanded for social distance remain valid.

When library only have old material as their information resources, and carried out marketing of information product and services, their marketing remain dead on arrival. Therefore, death of library material remain a challenge.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

The marketing of information product and services in library still remain a great avenue to make the library profession known, build efficient economic base of library, add value to the library, increase the number of

patronage, ensure effective feedback, improve the service provision of library and support sustainability. While the challenge of marketing of the information products and services in the library include, Inadequate budgetary allocations for library services, Non-automation of library operation, Irregular power supply, Inadequate infrastructure, Understaffing, Low computer literacy among staff, Lack of professional training in marketing, Limited media access, Death of library materials to market, Lack of marketing policy.

Therefore it is 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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