



Marketing as a Trend in 21st Century Librarianship

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ABSTRACT

Librarianship as a profession owned exclusively all manner of information items during the ancient medieval times but today, paradigm shift has been recorded from traditional librarian librarianship to a digital one. There are so many information outfits today that compete favorably with various libraries. This research work therefore highlights the general concept of marketing and further streamlines it to marketing in librarianship. Marketing is seen as a series of activities and events that bring about fulfillment to the producer (by selling) and satisfaction to the consumer (by buying), not leaving out the main component which stands out as value. The concept of marketing has it that products intended to be marketed must first be nursed so that selling gets to the peak. Three ways librarians can market library products include: offline, online and verbal. The marketing mix has been remodeled to align with librarianship. Librarians must market to showcase library products and services in this era of budget cut in addition to the value it adds. Marketing helps librarians to organize and disseminate the right information at the right time.

Keywords: marketing, librarianship, products and services.

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INTRODUCTION

The library is a catalyst for human progress and national development because its efficacy is still worthy of note today in all spheres of human endeavor. Libraries in recent times have added recognizable value to the services they render to its clientele. It is also pertinent to say that libraries keep up with providing information that will continue to boost the economic, political and social development of the country. There is a paradigm shift and a rapid change cum development in librarianship due to information technology and this has made libraries and

information centres more competitive than ever before. Any quality library is saddled with the responsibility of selecting, collecting, organizing, preserving and disseminating books and non-book materials by qualified personnel of librarianship (Obi, 2013).

Libraries, be it public, academic, national or special in this age have lots of work to do unlike the ancient times when books were chained serially, and that point declared a-no-go-area by the monks during the ancient and medieval times.

Nwosu (2017) opines that the library in the past owned exclusively everything it had from print to audio-visual materials and was in total control of the information materials it provided. Information today due to its explosion has become a commodity that every sector craves to have and control. It behooves the library to see this development as a healthy one in order to compete very well with their information counterparts by coming up with aggressive marketing and principles to match with the trends on ground.

Conceptual Clarification

What is Marketing?

Posigha (2016) defines marketing as planning and managing exchange relations with its group of clients. Marketing is an action that entails the needs of the market as well as designing appropriate products and services.

Marketing remains powerful machinery which has gone through various stages carried out in a gradual manner (Nwokah, Opara & Adiele, 2012). Various sectors are indulged in marketing being the focal point of modern business today. No organization in this modern time can strive without understanding the business that the organization has set up, backed up with marketing. This is popularly carried out through consumer behaviour study. Marketing in all strata of business life is nursed and may eventually come to play even before the inception of the product to prepare the ground for proper distribution and the expected outcome which is obviously success. Ideally, marketing should involve design, pricing, distribution, selling and product promotion until the consumers finally have it.

The American Marketing Association (AMA) as cited by Nwokah, Opara and Adiele, (2012) using the 5Rs in marketing define the term as getting the right product (service) in the right quantity, moving the product to the right place, and placing the right price at the right time. Following this definition critically, it means that the 5Rs of marketing must be strictly and meticulously adhered to, in order that complete fulfillment and satisfaction will be achieved on the part of the producer and consumer respectively.

Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) in Drummond and Ensor (2005) define it as a set of management procedures that involve identifying, anticipating and satisfying customers' requirement profitably. Kotler et al. (1999) as cited by Drummond and Ensor (2005) see marketing as creating and exchanging products and values with others. In other words, marketing involves a series of events and activities that bring about fulfillment to the producer (by selling) and satisfaction to the consumer (by buying).

Drummond and Ensor (2005) argue that for marketing to be sustainable, exchanges have to be mutually beneficial. Value remains that quality which each partner seeks ranging from money, support, prestige, respect up to maximum recognition.

Marketing involves trading with profit as the end result at heart. It is an exchange of goods and services for items that are of value to the one who needs it. Posigha (2016) stated that

the items of value are information and information services and those they are exchanged for a perception of worth. In this regard, the values of the services rendered are rated. Marketing is an elevated change of perception and attitude towards how information is selected, acquired, processed and disseminated by the 21st century librarian for effective service delivery.

Marketing can be defined as having the interest of the consumer at heart, by knowing the wants and needs of the consumers and meeting those needs satisfactorily. Marketing has its target as quenching the thirst of its consumers.

Nwokah, Opara and Adiele (2012) define marketing as a process in which needs and wants of the consumers are determined in order to satisfy them. They further state that marketing also make up the activities that are capable of stirring up a product from the producer up to the consumer.

GENERAL CONCEPT OF MARKETING

The general concept of marketing has it that marketing has to be nursed before the inception of a product. Ideally, it should involve design, pricing, distribution, selling and product promotion until the consumers eventually have the product being sold.

THE LIBRARY CONCEPT OF MARKETING

The concept of Marketing is relatively new in Nigerian library parlance as it is yet to gain grounds in library services and information education but suffice to say however, that the library has had the concept of marketing (perhaps not in the expected manner) right from the ancient, medieval to modern times. Udo-Anyanwu (2016) argues that the growth of libraries witnessed the steady input of the Egyptians, Mesopotamians, the Greeks and the Romans dating back to 600 BC. Information and marketing were done with the word of mouth. Although the dissemination and marketing of information was slow, information through papyrus, parchment, vellum, clay etc. reached their various destinations but we also mind the fact that some of them were either distorted or lost.

Nwokah, Opara and Adiele (2012) opine that marketing may be associated with sales but they are two different things. Marketing means presenting the products and services to look attractive while sales are the real output of marketing results or implementation. This is another way of saying that weak marketing of products and services produce weak results.

TYPES OF MARKETING

There are different types of marketing which also suit the library in advertising its products and services. They are: Offline marketing, online marketing and verbal marketing.

Offline Marketing

It is a traditional way of marketing the library and this type of marketing today cannot be overemphasized as most people are yet to find their feet in the world of Information Technology. Most users of public libraries are not computer literates and so find anything traditional very comfortable. Libraries can be advertized through prints, television and radio since a large

number of people listen out for information through any of these mediums. Other means of marketing the library services and products are through: Selected Dissemination of Service (SDI), Current Awareness Service (CAS), library exhibitions and displays.

Online Marketing

In as much as this medium of marketing entails the use of computers, the aid of internet service providers (ISPs) and power generating sets to function effectively, most organizations resort to this means because it is considered cheaper at the long run. Advert information is passed across-the-board in a matter of seconds reaching out to millions in a matter of seconds. Online marketing today are achieved via bulk e-mails, WhatsApp, online videos, Facebook, twitter, you tube, twitter, YouTube, linkedIn, etc. Inter library cooperation are very good examples of how library products and services are marketed online.

Verbal Marketing

Libraries can market their products by choosing and addressing its clientele with the right words. Good public relation is generally needed to boost this type of marketing. Unagha (2015) posits that good public relations are an added advantage needed to push the library image forward. Some believe that not a single dime is spent on this kind of marketing. This is arguable because periods of training to acquire degrees and certificates can be used as a yardstick to measure the cost of this type of marketing. It may be the most expensive in the long run, putting the cost of training and years put in to get quality training and skills.

Kotler and Keller (2009) posit that how best to create value for its target market is to develop a strong, profitable and long term relationships with customers (users) and in doing so, should understand the consumer market (which is the core needs of the library clientele).

WHY MARKETING?

Marketing has become expedient in library parlance so that the huge work in librarianship can be properly showcased. Librarians manage knowledge which has gainfully earned them the name “knowledge managers”. Nwosu (2017) clarifies that the profession specializes in generalities. The librarianship profession hinges on services and so librarians have to carry out the crusade of advertising and marketing the services they render and the products they sell.

Tiwari (2017) reveals that long-term research of libraries with the aid of Return on Investment (ROI) analysis has proven the fact that in monetary terms, libraries produce five hundred and fifteen (515%) percent annual return on investment, explaining that the benefits gotten from the library services exceed the cost of providing them. There should be no contradiction saying that library services yield even more than fivefold return if we compare the benefits with the cost of establishing these libraries. Libraries disseminate the right information and at the right time. It now lies on the professionals to tell the world how profitable the profession is and one major way this can be achieved is through marketing.

Students, researchers and faculty officers who depend greatly on academic libraries for instance may not be able to quantify the gains made using the university libraries. Information that aid and boost staff promotion is readily available in the library, career information which aid fulfillment of various degrees are equally handy in the library. Information that saves lives

because users are well informed is evidence of ROI in the libraries. The library in this regard, markets itself as evidence can be seen through various positive results that are accrued as a result of library usage. Graduates at all levels record the gains they accrue using the library.

Cogent reasons are evident for marketing library services and information products today. Posigha (2012) deciphers that budget cut; technology revolution and low awareness have necessitated the need for marketing the lot of the library in this era. It is a welcome development to inculcate marketing as part of the library activities and about the best way to enhance the use of its services and products. The need for libraries to market what they do cannot be overemphasized since it is a major tool for staying relevant in the information industry. So many reasons explain why people have begun to know the importance of marketing in library service and one major importance is the general notion which people have now, that library services and products are being seen as commodities that can be marketed and sold. User satisfaction is greatly improved as a result of library marketing.

Madhusudham (2008) as cited by Posigha (2012) states categorically that marketing by libraries are meant to improve and elevate information resources, create perception of need and demand, ensure that information is maximally used, improve the library status, use limited resources of the library adequately and make the library attractive in all ramifications.

Libraries irrespective of type must know that they have competitors like the book vendors, online book sellers, information consultants, internet services providers (ISPs) and other information providers and are therefore expected to match and braze up with healthy competitions in the industry. In other words, they should be proactive in their marketing to gain the expected recognition, attention and respect. Libraries compete with other faculties in the department for funds be it academic, special, national or school library to maintain relevance hence the need for painstaking marketing.

THE MARKETING MIX

In considering the needs of the clientele, the 4ps in the marketing mix is taken into consideration namely: the product, the place, the price and the promotion.



Figure 1: Marketing Mix. Source: Wikipedia 2019.



Figure 2: The Marketing Mix as modified by Tom-George (2019)

The Product: This remains added valuing the librarian offers through knowledge, information, organization and retrieval skills. Product is the library's services which consist of its collections, both tangible and intangible products. Products are commodities offered to the market to satisfy a need. Library materials, services and programmes constitute library products.

Obi (2010) expounds some services which librarians render to their clientele which include: abstracting, guidance- counseling services, selected dissemination of information (SDI), reference services, and translation services. Some other services include: inter-library loan, repackaging and condensation, newspaper clippings and patent information. Information products constitute: current awareness bulletins, result of literature search, new additions list, information bulletins, selective dissemination of information bulletins, newsletters, directories, abstracts and indexing services (Posigha, 2016).

The Place: Price marketing mix may be physical or virtual and must be attractive, inviting and welcoming. A physical space must be situated in a cool environment that is serene in order that users can benefit maximally from the sources in the library. As part of the marketing mix in the virtual aspect, the internet service providers must have speed, and up to date packages that are useful to its target audience. Apt software must have to be repackaged through current awareness service (SDI).

The Price of Library Services: This is made up of staff time spent in making sure those materials and services are available and users' time in finding materials and using them are spent efficiently. Most libraries do not have pricing policy and so do not cost their activities and decisions, and are just too satisfied that resources are well explored without necessarily increasing their cost.

Promotion: Promotion in the world of librarianship entails an advancement and advertisement of the library services and products. The academic library for example greatly showcases what it does in various units of the library through its yearly orientation programme for freshmen. The programme embedded in a comprehensive lecture covers every unit of the library educating and informing the freshmen of every vital aspect of the library and how best to make use of its resources and services.

The library has a promotion policy as part of its strategic marketing. This consists of positive action, good behaviour of the staff, convincing/inviting reasons why the library must be a welcome development in the life of its users. Promotions can be accompanied with marketing tools like books, t-shirts, face caps, key holders, bags etc. with the library's logo instilled on them.



Figure 3: 7 Ps Marketing Mix: Culled from Professional Academy, 2019

Marketing mix is also modified and known as 7Ps that include the addition of process, people and physical evidence. The offer a marketer makes to the customer can be altered by varying the mix elements.

There are various reasons that have precipitated the need for marketing of library services and information products and need to justify the financial resources spent on them. Be that as it may, it is a very vital way of enhancing the use of library services and products. Eze, Ezukwuoke and Okeke (2015) reveal that marketing information is very essential to promote utilization of

information resources, create perception of need, ensure that information is utilized optimally, improve library status, help librarians to be properly organized and be able tackle to issues to library materials and databases.

The Importance of Marketing

Marketing is very relevant and important in any organization today and this very much applies to the libraries. The extent of products been sold and services offered depend greatly on the level and quality of marketing was carried out in the library:

- Marketing gives the opportunity to add value to information services rendered and the products to be sold.
- It fosters inter activity between libraries, brings them close to the profession through knowledge sharing.
- Marketing helps to organize and disseminate the right information at the right time.
- Having to compete with other information counterparts, marketing ensures that librarians market and deliver comprehensive information that is convenient and easy for use.


CONCLUSION

Marketing and its lot is absolutely necessary for the enhancement and development of libraries for effective service delivery in the 21st Century. Funds are needed for effective planning to keep up with library work and what is expected of it. The location of the library has to be strategically positioned in a serene place that is void of noise and there should be no compromise about this. Demographic knowledge of users in any location of a library should be handy to the librarians in order to help them market and strategize effectively. Stakeholders in the industry should embrace aggressive marketing to meet up with the trends everywhere.

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