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IMPLICATION OF MARKETING PLAN: FOR MARKETING LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

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Abstract:

The paper describes the meaning and purpose of marketing in academic libraries and discusses five laws of library science in the view of marketing. It also describes marketing process, its development and implication of marketing plan, and list of the tools and techniques for marketing.

KEYWORDS:

Marketing, Library Services, Marketing Purpose, Marketing Plan, 7ps Model, Implication Of Marketing Plan, Tools And Techniques.

INTRODUCTION

As Kotler points out, organizations such as museums, universities, libraries, and charities need to market their causes and their products to gain political and social support as well as economic support. One of the major barriers for operating a profitable information business is the lack of business expertise among librarians and information managers. Marketing is the process of planning, pricing, promoting, and distributing goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy the library and the customer. Libraries and information centers have begun to realize that marketing of information products and services is an integral part of administration, especially as a means for improving user satisfaction and promoting the use of services by current and potential users. Three main factors, namely the information explosion, the technology revolution, and escalating library costs are responsible for encouraging the library profession to develop a marketing approach in its operations and services. In designing the marketing mix (The 7Ps instead of the 4 Ps), 7P's have become central to libraries - product, price, place, promotion, people, process and physical evidence. Any library using developing the marketing plan, marketing techniques to develop its operations focuses on its products (including services); the price paid, which may be in money, time or energy; the promotional strategies by which library collections and services are made known to potential clients, including publications, displays and participation in events; and the physical facilities or place from which services are made available.

1.What is marketing?

Smith writes, Marketing is a stance and an attitude that focuses on meeting the needs of users. Marketing is a means of ensuring that libraries, librarians, and librarianship are integrated into both today's and tomorrow's emerging global culture as well as Philip Kotler defines, Marketing (Management) as 'the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of goods, services, and ideas to create exchanges with target groups that satisfy customer and organizational objectives.

2. Purpose of marketing in Academic Libraries

There are two key purposes of marketing,

Achieving objective/goals Satisfying user/customer needs and wants of the academic libraries. Main objective of academic libraries is provide right information to right user at right time, and to put it in simple words satisfying user/customer needs, The second purpose is related to first purpose, if we provide product/services at right time to right user and fulfil the users need than we complete the purpose of marketing. Main purpose of marketing in academic libraries is to encounter a four-pronged challenge:

1. Increase in clientele, their variety, their demands, and their expectations.
2. Increase in the initial or capital cost of information and information technology, and their need to leverage the technology and find new levels of economies of scale to serve the increasing potential clientele.
3. In the event of drying up of the public sponsorship and subsidy, the need to find alternative sources of revenue.
4. Complexity in ways of identifying clients and their requirements, and servicing them.

3. Five Laws of Library Science: in the marketing view

In the early conceptualization of a Library and Information Centre's business, Dr. S. R. Ranganathan had the concept of customer orientation embedded into it. He described a library as a public institution or establishment charged with the care of a collection of books, the duty of making them accessible to those who require the use of them and the task of converting every person in its neighborhood into a habitual library user and reader of books.

Moreover, Dr Ranganathan's concept of the Five Laws of Library Science had the marketing concept at their core. The five laws were:

1. First law: 'Books are for use.' (Maximize the use of books.)
2. Second law: 'Every reader his book.' (Reader is the prime factor and his/her need must be satisfied.)
3. Third law: 'Every book its reader.' (Find a reader for every book.)
4. Fourth law: 'Save the time of the reader.' (Organize information in such a way that the reader finds the wanted information promptly.)
5. Fifth law: 'A library is a growing organism. (Emphasis is on comprehensive and evolutionary growth.)

Maximize use of the books is the marketing concept tell itself by first law, a focus on customer needs (second law) and wants through saving of time (fourth law), the third law relates to finding reader, probably implying that the library should reach out to the customers and fifth law emphasis is on comprehensive and evolutionary growth.

4. Who are the Customers/Clients

In an academic library the primary clients are the staff, student, and Research Scholars that is Internal and External users of the Library.

5. What Product and Services is the Library marketing

The library has many products and services that it can market. Each library needs to identify what it wishes to market and how. Marketing is not just about developing and promoting new services and products but about bringing awareness to clients of existing services and products and determining their appropriateness. New services like WebOPAC, Library Portals, database and online/offline institutional repository and usefull links located on library site etc a marketing plan needs to be developed and implemented with ongoing enhancement of the services and products should follow.

6. Marketing Process

Ohio Library Council has indicated the marketing process as follows:

1. Begin the marketing process by examining your library's mission or purpose.
2. Assess library capabilities with a marketing audit, an internal assessment.
3. Find out what products (services) your users want, and how they perceive the library, through market research
4. Develop goals and objectives based on your mission and the results of your internal audit and external research into what customers want.
5. To meet goals, select strategies to promote your products that will work best, be affordable, and reach your customers.
6. Create a plan of action that describes all the steps needed to carry out the strategies for meeting goals.
7. Evaluate how well you have done.

For example, in a digital public library, the first part of your plan is to arrange statement of your library's mission or purpose. For doing this,

Select one service or one user group for the purpose of this sample plan, e.g. reference, children's programming, an annual event, or pre-schoolers, non-English speaking users, retirees.

Describe how marketing of this service or to this group will contribute to the library's mission. For example, if part of your mission is to serve the community, you could say that marketing will let the community know how you can serve them.

7. Implication of Marketing Plan

7.1 What is marketing plan

A marketing plan provides the information manager with a blue print for identifying and targeting opportunities and client groups (target segments) and for the cost-effective supply of specific information products/services to the identified client groups. Marketing plan may be prepared for specific product(s) or service(s) as well as for the library/information centre as a whole. The plan helps the librarian/information manager to answer the following broad questions:

1. What is the current situation regarding the library/information centre, the product or the service?
2. Where should the information centre/product/service be in the next year?
3. How does the information centre/product/service get there to realize specific targets?
4. To assess whether the information centre, product or service realized the goals and targets set?

7.2 How to Develop marketing Plan

1. Developing a marketing plan is to analyze the current performance of the library and information centre.
2. Conduct a marketing audit. This step helps in: (i) identification of marketing goals of the parent organization; (ii) analysis of the market and customer behaviour; (iii) analysis of the macro environmental forces and business climate; (iv) analysis of competition; and (v) analysis of the internal environment, i.e. systems and procedures of, products and services offered by, and resources available to the Library/information centre.
3. The findings of the marketing audit are used in the third step to decide the strategic direction for the information unit.
4. Development of a marketing strategy follows as the fourth step
5. A detailed marketing plan is then prepared (fifth step) followed by the last step (sixth) of implementation and control. In addition, the marketing plan should be presented effectively. A better understanding of these steps will be attained, if we examine them in the context of library/information centre.

7.3 Marketing Mix (The 7Ps instead of the 4Ps)



[7 Ps Model of Marketing Mix]

Marketing mix is the key concept in the marketing task. It is the strategy used to perform marketing functions. Marketing mix according to De Aze (1985) is the planned package of elements which will support the organization in reaching its target markets and specific objectives. The four P's: Product, Price, Place, and Promotion. As each library product or potential product is analyzed and developed for its target customer, it must be viewed with the four P's in mind.

1.1.1 Product

A product is anything that can be offered to a market to satisfy a need or want. The products, which can be marketed, include physical goods, services, persons, places, organizations, and ideas. In the deeper sense, the product is not a physical item but a perception of the consumer or the user. Product means the satisfaction of the customer rather than a physical good. Goods are ingredients of customer satisfaction. Marketing mix is the process or device that makes this customer satisfaction.

All of the services offered by the library - lending services, inter library loan, on-line searching, house-bound readers' services, picture loans etc. are library's products that can be marketed successfully. Library can provide bibliographic information, abstracts and summaries of information, which disseminate the core level information. Books, databases, journals, bulletins, etc. represent the tangible information. Library can also augment information through quality, reliable, speedy and timely professional services. Under the product mix, library's resource collection represents as a product line while product items include books, periodicals, videos, films, audio recordings etc. For further fact, services of the library can be considered as a product line and the circulation of library materials, ILL, reference services, and on-line searching represent as product items.

1.1.2 Place

It represents the distribution channels that an organization utilizes to convey its own physical products or services to the end users. The distribution of the library's products refers to 'When' 'Where' and 'How' service is made available for the user. 'When' implies the time period in which information is provided. 'Where' indicates the location of the services and 'How' constitutes the type of distribution

1.1.3 Price

It is a flexible and dominant element, which determines the revenue/profitability/market share for the organization. From the customer's viewpoint price is a determinant factor because most customers depending on their income level consider the price before they purchase the product. The concept of price constitutes two different types - the monetary price, and the social price. Monetary price implies the payment of certain sum by the customer, and the social price refers to the additional effort that the customer must make in order to obtain access to a product. Price for the product is set when the organization

introduces or acquires a new product. Price can be revised to match the change of the product. Librarians should consider the 'monetary price' concept as well as the 'social price' concept when service. Customers look for clues to the likely quality of a service also by inspecting the tangible evidence. For example, prospective customers may look to the design of learning materials, the appearance of facilities, staff, etc.

1.1.4 Promotion

After information product or service has been developed, the price for it has been determined, and the way to reach it to the clients, at the places, where they want it has been worked out, then, and the potential clients must come to know of the product or service. Without this basic information or awareness, they cannot act. Therefore, the fourth 'P' in marketing, after product, price, and place, stands for promotion, i.e., the communication activity. The basic purposes of promotion are to: Attract and hold the attention of the clients (both potential and existing).

Make the clients aware of the product or service and the organization providing it.
Position the product or service and the organization in the minds of the potential clients in a unique and favourable manner.
Motivate the clients to actually buy the product or service.
Constantly reinforce the message on the clients.

1.1.4.1 Direct marketing

It includes Catalogues, Mailings, Magazines, Newspapers, Radio, Mobile Library, TV, and Telemarketing etc.

1.1.4.2 Public Relation

Speeches, Seminars, Annual Reports, Publications, News, Public Interest Articles

1.1.4.3 Advertising

Broucheres, Booklets, Posters, Leaflets, Directories, Display, Audio-Visual, Symbol and Logos, Book Fairs, Notice Board.

1.1.5 Process

In library and information centres, new technology can be employed to provide better services at lower costs and high quality staff is to be recruited. The staff should be treated well and be communicated clearly because their attitudes and behaviour are the keys to service quality and differentiations.

1.1.6 People

People are the staffs who occupy the key position in influencing customer's perceptions of product quality because of the simultaneity of production and consumption in services the continuing education. In fact the service quality is inseparable from the quality of service provider. In the case of physical product, a bad product can be taken or replaced; a bad service can not be taken back or replaced. So service has to be performed right information to the right user at the right time and finally users have a liking for service personnel who make them feel important. An important marketing task is to set standards to improve quality of services provided by employees and monitor their performance. Following steps necessary for better services:

Motivate to the Library staff
Training to the library staff
Team development because service is a team task

1.1.7 Physical Evidence

It is the environment in which actual services are rendered to the user; where any tangible goods that facilitate the performance and communication of the service. Users indirectly look the manner of

service provided or how effectively qualitative services are delivered to them by inspecting the tangible evidence. For example, Client/ User/ customers may look the appearance of facilities, staff, documents and their prompt findings etc.

8.4 Tools and Techniques for marketing

Internet
Library Websites
Library Portals
Library Blogs
WebOPAC
Inter library loan(ILL)
SDI and CAS Services
Organizing library weeks/ book fairs
Seminars/conferences/workshps
New Arrivals
Library brochure
Newsletters
By organizing competitions eg. Essay Writing, Book Seraching etc.
Best User Awards
Information Literacy Programme

CONCLUSION

Three main factors, namely the information explosion, the technology revolution, and escalating library costs are responsible for encouraging the library profession to develop a marketing plan in its operations and services. Main objective of library is to provide right information to right user at the right time in short to satisfy users/customers needs. If we provide product/services at right time to right users and fulfil the user's need, it satisfies the objective of marketing too. Using the appropriate medium to market libraries product and services is extremely important, such as websites, library blogs, library brochure etc. are examples of the medium.

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