



## Marketing Mix for Library & Information Product and Services: A theoretical Approach

Dr. Sudhir Kumar Jena, Librarian, IIM Shillong, drsudhirkumarjena@gmail.com

Dr. Manaswini Patra, I/C, Librarian, Berhampur University,

Tusarakanta Jena, MBA Student, Berhampur University.

### ***Abstract***

*Marketing of library and information products and services approach aims at determining the needs, wants and demands of the target clients through designing and delivering appropriate products and services more effectively for the purpose of achieving organizational goals and objectives. This paper is an aims to conceptualize the strategic approaches of marketing mix to library and information centers finally, it recognizes some benefits of proposed marketing plan. The librarians should understand the nature of information, needs of users, the transfer process between people and information. Understanding of this new dimension of library and information services will help concerned policy makers in formulating appropriate plans and programs to make the library and information services most effective, and long sustainable.*

***Keywords:*** *Appropriate product, Strategic approach, Marketing plan, Nature of information, Transfer process, long sustainable.*

### **Introduction**

Libraries are relatively new to the marketing area. Marketing of library and information products and services is a new concept in India. It is not too old as a compared to the developed countries also. The above said concept has emerged during the early 1970s. Since then, it has gained much attention in the USA and is considered as most important profession. Information institutions have grown into information industries which are providing free web based information services. These information industries have employed more than 50% of human resources.

Marketing of library and information products and services is an area which is now beginning to

attract the attention of research scholars, market researchers, and the business

people. Marketing in the broadest sense ranks as one of the most popular topics of the day. Marketing basically starts with the market research, identifying the consumer needs and demands, their pricing and promoting them to the appropriate consumers. The main purpose in marketing is attracting and retaining a growing base of satisfied customers.

Marketing approach is mainly useful to academic libraries to improve their image and to attract more and more users. It helps the library staff to upgrade their innovative knowledge both within their organizations and as a profession within the society.

Marketing aims to identify the client base, and to determine and fill its needs, wants, and demands by designing and delivering appropriate products and services. The main focus of the concept is



the client, and the goal is client satisfaction. Rowley (2001) calls marketing, the management process which identifies, anticipates, and supplies customer requirements efficiently and profitably.

Kotler (1999) says, that marketing is 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 customers and organizational objectives. Under the umbrella term marketing, we study concepts like building customer relationships, branding and corporate identity, marketing communications, price and pricing policy, collecting marketing data and marketing strategy and planning.

### Objectives and Marketing Goals

Once users' needs, future trends and resources available have been established the librarian is in a position to plan the marketing objectives, the resources to be used, the place and the time scale of the operation and the strategies required achieving them. The process of setting aims and objectives will serve a number

of purposes. It will provide a focused overview of the library service and give direction and guidance in achieving the objectives .If any of the objectives change over time then the market plan will need to be updated.

### Why Marketing?

Information professionals must understand that it is essential to actively market their services. Library marketing is critical for any information professional in order to spread the word about their library. It doesn't matter what library type, it doesn't matter how large or small the library is. You need to draw attention to your library, your services, your worth to your community, your administration, your staff, and your users. It is important to understand the organization's mission to produce effective marketing material that builds the library's brand and image, drives traffic to your web site, and differentiates your library from its competitors. That's why in this highly competitive industry marketing plays a very important role, Fig.1.

[Fig. 1. Planning Model]





**What Products and Services the Library Should Market?**

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 also about bringing awareness to clients of existing services and products and determining their appropriateness. Marketing plan needs to be developed and implemented with ongoing enhancement of the services and products should follow.

When the library is marketing its collections, in particular, the availability of new acquisitions like a new online patent database or a set of electronic journals, must be communicated to clients who need them. For new products or services, part of the planning must involve the creation of a marketing and promotional strategy and the allocation of responsibility to library staff to ensure that the plan is carried through.

Marketing is directly linked to the planning process. Having a formalized plan and direction of where the library is going as opposed to being reactive to change and problems that arise, enables managers to successfully develop marketing strategies and successfully identify new services and products. Part of the planning is development of a suitable mission statement for both internal and external use.

**Marketing Mix for Library & Information Center**

We applied the 7Ps (Koontz and Rockwood’s 4Ps plus Rafiq and Ahmed’s 3Ps) of marketing mix which is defined in Table 1. Koontz and Rockwood (2001) suggested that marketing strategy is a comprehensive, integrated and coordinated plan that combines four marketing elements, commonly called the ‘4Ps’ they are: Product, Price, Place, and Promotion and 3Ps of the marketing mix are: Participants, Physical evidence, and Process.

[Table 1: 7Ps of Marketing mix of libraries]

7 Ps	Definition
<b>Products</b>	Products or services of the general reference and information service department. This is, of course, the information, reference, and ancillary services that add value such as personal assistance, referral services, online database searches, document delivery, and interlibrary loan.
<b>Price</b>	Pricing of use of the library is usually that of the time and effort the user spends traveling to the library, as well as the time and effort spent
<b>Place</b>	Place of service, based upon knowledge of the market of a library, is essential in order to identify users and their discrete information needs and wants. To expand the service area, the library may have branches, bookmobiles, or electronic access, etc.



<b>Promotion</b>	Promotion includes utilizing persuasive information about general information services, and communicating this information to target market segments that are potential users. Five kinds of promotion include: publicity, public relations, personal representatives, advertising, and sales promotion.
<b>Participants</b>	All human actors who play a part in reference and information services delivery, namely the library's personnel.
<b>Physical Evidence</b>	The environment in which the reference and information services are delivered that facilitates the performance and communication of the service.
<b>Process</b>	The procedures, mechanisms and flow of activities by which the reference and information services are acquired.

### The Medium

Promotional activities can take many forms and the promotional media will depend on the nature of the target audience and on promotional objectives.

- **Personal Skills:** Your manner whether in person or on the telephone, will affect your users' rating for the library. You need to be professional and use quality procedures but you also need to smile and establish a personal relationship with as many of your users as possible. If you react positively to complaints, people will be encouraged to tell you about other things they would like to be changed.
- **E-Mail:** Where a large proportion of the users are on e-mail it is an easy way of reaching them, quickly and cheaply. It can be targeted more precisely than most other methods and so are effective at reaching specific audiences. The staff responds quicker to e-mails than

any other medium. By maintaining up-to-date address lists different user groups can be targeted with different versions of the advertising 'message'.

- **The Internet:** The Internet has the power to improve the library's image and to allow the library to offer enhanced services. Although it takes time to set up and maintain services on the Internet, it can reap rewards in terms of user satisfaction and recognition. A library Web home page serves as a promotional tool advertising in-house library services and electronic information resources on the web. The pages should include an e-mail link to the library making it easy to the librarian contact.
- **Newsletters and Leaflets:** Newsletters and leaflets are both a means of delivering information. A newsletter can be used to list interesting new web sites, new journals and online services, and perhaps more general science news of interest.



It does not have to be long but should be produced on a regular basis. Leaflets and guides can be handed out, and displayed on notice boards.

### Benefits

Successful marketing includes the art of deciding that strategy/ technique used in different situation. As non-profit-making organizations, library and information centers cannot avoid marketing practices. Although libraries/information centers as non-profit organizations have three constituencies, e.g., clients to whom they provide services, the parent institution from whom they receive funds and donor agencies; but they should market their services for the following reasons:

- Marketing enables librarian or information manager to understand the real needs of users for taking good management decisions, which will in turn help in providing maximum information services to users more efficiently and effectively.
- Librarian or information manager is not only interested for the people who do use the services regularly. He is also interested in non-user groups. Marketing play a vital role to identify the information needs of non-users and helps to provide them with necessary information.
- Librarians and information managers need to present their 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 service. In this way, marketing techniques will help libraries and information services receive more funding from their patrons.

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

### Indian Scenario

The developments taking place the world over have influenced the Indian librarianship as well. There have been a number of developments in marketing of library and information services in the country and some of these are mentioned below: The beginning of publication of literature on marketing of library dates back to 1980. The Indian Library and Information Science Abstract (ILSA) started abstracting in this area in early 80s. IIM, Ahmedabad, has developed a database on marketing of library services which is very helpful for researchers in many ways. It is an area that is being widely discussed in professional meetings; there is an increasing interest of the national professional associations and organizations, like Indian Association of Special Libraries and Information Centers (IASLIC), Indian Library Association (ILA), Society for Information Science (SIS), Medical Library Association of India (MLAI) and Management Libraries Network (MANLIBNET). In 1988, the first national conference was organized by IASLIC in 1988 (Kapoor & Chatterjee, 1988). SIS also selected the theme Information Marketing for its conference in 1995 (Kuldip Chand, 1996). During recent years it can be observed that marketing of library services has been



included as sub-theme in quite a good number of conferences and seminars. DESIDOC Bulletin of Information Technology has brought out special issues on marketing of library and information services twice in 1998 and 2002 besides covering articles regularly in volumes of the journal.

There has been increasing interest among researchers in this area. The topic of Marketing of Information and Library Services has been included in the syllabi of some universities in the country. The Indian National Scientific Documentation Centre's (INSDOC) MLIS programme of the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) have a blog on Marketing of Information Products and Services. Some other universities also give emphasis on this area in the syllabi, but only to a limited extent. Besides, associations, various agencies and institutions are organizing training programmes.

### **Challenges faced by Library & Information Professionals**

There are, of course, challenges and difficulties faced by users, but it is also very important to consider the challenges to information librarians. Here are some of the major challenges:

- Create a positive image
- Be proactive
- Build good relationship
- Create a welcoming environment
- Know how to communicate well with users from different cultures
- Respect for cultural differences

### **Conclusion**

Application of marketing techniques is very important in improving the capabilities of library's information services towards attaining satisfaction of users. Libraries are being forced to explore the possibilities of cost recovery and profit potentials for their survival. Libraries must change according to changing market conditions. And the market philosophy which also requires that library management focuses on the identification of users' needs rather than library needs. Librarians and information managers seem to be reluctant to become fully involved in marketing their information products and services and when they attempt to market their information services they neglect or fail to understand the behavior of the user. The librarians should understand the nature of information, needs of users, the transfer process between people and information. Understanding of this new dimension of library and information services will help concerned policy makers in formulating appropriate plans and programs to make the library and information services most effective, and long sustainable.

### **References**

1. AMA Adopts New Definition of Marketing, Marketing News, September 15, 2004. <http://www.marketingpower.com/content21257.php> (accessed January 28, 2008).
2. Briscoe, W.A. (1921). Library Advertising: Publicity Methods for Public Libraries, Library-Work with Children, Rural Library Schemes; Grafton & Co.: London; The H.W. Wilson Co.: New York, 1921, p.127.



3. CIM definition, Leading Body Calls for a New Definition of Marketing; <http://www.creativematch.co.uk/vie/news/?94810> (accessed January 28, 2008).
4. Cooke, E.F.; Rayburn, J.M.; Abercrombie, C.L.(1992). The history of marketing thought as reflected in the definitions of marketing. *J. Marketing—Theory Practice* 1992, (Fall), pp.10-20.
5. Cram, J.K. (1994). *Marketing for Non-School Libraries: A Guide to an Essential Management Activity*; Department of Education: Queensland, 1994.
6. Dinesh K. Gupta & Ashok Jambhekar (2002). Developing a Customer-Focus Approach to Marketing of Library and Information Services, *DESIDOC Bulletin of Information Technology*, 22 (3), May, pp.5-13.
7. Gupta, D.K. et al. Ed. *Marketing Library and Information Services: International Perspectives*; K.G. Saur: Munich, 2006.
8. Gupta, Dinesh K. Marketing in library and information context: Myths and realities. *Library Science with a Slant to Documentation and Information Studies*, (Now SRELS Journal of Information Management), 1998, 35(2), pp.99-104.
9. Gumbs, B. (1999). How to develop a marketing plan. In: *Marketing Information Products and Services: A Primer for Librarians and Information Professionals*, ed. by Jain, A. K. et. al. New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill, pp.202-225.
10. Heesop, Kim & Yonge Park. (2006). *Marketing Analysis of Reference and Information Services in Korean Libraries*, 20-24 August 2006, Seoul, p.1-15
11. Janine Schmidt, *Marketing Library and Information Services in Australian Academic Libraries* p.1-7.
12. Kotler, P. (1972). *Marketing Management: Analysis, Planning and Control*, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
13. Koontz C. M. & Rockwood, P. E. (2001). Developing Performance Measures within a Marketing Frame of Reference, *New Library World*, 102 (1163/1164), pp.146-153.
14. Kumar, SL & Suresh, RS (2000). Strategies for providing effective reference services for international adult learners. *Reference Librarian* no.69-70, pp.327-336.
15. Lemkan, H. L., Burrows, S., & LaAugust, R. (1985). Marketing information services outside the medical center, In: M. Sandra Wood, ed. *Cost analysis cost recovery marketing and fee-based services*. New York Haworth: pp.143-157.
16. Mattson, K.; Eldredge, J. *John Cotton Dana Legacy: Promoting Libraries for Users*. *Wilson Libr. Bull.* April 1992, 66, 48.
17. Patton, BA (2002). *International Students and the American University Library*. ERIC



Document No. ED469 810, p.132,

18. Rowley, J (1998). Promotion and marketing communications in the information marketplace.' *Library Review*, 47 (8), 383-387.
19. Raina, R. (1998). Information marketing. *DESIDOC Bulletin of Information Technology* 18:3 pp. 3-5.
20. Shapiro, B. P. (1981). Marketing of non-profit organizations. In: *The Marketing of Library and Information Services*, ed. by Blaise Cronin. London: Aslib, pp.26-27.
21. Savard, R. (2000). La perception du marketing chez les bibliothécaires. In *Adapting Marketing to Libraries in a Changing and World-Wide Environment*; Savard, R., Ed.; K.G. Saur: Munchen, 2000; pp.12-32.