MARKETING-MIX COMPONENTS IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT: A VIEWPOINT

DEBASISH PRADHAN,
Librarian, University Section, St. Joseph’s College, North Point, Darjeeling-734104 (India).

ABSTRACT

Marketing of library and information service implies identification of user needs so as to satisfy them accordingly. The scope of this paper is therefore to have a study on need for marketing in satisfying the user requirements. The paper thereafter introduces marketing-mix aspect and its genesis and evolution. It points out component ideas of marketing-mix in general and the component ideas required in library and information management. All component ideas are subsequently discussed in successive sections. The paper concludes with marketing aspect followed in non-profit organizations like library and information centres.

Keywords: Five Laws in Library Science; Marketing Audit; Marketing-Mix; Marketing-Mix Genesis; Non-Profit Marketing.

INTRODUCTION

Marketing in libraries and information centers has been discussed for over three decades. Today, library professionals are aware of advantages of marketing and the library literature is often teeming with concepts of marketing, marketing strategies, marketing plans and case studies on marketing of library and information services. Marketing in libraries ensures that libraries, and librarianship are integrated and forwarded into both today’s and tomorrow’s emerging culture. Marketing is not separate from good practice. Marketing can assist libraries in identifying quality services, programs, and materials. A marketing audit and the resulting plan can contribute to a library’s ability to find a niche in the present as well as in the future and to fill that niche by an optimal collection of resources. A marketing approach can assist libraries in defining their role and in guaranteeing their future. What the library will look like and what it will offer as services can be determined through the use of modern marketing theory and practice. Marketing of information implies expansion of use of information.
NEED FOR MARKETING IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICE

Dr. S. R. Ranganathan had focused on the need for marketing when he enunciated the ‘Five laws of library science’ in 1928 and published it in 1931. His five laws describe the marketing concept at their core, i.e., the idea of marketing and promotion of library services is very much inherent in all the five laws. The laws and their associated directives are:

- **Books are for use** – indicates the need for sales improvement;
- **Every reader his book** – focuses on customer needs;
- **Every book its reader** – implies library service should reach to the customer instead of waiting for them;
- **Save the time of the reader** – advocates the use of new technologies as the time saving device; and
- **Library is a growing organism** – emphasizes continued and growing relationship between library and its customers.

So, as a matter of fact, the five laws can be used as a basis for the development of marketing principles in the context of libraries and information centres. The satisfaction of customer is primary concern in the marketing approach. The entire ethos and shared values of the library as a social organization owe the responsibility of satisfying the customers. New efforts must be directed at working with customers to clarify their expectations.

MARKETING-MIX IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

Marketing of library and information services requires full competence in marketing management which involves a set of activities by which library and information services and products are channeled to potential users and common people. The core concept is utilization of library and information services for a sustainable societal development in all respects.

MARKETING-MIX: GENESIS AND EVOLUTION

The component ideas which all together are important in marketing management are known as ‘marketing-mix’. The use of apt and colourful term ‘marketing-mix’ was started by Neil H. Borden in 1964. Librarian as the information manager must know all component ideas existed in marketing-mix so as to find ways to satisfy user community. During the end of 1970s, E.J. McCarthy condensed Borden’s twelve component ideas into four ideas, namely **Product, Place, Price** and **Promotion**. Over a period of time, these four component ideas were referred to as ‘4 Ps’. In 1990 Robert Lauterborn advocated four corresponding implications for the ‘4 Ps’ – all were started with letter ‘C’, and respectively **Consumer needs and wants; Convenience to the consumers; Cost to the consumer; and, Communication with the consumer** – referred as ‘4 Cs’. Afterwards, V. A. Zeithaml and M. J. Bitner argued that ‘4 Ps’ were inadequate for services marketing context. They expanded the component ideas in marketing-mix through incorporation of another ‘3Ps’: **People, Physical evidence** and **Process**. M. Janakiraman states that three more corresponding Cs were then introduced: **Company employees; Concrete evidence and experiences; and, Course of action**. Now, there are ‘7 Ps’ representing component ideas and corresponding ‘7 Cs’ on implications in marketing-mix.
MARKETING-MIX COMPONENTS IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

The marketing-mix helps to build library and information services very firmly in the perceptions of their communities served. The services will benefit wider community for the public library, academic community for the academic library, and the clients and customers for the business or specialist information service. Each of the component ideas of marketing-mix has a number of controllable facets or variables tuned to specific markets and the markets for libraries and information services.

We may consider eight component ideas for marketing-mix in library and information services sector, and these ideas may be represented through ‘8 Ps’ and ‘8 Cs’ as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Component ideas (8 Ps)</th>
<th>Implications (8 Cs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Product</td>
<td>Community needs, customized services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Patron</td>
<td>Clients, user community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Convenience to community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Price</td>
<td>Costing for services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>Communication with community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>personnel</td>
<td>Conducting employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Complete environmental condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Course of action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this context, it is to mention that there are so many words started with ‘P’, e.g. Planning, Programme, Progress, Precision, Performance, etc. and all the words are somehow related to marketing aspects, but it would not at all be wise to coin more and more component ideas on marketing-mix. However, the above mentioned 8 Ps are for eight inevitable component ideas in marketing-mix concerned to marketing management in library and information services. Applications of these eight component ideas in library and information centres are now explored in successive sections.

PRODUCT: COMMUNITY NEEDS CUSTOMIZED SERVICES.

A product can be anything offered by the marketer to the customers for use or consumption that would lead to satisfaction of their wants or needs. In libraries and information centres, product or service is anything that library and information service is offering, or would offer to users, and especially to potential users. Different need-based products and services are to be identified so as to offer customized services.
PATRON: CLIENTS, USER COMMUNITY.

Library and information products and services have to be accessible to all members of the user community. Any limitation of access, whether deliberate or accidental, will reduce the ability of library and information centre to fully achieve its primary role of meeting the library and information needs of the community it serves. The user group may include:

- People at all stages of life: children, young adults, adults;
- Individuals and groups of people with special needs; and
- People from different culture, race, caste, language, religion and social status.

PLACE: CONVENIENCE TO COMMUNITY

Place is usually referred to ‘distribution centre’ in a commercial marketing-mix, but it suits admirably for library and information services, since it refers to where and how a service is made available to users community and clients. Here, place refers to creation of special utility to the users. The library and information centres should plan their buildings at convenient locations.

PRICE: COSTING FOR SERVICES

Price is a vital component in marketing-mix, but for many in library and information profession, it will be the most difficult to consider. Pricing of information services and products is relatively a new concept. Pricing system helps to avoid misuse and to keep attachment to the information supplied. However, libraries and information centres as the non-profit organizations pose difficulties in pricing of their services. Price is, therefore, rarely used as a promotional tool by librarians and information professionals. It does not necessarily imply a cash value. The price paid to libraries and information centres would be in terms of recognition achieved.

Strategic Marketing Plan for Enhancement of Library and Information Services
PROMOTION: COMMUNICATION WITH COMMUNITY

For the promotional aspects, librarians and information professionals are very much confident, because they have been practising more and more in this area of marketing than any other. Promotional methods involve mechanisms by which the target groups are informed about the resources available as well as services and products offered by the library and information centres. Non-users are considered an important sector, as they constitute major part of the community, and they are expected users. The most relevant promotional methods for librarians and information managers are different types of public relations and library extension services.

PERSONNEL: CONDUCTING EMPLOYEES

Personnel in the marketing-mix a component refers to all staff, who organize, administer and cater library and information services. It is difficult to achieve satisfactory dealings and exchange of views on information requirements without suitable staff.

- Staff should be informative, courteous, friendly, respectful and helpful at all times;
- There should be a regular programme of staff training to promote services;
- Technical jargons should be avoided in all forms of communication, verbal and written;
- Staff must act as information navigators to help users of all categories to make the most effective use of Information Communications Technology (ICT).

POSITION: COMPLETE ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITION

Position is the complete environmental situation in which library and information materials are kept, employees work, users come and services are delivered. Positional aspects for libraries embrace both internal and external environment. A user may have been overwhelmed when he comes to a library. Consideration of environmental aspects of a library and information centre should have started since the building planning. Environmental dimensions influence the beliefs and emotions, and finally the users respond towards the library and information facility.

PROCESS: COURSE OF ACTION

Process is group of activities by which the library and information products and services are delivered. This aspect is already contained in every component idea. This end component idea of marketing-mix is on verification of all the previous component ideas. The philosophy behind is that if all activities are set right and followed correctly, the output of services will automatically be within acceptable limits.

Marketing-mix strategies are closely interconnected. The strategies are outcome of long term goals and plans of an organization. They are significant and substantial part of marketing policy that supports the mission and corporate image of the library and information service. The marketing policy must have appropriate resources to underpin it.

RELEVANCE OF MARKETING FROM CURRENT PERSPECTIVES

A successful library and information centre is a dynamic organization functioning to provide wide range of library and information services to meet the varied and changing needs of its users. To be effective it requires experienced, flexible and well trained knowledge
managers and supporting staff able to use wide range of management techniques. Reading habit of common people is gradually diminishing. Along with this, there has been a constant transformation of library materials and books are no longer the only library materials. Some other media like audio, television, video, Internet, electronic publication, mobile technology, etc. as educational, informational, cultural and recreational intermediaries are day by day becoming virulent and threatening the existence of books and printed materials, and thereafter use of libraries. People are in a confused state. All these aspects influence librarians and information managers to possess marketing techniques to maximize the use of library and information resources and services.

CONCLUSION

Marketing of library and information services and products is relatively a new concept. It is finding its way in all kinds of libraries. Marketing is human activity that is directed at satisfying needs through an exchange process. For non-profit sectors, the exchange may not be a cash value, rather the exchange of belief. Marketing is not always a tool to achieve economic result, but to achieve total information result. Librarians and Information Managers can use marketing techniques to enable them to understand the needs of their users and to plan libraries and information centres effectively to meet those needs. In essence, marketing provides conceptual and analytical tools to plan and manage information organizations for achieving desired service. Libraries and information centres should promote their services to the public to ensure that they are kept informed of the services provided to meet their library and information requirements. The five laws of library science always inculcate the customer perspective. Now, a step out is needed for the librarians and information managers to use marketing techniques effectively so as to meet the challenges facing them.

REFERENCES