

## **EFFECTIVE MARKETING TOOLS FOR ACADEMIC LIBRARY SERVICES AND PRODUCTS**

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### **Abstract:**

Today business depends on marketing; therefore marketing of any product is seen from the point of view of its final result that is from customer's point of view. Thus marketing means working with market to actualize potential exchanges for the purpose of satisfying human needs and wants. Information is the power and libraries and information centers are the reservoir of this information. Libraries are also profit making industries and information is their key product. Libraries experience a period of radical changes in all the activities, particularly while providing information services to their users. Today, library and information professionals must assume a proactive role to cope with increasing competition.

**Keywords:** Library Services, Library Products, Marketing Tools.

## **Introduction:**

A customer in commercial arena gets satisfaction when the desired items are available for the improvement of their lives. The users are also visit libraries with similar expectation. And this satisfaction is the goal of any library system. The behavioral pattern off the information users in the open market of information is always same as that of a customer of a commercial good, so libraries must think about marketing of their services and resources to achieve goals. The library marketing concept requires that user's satisfaction. Marketing concept itself is changing and has different meaning for different people. Through library marketing librarians should be improving libraries image among the users.

## **What is Marketing?**

According to the Marketing Guru Philip Kotler "Marketing is the analysis, planning, implantation and control of carefully formulated programmers, designed to bring about voluntary exchanges of values with targets, markets for the purpose of achieving organizational objective".

Marketing, bring in an element of competition, which will result in providing better services. It's a process that can help Librarians in achieving self sufficiency in their resources and provide an optimum level of services to reach more potential users and to encourage the use of library resources. This naturally requires a self formed product or services orientation to customer.

Various types of tools for collecting and analyzing useful data about information need of the customer, which assists in designing, developing and delivering appropriate services.

### **Objectives of an Academic Library:**

- To satisfy the information needs of the users.
- Fosters knowledgeable, service-oriented and user focused staff.
- Strengthens the role of library faculty.
- To develop opportunities for maximize effective communication using ICT.
- To publicize the library facilities and library services.
- To develop different Tools and Methods to maximize the use of library by the users.

### **Academic Library Collection or Information Products:**

Academic Library Collection is the major component that we have to publicize using different Library marketing tools. Following are type of collection that every library possesses and that can be marketable.

- Text Books
- Reference Books
- Rare Books
- Research Reports
- Journals / Periodicals/Magazines
- CDs/DVDs
- Newspaper

### **Academic Library User:**

- Students
- Staff
- Research Scholar
- Administrative staff

### **Academic Library Services That Can Be Marketed:**

- Current Awareness Service (CAS)
- Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI)
- Online Document Delivery
- Translation Service
- Indexing and Abstracting Service
- Inter- Library Loan
- Reprographic Service
- Reference Service
- Alert of New Arrivals etc...

### **Library Marketing Tools:**

Information products are the marketable commodity and librarians are today aware of the advantages of marketing of services and resources. Library marketing tools will help to increase the utilization of the library resources.

Following are the ideal marketing tools applicable for academic library for marketing their resources, products and services which are as follows:

- 1) Brochures
- 2) Library Best User Recognition
- 3) Email
- 4) Website
- 5) Display of New Arrivals
- 6) Book Exhibition
- 7) Online Bulletin Board
- 8) Social Networking Site
- 9) Library Virtual Tour
- 10) Annual Report

- 11) Celebration of Events
- 12) OPAC
- 13) Library Orientation Program
- 14) Information Literacy Program
- 15) Library Bulletin
- 16) Library Education Program

*1. Brochures:*

Brochure is the effective marketing tool to market the academic library resources and services. This tool is useful for all kind of libraries. It contains highlights of the library including collection, services, functions, vision, mission, present status of the library etc. Academic library can accommodate brochure in to admission prospect. Thus the prospect provides information related to admission process as well as library details. On the basis of the brochure, user will get the whole idea about the library. Through brochures library advertises its services and resources, leaflets can be circulated on 'Guide to the library and its specialized collection' etc.

*2. Library Best User Recognition:*

Academic libraries can start Best User Award to increase the reading habit of the user. The winner will gifted new book which will be purchased from fine collection on overdue document. Every year library may announce three best users of the library based on their library resource utilization. So it will help to create interest among other users to become best user of the library. In this way this tool will help to fulfill Dr. Ranganathan's law 'Books are for use'.

3. *E-mail:*

E-mail is another marketing tool, through this tool library provides updation, new arrivals, reminder, alert, invitation regarding library information services and functions. This is a cheap and easy marketing tool for the entire academic library. It is the direct access point to the librarian and most of the libraries are using it priority basis for handling the quires of the users.

4. *Website:*

Library website is the picture of the library. It shows all updated information about library organized in proper manner. It is primary tool of marketing the library resources and services. Library website contains information like about us, collection, services, timing, rules, contacts us and services. It is quite expensive tool for creating library website but nowadays lot of web sites provides free space on internet to create website.

5. *Display of New Arrivals:*

Academic library procures library resources on regular basis like books, journals, magazines, CDs/DVDs, reference books etc. Library can display the cover pages of the new resources on the notice board or display board. It helps user to know the additions of the library.

6. *Social Networking and Its value*

In the knowledge society in addition to technical skills and access to information technologies, it is becoming increasingly important for people to have diversified and supportive social connections. Social Networking – It is the way the 21st century communicates

now. The term social networking refers to a process of relationship building among a group of people who have a common interest. It allows users to share ideas, activities, events and interests within the individual networks.

7. *Online Bulletin Board:*

This tool contains the current events, activities, function occurring in the library. It is helpful tool for academic library to keep up-to-date their user about the library progress. .

8. *Book Exhibition:*

Academic libraries can organize book exhibitions to increase reading habit among the user. Through the book exhibition, user can get to browse variety of resource which they may know. It is also useful for the purpose of collection development because from book exhibition user may suggest certain books for the library or they may purchase book with good discount.

9. *Library Virtual Tour:*

Mostly users are not aware about the functions, services, processes and rules of the library. They may get trouble while accessing the library, so this tool is useful to visualize the functioning of the library. It is the combination of the multimedia such as audio, video, sound, images etc and easy to deliver the information about the library. Generally it keeps on library portal or website for user awareness or literacy.

#### *10. Annual Report:*

This is also one of the effective marketing tools for academic library. Annual report contains previous year's progress, total resources, last year's activity accomplishments and future year's activities etc. This report helps user to understand the libraries progress report and status of the library.

#### *11. Library Celebration:*

There are certain events which library can celebrate, this event includes Library Day, Book Exhibition, Women's Day, Science Day, etc. On the occasion of such kind of celebration library can organize quiz and competitions, exhibitions, Guest lecturer and Discussion forum.

#### *12. OPAC:*

Library can start the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) service so user can browse the library resources through their respective desktop. OPAC will provide all the content of the library in searchable format This tool helps user to know the library resources. If possible library can start the Web OPAC facility to search the collection through internet without visiting the library.

#### *13. Library Orientation Program:*

Library orientation program is induction kind of activity to provide the information about the library, its function, services, sections, workflow, rules, regulation, and processes of the library. This orientation program can be useful for new comer of the library for the better understanding of the library.

#### *14. Information Literacy Program:*

Information Literacy program is designed to map the awareness of the user towards the library. It is the ability to know when there is a need for information, to be able to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively use that information for the issue or problem at hand. Academic library should design certain information literacy module to explore the library system such as Web OPAC, Online Database Search, library catalogue, library website, etc.

#### *15. Library Bulletin:*

Library bulletin is updating of the library. It highlights the activities organized by the library. It is the easiest tool of user to know the progress of the library or new activities of the library. This helps to increase the utilization of the resources. This news bulletin can deliver through website, portal, online bulletin board service, blogs or library newsletter.

#### *16. User Education Program:*

Library user is one of the key components of library; hence library user surveyor user study is essential. On the basis of user education, library knows the user expectations, needs and requirements.

### **Advantages of Marketing of Library Services:**

- It helps in managing libraries better.
- It helps to improve the image of library in minds of users.
- It helps to improve quality and effectiveness of services
- It helps to improve efficiency of library staff.
- It brings commitment to customer focus

- It helps in improving user satisfaction.
- Marketing of information products and services can help the users to get the information they want easily from the huge amount of information available.

#### **Disadvantages or Hurdles of Marketing of Library Services:**

- Ignorance about marketing concepts.
- Lack of proper education and training of library staff
- Negative attitude of users
- Lack of proper market research

#### **Conclusion:**

Marketing is essential in making the proper planning, designing and use of such services and products for the better and optimal use of information. The library should give priority to provide excellent customer service enhancing its image as *information provider* in the information era.

The library and information services should be user-oriented especially when we are designing them to satisfy the information needs of users.

Library acquisition, organization and dissemination must be based on the modern concept of marketing to achieve reader satisfaction.

It must endeavor to nurture culture of customer service to enhance its image in the eyes of the users.

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