Promotional Techniques Used as Marketing Strategies for Library Resources and Services

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ABSTRACT

This paper is based on the strategies for marketing the library resources and services. Marketing of library information resources and services is creating an enabling environment, arranging the prints and non – prints materials available in the library for easy accessibility and keeping the users abreast of the availability of the resources. The promotional techniques used in marketing of library resources are libraries' produced materials like: (brochures, flyers, library e-mail library websites, reading lists, bibliographies, Newsletters, posters and others);special programmes and events like:(library orientation, workshops and seminars)and social media like Face book, YouTube, Blog and others. Marketing of library resources and services increases users' patronage, justifies the funds expended on the library and enables it to compete with other information stakeholders.

Keywords: *Marketing, strategies, promotional techniques, library display, library orientation.*

INTRODUCTION

Library is a store house of knowledge where books and non-book materials are systematically arranged for users' information needs. The users need to be aware of the available resources in the library before they can come into the library to utilized the resources. A study by Osinulu and Daramola (2017) indicated that the Nigerian public university libraries, through the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) have yearly access to a huge amount of money for procuring both print, non-print and electronic resources, including hardware and software applications for library development. The authors acknowledge that TET Funds disbursement have greatly enriched and improved collection development. With an abundance of print and electronic resources, academic libraries are now facing the challenge of having how best to market these information resources, services and products to potential users. Marketing covers those activities that connect the organization to those parts of its outside world that use, buy, sell or influence the output it produces, the benefits and services it offers (Vij, 2012).

Marketing of information in the library is creating awareness of the available resources in the library. Kotler and Armstrong, (2012:5) give a broad definition of marketing as "the process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships in order to capture value from customers in return". Marketing of library resources and services is creating the right products inform of books and non-books material and letting the right people (the patrons) know you have them and creating conducive environments for utilizing the resources. Jestin and Parameswari, (2005) describe marketing as being able to study the needs of a particular group of people and in turn designing the right products and services that will best serve their needs. The librarians need to market their goods which are books and non-book materials. In the library setting, Sharma and Bhardwaj, (2009) refer to marketing as instruments through which both raw and processed information are transmitted to its members. Rowley, (2003: 5) describes marketing of information as "the marketing of information-based products and services". These products include books, journals, CDs, databases, electronic journals, newspapers and etcetera. The products and services can be marketed in order to satisfy the needs of library users.

Marketing is an integral part of the library service, because it has to do with basic principles of librarianship, that is, to develop good collection and user-oriented service (Madhusudhan, 2008). He further stated that libraries and other non-

profit organizations have only recently become aware of the need to market their products and services. Library and information products and services are now being recognized as commodities that can be sold, exchanged, lent and transmitted. Therefore, Nigerian libraries need to learn why and how to market their information resources and services to users which is the focus of this paper.

FUNCTIONS OF MARKETING AND PROMOTION OF LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Marketing and promotion of library resources and services serve various functions

It Increases Users' Patronage

Essentially promotion is the means of informing your users what you do and what you can do. The success and survival of libraries is dependent on getting the users to use the library resources and services. A library without users is useless, to succeed there is need to make the users aware of the existence of the library and its services and this can be achieved through marketing. The librarian may wonder why no one is coming into the library to use the resources; journal or collection of books and electronic databases, if they do not know, how would they come? Lawal and Amusa (2005), opined that Librarians must see themselves as salesmen who must dispose of their goods and services to those who need to be told and convinced of the need of such goods and services. They further stressed that what is needed to accomplish this is a dynamic outreach to enable clients exploit full resources of the library. Gupta, (2003) stressed this opinion. Librarians need to market their information products and services; proactive information dissemination needs to be carried out by Librarians. Proactive information dissemination involves making available specific information contained in books, to users that need or that may need them. They also emphasized that there are certain potent approaches to effective information dissemination and marketing of library information products and services that Librarians can employ in their dealing with the public.

Anafo, (2014) reported that special libraries in Ghana are facing challenges of making their services felt within their parent's organization. Marketing strategies is therefore, one of the ways to make these libraries' services known to their parents' organizations. Marketing the library service is not about selling services only; it is about spreading the knowledge about the existence of the library and its resources using different tools. It

is about keeping the clients in touch and informed about resources and services that match their interests. The success of library depends on marketing, mainly on convincing the clients that the tools or databases are worthwhile, they are made to understand what the services are and being enthusiastic about the resources. Therefore, marketing of library materials increases the users' patronage of the libraries.

It Enables the Libraries to Survive In this Era of Information Explosion and Digital Age

For libraries to survive in the present world of information explosion and internet age, they need to market their goods and services. Jose and Bhat, (2007) pointed out that we live in an era of competition and library's competitors include internet, television, FM radios, exhibitions and fairs, leisure services, holiday services, computer games, family retreats etc. Adekunmisi, (2013) also enumerated information explosion, technology revolution, escalating library costs and increasing competition by information providers and web-based commercial services provider as factors responsible for encouraging the library profession-als to develop a marketing strategy to its operations and services. The library according to Okon and Umoh (2014) is generally regarded as an informat-ion market to its users or clientele, the buyer or consumers. However, the library's monopoly of the information market according to Martey, (2000)has been broken and it has to compete to survive and stay in circulation. Therefore, to stay in circulation the librarian need to market it resources and services in order to remain relevant in the world of information explosion where libraries have various other information stakeholders to compete with.

It Increases the Value of the Library which Justifies the Funding

The library is not a profit-making organization and so it's worth and survival cannot be determined by profit. Continued financial support for the operation of the library depend on the demonstrated use of the services it provides. A service that is not used does not need financial support. Libraries therefore have the responsibility of encouraging the use of the services they provide. For libraries and information services to stay viable in the current climate, it is important they adopt marketing strategies to help meet organizational mission, goals and objectives. Marketing has long been associated with the selling of a product in order to make a profit, but was extended to the non-profit sector including libraries in the 1960s Enache, (2008: 477).

Unlike traditional marketing that is organization focused and for a specific product, libraries and information agencies are client focused organizations focusing on clients and meeting their needs, and need to adopt services marketing Welch, (2006: 14). Services are the intangible products that libraries now have to promote in order to compete with external competitors. Libraries face numerous challenges such as restricted funding and increasing user expectations, as they identify, develop, deliver and monitor service offerings that are superior to their competitors. However, these challenges offer opportunities to provide better services for users by redefining customer relationships through the use of marketing strategies to build and strengthen ongoing relationships with customers Rowley, (2003: 14). Effective marketing provides the means by which users are made aware of the services of the library and their value. Heavy patronage determines the worth of the library and justified the value of the funding of the library. Effective marketing is only one of the factors that determines library use. Adekunmisi, (2013) asserts that libraries depend on the supports of people they serve for their survival. A library should therefore, communicates, work with its customers and funding authorities to provide information about what the library is doing and to enable the library to learn about the community its serve. Marketing of library resources and services enables the library managers to justify the funds expended on the library.

TYPES OF LIBRARY USERS

There are different types of library users, and they seek information according to their needs. They include students and faculty member in case of academic libraries. Dr. S. R. Ranganathan has grouped user community on the basis of various types of services enunciated by him. They are, the freshman, ordinary inquirer and specialist inquirer (one who is a specialist inquirer and general reader). Here the freshman is the new member of the library, ordinary inquirer, is ordinary reader and specialist inquirer is one who specializes in narrow field where the general readers are the associated groups. In order to satisfy these groups, Ranganathan has suggested 4 types of services such as initiation or orientation, ready reference service, long range reference and general help to general readers respectively. Kuma and Phil, (2009).There are certain people who because of their style or other environmental problems could not become members of libraries in their vicinity and make use of the library resources. It is the duty of a librarian especially in public

libraries to convert non-users or 'on lookers' into potential and habitual users of such libraries.

TECHNIQUES FOR THE PROMOTION OF LIBRARY SERVICES AND RESOURCES

One of the key marketing mix strategies is effective promotion. Promotion in a library setting, can be referred to as the method used to provide information to users about the library services and resources, ensuring that users are aware of the services and resources available. According to Yi, (2016) citing (de Saez, 2002; Lancaster and Reynolds, 1995; Welch, 2006). The marketing mix refers to a set of variables that can be used by a library to promote its services and resources to users. The marketing mix is traditionally referred to as the 4Ps: price, product, promotion and place; however, the fifth P, people, is now commonly included. Although the marketing mix was developed for imparting the advantages of a tangible product, with the focus on product marketing, the literature agrees on the importance of applying this focus to service promotion. As the need for promotion of services has grown and is now more widely recognized, the marketing mix has been refined and adapted to include services, not just products (Mollel, 2013).

Patil and Pradhan, (2013) reiterated that to attract more and more users to the library, Library staff need to extend promotion and cooperation to users and marketing their services. The basic purpose behind promotion is to educate the users how to use the library and its resources and also to upkeep their knowledge by providing information appended in various sources available in the library. Like Companies promotion and marketing concept, library promotion and marketing services are different. The primary purpose of marketing of company products is to increase sales and ultimately to gain the more profit from it. The libraries are non-profit organizations; It is a social organization and service centre and their aim is to increase users' information needs satisfactions.

There are a number of ways by which librarian can attract users into libraries by means of extension activities or other publicity methods. All of these can be done through promotional techniques like: libraries' produces materials (brochures, flyers, library e-mails, library websites, reading lists, bibliographies, Newsletters, posters), Events (users' education, library orientation, workshops, seminars,), Library display, exhibitions, social media and others.

Libraries' Produced Materials Techniques

Libraries produced some materials as techniques for promoting their resources and services. They are brochures, flyers, library e-mail, library websites, reading lists, bibliographies, Newsletters, posters, etc. A good website helps to bring services and resources together in a unique way, because it is a direct link between the library and its specific users (for example students and academics) and the services it is seeking to promote. It also provides a channel for communication with target clients. Some media can be cross functional; for example, traditional tools, such as flyers, brochures and posters, can be used to promote events and programmes, which are promotional tools in themselves. Newsletters can introduce new developments as well as highlight current services. Target audiences can be easily and effectively targeted through e-mail lists and the Internet. These services are cost effective, as they require little investment in resources and reach the intended client directly.

Special Programmes and Events Promotional Techniques

Libraries organize special programmes and events like library orientation, workshops and seminars to educate their users about the activities of the library. As far as library activities are concerns, the users are illiterates. Tremendous increase in the volume of publication as resulted in the complexity of libraries and the methods by which literature is organized and disseminated necessitate the users' education. Users need assistance and guidance (Instructions, Initiation and education) to know how to use what and what type of services rendered by the library. Broadly it means to bring the awareness about or to guide the users, about library facilities, collection, services, introduction to the library technique and information sources; library rules, library procedures, library timing; senior library staff or teachers of library science and other relevant information about the library that will make utilization easy for the users.

Library Display and Exhibition as Promotional Techniques

Library display is the technique of collecting and arranging the information resources like books, serial articles, theses, photographs, diagrams others on a central theme in a prominent place for a short time in order to attract the attention and arouse the interest of users in the topic presented. Displaying or exhibition means that the library is demonstrating or showcasing what it has to offer to the various interest groups: businessmen,

academic, artists so on. Library display helps to draw attention to the items or program the library is promoting. Library display and exhibition helps to create signs for the library programmes at a particular time or points library patrons to correct area of the library. It helps to draw the attention of users to new books, special collections, under circulated titles and services that are offered within the library that are unnoticed.

Social Media as Promotional Technique

The 21st century has virtually turned everything virtual. The library and its users have gone virtual. To keep pace with evolving information technologies, librarians use a group of software applications including blogs, wikis and podcasting, media-sharing tools such as YouTube and Flickr, and social networking services such as Twitter and Facebook (Hinchliffe and Leon, 2011; Moulaison and Corrado, 2011; Yi, 2014) to market their services and resources with mixed success. Blogs and wikis, as well as social networking and information sharing sites such as Facebook, Flickr and YouTube, create new types of content. Information professionals use tools such as RSS (Really Simple Syndication), tagging and bookmarking as a means of promotion. YouTube is a video sharing site which allows people around the world to communicate and interact, making it a distribution point for user-created content (YouTube, 2015).The high percentages for the social media techniques used indicate that the era when libraries were considered to be only a depository of information has passed and current libraries as interactive hubs where users gather to seek and share information and find entertainment have come into being. Social media (including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube) as the tools, platforms and applications that enable customers to connect, communicate and collaborate with others online are now often used by libraries in their promotion campaigns because social media can support user-generated content that can be distributed among the participants to view, share, and improve. As found by Polger and Okamoto (2013: 250), 'a large percentage of libraries (70%) are using social media to reach library users and non-users'.

CONCLUSION/ RECOMMENDATION

Marketing of library resources and services helps the librarians to create awareness of the available resources in the library. The promotional tools like printing of brochures, flyers, newsletters, development of library website, library display and exhibitions, application of social media and use of internet will incurred additional funding. Therefore,

library managers should provide more funds for marketing of the library. Moreover, librarian should always be willing to market their resources and services to users not just to stocked the library. Furthermore, librarian should improve on their online marketing skills so that they can be marketing their resources and services to larger users beyond their local libraries.

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