

Marketing and Evaluation in Libraries. Reference Services. The New Information and Communication Technologies

Library Marketing in the World

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Abstract

The article is a sequel to the previous one published in the previous issue of the Librarianship and Information Science magazine. A presentation of several experiences concerning the implementation of library marketing in Europe being already made, in what follows we will deal with other situations from different countries of the world. All these examples can be useful to the infodocumentary structures in Romania which marketing is a new domain, still discreet.

Keywords: marketing, library marketing, promotion

In this world of globalization and independence, man, community or society cannot live alone, isolated. They have to put their efforts and points of view together in order to accomplish their mutual goals for the benefit of the benefit of the whole community. Libraries can represent interfaces not only among customers but also among scientists in view to spread their ideas.

The Library services marketing develop on an international plan, in all categories of libraries, and the specialists involved in their domain share their experiences in order to determine the development of these structures and also of the whole society.

In **China**, marketing has made its presence felt in the Commercial organizations. At the beginning of the 90's Philip Ketter's book "Marketing management" was translated in Chinese.

Initially, the interest for their domain was no so great, only a few thousand volumes being sold. The moment new editions of the book appeared people's interest in buying the book increased unexpectedly. Unfortunately in China, the concept of "non-profit organization" has not been officially defined. There are similar OUP structures, called "Shiye Danwei", state financed to fulfill same tasks required by the society. Libraries also belong to this type of organizations. In the context of a country which undergoes a changing process from a planned economy to a market economy, trade organizations are merely experimenting reform. Most libraries still forms in finding a way to survive. They take marketing superficially, and their practices are partial, sporadically and isolated.

Between 1980-1999 there have been written 15 articles referring to library marketing. Thus, theoretically speaking, marketing has been mentioned, discussed and studied for over 20 years. But the analysis of the content of these documents show the little program that has been made in the practice of the marketing library.

In 2003, the number of documents published that year outnumbers the total of those appeared between 1980-1999. This growth shows the fact that library needs marketing. There are 2000 libraries in China, from among which 600 did not have enough budget to acquire books, in 2001. The weakest point of the public library lies in the lack of strategy of the marketing management. Marketing should have been part of a strategy and not merely for used on information services which bring profit (providing documents or other payable services). Furthermore, marketing concepts do not systematically apply to the whole library process. That is why there is no basis of the modern marketing theory.

If rich libraries are not interested in marketing in order to enhance finances, poor ones do not have enough means to offer their customers good quality services, and they find it difficult or even impossible to guarantee marketing requirements. The more reform will affect non-profit organizations, and more pressure will on competing libraries in order to get public funds, the most marketing will develop and be assimilated in these structures.

In **Africa**, library services marketing is focused more on publicity because of the insufficient funds and the lack of specialists in documentary marketing. There are still many libraries in Africa which do not already have access to the internet. The developing process of libraries is an extension of the services introduced as part of the colonization process and as basic services after independence. The history of library development in most African Countries can be shared into three stages: the first stage (1960-1970) was characterized by a rapid development of libraries thanks to donations, the second stage was defined by an acute fall of investments (in 1980), and third stage (1990) was a recovery one, characterized by projects aimed at the information of technology, new management and planning approaches. In general libraries lacked dynamic and precise marketing strategies. Promotion of these structures was made through booklets, posters, publications or web sites, for those libraries which enjoyed appropriate facilities. Each publicity method is chosen according to the background in which it will be spreaded and also according to the information product to be promoted. For instance, in a more sophisticated background – web sites will be chosen as means of promoting services offered by the library.

Marketing was occasionally practiced unawaresly. This type of marketing is not formalized, activities being systemized depending very much on traditional instruments. There are no libraries specialized in marketing.

It is necessary libraries should orientate towards the needs of their users.

In **Kenya**, library and information marketing services is in an initial developing stage and prevails in the organizations run proficiently (this is practiced less in public or school libraries). Managers of libraries approach marketing as a means of marketing users know stored information materials and not offered services.

Different information and library services in Kenya have lots in common, being focused on marketing, awareness, strategies and limitations.

Most of the experts in information consider that marketing is similar to advertising. Specialized libraries surpass advertising level and implement with a limited capacity, other aspects of marketing such as: promotion, distribution and public relations.

There are different types of information services of different development stages. Except few universities and specialized libraries, which are being up-dated, others remain traditional.

Access to financial resources and viable policies are two fundamental aspects for the development of the information services.

Experts emphasize the fact that libraries in the developing countries do not develop their own concepts or documentary marketing prospects. They tend to adopt what has been achieved in this domain by the developed countries.

Library managers are aware of the need of using marketing in these institutions and gradually develop marketing concepts relevant for libraries.

There are several articles which debate upon this problem. Among the authors I can mention Tanui and Kavulya. Marketing as philosophy and concept must be understood properly but this will be done in time, we cannot compare the way in which is practiced in Kenya to the way in which is was practiced in the developed countries, because of the economic, social and political factors.

In **Pakistan**, the city of Lahore was the centre of librarianship under British leadership. James C.R. Ewing, vice-dean the Punjab University (UOP) played an important part, being the one who appointed Asa Don Dickinson (1876-1960), a former student of Melvil Dewey's, as university librarian, to reorganize UOP Library and teach modern library methods. Dickinson published in 1916 "Punjab Library Primer", considered the first professional book in this domain. He also funded Punjab Library Association (PLA) in 1915. PLA issued the first official periodical in 1930: "The Modern Librarian" and had an important role in founding the "Indian Library Association" in 1933.

In 1945 was issued the periodical "The Indian Librarian".

After 1949, libraries and the librarianship school were affected by the ethnic revolts and the migration of the population.

Pakistan has also two important libraries: The Public Library Punjab (founded in 1884) and the University of Library Punjab (founded in 1822 and opened in 1906). In order to be acknowledged by the local authorities, any state institution should have its own library and staff.

In their country academic libraries are more numerous, but the conditions of school libraries are alarming. Only few schools have small libraries (more often these being a single cupboard with books).

As I mentioned before, Asa Don Dickinson was the first one held specialized lectures.

Subsequently, the example of Punjab University was followed by Karachi University in 1950. Later on, other universities founded departments of librarianship because of the lack of a trained staff in this

domain. At present, six universities are oriented towards lectures in this domain (UOP, Karachi University, Sidh University, Baluchistan University, Islamia University in Bahawalpur and Peshawar University). In 2004, lectures extended including books on non-profit organizations marketing. In 200, the Department of Bibliology and Information Science in UOP introduced an optional lecture an information services marketing. Many students chose this course. In 2002, the course became compulsory.

Today, four universities hold marketing lectures in this domain. Despite these developing tendencies, there is a lack of communication between universities and different departments. Professors who teach documentary marketing use materials on the Internet. Students are encouraged to make a marketing plan, focusing on any library service or product.

In Pakistan the term “library” is used more frequently than “information centers”, because the inhabitants are more accustomed to this term.

Libraries remain with a traditional passive function. Only a few public libraries use the tactics of public relations.

Academic libraries in Australia have been considered essential in aiming educational and institutional support to continue their activities. In the past few years, products and services offered have changed considerably. Looking for new approaches, many libraries came to appreciate the benefit of applying marketing concepts.

Higher education in **Australia** is being under a growing pressure. All the Universities try to increase their income from non-governmental sources. They become more market-oriented and adopted varied strategies to increase their income in a competitive background. The managers of academic libraries in Australia meet several times a year and exchange information within a group called CAUL (Council of Australian University Librarians).

This group become important in sharing the strategies used. A subcommittee, known as CEIRC (CAUL Electronic Information Resources Committee) negotiated prices for different data bases and electronic service full-text.

In most academic Australian Libraries, external users can use library free, without special identification cards. Nevertheless they cannot borrow materials or use online services without authorization. All the products and services offered to the customers should be evaluated at times. Without an appropriate evaluation, librarians and library managers can have a wrong idea of what the customer want. Librarians gather lots of statistic data, these

being analyzed in order to understand the changing needs of the customers. CAUL had an important role in gathering the annual statistics. These can be seen on a web site: www.caul.edu.au/stats/.

A customer study is being done every two years, looking for information referring to the communication process developed by the library, staff, the service quality, facilities and equipment.

Many Academic libraries hire staff at each university. This uses an important marketing strategy.

The “linking” librarian interlocks the library with the university, school or research center, promoting new services and information sources offering the staff and students support in finding the information.

Approaches from the marketing point of view proved to be efficient in helping Australian academic libraries in adapting to the customer’s changes and in the future they will adjust services to the customer’s needs.

On an international plan, marketing expresses itself in different ways, more emphatically in some countries and less emphatically in others. We surprisingly discover marketing representations in unexpected places, in countries with reduced financial availability, oriented towards this domain and its users. Marketing is present even in places where its name is not even heard. Its application does not depend only on financial resources. In some countries, this domain was only used theoretically, in others marketing practices are still at the beginning. From this perspective libraries have a long way ahead. We can learn from this experience, from their failure and also from their success. The most efficient marketing for a library is presented by the pleased users. Infodocumentary marketing structures is a fundamental aspect followed by the modern society.

We left library marketing in the USA for the end, the USA being the country in which marketing appeared and developed. USA is also the country where people write extensively and also the country with the most important authors. Library marketing being in a direct relationship with the general marketing, it is obvious that there should be many examples and the results notable. Here are a few of such situations:

The Public Library in Detroit organized a Marketing Department whose main purpose is finding the users’ requests and needs and improving the relationship with them. As it follows from the library site the department is concerned with: promotion, especially publicity, on-line included, the organization of special events, the relationship with mass-media, the organization of exhibitions, renting halls for the meetings.

There is a marketing team made up of five members at US Environmental Protection Agency Region Library in Seattle.

Alison M. Keyes (2) shows that they have analyzed each marketing technique in comparison with its impact on the library's users, using instruments such as Internet announcement posters, presentations, counseling, a booklet and its electronic version to attract users to the institution services.

Keyes considers that marketing is essential for libraries and that is necessary that it should be planned and implemented and positive results will follow short after.

Rochester Public Library in New York (3) was reopened to the public in 1994 with an expanded and renovated building with the opportunity of extending their services. After this moment marketing started to take shape. There is here a team led by a public relations manager whose main task is to make a program to rise the public awareness in electronic information resources in the library. They have chosen a three stages strategy:

- Implementing a long term campaign of rising awareness of the role of library as a main information source for the community;
- Communicating the need of extending it and its benefits for certain groups (users, non-users, governors, potential donators) using booklets, press announcements, flyers, informal meetings, etc.
- Sending the library's message through the latest electronic technology in order to improve its image.

This strategy covered more annual policies. A good decision was also changing the name of the on-line system of the library into LIBRA, also suggesting a promotional game LIBRA Labyrinth in order to encourage the use of on-line services.

Their concerns of the BPR team were: improving the relationship with mass-media as well as finding other ways to send the library's messages to the customers.

Medical Library's in Dallas (Library of University of Texas Southwestern Medical Centre) (4) has also chosen a team to lead the marketing projects. In the last years its efforts have been concentrated in identifying the users and their information needs. The purpose of the project was to develop new services and products to answer the users needs, and the main purpose was its profile.

The team investigated the customers behaving habits using a variety of methods such as brainstorming, shaping the portrait of the medicine

student. In the last stage strategies for integrating new information have been identified. Then, the process was repeated for other kinds of users and the results were introduced on the Internet. In the main the user's profile contains: demographic elements, statistics of how to use the library, theoretical and practical research, marketing strategies.

The developing process of the profile stimulated self-evaluation, led to some coordinating plans of data collecting methods about users and also about ideas on how to use the library, encouraged the staff to get involved in the project. In the end they came out with the idea of making a data base with different information requirements and to apply them.

Library marketing remains a new domain with many unknown things, with a lot of self-pride, disputes and a lot of questions such as those of Hikka Orava (5) which are still waiting for an answer: "Do we consider this benefit from the users point of view, do we communicate in such way to answer their requirements? " Or are we too busy to run the library, the collections, the institution's values or do we try to approach marketing such as in the expert literature or because we assume that that's fairly or modern in this way"?

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