

Research Article

A Report on the Limits and Benefits of Marketing Library Products and Services

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A B S T R A C T

Libraries have had a good relationship with their readers for years. The new Internet environment and technological advances have prompted libraries to reconsider and adapt these innovations to run the system and services effectively and efficiently. Increasing resources and services is imperative and possible with effective marketing strategies. This article aims to highlight some traditional marketing techniques that libraries can repackage and promote for the efficient flow of information resources to achieve the institution's goals.

Keywords: Library Resources, Library Marketing, Mobile Services

Introduction

Change is essential to exist, survive, thrive, advance in any environment. Libraries are no exception to this phenomenon. Exploring, identifying, integrating changing technologies into library environments, identifying new sources, increasing resource costs, understanding new publishing models, increasingly sophisticated user requirements keep library professionals busy. Incorporating any of these elements into the technology requires a thorough understanding of the new system with analysis, its implications and how they are helpful and adequate to the user community. Every aspect requires attention to detail and an inquiring mind from conception to implementation. Once implemented, the next step is to promote and market the resources as products and services. In the case of libraries, the benefits are not tangible; in this case, it is difficult to convey and convince the management. To survive in institutions and stay afloat, libraries need to be proactive. Promoting, marketing, providing effective services to the user community are very important according to the changing environment.

The library serves as an information gateway, organising collected material into searchable possibilities that connect

the past and the future. It serves as the intellectual hub of any institution, reflecting new ideas and the activities that go on there. Library and librarian's roles are evolving tremendously in this digital era. The idea of libraries without walls is gaining traction and popularity among patrons. Libraries are expected to give online access to information 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in this information-centric user community since they are increasingly used in an online context.

Visits to libraries are made by people who want to use the internet and computers, access e-contents in a welcoming environment and meet up with other readers for book discussions. Since information can be found and accessed online from anywhere, physical collections are less common than in the 20th century. The primary responsibility of a librarian is to regularly inform library members about both the physical resources available to them and the usefulness of each resource. This can only be done by marketing to tell people about the library's amenities. The promotion of library materials and services should be prioritized. The possibility of improving library services and making the best use of its resources should be considered.

With technological advancements, libraries are dealing

with some changes and difficulties, including the need to support new and different content file formats, apps, new methods of accessing information with various search choices across numerous platforms. However, translating all this information and services into user-friendly formats is the primary concern.

Principle of Marketing

Marketing is frequently associated with profit, given that we are non-profit organisations, we prefer to refrain from it. Philip Kotler, the founder of marketing, emphasis marketing for non-profit organisations in the 1970s. He describes marketing as “the analysis, planning, implementation, management of well- formulated programmes meant to bring about voluntary exchanges of values with target audiences to accomplish corporate objectives. In order to inform, inspire, serve the markets, it strongly relies on creating the organization’s product, given the demands and needs of the target audience. It also significantly relies on employing effective pricing, communication, circulation.

Library Services: Importance of Marketing

Marketing is the continuing practice of connecting the library’s resources with potential users. Marketing require thorough research. Librarians must match what the library has to offer with what consumers expect. Building good connections within and outside the library may be a vital component of the advertising and marketing strategy.

Marketing is about relations and addressing the requirements of users. This entails recognising user requirements, conveying how libraries may assist clients in meeting those needs, offering services effectively. e-marketing is using information technology and developing concepts in a library environment to market optimal solutions that meet the demands of individuals and organisations. It refers to marketing concepts and approaches using electronic media, such as the web.

Because of this, librarians may assist their clients in accessing information using electronic media using various techniques, including email, Facebook, chat, websites, e-conferences, blogs etc. Most librarians believe that teachers and students do not entirely appreciate the scope of their collections and that the collections they have worked so hard to fund, acquire, arrange are not being utilised to their fullest potential. Libraries must have an online presence and use different marketing strategies to advertise their offerings and resources.

Change in user’s Behavior

Nowadays, information is virtual and accessible via the internet, clouds, archives, online databases etc. The power of internet has been experienced by youngsters, today, most academic scholars and library visitors believe that the best way to gain and share information is the internet.

Sharing helps transmit knowledge about the outcome. People share knowledge more frequently when working in a research group. When a user’s access is restricted, colleagues exchange Pdf files. Citation connections and information are shared in a variety of ways. Email is the preferred method. Internal networks are yet another option, followed by cloud services (like Dropbox). It has been noted that scientists tend to share the investigations and publications of others instead of their own.

Librarian’s Role in the Modern Environment

Every researcher’s or user group’s dream is to have the necessary data at their fingertips. So how do you, as a librarian, interact with this vital user community? Moreover, how can libraries guarantee that a particular research community makes the most use of the available facilities? A more general perspective is that if you create it, they will come. Going beyond the library’s boundaries is critical to evolve into a real collaborator in academics. Today, information is not just available in books and journals; it is also available online, librarians are the best at locating it.

Instead of complaining that the online age has unfairly devalued their abilities, conduct a study. Librarians can assist users in surfing more quickly and intelligently by detecting various resources and tactics. They are the instructors of digital literacy. Consequently, they may use Digital Literacy Programs to advertise library services.

Therefore, a librarian plays a crucial role, like E-resource Manager, in providing accessibility of necessary information to end users or capable of supplying the information in a fitted format. With increased demand on the research community to make research available, librarians are increasingly active. Librarians are ideally adapted to these new jobs because of their experience in curation, description, modification, preservation, giving access to diverse information forms.

Traditional Strategies for Promoting Library Activities

Exhibition of book covers purchased by the library, open access to the book collection, a showcase of a list of the latest entries, newspaper clippings, posters of licensed databases, appealing signs indicating the library circulation counter, reference area, web connection all were popular practises. Visitors were helped to learn about the strategic vision, library profiles, procurement policy for books, journals, various databases, membership advantages, guidelines for book loss, information about the staff members, a brief description of the library with the help of a manual.

Orientation for new students joining the library, an essay contest, a quiz were all conventional advertising events used by numerous libraries. All of this was clearly apparent

and felt observed by individuals who visited the library. However, today's subscriber is focused on his area of study. Because they are busy with their jobs, buyers seek a break from all these practices and want to access new tech-enabled services and resources on their handheld devices.

Use of Web and Social Media to Promote Library Services

The capacity to identify and interpret the nature and extent of information needs of various user communities is maintained by librarians. For example, students look for fundamentals and theories on topics related to their courses, researchers and scientists ask for scientific data and current developments in their research fields, managers and directors look for facts that help decision-making procedures in order to develop policies and expedite operations. Ability to contribute to creating a "My Account" on the websites of different publishers so they may receive tailored features like quick access to publications and free sample issues. Online application tools from several Social Media Sites help market library resources and services in many ways.

Modernized Homepage

A library portal that is consistently updated is very beneficial for promoting library activities. It functions as a doorway for knowledge, giving users access to web-based information, numerous databases and journals to which the library has subscribed. The users are helped by providing hyperlinks to databases apart from subscribed ones to get free information through the same website. A website which is optimised for mobile can make it easier for users to access the content on several gadgets

Facebook

Facebook can be utilized to advertise library services by forming an exclusive group of scholars and educators to advertise future events, new library additions, librarian posts. Facebook may be used to evaluate library services or to obtain feedback because it allows users to like, dislike, or criticize. Through Facebook, a brief video describing the amenities given by the library and a tour of the new databases may be posted.

Twitter

Twitter is another effective social tool for promoting library activities. It draws attention to the library. It allows users to find out about upcoming book exhibitions and the sale of books. This may be used to provide opinions on new databases, textbooks, periodicals purchased by the library. It allows for direct engagement with readers. It can also be used to notify individuals about library timings.

YouTube

For promotional purposes, libraries may set up their official

YouTube channel and post clips of fascinating happenings that have occurred there. Presentations and demos on purchased databases, guides on using sources, videos on book reviews to excite readers for reading. Viewers will be interested in a video-streaming virtual tour of the library, which draws more people to utilize the library services.

Blogs

Blogging is an excellent way to communicate with users that libraries may employ. A librarian can build a particular topic blog to provide more details about any institute's research initiatives. New findings and breakthroughs in the user's area of interest can also be conveyed via blogs.

Newsletters

Newsletters will assist in promoting new initiatives taken by libraries, as well as various global happenings like webinars, valuable news to readers, student achievement announcements.

E-mail Alerts

Besides newsletters, mail alerts can also be used to share information concerning publications of interest to readers, coming-up conferences all over the world, current open databases, paid databases, online resources arranged for trial by the library. Similar information can be displayed and mentioned on the library's main page.

Tutorials on Different Databases

The usage of resources will improve due to subscribed databases in the library, it will also enhance user awareness to access databases.

Remote Access Facility to Subscribed Sources.

Information is something that users require at all times. By offering apps for remote access to all library catalogues, users may get the information they need whenever they need it.

Assist in Scientific Endeavours

In order to assist scholars in developing their own identities in the field of academic communication, libraries may also help them by creating their ORCID profiles. The significance of resources and services may be highlighted by organizing training sessions on reference management products like EndNote, Zotero etc.

Challenges

Transformation is often associated with challenges. Library staff face several hurdles as their roles advance. Some of these include privacy, security, copyright problems, usage terms and conditions, as well as the presence of technical staff to resolve problems quickly. Most repositories in the current generation provide information access via numerous apps, some of which are developed and hosted on separate servers.

Furthermore, because e-journals subscriptions are desired, professionals encounter various challenges, such as digital archiving, expiration period, managing package price, consortium contracts and models, availability and intellectual rights issues.

Other issues are quick and easy access to subscription material, updating of electronic sources, renewing subscribed material licences, maintaining computers with backup. Handling the ratio between financial constraints and soaring product and resource pricing is a big challenge for library managers. Slow network speeds and recurrent communication failures with numerous local agencies lead to delays in scientific data distribution. In India, the majority of research is done in government establishments. Social media websites are restricted in most of these organisations due to security and administrative grounds. Promoting library services to individuals using existing tools and social platforms is a big problem in such scenarios.

Future Trends

With the advancement in technology, consumers may require various services like wireless printing via smartphones and Wi-Fi based connectivity. Students may also demand any institute thesis in audio/ video format to save reading time. Voice assistants of different search engines may notify subscribers of any relevant happenings. Libraries should encourage the adoption of mobile-friendly services, such as Wikipedia on gadgets. A webcam option may be offered to users to view the availability of computers, letting them choose the most convenient time to come to the library and save their time waiting.

Conclusion

Marketing is usually low on the priority agenda. However, in today's digital world, it has evolved into a prerequisite. The marketing strategy should evaluate where you are now in facilities, where you desire to go, how you plan to achieve that goal. There are several social media platforms available to the younger generation. Not every user will be familiar with every programme, nor will every application be utilised often. While integrating with the system, librarians must be careful and picky in selecting the best suitable apps based on previous encounters with the user group. In marketing and advertising library assets and offerings, librarians should be creative and take the initiative. Identifying and understanding our users is indeed the primary goal of marketing since doing so will help libraries better meet their requirements. Developing a marketing technique is crucial because it will assist us in better managing and utilising the available resources to contribute to achieving the organisation's objectives.

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