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Topic: Marketing Mix

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Marketing Mix:

1. INTRODUCTION:

Marketing assuming more significance in business and industrial organizations, it has become a function of management. It may, however, be pointed out that marketing is different from selling. One sells an automobile, but marketing is looking at transport needs and offering a vehicle that satisfies a transport need. One sells books and periodicals, and even information, but markets a solution to a problem. Marketing is, therefore, an aggregate of many activities such as promotion, advertising, etc. But promotional activities, as observed by Saracevic and Wood, do not constitute marketing, they are only one of them. Marketing means something different to everyone. But the central concept in marketing is in being customer- and not product-oriented. The focus of concept of marketing now is the customer, do identify customer, satisfy the customer, and keep the customer. So why, Michael Porter, a Harvard University professor, offers a simple, but quite comprehensive definition: "Marketing is anything you do to get or keep a customer".

the present emphasis on service suggests a proactive stance rather than a reactive one. The library services therefore must be promoted among their users not only to increase awareness as to what their library is offering but also to give quality services. This leads the librarian toward marketing the library services in support of the teaching and research objectives of the academic institutions.

2. Definition:

According to Philip Kotler: "the analysis, planning, implementation, and control of carefully formulated programmes designed to bring about voluntary exchange of values with target markets for the purpose of achieving organizational objectives...and using effective pricing, communication and distribution to inform, motivate and service the markets".

According to The American Marketing Association: "Marketing consists of individual and organizational activities that facilitate and expedite satisfying exchange relationships in a dynamic environment through the creation, servicing, distribution, promotion and pricing of goods, services and ideas"

3. Marketing Mix:

The concept of marketing mix can be defined as a process related to an exchange, and marketing management is the set of activities that facilitates this exchange. The marketing activities have been traditionally described as marketing mix which has been defined as a set of marketing tools an organization uses to pursue its marketing objectives.

Marketing mix is the key concept in the marketing task. It is the strategy used to perform marketing functions.

Marketing mix according to De Aze (1985) is the planned package of elements which will support the organization in reaching its target markets and specific objectives. Marketing mix helps to position the library or information service very firmly in the perceptions of their communities served – the wider community for the public library, academic community for the academic library or the clients and customers for the business or specialist information service.

4.4 P's Of Marketing Mix:

All marketing decision-making can be classified into four strategy elements, referred to as the marketing mix or the four P's: Product, Price, Place, and Promotion. As each library product or potential product is analyzed and developed for its target customer, it must be viewed with the four P's in mind. McCarthy's (1978) classic model of the four Ps – how the product or service is best presented, in attributes, price, availability and promotion, to the desired market segment – is a development of a theory put forward initially by Neil Borden (1965). Borden's mix is now more precisely found in market research and market strategy.



Figure 1: 4 Ps Model of Marketing Mix

1).Product:

"Products and services which provide benefits for users and which answer users' most important needs are the core business of the library and information service. These products appear as a response to user priorities in the form of commercial intelligence, educational, leisure, recreational or social information. All of the services offered by the library: lending services, inter library loan, on-line searching, house-bound readers services, picture loans etc. are library's products that can be marketed successfully. Product concept in the information sector is spread out over three levels; core level, tangible level, and augmented level. Library can provide bibliographic information, abstracts and summaries of information, which disseminate the core level information. Books, databases, journals, bulletins, etc.

2).Price:

Most of traditional librarians believed that the price for library services was irrelevant. Library services were considered free until recent and now librarians have understood the price potential of services provided by the library. "The fact that most library services are free obscures the importance of price in service planning". "Most traditional librarians believed that the price was irrelevant for library services. However, librarians recently came to know library's price potentials with the practice of charging fees for online searching, inter library loans, and photocopies.

3).Place:

Although the traditional distribution of products involved the process of production, selection of warehouses, and the transport of goods to the destination (final customer); recent trends practice the procuring of inputs, converting them into finished products, and the distribution of them to the end user. The traditional distribution channels of the library services represent two models. The first model One-on-one model involves the provision of information through face-to-face interaction of librarian and user/patron/client. Second model – 'the concept of the library as a physical place' implies that the library services are provided as the physical location site/building. Reference librarians answer user queries orally by the face-to-face contact over the telephone or by the mail in written format. Photocopies, Fax pages, computer diskettes, and audio/video cassettes are some other means of physical distribution. Online databases through computerized networks are important channels of dissemination. Internet is a popular example. Information agents, brokers, and online hosts are considered as intermediaries of the library market. Mass media like TV, radio, newspapers, are also means of indirect distribution.

4).Promotion:

Promotion mix involves the function that marketer communicates with customers in order to acknowledge the product. Marketer needs to plan strategies to attract the present and potential customers to the product. Product awareness with wholesalers, retailers, suppliers and others is made through various communication tools. "Library's market must be aware of the services available (and perhaps of what could be available) and should be persuaded to use them. This point may be contentious but it makes sense to fully exploit any service it has been instituted. The library as a medium for the communication of information is a failure if it cannot communicate its own potential value to its market". Market. The basic aim of library promotion is to select a technique that can encourage the recipient to respond either by buying or requesting further information, or by filling the promotional material away for the use in the future. A number of viable promotional techniques are found utilized either singly or in combination in the library.

a).Advertising:

The purpose of advertising in the library context is to develop the awareness of users, increase the use of services, and intensify the image of the library. Advertising programmes must be designed to achieve reader's attention, arouse interest for the product, lead the user to decide purchasing, and buy/use the product with a satisfaction. Library can advertise its products through displaying, ads on in-house newsletters, local press, billboards, posters, on-screen announcements, radio, cinema advertisements, Television commercials, and networks. In-house information services are commonly used through leaflets and brochures, which are aimed at a target user group.

b).Publicity:

Library in the aspect of Public Relations incorporates the interaction between the library and its customers. Public relations involve the interpersonal contact, which is to develop the communication of trust, mutual respect, perception, attitude and opinion to communicate the benefit of the library and its products. Media interviews, bookmarks, posters, and displays are also tools for the publicity. The library services themselves can make publicity. Staff performances, face- to- face contact with users, and the quality and the structure of the library building are important factors. Customer care is another tool for the promotion of the library. This implies the training of staff to take client's attention to the library. Library promotes its services through extension services such as library visits, ceremonies, seminars, book exhibitions, contests, rewarding functions, get-togethers, and sponsorship programmes. User education and current awareness services play the role of advertising and personal selling. Library can communicate through various modes of messaging – oral, written, electronic or implied. Library extension services are not purely related to the library's professional activities, but help users become loyal customers to the library. Displays of new arrivals, book reviews, and organizing of exhibitions, and book fairs are important. Library can conduct public lectures, speeches, discussions and seminars under various topics, which are believed interesting to users. In

public libraries Story hours can be conducted targeting children, blind or old aged persons and illiterate people. Library guide tours, visits, commemorations and seasonal celebrations are conducted to attract users.

Apart from the above-mentioned 4Ps among marketing mix elements there are other 3Ps namely 'Process mix', 'Physical evidence mix', and 'People mix' extended in the service marketing.

SUMMARY:

The marketing mixes aim at communicating effectively with the 'publics' of the library or information service and satisfying target user, client and customer needs. It is a significant and substantial part of marketing policy that supports the mission and corporate image of the library or information service. Marketing policy must have serious resources to underpin it. Its success could mean the difference between merely surviving and real growth and development, and this success is very largely based on understanding market need. But we should never forget that it is the user who drives marketing and shapes the service and we, the librarians must keep the needs and wants of users in the forefront when planning for services and programs, including Library 2.0 connecting information literacy, virtual learning and social technologies. So our approach should be customer focused.