



Importance of Library Marketing and Promotion of Academic Library Service: with Special Reference to Rajarata University Library System

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ABSTRACT

A library has many products and services that it can market. Each library needs to identify what it wishes to offer to the market. This study aims to identify the concept of library promotion and marketing of library services. Using an exploratory research method and a descriptive research method, this study explains practical solutions; ways and means of marketing the library services with special reference to Rajarata university library system in Sri Lanka. The main aim objective of the study is to introduce the current status of library promotion and marketing of library service. Promotion is another important phenomenon in marketing. Promotion of what is there in the library. Users may not be aware or familiar with the library system. Hence it is essential that every year new students are joined with the library and at the beginning of the academic year, library must provide awareness programmes. Currently the library is conducting various type of programme. The library needs public relation in its effort to achieve its aims. Library web site, conducting various types of user awareness programmes, information literacy programmes, library guides, library tours, user assistance have great potential for enhancing public relations in libraries. Based on those activities public relation will help the effective functioning of the library and promote the services of the library. With this information library can analyze what information and services would be most useful to deliver and how to deliver them most effectively.

KEYWORDS – *Information services, Library services, Marketing, Promotion, University libraries*

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Introduction

According to Garoufallou et al. (2013) marketing supports the reaching of organizational goals by focusing on the identification and satisfaction of customer needs, thus it can also contribute considerably in achieving the objectives of non-profit organizations such as libraries. The concept of marketing non-profit organizations was initially introduced by Kotler and Levy (1969). However, in the early days marketing was considered to form part of a managerial process outside the boundaries of library science and librarians were reluctant to use it (Lovelock and Weinberg, 1990; Cronin, 1992; Weingand, 1999; Gupta, 2003; Schwamm et al., 2009).

Libraries are considered as treasures of knowledge as well as storehouse of knowledge. It is true that all libraries in the world are full of reading material which are consisted of books, journals, films, images, manuscripts, Audio visual materials etc. which has knowledge, recorded by people, eminent writers and eminent personalities. Preservation of this knowledge is a prime task of all libraries and Information centers. However it is a must to market these resources which are possessed by the libraries. Now a days with the help of Information technology many libraries and information center have their own websites on which all kind of materials are accessible with its bibliographic details and mechanism to promotion and market the services (Patil, & Pradhan, 2014).

Library promotion and marketing services are different. The primary purpose of marketing of company products is to increase sales and ultimately to gain more profit from it. The libraries are non-profit organizations; it is a social organization and a service center. Library is organization where various management aspects are being used to provide better services.

Objectives

The main aim of this study is to investigate the nature and extend of library marketing and promotion activities in Rajarata University library system in Sri Lanka.

Best practices in Rajarata University library system

• User education programme

The library has been conducting user orientation programs annually for the new batches of students. The library possesses library resources, library memberships, library rules, library facilities, library visit, access to Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) and online resources are the subject areas discussed at the orientation programmes. Library visit is a good chances for those students to get familiarize themselves with the library environment, resources and contact staff. Tours should be done by a professional librarian.

• Information literacy programme

To increasing the information literacy among the students, the library organizes various programs such as internet access facilities, browsing internet, access to e-journals, databases, institutional repository, OPAC and accessing other libraries etc. The library has been arranging E-resources awareness and training programmes by inviting resource persons from expert in the field. For effective usage of resources for right information in right time, it is necessary to train all academic staff, students and administration staff. In this direction, the university library is conducting continuous training programmes about e-resources, digital repository and use of internet and other applications.

• Maintenance of the library space

Library has planned to establish study carols for researches. Also library area is clean and neat. The clean environment attracts users to come and study in a healthy environment.

• Create a welcoming environment

We give positive attitude and maintain favorable relationship with users. Librarian needs to develop the ability to create a welcoming environment, be patient, and build confidence with the users. When librarians are friendly and welcoming and helpful, users are encouraged into the library, whereas, in a library where the librarians are unfriendly and lazy, users are driven away. It is reported the personality of the librarian determines the rate of utilization of the library by its users. If she/ he is friendly and professional, the user will be convinced that there is an approachable and a reliable information expert in that library. If they are drawn to the library by the mien of the librarian, they will then be able to browse through the books and thus become aware of the availability of materials relevant to their studies and research, and the use of the collections increases (Ajileye-Laogun, 2004).

Discussion

Library marketing concept will help to establish the library's image and position within the academic community. Therefore, library marketing as well as public relation should be regarded as a prerequisite for the effective functioning of the library, which will help to promote the services of the library.

Main Conclusion

As librarians we should be actively engaged with marketing and promoting of the library services. The fundamental aim of marketing is to know and recognize the users in order that the library is able to satisfy those needs in an effective way. The final aim of the marketing of library and information services should be the dissemination of the correct information to correct user at correct time.

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