

# **Role of Social Media in Marketing and Promoting Library and Information Services and Products**

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## **Introduction**

Library marketing and promotion always help libraries to reach to its end users. Libraries are always using various media like brochure, newsletters, broadcasting etc to promote its services and products. Due to Information and Communication Technology (ICT), libraries entire face change and also users demand change. Social media is widely used by community to interact, communicate, share and send information to each other. Social media is integral to market library resources and services. It offers more than just traditional ways of marketing and promoting of library services. It allows users to create, connect, converse, contribute, vote and share information. By using social media libraries can spread news about events of libraries and also alert users about publicized new acquired material by libraries. Different applications of social media are useful for libraries for obtaining their patrons feedback and to ensure the maximum engagement of their users in promotion of their product and services.

## **Marketing**

According to Wikipedia "Marketing is the process of communicating the value of a product or service to customers, for the purpose of selling that product or service". Similarly Stanton has opined, "Marketing is a total system of interacting business activities to plan, price, promote and distribute want satisfying products and services, and present to potential customers."



## Need of Marketing

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. Marketing may be instrumental in maximum utilization of information products for which information can- ters have been investing huge amount of money, man power and time. Communication, visibility and customer orientation are key factors in successful marketing.

Madhu sudhan (2008) signifies the essentiality of marketing for libraries as to

- Create perception of need and thereby create demand
- Ensure the optimum use of information
- Improve the image and status of the libraries and library professionals
- Tackle the problems of rising costs of reading materials, journals, and databases
- Cope with the information explosion
- Introduce cutting-edge information technology systems in library services
- Balance shrinking funds
- Save libraries from devaluation
- Save libraries from declining reader-support
- Uphold the dictum that information is power

## The Four P<sup>s</sup> of Marketing

According Wood the four Ps of customer-cantered marketing are product, price, place and promotion. This is also called the marketing mix.

### Product:

The library's products include not only the books and materials that circulate but also information services, friendly professionals, comfort, and life-enhancing.

### Price:

The price is what it actually costs to bring the product or service to the customer. "There is simply no profit-oriented business that does not know



exactly what costs are involved in producing a product; such information is critical in order to establish a price tag for each item."

### Place:

Place concerns where the product is offered. For libraries, place is obviously a building, but it also includes other points of access to library services including a bookmobile, the library's website, and accessibility for handicap patrons.

### Promotion:

Promotion is the aspect of marketing which is most familiar to librarians. Promoting refers to getting the target audience to notice what the library has to offer them. Newspaper advertisements, flyers, mail-outs, and radio and TV commercials are part of promotion.

Traditional media for marketing and promoting of library and information services and products are

- 1) **Library Brochures:** It gives users outline about library, its services, products and rules of library.
- 2) **Newsletters:** Newsletters give specialized information to limited audiences on a regular basis with short articles written in an informal style.
- 3) **Posters:** Posters can often be first point of contact for a potential customer. They can be used for highlighting a particular services or event for a sustained campaign of information drip feeding. The idea is to broadcast a clear message to a group of people simple and cheaply.
- 4) **Advertising:** It is an important tool for promotion of library and information services and product. The purpose of advertisement is to persuade people to act, by contacting you to talk about how you can help them.
- 5) **LIS open sessions:** It is one effective way of raising the barrier between customer and service for special events out of our meetings, a chance to glass of wine. Customer meets to information staff to one to one basis and staff is able to concentrate their efforts on introducing explaining the services that are of particular relevance to the customer.
- 6) **Broadcasting:** It is good medium to use to get to a large audience at relatively little cost to LIS. Local Radio channel and TV can help in this matter.

### Social Media for promotion of library and information product and services:-

Social media is the interaction among people in which they create, share, or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks.



Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein defines social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content".

From the definition we can conclude that social media bring different community of people together in one centre place like libraries done and where they can share communicate with librarian hence we can say that In today's ICT era social media play an effective role for marketing and promoting library and information services.

Following are the some social networking sites which helps librarian to market and promote its product and services beyond the boundaries of libraries and hence it increases active participation and communication of library.

- 1) **Face-book:** It is very user friendly and interactive social networking site for connecting library services to the users. With the help of Face-book libraries can advertise their upcoming events and also share the information about new arrivals and editions of books. Better and faster distribution of library newsletter uploading brochures about academic activities such as schedules of conference, seminar can be done in no time on Face-book.
- 2) **Twitter:** It is kind of micro blogging application where short messages can be sent to destination. It helps to keep staff and user informed of the events and program of library, workshops, new arrivals and new services through short messages either through web or through SMS using a mobile phone with a limitation of 140 characters. It helps to provide online reference service. Twitter post can be linked to the home page of library blog posts, wiki, online archives for detailed information. It is highly effective for increasing library users.
- 3) **LinkedIn:** It enables patrons to connect with subject specialists in their particular field of interest. It helps to provide selective dissemination of information service to users. LinkedIn can be used by libraries to create professional connections and to market library services among other professionals working in different libraries of the world and can also solicit their idea and professional experiences.
- 4) **Ning:** Being an online platform Ning facilitates people to create custom social network where community web pages can be created and be connected through network. Communities on Ning can associate with online services like Face-book, twitter. People can create their own social network to build up discussion on a particular topic. Ning has a potential to converge their information professional together and thereby the marketing of information among the libraries would be



much effective than ever. It works like a bride connecting librarians with users and library associations.

- 5) **Flicker:** This application facilitates sharing images of library, cover page and content page images of new arrivals of books and journals can be diffused among the users community through Flickr. Academic events such as seminars, workshops and conferences through images may be shared to public for the awareness. Libraries can use Flickr to upload library images and the picture of different services offered.
- 6) **YouTube:** A popular audio visual application where videos can be uploaded, searched, accessed and downloaded throughout the world. Video clippings of documentary films of libraries and information centres give users a grid view of intact collection and environment of the library. The users can even comment on the video which may be considered for the feedback. Library products such as e-learning tutorials are promoted through virtual tour.
- 7) **SlideShare:** It is a platform for slide hosting service. It allows users upload files privately or publicly which can be viewed by users. SlideShare has been playing a vital role in the field of education and e-learning. Sharing ideas, conducting research, connecting with others have been much effective through SlideShare. Anyone can view presentation and documents on topics that interest them, download them and reuse or remix for their own purpose. Presenting prepared slide that contain information about library products and service will notify every user who visits and shares.
- 8) **Blog:** Here, librarians can periodically post messages; share information on a particular subject or issue, and allow users to contribute to content. They can write articles, news on topical issues and expect an instant reaction from their users.
- 9) **What's App:** What's App Messenger is a proprietary, cross-platform instant messaging subscription service for smart phones that uses the internet for communication. It is useful for libraries to market library reference / research services. It helps to keep staff and users informed about events, new arrival, and program of library, workshop and new services through short messages. It is also useful to send images, video and audio media messages of library program and activities using integrated mapping features.
- 10) **Google+:** Google+ is a social networking and identity service that is owned and operated by Google Inc. It helps libraries to post upcoming events, programs of library, new arrivals of books. By Creating Circles library can send specific information to that group. User can also give their comment on library program and services. By using Hangout feature library can do video conferencing call to user to give information about activities of library.



### **Importance of Social media in promoting of library and information services:-**

- Social media helps to expand your community: - Social Media helps to expand their community by the way of Face-Book, Twitter or etc. It plays an important role in marketing library services & Products. It connects users who are interested in the same field. Social media has an international reach. Librarian can use social network for sending messages about themselves can spread the message further. Power of social media in shredding information quickly & it is use by libraries by effectively for promoting & expanding the services & Community.
- It is helpful to engage library community: - Through the using of social media library promote new books, reviews, book awards list and current awareness services by posting it on various social media for information as well as selection for the usurers. An online question & Answer can be creating for the readers to recommends on things. This way we can engage our library patrons in their related information.
- It plays a vital role to encourage use of library resources and services: - In this technological age everyone wants to quick response or quick information retrieval tools. By the helping of social media libraries create questions & answer through what's App Group, sending a video clip on related topic on YouTube and many others. Libraries encourage its patrons or users to use library services & products those are provides by library through the social media & gets there need fulfil in quick & effectively.
- It enlarges learning opportunities among us: - We are all finding something new & better or latest information on related topic. With the help of social media library enlarge learning opportunity among users. Today we have smart electronic devices to find our need like I-Pad, Smart Phone, Tab etc. We don't go on the information canters or in the libraries just only use the services those gave library to us and get our information anywhere with the help of these social media.
- It eases the effective target marketing: - Services and Products of Library are easily spread by marketing on social media. It directly targeted to him needy & Hungary people of information. These People always search the sources where they get information.

### **Social Networking Librarians**

Libraries play important roles in providing information for research and access to knowledge. In order to stay relevant in the socially networked environment and meet the growing needs of their users, libraries therefore need to pro-actively embrace the new technologies and face the challenges for better services delivery. Librarians are responding to the popularity of social networking sites and their expanding role in the creation, use and sharing of



information by engaging them as a central medium for interacting with library patrons and providing services to meet their information needs. The ways in which people communicate, acquire and share knowledge, will inevitably have an impact on the library its services and its staff. Librarians should follow the public conversations, posts, updates and events of these key individuals, and pro-actively offer advice, resources and help. He should act as an active participant of the social space and be able to identify the needs of the members of the library communities and to proffer solutions by offering information, links to the websites that are relevant to their information needs; and even direct offers of help. There is an urgent need for libraries to adopt the new social networking tools in their services as a strategy to embrace change while promoting a participatory role for library users in knowledge creation. The growing use of social networking tools calls for librarians to develop 21st century skills on digital technologies. Libraries can connect their social networking sites with their library Websites to links to their catalogue, chat reference pages, research guides, calendar of events, news etc. Some of the roles of the social networking librarian include: understanding and articulating the nature of social networking sites, creating webpage and content, establishing friendly user interface over the network, creating online database management, evaluating and applying information and assisting users with skill acquisition. Other skills for a social networking literate librarian include searching and navigating the web, creating social network space, teaching, and providing quality online library services.

#### Challenges for Social Networking:-

- 1) **Lack of Awareness** – Most librarians in the developing countries are not aware of social networking services, even the few that are aware are still struggling to find out the productive uses of these sites for library services. Users are also not aware of the protocols involved in social communication. Many students and possibly even some of the academic staff may be unaware that there is a subject specialist in their discipline.
- 2) **Bandwidth problem** – Most institutions have limited bandwidth to support this practice. Poor connectivity can frustrate effective online participation.
- 3) **Technophobia** – Many librarians and users are afraid of handling computers. They make the traditional library services their comfort zone and are not eager to embrace change.
- 4) **Lack of maintenance culture** – Maintenance culture is seriously lacking in most institutions in developing countries. The few available technologies are in moribund conditions that may not support remote access to information.
- 5) **Unreliable power supply** – The low supply of electricity discourage people from participating in the online forum.



- 6) **Lack of training of staff** – Most librarians lack the 21st century skills that could be required to adopt the social networking tools for effective library services.
- 7) **Government intervention:** There is little or no intervention of the government in the area of ICT.
- 8) **Copyright Issue** – The free access to information where people copy, paste and edit without acknowledging the authority is a serious challenge to copyright management.

## Conclusion

Dynamics of LIS Marketing have significantly changed. Marketing is no longer confined to promotional effort but build on interaction with users, whether they are actual users or potential and are in library or outside. Social media is a vital tool for marketing and promoting of library services and products among new generation users and to creating user cantered libraries. Social media helps librarian to communicate with end users and provide all information about library services and products. Social media helps librarian to satisfy the changing demand of users and save the time of users by providing user friendly interface. Social media marketing helps librarian to improve library services and increase the performance of library and its services.

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