
MARKETING RESEARCH IN LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION CENTERS

Dr. Dhananjay Bhagawan Sutar

Deputy Librarian, Barr. Balasaheb Khardekar Library, Shivaji University, Kolhapur.

dbs.lib@unishivaji.ac.in

ABSTRACT:

The concept of marketing of information services and products is now widely accepted in the field of LIS. It has made a great impact on relationship of libraries, librarians and library users. The use of information sources, services and products has been accelerated through adoption of marketing strategies especially because of emergence of new technologies and availability of information in e-formats. The marketing activities in LIS are expanded because of use of e-databases, e-books, e-journals and e-resources. The libraries are acquiring the materials in e-format through purchases or on subscription basis and eminent publishers all over the world are involved in marketing of these e-products along with the printed material in a considerable manner through advertising and promotion. This environment is now suitable for carrying out marketing research in libraries and information centers.

Key words:

Marketing, marketing research, Five laws of library science, marketing research process.

1. Introduction:

Marketing is a process of making available the information services and products from the place of its publication to the place where it can best be used by the readers community. It includes all the steps from the production of information and its transmission to the users who can best make use of it.

Marketing research in libraries and information centres (LICS) is related to find out the problems in various library processes in delivering the information and to take the right decision to solve these problems.

1.1. Concept of Marketing:

Due to changing nature of various library products and services, the ways and means to transmit the information globally has been drastically changed. Due to emergence of new technologies, the scope of marketing of information by libraries has widened. Marketing of Information services and products has become a very crucial issue due to change in the reading culture, dwindling budgets of libraries, change in acquisition policy of libraries, availability of e-documents in changing ICT environment etc. which necessitates library professionals to implement the marketing of information services and products for the benefit of all.

1.2. Research:

Research is a systematized effort to gain new knowledge and through research 'organized knowledge' is developed by implementing scientific methods for testing of hypothesis. Through research, the scope of knowledge is widened and certain principles are formed which are used to improve the standard of the processes and methods.

1.3. Marketing Research:

Marketing research is a systematic search process which identifies the problems in marketing processes and to find solutions to the problems which rely on the information search and analysis.

It is scientific collection, recording and analysis of information that relate with problems associated with marketing of services and products.

Marketing research means to collect, process, analyze, store and disseminate the information which helps to take a right decision or to assist in a process for improvement of decision making.

In order to gain new knowledge about the marketing functions and problems through research, marketing research is a pre-requisite for use of resources.

According to Yadin Daniel (2006) marketing research is 'a set of instructions given to a research organization by a client, in the form of a project. This will be complete with objectives for the research specific individual requirements for the current project, and the use to which the findings will be put. Since virtually all marketing projects are time related a deadline for completion of the research is essential this is specific in brief.'

Marketing Research in Libraries and Information Centers

Baker, Michel J.(1984) has defined marketing research as:

‘A branch of social science research which uses specific methods to collect information about all those factors which impinge upon the marketing of goods and services, and so includes the measurements and analysis of market, the study of advertising effectiveness, distributive channels, competitive products and marketing polities and the whole field of consumer behavior.’

From the above definitions, it is crystal clear that marketing research is a branch of marketing intelligence which considers the problem related with marketing and brings out discussion which guides for taking proper and accurate decision. It focuses on evaluation of marketing problems. It is a process to acquire description information about marketing problems and find solution for the same.

2. Importance of Marketing Research in LICs :

- 2.1. Increased communication gap among readers and library staff is a factor mainly responsible for increasing importance to marketing research. In order to reduce and remove the communication gap among staff, students and society, marketing research is essential and useful. Through marketing research, the readers and the changes of their information needs can be known effectively.
- 2.2. Due to Changing nature of information, various storage devices, search strategies and ways of information retrieval, marketing research has become a necessity in Libraries and Information Centres (LICs). The results of marketing research can effectively contribute towards readers satisfaction, managing information sources & services for improving overall efficiency of libraries and to offer modern library services to clientele.
- 2.3. Without effective use of marketing research, libraries can't be reader's / User's oriented.
- 2.4. It makes available right path for providing reader's services as per their demand.
- 2.5. Management of changes through adaptation of library services, library structure, technology implementation, can effectively be guided by marketing research in LICs. Various opportunities and challenges created by external environment can effectively be managed by marketing research.
- 2.6. The problems like technology obsolescence that arise due to research and developments in ICT and its application in libraries can be effectively solved through

marketing research in LICs. ICT greatly affects the working of libraries. In order to bring about necessary changes and discover new facts, to consolidate and repackage the information in various ways, to promote library extension activities and for increased use of library resources, marketing research is of immense value.

2.7. In order to solve problems related with marketing of information services and products, marketing research helps in following way:

- a) Analysis of problems in marketing of Library services and products with reasons.
- b) Selection of right alternative to solve problems from among various alternatives.
- c) Maximum use of available resources and choice of right work flow.
- d) Study the right way of work in ever changing ICT environment.

3. Scope of marketing research in LICs :

Marketing research in LICs is related with:

- a. Information product planning and development.
- b. Information dissemination policy.
- c. Library orientation and extension activities.
- d. Marketing of information services and products and the policies and programmes related with it.
- e. Information seeking behaviour of users and their attitude.
- f. Digital Content of information and its access on payment basis.

4. Steps of Marketing Research in LICs :

For marketing research in LICs, it is essential to acquire and store information, organize it in systematic way to facilitate its analysis and to draw some inferences. Hence, marketing research in LICs consists of following steps:

4.1. Analysis of readers demands:

It is essential to understand the problems in marketing of information sources and services to reach it where it can best be used. The objectives of marketing of information sources and services can be achieved through getting the factual

information about various library products and services and the dissemination of information related with it. For this purpose, analysis of reader's demand for new information is essential. It helps to decide user's informational requirements, their reading habits and preferences as well as the services and products suitable to satisfy their information needs.

4.2. To determine marketing problems and objectives of marketing research:

In order to make the marketing of information services and products as an effective activity in librarianship, it is necessary to understand the problems in the process of marketing of information services and products. It enables the professionals to decide a marketing strategy suitable to solve these problems. This will have positive impact on creating need and awareness about library resources, library products and the promotional activities of the library.

4.3. Converting information into marketable commodity.

Various information sources available in LICs need to be converted into marketable commodity for target community. For this purpose, analysis, repackaging and consolidation of information into marketable product is to be exercised. The various ways for repackaging of information will help to convert the information into a marketable information commodity.

4.4. Deciding a target community which would need the commodity:

At this step, a target community which would need the information product and commodity is to be decided by creating awareness about the commodity to create the demand for that. It is to be assured with readers satisfaction, continuous supply of marketable commodity without break and delay, obtaining feedback from users about the commodity and further conducting ongoing research about changing information needs of the readers to improve the quality of information products and services.

4.5. To determine advanced sources of information and acquiring them:

Due to change in technology, the sources of information are also changing to advanced forms and formats. Accordingly, its balanced acquisition is essential. Many e-resources need to be subscribed by paying annual or one-time subscription or sometimes you have to pay according to 'pay-per-use'. It has made a great impact on marketing of information sources and services.

4.6 To analyze, consolidate and repackage the information:

The information is to be analysed, consolidated and repackaged to solve the problems caused by lack of appropriate information. Consolidated information can be directed towards increasing utilization of information for various users and since it involves information selection, evaluation and analysis, interpretation and synthesis of information so that it can be used effectively for marketing purpose. Repackaging of information is carried out to make the presentation of information in more understandable and usable form.

Through this process, analyzed information is effectively used for drawing inferences which can form a base for action plan.

4.7 Preparation of marketing research report:

The findings and suggestions obtained from the marketing research I the process of Marketing of information services and products, can be submitted to library administrators. It contains the suggestions for management to bring about both qualitative and quantitative change in the products and services, distribution process and promotional activities. Since, the report is based on information analysis and the conclusions arrived at through the systematic explanation, it is the core part of marketing research.

4.8 To take marketing decision and follow up:

This is the last step in marketing of information services and products. The implementing of the suggestions made in marketing research report is accepted by managerial through careful study of it ensuring that the suggestions are right & feasible or otherwise can make the decision to conduct the marketing process again. It is expected that the researcher should actively participate with the Manages to implement the suggestions made in marketing research report.

5. Conclusion:

Marketing Information system is must for taking marketing decisions for the managers of organisations and the institutions which offer services to society. Marketing research is an important component of marketing information system and is related with all components of the system. Its implementation in the libraries and information centres is related with the situation analysis, attainment of library objective and reader related problems, qualitative e improvement of information sources, balanced Collection development, systematic storage

Marketing Research in Libraries and Information Centers

and analysis of information, and reader's satisfaction. Its provides benefits to library system as a whole by identifying current prevailing situation, identifying changes in demand and readers likings, incorporating management of changes by effective implementation of ICT in profession, and adapt to changes in readers behaviour etc. Thus marketing research makes marketing information system and library system more authenticate and amenable to face the challenges of the future.

6. References:

- Yadin, Daniel (2006). Ed.1. The International Dictionary of Marketing Ed.1 London; Kogan Page Ltd.p.336.
- Baker, Michael J. Ed (1984). Macmillan Dictionary of Marketing & Advertising, London: Mth Macmillan Press LTD.p.123.