ISSUES IN THE MARKETING OF LIBRARY, INFORMATION PRODUCTS AND SERVICES AT UNIZIK LIBRARY

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Abstract

The paper discussed issues surrounding the marketing of library and information services in Festus Aghagbo Nwako Library. It highlighted the concept of marketing library services as well as strategies that will enhance library operations both in the traditional library setting and in the digital environment. It recommended different information literacy skills such as knowledge acquisition, use of library oriented social media, talk shows, institution of annual library week, webnar among others.

Keywords: Marketing Information Services, Traditional Library, Information Literacy, Social Media Marketing, Festus Aghagbo Nwako Library.

Introduction

Library is the storehouse of knowledge and university is given to academics and knowledge generation. The University Library is the academic nerve centre for every university world over. This informed the establishment of university library at the inception of every university. The information content of products in libraries are for use. It is useless effort to enmass information products that are never used. The joy of librarians is when they witness aggressive use of the library products/holdings and services, which they offer. It is a social crime if the accumulated library holdings are not utilized in teaching, learning and research.

With the dynamic Information, and Communication Technology (ICT) that has made the world a global village, there are now changes in terms of the nature of information products and services offered by the library. Library users now scarcely visit the library. They believe that with the Internet, they do not have any need to be visiting the library. Internet is not a replacement of formal library. The Internet as the bookshop has a lot of garbages, which need to be isolated by librarians during selection and acquisition. There are the traditional/analogue and virtual

libraries, which can be accessed physically and remotely respectively. Librarians should bring back the library users physically or remotely to the library through marketing of the library and the services to them. Librarians should always prove to the library users how indispensible libraries and

librarians are, as regards information provision for teaching, learning, research, and national development.

The Concept of Marketing Library Services

The American Marketing Association (2013) defines marketing as those activities which direct the flow of goods and services, from production to consumption. Marketing is planning and managing the organization's exchange relations with its clientele. It consists of studying the target market's needs, designing appropriate products and services, and using effective pricing, communication and distribution to inform, motivate, and serve the market. There is always the need to have resolved attention to meeting patrons genuine needs. Any library that worths its salt is given to marketing of information products and

services. In any functional library there should be the *Current Awareness Services (CAS), Selective Dissemination of Information*(SDI) and the likes. These are aspects of marketing
of library services. According to Gupta (2003), marketing of library services is the effective execution of all the activities involved in increasing users' satisfaction by providing maximum value to them.

The Problem

The teaching of *Use of Library* to 100 level students though an aspect of *Use of English*,is supposed to market the library and attract students to the library, but it is not so at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. One experience pioneer students of Pharmacy in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, will not forget in a hurry was when the library catalogue failed to lead them to Pharmacy books for reading assignment in the library. There were no catalogue entries for the Pharmacy books on the library shelves. When library operations fail to achieve the set objectives, library services will invariably be at the lowest ebb. Library users are not optimizing adequate library services due to inadequate human and infrastructural development of various units of the University Library. No single department in the library is marketing its operations and services. Few departments are making resolved effort to attract library users to the library. The situation has to change. The library and librarians presently appear not to be relevant to the university community with regards to information services provision. Library use should be the order of the day at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. It is a task that must be achieved and all professional hands must be on desk. The concern of this paper, therefore, is to sensitize librarians on the urgent need to market the library as well as recommend marketing strategies that will sell the library and its services to the university community.

Strategies For Marketing Library Products And Services

Libraries have always been engaged in marketing, being by its nature service oriented. Libraries offer essential social services as asserted by the Nigerian National Policy on Education (2013). There used to be mobile library services in both primary and secondary, in the 1960s, before the Nigerian-Biafrian Civil war. Library materials, books mainly then was available for borrowing, and even taken to very remote rural schools. Educational films were sometimes shown. As stated earlier, traditional libraries were involved in CAS, SDI etc. All these were stand-alone or analogue library service delivery. With the present ICT driven world, there are now changes in terms of the nature of products and services offered in the library/knowledge centre. As library users do not frequently come physically again to the library; librarians who can never be beaten by the dynamic nature of ICT, evolved the virtual library so as to take libraries remotely to the global world. Distance and non-visit of the physical library is no longer a challenge to librarians, library users and library services. There is therefore an urgent need to evolve strategies on how to market library products and services in both traditional and ICT driven environment.

There are strategies for marketing library products and services, both in the traditional and ICT (automated) driven library with Internet access.

Strategies For Marketing Library Products And Services In Traditional Libraries

Already some of the strategies for marketing library products and services in the analogue, old fashioned traditional libraries have been mentioned. The strategies are: *CAS, SDI*,bibliographies compilation (*reading lists*) to support teaching, learning and research. There are equally *library orientation* and the Teaching of *Use of Library* – a minimal aspect of the General Studies *Use of English* for 100 level students. All these notwithstanding, library users are however not attracted to the traditional library.

Modern libraries started with library 1.0 (print-based) and transited to library 2.0 (social media-based). To meet up with the challenges of the AACR2 that is not suitable for processing digital or Electronic Information resources (eir), the library 3.0 (RDA) came on board. Every modern library in this 21st century must therefore, be automated and should have Internet connectivity with constant power supply (24 hours for the 7 days in a week). This is what is in vogue. Nnamdi Azikiwe University has to follow the trend.

Library automation is the current marketing tool for libraries. It increases visibility through online presence. With automation and very effective and efficient marketing strategies of library products and services by the librarians, library users can no longer depend solely on the Google but library websites.

This paper is not for rhetoric purpose but for launching of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Library on the web. The concern of every academic institution is to ensure the visibility of academic activities and the web-presence of the academics in the institution. The library as the academic nerve centre of every academic institution should be at the centre stage of promoting the institution's visibility. All it takes is to evolve effective strategies for marketing the library, library products a2nd services; hence the focus of this paper.

1. **Information Literacy Skills Knowledge Acquisition**

Literacy is being familiar and versed with the literature of a given discipline (accumulated body of knowledge). It is an active and broad-based learning process. As one reads and learns, one becomes literate. It makes a person knowledgeable. There are information literacy skills to be taught and learnt for holistic knowledge acquisition. Information literacy skills involve steps of solving information problems, meeting information needs and filling knowledge gaps. Everybody has information need. A person who does not know and does not know that he does not know is a fool, an academic misfit. A person who does not know but wants to know is wise. Information literacy skills, knowledge acquisition is achieved through the information literacy programme. As people get sensitized about library products and services, demand to use the library increases. Stimulating library use through information literacy programme, is a marketing strategy for the library. The proposal for the teaching of "use of library, ICT and information Literacy skills" has been submitted to the Vice-Chancellor. The proposal recommends a seperate General Study course on Use of Library and Information Literacy, different from Use of English. This separate General Study course will definitely

market the library, its products (information resources) and services. Institutional Information Literacy forum for sharing of ideas is necessary in every academic institution.

2. **Social Media Marketing Approach**
Social media which are free websites are presently the popular global interaction and marketing platforms. Libraries should make aggressive use of social media to reach out to library users. The library products and services should be constantly marketed, using the social media. The social media utilization is actually what is involved in Library 2.0 information provision and services. Among the popular social media are: **Facebook, Blog, Twitter, WhatsApp**, **Skype, Linkedin, Google + Instragram, Flickr, Goodreads, Xing, Snapchat, Tumbir, Pinterest, You Tube, Vine, VK.com, Meetup, Disqin, Renren, Twoo, MymFB,** to mention but a few. Library users are now regulars to the different social media. Librarians should constantly meet the library users there. Institutional libraries such as the university library must be on these social media 24 hours for the 7 days in a week.

3. **Library Website or Web-Page in the Institution's Website**
Every library should have a website or at least a web-page in the institution's website. This provides web presence for the library. The library's Open Access Catalogue (OPAC)WebPAC and database should be showcased at the library's website or webpage. By so doing, the library and its products and services are marketed globally.

4. **Open Source Institutional Repository**
Every academic institution is given to knowledge generation through published research reports. There are the Masters theses, Ph.D dissertations, research projects and scholarly publications of the academics. All these should be archived in the Open Source Institutional Repository for ready global availability and accessibility. This gives exceeding visibility to the library, the academics and the institution as the creative output are populated to the cloud. This is a very good library marketing platform.

5. **Faculty and Department Library Talk-Shows**
The Faculty and academic Departmental staff and students should be made to realize that the library and librarians are indispensible in knowledge pursuit. This should be achieved through faculty and department library talk-show. The librarians should in these fora show –case their information products and services as it concerns each discipline in the university.

6. **Institutional Annual Library Week**
Institution of regular institutional annual Library week, that will bring librarians, book vendors, ICT experts and other information or library equipment and infrastructure providers together is advocated in this paper. During the library week, reading

promotion and competition for students (undergraduates) will be among the activities. Prizes will be attached to the competitions to attract great number of participation. Exhibition will be part and parcel of the library week. The primary purpose of the Institutional Library week is for the Institution's academic community and even beyond to see for themselves what the library offers. During the Library week too, there will be research paper competitions by Masters and Ph.D students respectively. The week will be publicized on the Internet and equally in the mass media – university bulletin, newspapers, television, etc. The library week will go international if properly institutionalized.

7. **Institution's Webinar**
With video conferencing facilities in the library, institution's webnar for sharing ideas and knowledge should be put in place. Participation in global video conferences and live seminars from one's institution will be made possible. This is a trendy marketing strategy of the library.

8. **Library Bulletin**
With library bulletin, library products and services will be publicized to the academic community and the global public in general. The monthly library bulletin should always be uploaded to the Internet through the library's website or web-page.

Conclusion

Marketing of the library is a must for librarians. When the library is effectively marketed, it will attract users naturally to both the analogue/traditional and virtual libraries. With this achieved, there will be a shift from the Google search to the physical library or the virtual library website content search. Libraries and librarians are very indispensible but the Librarians must always be engaged in regular and diligent marketing of the libraries and their services.

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