

**MARKETING AND PROMOTION OF
LIBRARY PRODUCTS AND SERVICES:
NATIONAL LIBRARY OF NIGERIA EXPERIENCE**

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ABSTRACT

The National Library of Nigeria over the years has been rendering diverse services and packaging information products for its patrons. These emanate from its professional departments namely, Public Service, Research and Development, National Bibliographic Control, Collection Development and Processing and Virtual Library Services departments. These departments package products and render services for consumption or use by the public. However there are no enough publicity for these products and services to enhance their patronage. It is on this premise that the paper examines the strategies it needs to employ to market its products and services.

INTRODUCTION

Marketing is mainly associated with corporate organizations that are profit oriented unlike libraries which render social services to their patrons. Associating marketing with libraries has not been appreciated because it is believed that they are funded differently, have different objectives and operate in a different environment. Furthermore, they are not profit making enterprises; rather they are service oriented.

Marketing of library services according to Renborg (1997) began one hundred years ago at the 1896 American Library Association (ALA) Conference where Lutie Stearns talked about advertising the library. Since then many libraries around the globe have not only adopted the processes of marketing but have set up committees to aid in carrying out the process and monitoring its implementation. Examples are the National Libraries of Malaysia, Australia, and Scotland among others. These libraries today have not only created awareness but also identified the products and services needed by their patrons.

The success of any library does not only depend on availability of fund for its operations, but also getting patrons to use the library information resources and to create awareness of the library's products and services. Marketing is one of the many ways to achieve the objectives of informing patrons, organizations, individuals etc. about the usefulness of library.

WHAT IS MARKETING?

Marketing means different things to different people. To the layman it is the process of buying and selling of products and services. While some people equate it primarily with communication tools, others view it as a means of awareness or creating more demands for customers.

The marketing guru, Kotler (1994) described it as "A social and managerial process by which individual groups obtain what they need and want through creating, offering, and exchanging products of value with others." His definition places emphasis on identifying the needs of patrons and how to provide services and products that will satisfy them.

Marketing therefore is not only about making monetary gains but also reaching out to patrons and being aware of their needs and knowing the most appropriate means of fulfilling these needs. Thus, it is not all about "selling" information products and services to patrons but creating awareness about useful information products and services.

Marketing it includes analyzing the competition, positioning, pricing, promoting, advertising, public relations and sales of the library products and services." From the foregoing, marketing places the library at a more advantageous position among competitors like cybercafé, bookshop and , other information delivery services, etc.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Library Products

Library Products are items which are tangible and visible. That is, they can be felt, touched and read. Kotler (1994) defines products "as anything that can be offered to a market (patron) for attention, acquisition, use or consumption that might satisfy a want or need. The products found in the library are of two types: print and non print (electronic). The prints are indexing and abstracting publications, journals, bibliographies, compendia of reports on various subject matters etc. while the non prints are Compact Disc ROMs, video, cassette, microfilm etc.

Library Services

Library services are duties rendered to patrons or rather an attention given to a patron. It is intangible, not visible, and cannot be felt. It involves interaction between or among two or more persons. That is why it is usually an activity.

The following are some of the services rendered in the library: current awareness, Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI), referral, training, internet services etc.

VALUE OF LIBRARY PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

The value of library products and services to patrons and non-patrons cannot be overemphasized, bearing in mind that information is what makes nations, organizations and individuals what they are today. The following are values that can be derived from using library products and services:

- ✧ It helps in making quality decision
- ✧ It saves time, increases productivity and improves quality of work
- ✧ It eliminates duplication of efforts as regards research output
- ✧ It provides access to a range of information sources
- ✧ It increases the intellectual level of users.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MARKETING LIBRARY PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Provision of information resources and dissemination of information has been among many other services provided to patrons by the library. Marketing enables the library to reach out to patrons who are not aware of its products and services. According to Henzcel (2004) marketing can create awareness of and desire for services, as well as build understanding of the value of the services. Jestin and Parameswani (2000) opined that "marketing of information products and services is an integral part of administration, especially as a means of improving user's satisfaction and promoting the use of services". Unless information is used, the question of impact of information on development of individuals, organizations and nations does not arise. Henzcel (2004) affirms this by saying that "when the clients recognize how the products and services add value to their work, then they will refer others to us". Through referral, the library is bound to increase its patronage.

Patrons are the major reasons why libraries including the National Library of Nigeria are in existence. No matter how well equipped or stocked with information resources and how courteous its workforce are, if there are no patrons to consult or use the products and services such an effort, resources and time becomes wasteful. Therefore, it needs to device means of informing the general public of its products and services. This will not only increase patronage but will also attract the attention of funding agencies.

The integration of marketing to library products and services is expedient because it reinforces and reiterates the basic values of the library in a changing environment as a result of information technology. Library products and services, when marketed continuously, may become registered in the minds of the patrons. The aftermath of this, is that the library is bound to gain prominence in the socio-economic and political sphere of the country. For example, the relevance of the bibliographic control services,

when marketed and publicized effectively would create awareness of the importance of acquiring the ISSN and ISBN among publishers, writers and other stakeholders.

National Library of Nigeria is not the only social institution depending on the government for funding. In this era of privatization of some social institutions and reduction of revenue allocation, it has become necessary for it to source for funds elsewhere. One effective way of achieving this is through marketing of its products and services. Examples of such products and services through which it could generate funds are e-resources, National Bibliography of Nigeria, Nigerbiblios, Mailing List of Libraries in Nigeria, National Library of Nigeria Statistics, Subpoena etc.

Kotler (1994) affirms this by saying that "organizations such as museums, universities, libraries and charities need to market their services and products to gain political and social support as well as economic support through which more funds could be allocated to it". In addition, rendering of quality services can also increase funding in the sense that satisfied patrons will inform others how pleased they are with the services provided by the National Library and this will invariably, attract more government attention.

Countries are clamoring for immediate fulfillment of ever rising social and economic expectations, and are therefore asking for what information can do for the overall national development. The National Library as the apex library is expected not only to meet the information needs of few patrons but also researchers, policy makers and scholars. For a country to obtain sustainable development she needs information to execute her programmes and projects, to take decisions as well as implement policies.

The National Library of Nigeria could market some of its products and services to this group of patrons. Some of such products and services are selective dissemination of information (SDI), abstracting, training, etc. When these activities are delivered effectively to them, then it would have contributed to nation building, because the use of information has become essential for survival and progress of nations.

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF NIGERIA

The tables below show the products and services with their respective prices (fees) emanating from the National Library of Nigeria as well as some of the departments with the specific services they render and products.

Table 1 indicates the products and services that emanates from the five professional departments.

Departments	Information products	Information Services
Public Services	None	Referral, Documentation /Inter-lending, Photography, Special Services, Information Retrieval, Subpoena and Internet Services.
National Bibliographic Control	Issuance of international Standard Serial Number (ISSN) and International Book Number (ISBN)	Bibliographic Control Services and Cataloguing and classification
Collecting Development and Processing	None	Legal Deposit Services, Gifts and Exchanges, procurement of materials
Research and Development	Nigerbiblios, Mailing List of Libraries in Nigeria Nominal List of Practicing Librarians in Nigeria Directory of Libraries in Nigeria, National Digest of Library statistics, National Library of Nigeria Statistics	Training Services, Indexing and Abstracting Services, Translation Services, Consultancy and Technical Assistance Services
Virtual Library Services	E-Resources	Digitization

Table 2: Indicates the Public Service (Subpoena) provided between 2006-2008

Service	Year	Patronage	price	Marketing/Promotion Strategies
Subpoena		414	200=	It is the sole responsibility the National Library of Nigeria to provide this service
	Jan-Dec2006	313	1,000=	
	Jan-Dec2007	775	1,000=	
	Jan-Dec 2008	36	1,000=	

Source: Register of the Serial Section of the Public Services Department.

Table 3: Issuances of ISBN as a Public Service provided between 2004-2008

Service	Year	Patronage	price	Marketing/Promotion Strategies
ISBN	2004	1,617	Range from N3,500- N20,000	Display and Exhibition at conferences
	2005	1,617	same	Posters
	2006	1,939	same	Flyers
	2007	2,241	same	
	2008	N/A		

Source: Statistical tables of work received 2001-2007 Non Official Publication from the National Bibliography of Nigerian.

Table 4: Issuances of ISBN as Public Service provided between 2004-2008.

Service	Year	Patronage	price	Marketing/Promotion Strategies
Issuing of ISSN	2004	603	5000=	Display and Exhibition at conferences
	2005	456	5000=	Posters
	2006	403	5000=	Flyers
	2007	360	5000=	
	2008	519	5000=	

Source: Records from administered blocks from NBCD.

STRATEGIES FOR MARKETING LIBRARY PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

The following strategies should be employed in promoting and marketing the institution's products and services.

Verbal Communication

Verbal communication is one way staff can employ to market the apex library's products and services. There are a number of potential patrons who need library products and services to make their decisions, but they do not know how to go about it or where to seek for such information. This is where verbal communication comes in as one way of informing patrons about how these library products and services can meet their needs.

Production of Brochures, Posters, Flyers, Booklets and Bookmarks.

The National Library of Nigeria should come up with appealing and colourful brochures, posters, flyers and bookmarks where it can advertise its products and services. They can be pasted on notice boards at the premises of the National Library headquarters and branches. They can also be distributed to tertiary institutions, government agencies, research institutes, corporate organizations, individuals, publishers, other libraries etc.

Library Tours

The apex library can organize guided library tour for current and potential patrons annually or biannually to promote its products and services. This is to enable patrons have the opportunity to ask questions about the products and services.

Library and information Month

The National Library of Nigeria can organize library and information month for patrons, publishers, booksellers, and system vendors to enable the staff interact with and inform them about its products and services. Thus, stakeholders in information delivery industry may collaborate with the apex library in marketing its products and services.

For instance, publishers can assist in publicizing the legal deposit obligation and ISSN/ISBN issuance while booksellers can buy products such as NBN, abstracts and e-resources..

Billboards and Notice boards in major Nigerian Cities

The National Library of Nigeria should employ these media to promote its products and services among patrons, organization, government agencies etc. Notice boards can be mounted in strategic positions on the premises of the National Library of Nigeria. Billboards could be mounted at densely populated areas of towns while e-billboard can also be used to promote its products and services.

Print Media (Newspapers, Magazines, Publications of NLN)

Print media is another important tool for promoting and marketing information products and services because of its wide readership. National Library of Nigeria can produce and circulate newsletters which should contain new services and list of new titles. The newsletter can be sold at a token fee to organizations, individuals, tertiary institutions etc.

Electronic Media

Radio and television have a wide coverage of viewership that cannot be overlooked. Having a slot or quiz on library issues or announcing what the library does on both media can aid marketing of products and services.

Readership Promotion Campaign

The readership campaign organized by the institution can also be used as a channel for marketing. During the campaigns, the library can distribute flyers carrying information about its' products and services. The programme is an opportunity to establish partnership with publishers, NGOs and international organizations who are involved in literacy programmes on marketing and income generation.

Websites

Proper packaging of National Library publications and databases and posting the same on its websites will not only promote the products and services nationally but also internationally. Thus, patrons and non patrons can subscribe to them for a token fee. This will open more opportunities for cooperation and collaboration with other information delivery service providers worldwide.

Telemarketing

The apex library can take advantage of mobile phone to promote its latest products and services to individuals and organizations. A typical example is the e-resources-digitized newspapers, indexes and abstracts on various subject areas which should be advertised to the public and private sectors.

Seminars/Presentation/Workshop

The National Library should make use of the opportunity offered by seminars, conferences, workshop etc to market its products and services through displays, distribution of flyers, bookmarks and formal announcements.

Packaging and branding are what distinguish one product from another. The Publications of the National library of Nigeria should be well packaged both in print and electronic format to attract patrons. For example, the cover pages can be printed with attractive colour, graphic designs etc.

Public Relations

Public relation is a major component of marketing. It is a channel of creating a personal relationship between the potential patrons and the library /librarian. In order to successfully promote the true value of products and services the librarian should engage in personal advocacy. For example, the issues of publishers and individuals selling ISSN, ISBN and failing to deposit their information resources to the library will not arise if the library is able to market its products and services to patrons. The National Library of Nigeria's Public Relation Unit should rise to the challenge of promoting and marketing the institution's products and services. Constraints to Marketing and Promoting of Library Products and Services.

Financial Resources

Adequate funding is needed to market some of the products and services of the National Library of Nigeria. This is because without funds, a number of the above mentioned promotion tools may not be operational or effective. Adequate funds are also needed to send staff for training to equip them with the principles of marketing. Funds can enhance the consistent production of these products.

The Organizational Structure

Policies and procedures often get in the way of good service. The reference desks of the Public Services Department of the National Library of Nigeria is sometimes manned by both the professional and paraprofessional, whereas it should be manned by a knowledgeable and experienced professional.

The Library Environment: Marketing is not only about employing different promotion tools to create awareness on products and services but it also includes a good working environment. The Public Services Department at the Headquarters in Abuja is not in good condition and it projects a poor image about the National Library of Nigeria. Erratic power supply and inadequate spacing as well as offensive odours that exude from the surroundings are impediments to marketing as these can discourage staff from rendering effective services as well as patrons from visiting the library. It is hoped that movement to the library's permanent building will solve this.

The Attitude of Librarians

The National Library of Nigeria and its professional workforce should not be satisfied with their traditional roles of custodian of knowledge. The era of waiting for patrons to make use of products and services has ended with the advent of ICT. The workforce should be active. Librarians often wait for patrons to come to them or stumble across the library web-sites instead of enquiring from users about their information needs. Jain et al (1999) affirms this by saying that libraries are happy satisfying a limited number of clientele who request for information while jealously guarding their information materials. One way to market its products and services to potential patrons like policy makers is by offering Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) and abstracting services.

Erratic Power supply

This is not a peculiar problem to the apex library. The National Library needs constant power supply to keep the websites and cybercafé functioning. Also the cybercafé needs to be functioning at all times so as to retain patrons and attract new ones. However, since 2006, the cybercafé has not been functioning effectively due to epileptic power supply and technical problems.

Training and Education

Marketing concepts may not have been taught at library schools or may have been given less emphasis. In other words, it may have been perceived as a business term for profit making organizations. It is because most librarians and documentalists have not been trained in the concept of "marketing" that introduction of marketing in information services has not always been easy.

Recommendations

The following recommendations will assist the apex library to market its products and services:

1. The various departments should deploy knowledgeable professional staff to man the reference desks at the various professional departments, book fair, displays, exhibitions etc.
2. The websites of the National Library of Nigeria should be updated by hosting the different products and services.
3. More funds should be released to the professional departments towards the marketing and promotion of their products and services.
4. A marketing committee drawn from the various professional departments should be set up to collaborate with the public relation unit in marketing and promoting the institution's products and services.
5. The Public Services Department should be renovated or expanded to accommodate more patrons.
6. Regular press conferences should be organized for all stakeholders in the information and services delivery sector to create awareness.
7. Organizing frequent exhibitions and displays at state branches is important
8. There should be adequate technical support and alternative provision of power supply for the cybercafé.

CONCLUSION

The apex library should know that marketing is not only a practice for businessmen; it is the science of strategy whose main objectives are to create awareness and satisfy the patron's needs. The National Library of Nigeria should apply it as part of its routine activities in the management and planning process. The era of being passive and depending solely on government for funds is not realistic anymore. Consequently, the library should change its attitude towards marketing and embrace the concept in its totality.

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