Relevance of Ranganathan's Laws of Library Science in Library Marketing

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Introduction

Libraries and information centers arean indispensable part of any academic or research institution in India. Information transfer and dissemination of information have long been recognized as essential elements for research and development activities. Libraries and information centers put lot of effort and energy into designing information services and products and distributingthem to satisfy their users. Despite their best efforts, users sometimes feel that they are not being adequately and appropriately served. The best way to overcome this problem is by designing and developing an appropriate marketing strategy for LIS products and services.

Marketing

The Chartered Institute of Marketing, UK ("Marketing," n.d.), defines marketing as the management process which is responsible for identifying, anticipating, and satisfying customer requirements profitably. Kotler (1985) says that marketing is "an act of analysis, planning, implementation, and control of carefully-formulated programmes designed to bring about voluntary exchanges of values with target markets for the purpose of achieving organizational objectives." These two definitions draw our attention to the following:

marketing is a managerial process involving analysis, planning, implementation and control
marketing is concerned with carefully formulated programmes – not random actions – designed to achieve desired responses
marketing seeks to bring about voluntary exchange
marketing selects target markets and does not seek to be all things to all people
marketing is directly correlated to the achievement of organizational objectives
marketing places emphasis on the target market's (consumer's) needs and desire rather than on the producer's preferences.

Since customers are given the top priority, service providers should remember that customers are the most important people to be served in library and information centers. They are not dependent on the library; rather, the library depends on them. They are part of the library. They are the people who bring their wants and needs and we are there to meet their needs. Marketing is a management process that includes: marketing plan, marketing research, market segmentation, marketing mix (Graves and Wulff, 1990). In creating a marketing plan, a library must concentrate on mission analysis, resource analysis, strategic planning and monitoring, and evaluation of the tasks performed. Market research is done to assess market information needs by stating research objectives, developing a research strategy, knowing target market characteristics, etc. Market segmentation is defined as a group of customers with similar or related characteristics who have common needs and wants. Market segmentation is usually divided into:

- Demographic Segmentation
- Socio-Economic Segmentation
- Geographic Segmentation

Marketing mix includes products (such as books, periodicals, literal programmes, bibliographies, annual reports, statistical surveys, and compilations and services such as electronic resources); price (in the form of credit, discount, cash, etc.); Place (including coverage, distribution channels, inventory, locations, and transport), and Promotion (which is done through advertising, personal selling, and public relations).

Ranganathan's Five Laws of Library Science

During his eighty-year lifespan, Dr. S.R. Ranganathan made contributed many new ideas to library and information science. He wrote 60 books and about 2,000 research articles in his life. Really, Dr. Ranganathan was a multifaceted personality. He devoted his life to the cause of development of library science in India. Dr. Ranganathan enunciated various laws, principles, canons, theories, etc., in LIS. His theories are based on scientific principles. They are accepted universally and are relevant even today. We can say that his ideas are like a lighthouse for libraries, and LIS students and teachers. His ideas are still exciting and, even today when computers and other developments in the field of telecommunication have changed the whole scenario of LIS. Even now, when libraries and information centres face the problem of underused information resources as well as the challenges of implementing Information Communication Technology (ICT), Dr. Ranganathan's philosophy is relevant and accepted as a way to overcome both these problems. The answer comes in the application of his Five Laws of Library Science.

Ranganathan's Five Laws of Library Science

1. Books are for use

2. Every reader his/her book

3. Every book its reader

4. Save the time of the reader

5. The library is a growing organism

The father of library science in India propounded the five laws of library science in 1931. The first law is that books are for use. It is imperative to ensure library patrons use the materials we select and purchase for them. Libraries are not just about storing books, they are about people having access to books. This is something Ranganathan made clear in his own discussion of the first law (Ranganathan 1988). His talks and writings emphasize the preservation of

information and knowledge to be as important as access to information and knowledge. Undoubtedly, both preservation and access are important, and the availability of digital technologies that Dr. Ranganathan could only have dreamt of have a vital role to play in preservation and access. Librarianship is now blessed to have the opportunity of making knowledge available through digitization, but digitization can best be justified by focusing on the priorities laid down in the first law. The first law is also forward-thinking in its emphasis on the library's location. Increasingly we are seeing libraries sited, or even relocated, in more accessible locations in order to increase custom.There is debate among library professionals on the issue of merging of public libraries with other services, such as sports centres, or moving the library to main thoroughfares rather than outlying parts of the community. The implication of first law of library science in marketing library is the emphasis on the optimum use of resources, facilities, and services.Convenient location, effective signage, and longer opening hours; helping hands for using resources and services are all important.

The second law, "every reader his or her book," means that we all have diverse interests and that there is a book out there to satisfy each of us. The core need is to fight for the right of users to information of all kinds, the consistent battle against censorship and inequality of access that has governed civilisation since its inception. Our duty is to help users find the information they require and ensure any blocks in the way are not blocks we have created. Barring access to knowledge is totally against the philosophy of Dr. Ranganathan's law. In fact, the second law provides roots to the freedom to access information and knowledge in the forms of writings of all kinds, and to be informed on topics that others may wish to suppress. The second law reminds us to be impartial in our dealings with users. The implication of the second law in marketing the library is to meet user needs satisfactorily by collecting and interpreting information, understanding the needs of users, and matching the needs with its resources. The library should develop its collection keeping in mind the present and future requirements of its users. The library collection should be a mix of old and rare material as well as of the latest material reflecting advances in various fields.

The third law: every book its reader (Ranganathan, 1988) advocates easy access to materials, and one way to do so is by putting people together with what they require. Putting books into the hands of people who do not necessarily know what they need is also at the heart of the third law. We could interpret reader development as being part of the third law, since we promote books to users that may not be known to them and that may offer opportunities for enrichment that other titles do not. Historically, reference work has been identified within the third law, and this continues to be the case in the virtual library. Virtual reference services continue to grow in popularity in both academic and public libraries. Libraries and information centres are launching virtual enquiry services through their websites. They are accepting models created for this purpose by world-renowned libraries, especially university libraries. These are exciting developments, focused on expanding services to where and when users may need them. They allow librarians to continue to use their skills in tracking down quality information for users and will become a staple feature of library services. The implication of the third law in marketing the library is performing activities that take library products and services to the users: publicizing the value and benefits, promotional campaigns, adovacy, public relations, personal communication, etc. The library should use promotional tools to publicize its resources, facilities, and services. It should direct its efforts to attracting new users to the library and reach out to its existing users by providing library services at their doorstep. It should give its users tje personal touch and develop a feeling of belonging in the library.

The fourth law is "save the time of the reader" (Ranganathan, 1988). Time is important to every person. Time management is a key to success in life. Libraries must have the objective of saving the time of the reader. The entire journey of librarianship is about devising, designing, and developing methods, systems of organization and dissemination of information to provide the best service to their

readers in the most efficient, accurate, and effective manner and thus saving the reader's time. For example, we create catalogues, bibliographies, indexes, and abstracts to save the time of readers. Saving the time of the reader also relates to how we actually organise information. Acceptance and adoption of ICT has used to save thousands of hours of the reader's time when compared to manual systems. Noruzi very rightly opines that considering the time of the user as a vital notion, and that all five laws of library science are transferable and applicable to the Web. Increasingly, saving the time of the user becomes navigating with them through the Web and creating high-quality and accurate guides to information in this challenging domain. The implication of the fourth law in marketing library is its focus on the user benefits and preferences. Consolidation and repackaging information into an appropriate form, making information available when it is needed, ensuring the quality of services and offerings, are tasks that take user benefits and preferences into account.The main objective of the library should be that the user who enters in a library for a specific purpose should not leave emptyhanded. At the same time, it must also be ensure that the users' valuable time is not wasted in searching for material.

The fifth law, that the library is a growing organism (Ranganathan, 1988) states that libraries will continue to grow in the future. Perhaps we can look at digital information and conclude that the growth is not as pressing from the point of view of physical space, although this remains something that libraries struggle with. Even in the digital world, the analogue continues to be important. Book publishing remains healthy, and indeed a much less expensive endeavor than it was in 1931. Libraries will continue to struggle with space problems. This is reflected in the statistics of information generation and the acquisition of information resources of libraries of any type. Even the presence of e-resources does not stop the acquisition of new print material, and the pace at which they grow has not changed. Lancaster's dream of a paperless society is not likely to come true in the near future. The sacrifices librarians have to make between space for books shelves and space for computer terminals to deliver this ever- expanding need will continue to be an issue. One can also see the library as a growing organism in terms of staff and skills. As the library grows in services, the skills necessary to deliver these new services will also grow. Perhaps we could argue that both libraries and the profession of librarianship are growing organisms. The fifth law's implication for marketing is adapting the library to future user needs, including mobilizing resources, dealing with uncertainty about future user needs, new services, new customer groups, new environment, etc. The library should also transform its services to keep up with other changes in the world. The library must not lag behind in adapting to new technologies. The library staff must be technology-literate.

In order to make use of these laws more effective, libraries and information centres must adopt marketing tools. Important promotion tools include:

1. Communication

Rowley (1998) divides communication channels into personal and non-personal. Personal communication channels are those in which two or more people communicate, and word of mouth is the primary means of communication, although other media such as e-mail are significant. Non-personal communication channels include TV, radio, posters, newspapers, etc.

2. Atmospherics

This term is coined by Philip Kotler (1975) who defines atmospherics as "the designing of buying and consuming environments in a manner calculated to produce specific cognitive and/or emotional effects on the target market." In other words, the working environment, library ambience, appearance of employees, the physical setting, lighting, work environment, noise levels, etc. These must be healthy and suitable to make a positive impact on users. Atmospheric considerations are often neglected in may libraries and information centers. It is

not always a matter of extra cost but simply a matter of thoughtfully designing space in the library, placing of relevant guides to use, etc. This may help in attracting and maintaining users.

3. Advertising

Advertising is important for promoting library services. A library can advertise its products and services in newspapers, scholarly journals, magazines, newsletters, radio, television, Web, etc. Advertisements help in image-building. They can be in a short message, or staff can write longer articles on new and existing library services. Librarians can appear on local radio and TV, highlighting the new role the libraries plays in the present era (Jaafar, 1998). There are a variety of ways of advertising online. Traditional print advertisements include brochures, pamphlets, newspaper advertisements, etc.

4. Brochure

The design and presentation of brochures and leaflets should be aesthetic and attractive to users. The language should be simple and should hold the interest of the user.

5. Leaflets

Leaflets include guides to the library and its special collections, Web guides, Reading list on IT, and so on. Other brochures can be kept in the library at a location which is placed so that anyone who enters the library is attracted to that corner.

6. Posters

Posters offer good visual communication. They can draw attention when displayed at prominent locations and provide brief information about an event, service, etc. Old and defaced posters should be replaced on a regular basis.

7. Newsletters

The library can convey information about new acquisitions, new services, events and activities, fee changes, etc. Information regarding library can be included to conveys a message to readers about the alertness of the library in updating and communicating small but important pieces of information. In fact, they are an excellent marketing tool because they list all the activities of a library. With ICT facilities in the library, an e- newsletter can be produced. The text of the newsletter can also be included on the library website.

8. Extension activities

Activities such as book displays, lectures, quiz, debates, seminars, competitions, exhibitions, etc., can have a positive impact on the image of the library and can motivate people to come to the library and promote the use of its products and services.

9. Library Tour

Library tour for new and existing members can be used to promote the library services. While on a library tour, users can be prompted to ask questions and find out more about new activities, products, and services.

10. Library Month/Day

Organizing national library day/month can be an effective way to promote the library. A library can create awareness of its importance in society.

11. Promoting in Electronic Environment

Libraries, especially in large cities like Delhi, and Bombay use ICT tools in

designing, developing, and disseminating services to satisfy their users. They also use ICT to promote their products and services. ICT-based channels include library websites and email.

12. Websites

Libraries websites can be accessed by users at any time.The websites contain details about the library, including the collection, subscriptions, service policy, terms and conditions, etc. It may also have graphics and multimedia advertising that can have an impact on visitors. The library webite should be contiuously updated to avoid an adverse effect the image of the library. The website can also be interactive so users can communicate with staff. For this purpose, a directory of staff members should be posted on the website (Mahajan and Chakravarty, 2007).

13. Electronic Mail/Mailshots

According to Natarajan (2002), e-mail is the most universal application on the Internet and it can be used for direct communication with potential users. There are many benefits to using email as a promotional tool. Mailshots are an effective medium that create personalized services, with information about library activities and events, membership renewal (Singh and Krishan Kumar, 2005).

14. Bulletin Board

This is an offshoot of email and is a many-to-many email system. It is medium for messages of interest to a community of online users (Moorthy and Karisiddappa, 2000). This service can be used by libraries for disseminating information to online users.

15. Newsgroups

Libraries can use newsgroups or discussion groups to build awareness among its clientele. According to Moorthy and Karisiddappa, (2000) a message (an article) is posted to the entire newsgroup. Other interested persons can reply/comment on the message. The topic can range widely, but each group is confined to one subject.

16. E-commerce

A library can also sell its products online through online charging and credit facilities. E- commerce has redefined the way business is conducted. Well-known bookstores around the world are offering their holdings over the Internet. For example, Blackwell maintains a database of more than 1.5 lakh active titles (Moorthy and Karisiddappa, 2000). Benefits of e-commerce include:

- A very large customer base and that reaches many different countries.
- Maintaining a website is relatively cheap, and results in reduced prices, more competition, current information, quick access and sales
- Caters to the customers' wide and varied interests, saving travel time

17. Blogs

Blogs are continuously-updated websites, created by individuals or organizations. They are generally free. A library can use blogs to promote its products and services by making it appealing and informative (Mahajan and Chakravarty, 2007). Special alerts about new resources special services can be included in the blog entries. To get feedback, comments and suggestions can be invited from visitors.