

Chapter 7

The Significance of Marketing in Library and Information Science

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ABSTRACT

The value of information as an intangible asset has become increasingly prominent in recent years, in spite of the challenges involved in the identification, measurement and financial valuation of intangibles. Information is a commodity and information service is the marketing of that commodity. This chapter highlighted the significance of marketing in library and information science. Concepts such as information science, marketing and marketing mix, marketing research, and significance of marketing were discussed. The chapter concluded that marketing of information services is important and recommended that it should be incorporated into the curricula of Library and Information Science Schools in Nigeria. It is hoped that information provided in this chapter will enable Librarians, lecturers and students of Library and Information Science to understand the value of marketing in the process of providing information services to customers.

INTRODUCTION

Information science evolved from the problem of information explosion, or what over a half century ago Vennever Bussh in 1949 defined as the problem with the ‘bewildering’ array of knowledge. Bush also suggested the application of the modern information technology as a solution to the problem, a solution eagerly embraced by information science. Information became the basic phenomenon underlying information science

(Saracevic, 1999). Borko (1969) as cited by Bates (1999) defined information science as:

The discipline that investigates the properties and behaviour of information, the forces governing the flow of information, and the means of processing information for optimum accessibility and usability. It is concerned with that body of knowledge relating to the origination, collection, organization, storage, retrieval, interpretation, transmission, transformation and utilization of information (p.1044).

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The domain of Library and Information Science is the universe of recorded information that is selected and retained for access and use. Library and Information Science addresses professional practice and scientific enquiry related to the effective and efficient communication of human knowledge (literature) among people in the context of social, organization and individual need for and use of information.

The discipline is studied at post-graduate and undergraduate programmes in tertiary institution throughout the world. Graduates of Library and Information Science find employment in libraries and information centers and to provide improved information services to the parent organization. In Nigeria observation and experience had shown that many institutions' libraries services are poor. The consequence of this is low patronage and inadequate support from the parent organization and the public. The issue may be caused by inadequate knowledge of marketing to efficiently promote information products and services. Therefore, the objective of this chapter is to highlight the significance of marketing in information science. Concepts such as information science, marketing, characteristics of services, marketing and marketing mix, marketing research, and significance of marketing are discussed.

Marketing

The value of information as an intangible asset has become increasingly prominent in recent years, in spite of the challenges involved in the measurement and financial valuation of intangibles. Information is a commodity and information service provided by libraries and information centers is the marketing of that commodity. The above statements underpin the imperative of economics and marketing of information to the user of information. There exists an interface between the information user and the information products/services where exchange could take place hence, marketing of information products/services. Ac-

cording to the American Marketing Association (1985) "Marketing is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organization objectives". Kotler (1982) defined marketing as:

The analysis, planning, implementation, and control of carefully formulated programs to bring about voluntary exchanges of value with target markets, for the purpose of achieving organizational objectives. It relies heavily on designing the organization's offering in terms of the target market's needs and desires, and using effective pricing, communications and distribution to inform and service the market. (p. 9)

Marketing implies exchange of relationship between the service provider and the service consumer with the aim of satisfying the consumer's needs. Library and Information professionals have been involved in the process of marketing because they identify users' information needs, acquire and package information to meet the needs.

Service according to Leonard (1980) as cited by Hoffman and Bateson (2001) is "deeds, efforts, or performance" (p.4). This implies that service is the action of doing something for someone or something and it is intangible. Therefore, it may be defined as an economic activity that is intangible in nature and does not result in ownership. Marketing a service differs from marketing physical goods because of the characteristics of service.

Characteristics of Services

In marketing of information we offer something of value (information products and services such as books, advice or searches) to someone in exchange of something else (knowledge) of similar value. Vespry (1995) noted that "Information is a marketable service, and there is a constant market for it. Like all other products, to be marketable, information has to be what the consumers want

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