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The Importance of Marketing and Total Quality Management in Libraries



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The obvious reason for librarians to be involved in marketing is to improve the potential library user's satisfaction.

Joyce A. Edinger

Introduction

Herb White, states in *Library Journal*, "... it should be fairly clear that librarians do not market and that they never have marketed." He concludes, "What we need to tell people is not how wonderful our public libraries are but rather how wonderful they could be. The awakening of these dreams is the purpose of marketing" (Besant & Sharp, 2000). Since the 1960's, the most widely taught marketing concept was the marketing mix theory: the 4Ps (product, price, place and promotion)—so clean, so neat, so inappropriate for libraries. Marketing theory cannot always be so succinctly described since relationships are by their nature complex. Marketing and Total Quality Management (TQM) are closely and clearly interlinked. Marketing focuses on capturing and analysing customers' needs; TQM involves the question of whether products and services do correspond to customers' expectations and needs and whether both are congruent with each other. TQM has been defined as "a systematic process which focuses on understanding customer needs and improving customer services" (Donald, 2003). The implementation of TQM in the library is a useful way to evaluate the quality of library services and provide goals for improvement. One especially beneficial aspect of TQM is its emphasis on continuous improvement.

Libraries are both a creation and a servant of society. A library operates routinely with a known set of customers. A library also operates on trust. When a client walks into the library, he trusts that he will get the material or information that he needs. The library, in turn, trusts that the client will return the items within the specified borrowing period. The specific structure of a library with its strict requirements as to efficiency demands a focus on the quality of value-adding processes. If a library is to be managed according to quality criteria, quality needs to be defined and made measurable. The indicators found must be captured in a measuring system for the sectors "cost and performance,"

“customer satisfaction,” and “staff satisfaction” that facilitates quality controlling and provides staff with controlling parameters for everyday work.

The most important condition of effective library services is to support continuous enriching dialog between the library and society by agreeing upon quality targets, which relate to the maintenance or improvement of quality standards. The library staff carries the responsibility for the results of their work and for reaching the agreed targets.

Concept of Marketing Library Services

The history of marketing library services began long before the concept was born. Samuel Swett Green in his often-quoted speech at the ALA Conference in 1876 advocated “improved personal relations between librarians and readers.” It could be said that today’s marketing of library services has its roots in parts of the USA and Northern Europe, in countries with few illiterates and more money, libraries, and library schools than the rest of the world. This certainly does not mean that the idea of libraries reaching out to “the common man” has not occupied librarians in other parts of the world. For instance, there is the example of the “library movement” in India at the beginning of the 20th century (Renborg, 1997).

Basic Steps for Marketing Library and Information Services

Libraries and information centers of all types and sizes are faced with the need to market. Librarians and information professionals must learn to effectively market and advertise their services.

1. **Competition for customers** - Libraries are part of a highly competitive service industry. Competition comes from mega-bookstores, online book dealers, consultants, the Internet, and individuals who feel they can go it alone. Libraries are no longer the only information show in town. Free web access to information is here to stay and non-library and fee access information providers won’t hesitate to market to library customers.
2. **Competition for resources** - Libraries of all types have to compete with other organisations or departments for funds. Public libraries have to vie for public monies that provide for their existence. Special libraries find their funding is frequently targeted during parent organisation budget cuts. Marketing library services benefits the bottom line.
3. **Maintain your relevance** - Libraries need to market themselves to remain connected with their communities and have some bearing on real-world issues and present-day events.

4. **Stop being taken for granted** - Libraries need to convey what is unique about the access and services they provide. Both customers and librarians cannot assume that libraries will always be available.
5. **Promote an updated image** - Librarians are not perceived as well-trained, technologically savvy information experts. Most customers do not see the demanding information management responsibilities of a librarian.
6. **Visibility** - Librarians are not on the radar screens of many people who think of themselves as information literate. People who are in positions to employ librarians are not reading much in their professional literature about a librarian's value.
7. **Valuable community resource** - Libraries are and should be viewed as essential and valuable community resources. People need to be made aware of the services and products that are provided and their comparative value. Librarians should be the resource that the local power structure goes to for information.
8. **Rising expectations** - Library users expect recognition, attention, and appreciation for their individual information needs. Customers also have ever-changing needs and wants, which makes the library market as dynamic as retail markets. Marketing helps to create an environment in libraries that fosters customer consciousness among employees.
9. **Survival** - Libraries depend on the support of others for their existence. A library must communicate and work with its customers and governing/funding entities to provide information about what the library is doing and to enable the library to learn about the community it serves.
10. **Beneficial to library image** - Effective marketing can among other things: increase library funds, increase usage of services, educate customers and non-customers, change perceptions, and enhance the clout and reputation of the library and its staff (Steadley, 2003).

Difficulties to Marketing Library and Information Services

Most librarians do not market their libraries, do not know how to market, or do not know how to do it well.

1. **Old models** - Many librarians work on the old model of existence by mandate.
 - Students should use library databases to locate quality information for their papers.
 - Faculty should send their students to librarians for assistance.
 - Children should be brought to the library to learn about books.
 - Middle managers should tap into the corporate library for information.

2. **Humility** - Too often librarians wait for others to notice that they are doing a good job. Librarians may be reluctant to capitalize on their strengths and knowledge, while the general public often does not see the value that information professionals could bring to sophisticated information challenges.
3. **Myth** - There is a belief that libraries do not need to be promoted in any special way because their importance to society should be apparent to all.
4. **Old expectations** - Librarians and libraries are limited by their traditional image; that libraries offer books for lending and provide programming for children, but do not contribute to more sophisticated information needs.
5. **Lack of training and education** - Often librarians do not promote library services well due to lack of training and knowledge of marketing tools and techniques. Although marketing is more widely discussed and accepted professionally than in the past, this acceptance hasn't necessarily resulted in more marketing classes in library schools' curricula. Despite the growing literature on library marketing, there remains a lack of familiarity with the total marketing concept among librarians.
6. **Confusion** - There is confusion about what the term marketing means. Much of this has to do with the interchangeability of terms such as 'promotion', 'public relations', 'publicity', and 'marketing'. There is also confusion about marketing libraries; the perception is that marketing is a business tool and not applicable to library settings.
7. **Fear** - Librarians are often reluctant to borrow from the private sector. They have a fear of commercial publicity and see marketing as manipulative, a waste of time and resources, and unprofessional.
8. **Passive vs. active stance** - Rather than selling the library on its value and letting people know what the Library and Information Center offers, librarians often wait for customers to come to them. Rather than pushing out responses to anticipated information needs to customers, librarians wait for customers to stop by the facility or stumble across the library web site.
9. **Complex and complicated task** - Marketing is a complicated problem for libraries because of their wide range of products and services from books to Internet access, and an extremely diverse audience that ranges from children to seniors, public officials to business people, and students to faculty, etc.
10. **Money and attitude** - Lack of funds is often used as a reason or excuse not to market. However, marketing library services is not simply a matter of spending dollars on promotion and advertising. Marketing is also a matter of improving the customer's experience of library services. The attitude of the library director and the staff as they interact with customers is what shapes customers' experiences and 'markets' the library to those customers.

Total Quality Management

Total quality management is an approach that an organisation takes for improving its performance on systematic and continuous basis. This is achieved by involving all employees throughout the organisation in satisfying all requirements of every customer, whoever the customer may be - either external or internal. Quality management is the basis for library management in general. Such principles of TQM as meeting the customers needs, exact assessment, continuous improvement, teamwork, and enthusiasm of the leaders are typical for library service.

Total - everyone in the organisation is involved in creating and maintaining the quality of the services and products offered.

Quality - the organisation through individual and collective actions focuses on meeting customer needs, recognising that customer perception identifies quality.

Management - in managing the system, the emphasis lies on continuously improving the system in order to achieve the best results.

TQM is a management philosophy embracing all activities through which the needs of the customer and the community, and the objectives of the organisation, are satisfied in the most efficient and cost-effective way by maximizing the potential of all employees in a continuing drive for improvement (Metreveli, 1998).

Basic Tools of Quality Management

Management tools that can be used for measuring and documenting quality of the products, processes and services (Jaafar, 1998):

- Control charts
- Pareto chart
- Cause and effect diagram
- Run charts
- Histogram
- Scattered diagram
- Flow charts

It is being attentive to today's customer demands, right now, as well as preparing for tomorrow's customer's needs. It is giving personal service and efficient back room preparation. It is managing this moment's transaction and the whole experience for the customer. It is providing value and maintaining a distinction. To achieve all of this dynamically, the quality leader needs data and mechanisms to provide it. He needs a minimum of four channels of information, one to keep him in touch with the customer's changing requirements; a second to monitor his output against those

requirements; and a third to feedback his performance in matching the two. But these are all reactive, so he needs a fourth channel to anticipate his customers needs and help keep him one step ahead. This data applies at the macro level of the whole organisation and at all levels down to one individual supplying another.

Why Libraries Should Adapt TQM

Libraries are among the most ancient social and cultural institutions in existence. Ancient libraries as well as modern ones have one thing in common: all of them have a body of information recorded on some type of medium and that information could be retrieved when needed. The accessibility of information requires good organisational ability from those who are in charge. The basic concern is to create a structure of the organisation where desired information is retrieved and made accessible efficiently and in a timely manner to the users. Creation and maintenance of such a structure requires an effective management process that facilitates work toward that goal.

Over many centuries libraries have adopted many different management principles from business, industry, religion, and government. A library is a business that must be operated efficiently and well. A major difference is that most libraries are non-profit organisations. Management of vast amounts of information stored in different formats - printed, electronic, audio, video - requires use of the most modern management techniques.

Today technologies have changed our social and economic life. In the workplace methodologies change; people work at home or on the web with flexible timetables, and more and more virtual communities are emerging in different fields. The most important stakeholders in the library are customers, the providers of subsidies, staff, and other libraries. These stakeholders are interested, for various reasons, in the introduction of TQM. The introduction of TQM makes great demands on the staff. The following factors in particular need to be taken into account:

1. TQM involves a process of change and therefore requires of staff that they be ready to play a constructive role in that process.
2. TQM requires a basic reorientation from the media stock towards customers and markets. For TQM a result-oriented approach, not the input of resources, is of vital importance.
3. A strongly hierarchical organisation with fragmented responsibilities is not well suited to the introduction of TQM since all staff needs to feel a responsibility for influencing quality.
4. The effort necessary for implementing TQM is at the same time rewarding for both staff and the institution: improvement of the institution in which they work, a strengthening of that institution's position, and more opportunity of staff to influence their own work (Klaassen & Wiersma).

The management of quality in libraries, as a management method that allows the improvement of performance, has been the object of interest for the managers of these services. In this context, the identification of indicators that may take into account the social-economical and political context that permeate the reality of the information services is essential to better adequate the quality proposals.

Relevance of Marketing for Librarians and Information Managers

To use the concept “marketing” librarians have brought over some management tools from the commercial world. That has been advantageous for the global library world. It has forced librarians to look at the libraries as the enterprises they are.

In the early conceptualisation of a Library and Information Centre’s business, Dr. S. R. Ranganathan had the concept of customer orientation embedded into it. He described a library as..... a public institution or establishment charged with the care of a collection of books, the duty of making them accessible to those who require the use of them and the task of converting every person in its neighborhood into a habitual library into a habitual library user and reader of books.

Conclusion

Libraries in Asia have been traditionally under-funded. But the Information Age is starting to change all of that. The technology is already superb and has even greater potential, but needs the wisdom of older minds that are trained and have built a lifetime of experience in making sure people get the information they need. Librarians are quickly responding to the challenge and are making sure they get their share of the information age financial largesse. Marketing in libraries has gone beyond special days and book displays. The value of marketing library’s products and services has been recognised and now we as library staff need to develop and formalise our marketing strategies. We need to give the marketing function a priority within our other library duties. Sell the idea to your manager and other staff by aligning your strategies to your organisation’s strategic function and business plan. Putting it all down on paper gives your marketing ideas credibility and helps keep them focused. Thinking in terms of the wishes of customers and translating customer wishes into library policy also presupposes appropriate staff management. For only staffs who are motivated are ready and able to take an interest in customers and their concerns, and to achieve high quality in their work.

We must seriously reflect on the implications, relations and conflicts raised by the information-oriented processes in libraries. In the case of libraries, technologies have made their activities easier and they have changed them. The work done by the

information services is an enterprise that requires commitment and a good disposition to devote time, consideration, and love to all these activities and to become part of the change, delivering and communicating this attitude, converting ordinary things into extraordinary achievements.

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