Article

ADVERTIZING LIBRARY AND INFORMATION PRODUCTS AND SERVICES IN NIGERIAN LIBRARIES

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Abstract

In order to successfully promote the true value of library services and products, librarians must move outside of the library and become personal advocates for the library. This paper therefore, focused on advertising library information products and services. The authors reiterated that advertising helps to create awareness and loyalty and stimulates demand. Effective advertising also communicates to a target audience the value of a product or service that a firm has to offer. The authors observed that library services that are not marketed effectively may not be heavily patronized. As a result, users do not know the products and services available and do not ask for them. This paper, therefore, discussed the role advertising and other marketing processes play in creating awareness and sensitizing the users about the available library information products and services. This paper treated other issues such as advocate for the promotion of true value of library services and products through advertising, the roles of advertising as essential and primary marketing tools for library products and services, the reasons for marketing library products and services and dichotomy between library information products and services. This paper also established the relationships between advertising and other management processes such as public relations, marketing and publicity among others. The authors conclude that the onus is now on the management of a particular library to know when that library is ripe for advertising, the type of information products and services to place on advertisement jingles, the right medium or media of advertisement and evaluation of the advertisement effect on that particular library's awareness programme and the resultant patronage.

Introduction

Libraries according to Edoka (2000) are repositories of information, a place of refuge from the tidal waves of information and misinformation. A library as defined by Ozioko (2005) is a definite place where knowledge, information and other human records in their print and non-print (such as audio-visuals, microforms and computer programmes) formats are professionally acquired, processed and made available for use. The library is a powerful instrument in educational, economic, socio-cultural and political development (Ozioko, 2005). As the society develops and becomes more

complex, it separates into many interacting divisions and as a result different types of libraries emerged to provide needed services to users.

In order to successfully promote the true value of library services and products librarians must move outside of the library and become personal advocates for the library. This is public relations, which is a personal relationship between the potential customer and the professional service provider and a major component of a marketing plan. The librarian must also utilize other important, essential and primary marketing tools, such as advertising and publicity. Advertising will help to create awareness and loyalty and stimulate demand. Effective advertising communicates to a target audience the value of a product or service that a firm has to offer.

Stueart and Moran (2002) advised librarians to become entrepreneurs. They stressed that information professionals has no business waiting for faculty people and administrators with no speck of idea of how libraries and information centres are managed and care less about their operational systems to change their situation for them. They advised that libraries must be run like commercial firms and professional librarians must be the managers. Librarians have to adapt to and cope with the changes taking place in the environment in which they operate. Effective marketing provides the means by which users are made aware of the services of the library.

Library services that are not marketed effectively may not be heavily patronized. Academic libraries in Nigeria need to provide effective marketing by which users are made aware of the services of the library. Patronage leads to recognition of the worth of the library and significantly contributes to improving the service quality and better performance by the library staff. Library users in these universities are expected to utilize the university library effectively as one of their main sources of getting information. The various forms of marketing are promotion, public relations, advertising, publications, etc.

Briscoe (2000) observed that libraries in underdeveloped countries are underutilized of information sources and services. This is supported by Adeyoyin (2005) who maintained that lack of marketing strategies affects library user skills and the utilization of these services. As a result, users do not know the resources and services available and do not ask for assistance in the use of the library. There is thus a gap between what is and what should be. Urgent attention is needed or else these resources will not be

utilized effectively and users may not come to the libraries. They may abandon the library and as such users would miss out on information that could have made them better scholars and citizens of the nation.

Statement of the Problem

Information products and services abound, especially since the emergence of information and communication technology (ICT) equipment and facilities that enhance the status of their carriers. Notwithstanding, many times these products and services are shrouded in the cloud of non-recognition, even sometimes by the professionals themselves and more so by the library patrons and clienteles. However, the recognition of these products and services and appropriate marketing through advertising have been identified as some of the ways to bring effectiveness into information products and services delivery in library and information centres worldwide. This paper therefore sets out to advocate for proper identification, recognition and subsequent advertising of library' information products and services as marketing strategies in Nigerian libraries.

Objective

1. This paper sets out to achieve the following objectives:
2. Advocate for the promotion of true value of library services and products through advertising.
3. Establish the roles of advertising as essential and primary marketing tools for library products and services.
4. Justify the reasons for marketing library products and services.
5. Distinguish library information products from services.
6. Establish the relationships between advertising and other management processes such as public relations, marketing and publicity among others.

Library Products and Services

Information products and services can be distinguished easily. A service is generally provided to a client, and is tailored to the needs of that client. It's generally provided "on demand", in other words, a client asks for a service, which is provided in response to that request. A product, on the other hand, is some type of predefined "package" of information that is offered for sale or license to customers. The goal of the producer is to create the information product once, then sell it multiple times as opposed to a service, which is offered one-on-one to a specific client.

Additionally, creating an information product gives room for creating passive revenue, which helps to scale up the business without having to add more staff, create multiple revenue streams from one initial effort and have less client dependency.

There's a wide range of information products. These include, among others; market research reports, workbooks and training guides, syndicated columns, podcasts, self-directed online tutorials, industry or personal-interest newsletters and training CDs. Others include; annual market trend analyses and/or forecasts, weekly/monthly environmental scans, e-books, directories, databases and revenue- producing website.

Characteristics of a Product

A product is something that is created once and sells many times. Some standard characteristics of a product include the following:

1. **Pre-Packaged:** A standard format has been created for the product that is used for/by all customers.
2. **Pre-Established Pricing:** There is a set price for the product, although tiering is a possibility where you can offer more info/features/functionality for more money.
3. **Minimal Personal Engagement:**
   The goal of the producer is to create passive revenue, with minimal "labour" costs.
4. **Minimum Customization:** The goal is to have a single version that is created once, sell multiple times with as little involvement/intervention as possible.
5. **Market Size:** The product should have a group of customers rather than an individual client.
6. **Sale** is of an existing, tangible item with immediate benefits that customer either needs or doesn't; not about relationship-building as is the case with a service business.

Evaluating Potential Product Opportunity

The following are suggested by Bates (2009) as some of the important factors to be considered when evaluating the potential product opportunities:

1. **Opportunity:** Have others indicated an interest in your potential product? Is this a recurring request or need, or just occasional? Is the information that will make up your product difficult for you to find/update? (If so, are there ways to make

your information gathering less problematic?) Does your product fall in the nice-to- have or need-to-have category? (You want to be in the latter, if possible.) If your information product will take a major effort (for example, writing a book), consider whether the return on your investment (ROI) will be worth the opportunity costs (lost evenings, weekends, and holidays for months!).

2. **Market:** Some of the questions to raise and possibly find answers to are; who will buy your product? At what price? How big is the market? Can your product possibly be reshaped for another, additional market?

3. **Product** Is it automatable, in other words, can you produce it using technology-based, automatic processing? This will definitely save time. Is it scalable; can you produce and sell your product to many much more customers as easily as to lesser numbers? The less manual labour involved, the more scalable a product is. Is your product standardized, so that everyone is buying the same version? A variation here is that you may want to offer customization for a high price premium, an attractive option if the customization can be done automatically. If this is 'a technology-mediated product, how much customer support will you need/be willing to offer?

4. **Infrastructure:** Will you be able to fill orders automatically Ada your website? How will you market and or sell your product? Are there regulatory, licensing, or other legal issues you need to consider?

5. **Impact on Existing Work and Life:** Creating an information product that is sold for additional income is a great way to add a bit of financial security in these uncertain times, and might also possibly end up becoming a significant part of the producer's career. But it's important to realize that one needs to be realistic about how much time one has to devote to the product, so that it doesn't hijack all professional energies, time, and often, budget (Bates, 2009).

Reasons for Marketing Library Products and Services

One of the reasons for marketing library products and services according to Britt (2000) is to emphasize accountability in this apparently nonprofit and non-fund-generating unit of the institution. Sometimes, people subtly ask the reason why there should be allocation of funds to library programmes and sendees, and ask for the library's actual contribution to the academic community. Britt (2000) in answer to this says that the library is an indispensable source of information and information products and services make its clientele see it as vital to the academic community.

Another reason for marketing library products and services according to Stacks (2004) is that the use of library by the academic community must be encouraged especially now that there is competition from other information providers. An effective marketing strategy directed at all segments of the market may encourage heavy use of the service. Libraries are and should be Adewed as essential valuable community resources. There's need for awareness among the people about the services and products that are provided and their comparative value.

Edoka (2000) however, states that the library has the responsibility of ensuring that its resources and services are used. The library can effectively do these by involving actively in the marketing of its services like other organizations. The marketing programme will enable the library to reach more potential users encourage and promote the use of library resources and work towards becoming the indispensable information centre where modem information disseminating equipment are functional. Stacks (2004) states that marketing is central to the survival of an organization, and that marketing does not just happen, it needs managers. As librarians we are all involved in the process of marketing. There should be mutual relationship between the librarians and the users.

In Mckay (2003)'s opinion, there is need now more than ever for professional librarians to run libraries like business organizations. For this to be achieved there's also the need for professional librarians to become entrepreneurs. It is therefore a dangerous trend for librarians to wait for those who have no idea of how libraries are managed and who do not understand or appreciate their work to determine for them what happens in their professional field. According to Mckay (2003), the libraries must be run like business firms and professional librarians must be the managers. This is important in that by the time we educate the finance and management people, they would understand why libraries and librarians function the way they do.

Libraries must strive and thrive because they still have a role to play in the academic community. Librarians like other professionals have to adapt to and cope with the changes taking place in the environment in which they operate. The operation of the library depends on the demonstrated use of the services it provides. Librarians therefore have the responsibility of encouraging the use of the services they provide. Effective marketing provides the means by which users are made aware of the services of the library. Heavy patronage therefore determines the worth of the library.

Advertising Library Products and Services

Advertising involves a purchase from a media source (newspaper, TV station, web marketer, radio station and magazines). Libraries can prepare their own advertising and pay for placement, or pay to have the advertising materials developed by the media retailer. Public relations more often relies on free publicity instead, and some libraries have a policy of using only free publicity.

Britt (2000) defines advertising as any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of products, services or ideas by an identifiable individual or organization. The goal of advertising is to awaken or produce predispositions to buy the advertised products or services. Reece (2004) contends that advertising is designed to promote a product, a service or an idea. To him the purpose of advertising is to sell products or services through different methods like displays, word of mouth etc. Jefkins (1998) asserts that advertising presents the most persuasive possible selling message to the right prospects for the product or service at the correct possible cost. In his view, advertising is limited to marketing.

Publicity according to Jefkins (1998) results from information being made known. Publicity yields an image and subject to adequate information the image of any subject can only be what it truly is. Publicity can be gained as a result of information being published or announced. Publicity is information supplied to news medium without cost.

The definition of the British Institute of Practitioners in advertizing (IPA) is as follows: 'Advertising presents the most persuasive possible selling message to the right prospects for the product or service at the lowest possible cost.' Advertizing presents the most persuasive possible selling message through the creative skills of copywriting, illustration, layout, typography, scriptwriting and video making based on a theme or copy platform. The emphasis is on selling, which differs from the PR role of informing, educating and creating understanding through knowledge. A major relationship between advertising and PR is that advertizing is more likely to succeed when prior PR activity has created knowledge and understanding of the product or service being promoted.

This is sometimes better known as market education and is a practical example of how PR can help the marketing strategy. It is practical and more sensible than relying solely on advertising to break into a new market or to introduce a new and unknown product or service. A number of new products have failed to sell simply because there was no build-up of market education, and the advertizing spend was a waste of money.

By the use of marketing research to discover who is most likely to buy the product or service, which advertising appeal will provoke the best response and which media will reach most prospects most economically, the advertising can be made most effective.

The choice and use of media to achieve maximum results at minimum cost will make the advertizing cost-effective. A good advertizing agency uses creative research and media-buying skills to produce economically-productive advertising. The cost of some campaigns may seem huge, but this investment is related to the size of the market, production capacity and the volume of sales (often repeat sales) which are sought.

It should be made clear that 'free advertizing' or 'unpaid-for advertizing' is not the real practice of public relations as some may think. There is nothing free about public relations. It is time-consuming and time costs money. If a story appears in the news column or bulletin, its value cannot be reckoned by advertisement rates for space or time because editorial space and radio or television programme time is priceless. Although every organization is involved in public relations, advertizing may not be used by an organization either because of its size or need.

While public relations embraces everyone and everything, advertizing is limited to special selling and buying tasks such as promoting goods and services, buying supplies, recruiting staff or announcing trading results. However, on occasions, PR may use advertizing to achieve its aim.

The value of budgeting and explaining costs in advertizing cannot be quantified. It is therefore advisable to let the client know what the total bill or cost represents. In some cases, the total cost of advertisement may represent researching the story, writing the story, seeking approval and perhaps having to produce a revised version, writing different versions for different classes of journals, compiling a special mailing list and printing the releases. Others include; addressing the envelopes and filling them,

postage and dispatch or distribution by fax and e-mail, payment of the press cutting agency fee and answering editorial queries.

Advertizing campaigns are based on initial surveys. Research in advertizing is small compared to the cost of the total campaign. Advertizing major cost is the immense bill for space and air time for which they have to pay quickly under their recognition agreement with the media owners, while having to allow their clients credit. A requirement of recognition which entitles the agency to receive commission from the media is that the agency does have the necessary cash flow, which amounts to three months' credit.

Planning is of paramount interest to advertizing. Without a planned programme, the advertizing practitioner would always be starting new things and probably never finishing others. At the end of the year, it would be very difficult to show what had been done and with what effect. It would be like running a train with no destination, taking no fares and eventually running out of fuel. Unprofessional advertizing can be exactly like that: purposeless and pointless.

It should be noted here that while other scholars such as Grunnig and Hunt (1996), Heath (2005), Phillips (2006) Caulfield (2007), Paul (2008) and Gillin (2008) referred to the anchor man of the PR activities as PR managers, Britannica Concise Encyclopaedia referred to him as publicist. This should not be misunderstood to mean that public relations is synonymous to publicity as opined by Bianco (1998):

> *Public relations and publicity are not synonyms. Publicity is the spreading of information to gain public awareness in a product, service, candidate, etc. It is just one of the techniques of public relations.*

Kaydo (2000) also corroborated Bianco's view:

> *Public relations and publicity are not synonymous but many PR campaigns include provisions for publicity. Publicity is the spreading of information to gain public awareness for a product, person, service, cause or organization, and can be seen as a result of effective PR planning.*

Publicity according to etymonline.com is defined as "condition of being public," from Latin word publicus. Sense of "making something known". Publicist is from French word, originally "writer on current topics;" meaning "press agent". Publicity according to Jefldns (1998) results from information being made known. Publicity yields an image

and subject to adequate information; the image of any subject can only be what it truly is. Publicity can be gained as a result of information being published or announced. Publicity is information supplied to news medium without cost.

On the other hand, Britt (2000) defines advertising as any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of products, services or ideas by an identifiable individual or organization. The goal of advertising is to awaken or produce predispositions to buy the advertised products or services. Reece (2004) contends that advertising is designed to promote a product, a service or an idea. To him the purpose of advertising is to sell products or services through different methods like displays, word of mouth etc. Jefkins (1998) asserts that advertising presents the most persuasive possible selling message to the right prospects for the product or service at the correct possible cost. Advertising is limited to marketing. The work of Adeyoyin (2009) clearly revealed that public relations can be used to disseminate information to the general public including customers, investors and other interested group.

The following have however been identified as the main media used for advertizing:

a) **The Press:** national and regional newspapers, consumer, special interest, trade, technical and professional magazines, directories, yearbooks and annuals.

b) **Multimedia Resources:** these have successfully replaced what was used to be known as audio-visuals such as slides and video cassettes for replay on a television set. Modem resources such as VCD, DVD, *i*-pod, mp4 players, USB flash, detachable hard disk, etc are now being used in their stead.

c) **Internet:** Internet has continued to grow exponentially and has become a veritable tool of advertising for many local and multinational companies whose business base spreads around the globe.

d) **Radio:** national, local, international, e.g. tapes supplied to local radio among others.

e) **Television:** regional stations, cable services, network stations, etc.

f) **Exhibitions:** support for exhibits in trade or public shows, overseas trade fairs, etc.

g) **Printed materials:** educational, informative, prestige, staff induction and print of all kinds.

h) **Sponsored books:** This could be books about the organization's subject. For instance, do-it-yourself manuals sponsored by tools and equipment firms and cookery books sponsored by food manufacturers.

i) **Direct mail:** The advertizing medium of direct mail may also be a medium to explore.

j) **Spoken Word:** Advertizing has not only to do with the mass media. Personal confrontation or eyeball- to-eyeball communication can be effective whether over a meal or a drink in an office, on the telephone or on the workshop floor.

k) **Sponsorships:** for the arts, sports, expeditions, university fellowships, causes and charities, etc. sometimes for outright advertizing or marketing purposes, occasionally for philanthropic reasons, and sometimes for PR purposes.

l) **House Journals:** The medium has developed in recent years, thanks to the personal computer, desktop publishing, electronic mail and international satellite transmission. The whole process of producing and receiving house journals or internal news has been revolutionized.

m) **House style and Corporate Identity:** This can take many forms according to the nature of the organization, but in general, it means things which identify the organization. A symbol is usually printed or painted on everything a prospective or actual customer is likely to use. It is common nowadays to see some organizations or corporations with distinct corporate identities. For instance, the communication giants in Nigeria such as MTN, Globacom, Zain, Visafone, Multilinks, Etisalat, among others.

Conclusion

Advertising is aimed at target audiences, which may be the few groups of people who are the most likely potential customers. However, the importance of advertising as a management process which helps to galvanize other management processes such as public relations and marketing cannot be overemphasized. Hence, the slogan among the advert practitioners that: 'if your product or service is worth its name, you must be proud to tell the world about it'. It has been successfully established by this paper that 'telling the world about it' simply means using the various advertizing media to advertize such product or service. The onus is now on the management of a particular library to know when that library is ripe for advertising, the type of information products and services to place on advertisement jingles, the right medium or media of advertisement and evaluation of the advertisement effect on that particular library's awareness programme and the resultant patronage.

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