MARKETING OF INFORMATION SERVICES AND PRODUCTS : A SURVEY OF USERS ATTITUDE IN DEVI AHILYA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

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ABSTRACT

Describes users attitude towards marketing of information services and products in the library of Devi Ahilya University, Indore, M.P. India. Definition of marketing, different marketing keys and concepts of marketing in library and information centers is discussed. The questionnaire method is used to solicit the opinions of different user groups. Examines the main purpose to visit the library, ways to keep updated information, required information services and products by the users and their willingness to pay for library information services and products. Finally highlights the suggestions of the users for improvement/marketing of information services and products.

KEYWORDS: Marketing, Library Information Services, Information Services, Products and Users Attitude

Introduction

Information is power which acts as a life saver for industry, business etc. Earlier 4 M's; Manpower, Money, Material and Machines were essential for any teaching, research and development. But now the 4 P's Product, Price, Promotion and Place are important in information industry and libraries are also emerging as an information industrial house. Three main factors, namely the information explosion, the technology revolution, and escalating reading material costs are responsible for encouraging the library profession to develop a marketing approach in its operations and services. Therefore the present day libraries are moving towards marketing of their services and products. Marketing is a way of ensuring the libraries, librarians and librarianship for integration into both today's and tomorrow's emerging global culture. Marketing is not separate from good practice.

Marketing offers both a theory and a process by which libraries can link products, results, and roles. Marketing can assist libraries in determining their future and in identifying the quality product services, programs and materials.

Definitions

According to Kotler "Marketing is the analysis, planning, implementation and control of carefully formulated programs designed to bring about voluntary exchanges of values which targets markets for the purpose of achieving organizational objects. It relies heavily on designing the organizations offering in terms of the target market needs and desires and on using effective pricing, communication and distribution to inform, motivate, and service the markets". The American Marketing Association (1985) defined marketing management as "the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods services to create exchange that satisfy individual or organizational objectives". Goldhor (1970) defines, "Marketing as the process of creating value through the creation of time, place, place and form utilities."

Marketing in Library and Information Centers

Marketing means working with markets to actualize potential exchange for the purpose of satisfying human needs and wants. It is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of goods, services and ideas to create exchange with target groups that satisfy customer and organization. In terms of libraries, marketing means a sufficient change in the traditional attitude of librarians towards acquisition, organization, processing and retrieving information. The basis of library service should be to help its users to solve their information gathering and processing needs. The library can do this only if it relies on systematic information collection, procedures and policies and adjusts its products, services and organizational policies and procedures to the demands of the users.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to study the:

1. Different ways for updating information
2. Users' reasons to keep up to date with innovations.
3. User awareness regarding the information required in their field of interest.
4. User Expectations of library services and products.
5. Users acceptability for fee based information services and products.
6. Measures to improve the library information products and services.

Methodology

Questionnaire method has been adopted to collect data for the present study. To select the sample population, Random sampling method has been used. Accordingly the questionnaire was distributed among 200 users of Central Library, and Student Home Library of Devi Ahilya University, Indore, out of which 167 responded.

Analysis of Data

During the past few years, the University Central Library is providing electronic information more expeditiously and comprehensively than before for its members. As a result, now the members are having a variety of services to meet their information requirements. The analysis of collected data from users has been presented in the following paragraphs to arrive at meaningful conclusions.

Status Wise Distribution of Respondents

The four categories of the users and the percentage of those who responded amongst these are tabulated below. It is noted that 33 (16.5%) of the respondent were reluctant to respond.

Table 1: Status wise Distribution of Respondents

Category	Distributed	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Teachers	50	35	17.5%
Ph. D. Scholars	50	45	22.5%
M.Phil. Scholars	50	47	23.5%
UG/PG Students	50	40	20%
Total	200	167	83.5%

It is clearly depicted from the Table that 50 questionnaires were given to all the respective categories of users, out of which 47 (23.5%) are M.Phil. students, 45 (22.5%) Ph.D. scholars, 40 (20%) UG/PG students and 35 (17.5%) are the teachers.

Frequency of Library Visits

Frequency of the library visits will definitely influence the use of library resources and the understanding about the library system. As such, an effort is made to assess the frequency of library visits by the users.

Table 2: Frequency of Library Visits

Frequency	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Daily	112	67.06%
Four Times a Week	13	7.78%
Three Times a Week	15	8.98%
Twice a Week	12	7.18%
Once a Week	10	5.98%
Occasionally	05	2.99%
Total	167	100%

The results show that 112 (67.06%) of the respondents use library daily, 15 (8.98%) thrice a week, 13 (7.78%) four times, 12 (7.18%) twice and 10 (5.98%) once a week. Only 5 (2.99%) of them use it occasionally.

Purpose of Visiting the Library

The requirement of the users in university library varies from user to user. As such, it is felt appropriate to study the purpose of the library visits by the users.

Table 3: Purpose of Visiting the Library

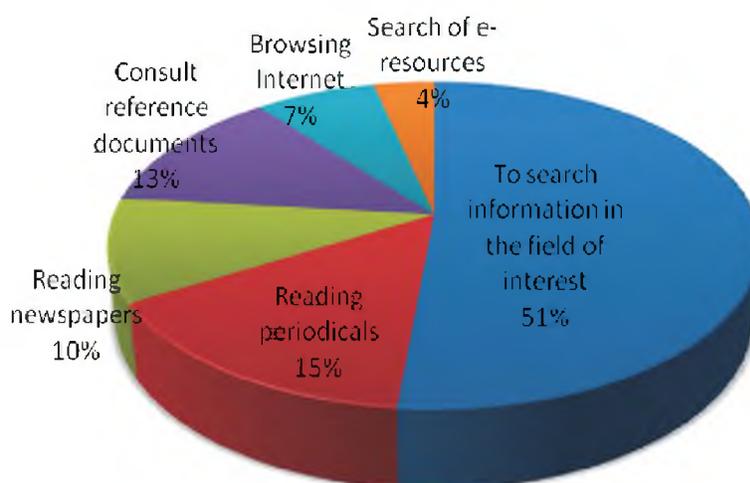| Purpose	No. of Respondents	Percentage
To search Information in the Field of Interest	86	51.49%
Reading Periodicals	25	14.97%
Reading Newspapers	17	10.17%
Consult Reference Documents	21	12.57%
Browsing Internet	12	7.18%
Search of e-resources	6	3.59%
Total	167	100%

Fig. 1 : Purpose of Visiting the Library

From the Table and Figure, it is clear that most of the users primarily visit the library to gather the information in their field of study followed by reading periodicals, newspapers etc. Very few students make the library visit to make use of the E-resources. This can be attributed to the fact that the university is having well established internet connectivity in the campus and the users must be using the resources from their desktops in the respective departments.

Reasons to Keep Up With Innovations

The members of the library visit the library to meet various information requirements. The interest of the user and library resources and services play a vital role in satisfying the information needs of the users. As such, an effort is made to study the reasons for keeping themselves with latest innovations.

Table 4: Reasons to Keep up with Innovations

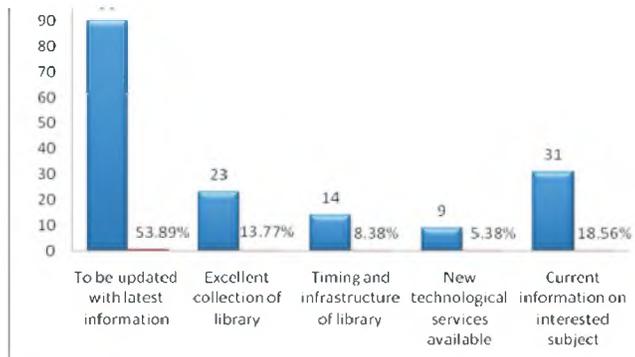| Reason	No. of Respondents	Percentage
To be updated With Latest Information	90	53.89%
Excellent Collection of Library	23	13.77%
Timing and Infrastructure of Library	14	8.38%
New Technological Services Available	09	5.38%
Current Information on Interested Subject	31	18.56%
Total	167	100%

Fig. 2 Reasons to Keep up with Innovations

The Table and Figure reveals that majority of the respondents wish to access latest information for updating their knowledge, 31 (18.56%) are interested to find current information on interested subject. Similarly 23 (13.77%) get attracted to the excellent collection of library, 14 (8.38%) appreciate timing and infrastructure of the library and 9 (5.38%) are happy with new technological services available in DAVV library.

Different Ways for Updating Information

The users have different options to keep up to date about the recent advancements in their area of specialization. As such, it is necessary to find out the means opted by the users in updating the information required.

Table 5: Different Ways to up-to-date Information

Different Ways	No. of Respondents	Percentage
SDI	09	5.38%
Seminar/Conferences	20	11.97%
Current Journals and Research	91	54.49%
Consultation of Catalogues/Bibliographic List	14	8.38%
Conversation With Faculties/Colleagues	15	8.98%
Consultation of Indexes/Abstracts	12	7.18%
Exhibition/Fair	6	3.59%
Total	167	100%

Seven categories were identified to know the ways through which users keep themselves updated with the information in their field of interest. Data given in Table 5 reveals that 91 (54.49%) respondents keep themselves up-to-date through current journals and published research works, which is considered as the prime media of scientific communication 20 (11.97%) through attending seminar/conferences and 15 (8.98%) by conversation with faculty members or colleagues. The data

also indicates that 14 (8.38%) respondents are aware through consultation of catalogues/bibliographic list, 12 (7.18%) by consultation of indexes and abstracts and only 6 (3.59%) through exhibitions/fairs organized by library time to time.

Required Information Services by the Users

The Library is providing information services, to meet the requirement s of its members. However, it is not possible to meet the individual requirements of all the members. As such, the opinion of the users is solicited regarding the information services/ products required for them in satisfying their information needs.

Table 6: Required Information Services by the Users

Services	No. of Respondents	Percentage
CAS	12	7.18%
SDI	9	5.38%
Photocopying of Articles/Theses	39	23.35%
Information Searching Pattern	44	26.34%
Forth coming Seminar/Conferences	17	10.17%
Reference Services	6	3.59%
Circulation of Journals	28	16.76%
Inter Library Loan	6	3.59%
Other Services	6	3.59%
Total	167	100%

Table 6 shows the range of information services required by the users of DAVV. It is clear that 44 (26.34%) of the respondents require information searching pattern related services, while 39 (23.35%) photocopy of articles/theses and 28 (16.76%) circulation of journals. All the other services required by the users have been given in the above table in order of preference. It is interesting to note

that the users are unaware of the UGC-Infonet's latest initiative i.e. JCCC@UGC-INFONET.

Required Information Products by the Users

The Information Technology has enabled the librarians, to provide a wide range of services for its users, in their quest for new information. As such, it is felt appropriate to find out the information services/ products required by the members. Table 7 shows that 51 (30.53%) respondents require current information bulletins, 43 (25.74%) the list of new arrival information in the library and 15 (8.98%) require repacking of information products.

Table 7: Required Information Products by the Users

Products	No. of Respondents	Percentage
New Arrival List	43	25.74%
Bibliographical List	10	5.98%
Repackaging	15	8.98%
Newspaper Clipping	5	2.99%
Current Information Bulletin	51	30.53%
Indexes	9	5.38%
Abstracts	12	7.18%
Directories	8	4.79%
Other Products	14	8.38%
Total	167	100%

Users Readiness to Pay for Information Services

Many a times, the users need information services, but are not ready to accept any fee based information service. Our practical experience shows that the members ask for a book or some

photocopy of research articles from a distant library. Of the total requests quite a few approach the librarians as a follow up measures and a large number forget the request in a couple of days. As such, it is necessary to find out the acceptability of the users for fee based information services and products.

Table 8: Users Readiness to Pay for Information Services

Services	Ready	Not Ready	No Response	Total
CAS	83 (49.70%)	48 (28.74%)	36 (21.55%)	167 (100%)
SDI	78 (46.70%)	37 (22.15%)	52 (31.13%)	167 (100%)
Photocopying of Articles/Theses	121 (72.45%)	46 (27.54%)	-	167 (100%)
Information Searching Pattern	89 (53.29%)	65 (38.92%)	13 (7.78%)	167 (100%)
Forthcoming Seminar/ Conferences	70 (41.91%)	35 (20.95%)	62 (37.12%)	167 (100%)
Reference Services	85 (50.89%)	82 (49.10%)	-	167 (100%)
Circulation of Journals	83 (49.70%)	64 (38.32%)	20 (11.97%)	167 (100%)
Inter Library Loan	95 (56.88%)	69 (41.31%)	3 (1.79%)	167 (100%)
Total	704 (52.69%)	446 (33.38%)	186 (13.92%)	1336 (100%)

Eight categories of information services were identified and formulated to know the information services by the users on payment basis. The analysis of the data shows that 121 (72.45%) are ready to pay for photocopying of articles or theses, while 95 (56.88%) for inter library loan and 89 (53.29%) are ready to pay for information searching pattern. Data regarding other services has been analyzed in above table. It is clear from the table that a significant number of users are willing to pay for developed and comprehensive information services in DAVV.

Users Readiness to Pay for Information Products

The analysis of the data in Table 9 shows the responses of users who are willing to pay for needed

information products. It is clearly depicted from the study that 136 (81.43%) are ready to pay for current information bulletin and 134 (80.23%) for bibliographical list. Similarly 127 (76.04%) for new arrival list, 105 (62.87%) for abstracts and 92 (55.08%) are willing to pay for newspaper clipping. Eight categories of information products were identified to know the users' willingness to pay for information products.

Table 9: Users Readiness to Pay for Information Products

Products	Ready	Not Ready	No Response	Total
New Arrival List	127 (76.04%)	140 (23.95%)	NA	167 (100%)
Bibliographical List	134 (80.23%)	11 (6.58%)	22 (13.17%)	167 (100%)
Repackaging	88 (52.69%)	79 (47.30%)	NA	167 (100%)
Newspaper Clipping	92 (55.08%)	30 (17.96%)	45 (26.94%)	167 (100%)
Current Information Bulletin	136 (81.43%)	22 (13.17%)	9 (5.38%)	167 (100%)
Indexes	82 (49.10%)	60 (35.92%)	25 (14.97%	167 (100%)
Abstracts	105 (62.87%)	25 (14.97%)	37 (22.15%)	167 (100%)
Directories	73 (43.71%)	58 (34.73%)	36 (21.55%)	167 (100%)
Total	837 (62.64%)	325 (24.32%)	174 (13.02%)	1336 (100%)

Findings of the Study

It could be inferred from the above analysis of data:

- Sixty seven percent of the members visit the library daily, followed by 8.98% who visit thrice a week.

- The maximum number of users with 51.49% search for information in the fields of interest, followed by 25 (14.97%) reading periodicals.

- Fifty four percent of the respondents keep up with innovations to be updated with the current information and 91(54.49%) keep themselves updated through Current journals and research.

- Twenty seven of the users require information searching pattern followed by 23.35% respondents requiring photocopying of articles or theses, 25.74% who require new arrival list product in library respectively.

- Seventy Two percent of the respondents are willing to pay for photocopying of articles/theses, 95 (56.88%) inter library loan and 89 (53.29%) for information searching pattern services.

- More than sixty two percent are willing to pay for developed information products. 136 (81.43%) out of 167 respondents are ready to pay for current information bulletin and 134 (80.23%) for bibliographical list.

Conclusion

Application of marketing techniques is very important in improving the capabilities of library's information services and products towards attaining satisfaction of users. And the market philosophy also requires that library management focuses on the identification of users' needs rather than library needs. Marketing is a vital function in libraries and information centers to keep themselves in constant touch with the users, to understand their requirement to develop services and products that meet these needs, and finally to build up a regular channel of communication with them. The librarians and information centers can't avoid marketing of their services and products, if they want to become self supporting eventually and to do well also. This is the fundamental principle on which marketing is based.

Suggestions

In the present age where, information regarded as power, and marketing is the key area for promotion of the information services and products, the following areas need to be addressed by the authorities for improving library and information products and services.

- Interaction with the users is necessary in order to evolve the library products and services in response to the users' requirements.

- Library should organize meetings that serve an opportunity to have face-to-face interaction with the members to know the level of their satisfaction. It should be done at regular intervals.

- To know about the views of the users, the library should conduct user survey. It could be done with the help of various techniques like questionnaire, interview schedule etc.

- The library or information centers should maintain suggestion box or registers where users can drop their suggestions for improving library information services and products.

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