

Marketing of Library Services for Customer Satisfaction: A Case Study of the Polytechnic Ibadan

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Abstract The relationship between Librarians and patrons (library users) must be a symbiotic one if high education standards must be maintained and sustained especially in this age of information explosion. This means library collections, programs and services will remain marketable to educational communities regardless of their status. This paper highlighted roles and medium through which librarians can market various resources with a practical example of marketing strategies and techniques for newly admitted ND1 Students of The Polytechnic Ibadan Saki Campus, 2014/2015 academic session. Out of the 14 academic departments of the institution, 7 construction related departments were selected viz-a-viz Agricultural Engineering, Agricultural Technology, and Architectural Technology, Building Technology, Estate Management and Quantity surveying. In each of the selected 7 departments, Class representatives and their deputies were purposefully picked totaling 14. These were invited to watch documentary film at Saki Campus Library on the construction of World's Tallest Hotel in Dubai, as part of orientation activities for fresh students. The multiplying effects of this program led to an improvement in usage, value, and increase in user education and perception which served as outcome for marketing library services. The paper then recommends among others, that this marketing strategy should be adopted and extended to other academic campuses to sustain academic culture nationwide. As librarians willing to justify their relevance in academic environment and library vote from their parent body, marketing techniques and strategies should be adopted in order to satisfy the library users' needs.

Keyword *Library Services; Customers Satisfaction; The Polytechnic Ibadan; Marketing*

1. Introduction

Library users are customers that consult library for their information needs, which can be obtained elsewhere. The extent of their satisfaction rests on how library understands customers: their status and interest area should be known and catered for the conditions for offering information services, program and products is a consideration for entire academic library staff. How well we communicate with our users and how we receive feedback on their needs is an indicator for understanding our customers. They are important visitors to our quiet zone. As independent as they are; we are dependent on them for our relevance. Their regular or occasional appearance with their wants and

needs facilitates our work to meet their challenges; they are encouragers for all the opportunities to serve them, hence they need to be treated with utmost care, including difficult library patrons as our relation is to achieve maximum benefit in the participation (Ngozi, 2014). Patronage of academic library is always high during examination time than any other period; the reason is due to low reading habit of our clients. The concern of library is to start marketing resources through her collections, programs and services so as to reverse the poor reading habits among Nigerian students (Aina, 2011).

Kotler (1983) defines marketing as an act of analysis, planning, implementation and control of carefully-formulated programme designed to bring about voluntary exchange of value with target markets for the purpose of achieving organizational objectives.

1.1. Points to Note in the Definition Are

- Marketing is a management process based on analysis, implementation and control.
- It is Policy related - as programs/structures need to be carefully planned for, to achieve positive responses.
- Voluntary exchange- no compulsion or coercion in social programs as participation is voluntary
- It selects target among segments as it does not mean same thing to all people.
- It allows correlation with organization objectives.
- It emphasizes or shows concern with the target market (consumer's) needs and desires rather than with producer's choice. Madhusudan (2008)

Today, vast amounts of information are available in numerous forms and its seeping by individual at work places, homes and recreational centers in various formats, such as- computer software, databases, CD ROMs, cable and satellite television, direct satellite services, radio, television, telex, the world wide web, newsgroup, list serves, e-mail, video conferencing, streaming etc make reading for pleasure and passing examination easier than olden days *as the learner can sometimes boycott information objects (librarians, and teachers), information media (library, classroom, and laboratory infrastructure) and information executors (librarians, teachers and administrators)*. Therefore, they can do without libraries as alternatives abound everywhere, if we should allow them to slip away completely, librarians may be adjudged to be inefficient in the discharge of their primary responsibility and library may be viewed as an ordinary store house of knowledge. The only way out of this conundrum is to employ a more proactive marketing strategy for library services which must be supported with research and adequate plan. The commonest goal to all libraries is to put up strategies that will improve the reading habits of all the different segments of users by reviewing contents and design for service promotion. This may lead to introduction of facilities, tools, techniques and proper guidance for staff among others. Donohoe (1992) sees services from the area of specialization such as Selective Dissemination of Information, Referral Services, One-to-One Session, teaching and training users, individual help to users, services dedicated to the needs of a particular group, aggressive marketing campaign and IT support for mobile and non-mobile library users. While Corral (1994) sees proactive role of librarians on the production of publications such as journal articles, hand-outs, written guides, daily lobbying, and negotiating on behalf of users, the author sees facts, information, knowledge and wisdom content of various platforms, good human relation and media in the traditional services combine with online internet, publishing facilities and commercial online databases available through Internet and network providers as all means of marketing academic libraries in Nigeria.

Library can generate reading list for all subjects, recommend materials to buy, allow free online ordering facility, and select materials for patrons through Assisted Purchasing Scheme, provision of unique range of loans like books, DVDs, story CDs and cassettes for the different categories of users

among others. Librarians may bring about Improvement of facilities if library can have a garden- it can be converted to a place for relaxation and recreation because of beautiful plants arrangement, decorated environment and fresh non polluted air.

Catalogue and internet workstations can be positioned in an open area where it could easily be seen, while different copy machines can be placed at different points for convenience under the supervision of librarians

Students service desks, reading areas may be separated from lecturers' joint, only to find out that both may be much happier. Replacement of dimmed lights with strong ones and light paints in the open shelves may cut down on defacement in the library.

Relocation of audio and CD books to reservation area near entry or exit point may support the organization's objective and promote convenience of patrons.

The signing of pact at various levels by libraries at local, regional, international and other information agencies using all the media available to get the request of patrons granted makes lending and borrowing easy for the partners involved.

Libraries do purchase articles, or get any resource for patrons through online purchase. The impact of library in the society can be further boosted by observing or organizing important events such as Library week, Book Fairs, visit to places of interest such as National Museum, National library, amusement parks, archives, and computer information departments among others. Centers for reading program and spelling bees competition may also be set up in order to boost library patronage. Advantages of interactive web applications may be adopted for library users, non-users, professional and non-professional library staff for growth and development of information cum knowledge on library web sites. Provision of these services will appeal to a growing number of mobile users and those in online communities

1.2. Successful Program Executed at the Polytechnic Ibadan Are

- Life skills presentation:- Management skills, such as time, home, business and electronic information access were organized at the end of semester as break program for all library users with a fee of Hundred Naira (#100:00) for each participant. No penalty is awarded against absentees as it is optional for our clientele.
- Presentation on recreational interest such as small scale agricultural program, beekeeping, horticultural practices, catfish production, snail farming, poultry and sewing crafts. This program is a day seminar organized as part of staff training and development. Every participant pays Two Hundred Naira (#200:00) as attendance fee with take away fruit pack. This program is a passive income generator as the owner of the new venture still retains his/her monthly salary while keeping the money spinning vocation at the same time.
- Presentation of concerts: - They are in this order- chats shown, drama, game show, sportscast, talks show, etc. The program is an outreach event organized for secondary school students as preparation for public speech. Talks on production processes of art works, art investment, inspiration and storytelling on political issues, governance, economy, and narratives of social life are not left out for users' consumption. Library provide a link to who wants to protect our cultural heritage through literature, art and symbolism especially in the area of traditional medicine that is free of superstitions and fetish coloration, or owner of books wanting to sell, and who wish to consult book sellers, printers, publisher or any member of the book/publishing industry. It is a free program as library has sponsors for it.

1.3. Product Analysis at the Polytechnic Ibadan Library

The quality of the product is hardly known until it got to the market, this depend on how it is packaged for all the consumers. The promotion of library product is through aggressive awareness viz-a-viz banners, posters mounted in strategic places at all converging centers such as admission office, health center, bursary, library, hostel and departmental offices. Library guide, literacy instructional classes with orientation practical at e-library for all fresher's and sophomores are contributive factors to product marketing. Students pay fees, register courses, update library records on regular basis. The polytechnic Ibadan has synergy with Nigerian Library Association at National, and State level, Chartered Librarian Registered Council on Advocacy and productivity on programs, products and services.

Library has automated all its functions under the library automated program. In fact, library has used Lib+, X-Lib, etc before changing to the present Koha software. The present library automation has the full support of Federal Ministry of Education Agency known as Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND). The financial support led to ease the way for the polytechnic library to set enough money for personnel training, online bibliographic database with barcode for circulation while older resources are under backup. Library guide is incorporated into home page of PolyIbadanlibrary.com using Library of Congress as backbone. The online Public Access Catalogue can be found on <http://192.168.90.59:83>. The library offers access to reference items like General and subject encyclopedia. Searchable text for e-journals of all twenty five program in the five faculties Business and Communication Studies, Engineering Studies, Environmental studies, Financial Management Studies and Faculty of Science can be found through the PolyIbadanlibrary.com. Databases from publishers such as Jstor, Blackwell, Emerald, ACS, Institute of Physics, American Institute of Physics, Cambridge, Springer, and Elsevier's Science Direct among others can also be found.

1.4. Price for Product

The motto of The Polytechnic Ibadan is hard work is a panacea to poverty. "Ise logun ise" Students will not be short changed with less than the quantity and quality of knowledge they are entitled to receive. Parents will not be defrauded by offering them less than what they paid for and the Nation will not be defrauded through less training than its children and future leaders should receive. This is the reason of a flat rate charge for all students as they pay #770:00 as annual subscription fee to the library. Students of this institution can be divided into two categories- irregulars and regulars. The irregular are those that are under directorate of Preliminary and Basic Studies these are:

Pre-National Diploma, Interim Joint Matriculation Board (IJMB) Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and International English Language Test Scheme (IELTS). These students having properly registered have access to their separate collections and restricted services such as lending of course materials, photocopying and reading in the library as the only opportunity given to them. They are the least as their total population is just two thousand on annual basis with a short stay in the campus. The regulars are 1st year National Diploma and second year (ND1, NDII), 1st year Higher National Diploma and second year (HNDI, HNDII) and Part-Time students. The population of all National Diploma students is twenty two thousand, Higher National Diploma six thousand while all Part-Time students is Five Thousand Two Hundred. The regular especially Full-Time has maximum benefits after the registration as their access card will provide the following opportunities: investigation about the library, receipt of library brief, library guide, assignment alerts, book fairs, participation in award day competition program, reading together (shared reading) lectures and special exhibits. Resources in Institutional library contain topical issues on all the departmental programs including leisure reading such as parenting, home maintenance, time management, stress reduction, career improvement, hobbies and health tips for personal consumption. Library personnel such as librarians, library assistants, technicians, clerks, aides, and even book keepers and custodians have a lot of

contribution in tangible and intangible library practices as mentioned by Heery (1996) and Pelman (2009) perform varieties of work such as enquiry work and alerting services to library users, through circulation, collection provision, user education, IT facilities and support literature. The library staff and user's interaction may be in form of what suits the client i.e. face-to-face to that which is available at the end of telephone, e-mail or through dial-up services. The cooperation and academic integration has made many lecturers to encourage library usage through generation of reading lists, assignments/projects given to students periodically.

2. Objective of the Study

The main objective is to expand the awareness about library products, programs and services to faculties and students within and outside the polytechnic Ibadan, Saki campus as justification for the contribution of library in users academic development and to fulfill the goal of tertiary institution on its products.

3. Statement of the Problem

The rate of seeking admission to tertiary institutions in Nigeria is alarming from the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) records. Not all successful candidates were given admission. Attempts by government to establish more tertiary institutions of learning and private ones with their study center have not addressed it completely. Belo (2013) opines that some students after being given admission are not serious with their education by not spending their time judiciously thereby having their academic performance adversely affected by scoring low marks in assignments, test, practicals and examinations. Only few percentage of Nigeria students have cultivated a lifetime reading habit, as the best result in annual convocation brochures of all tertiary institution continuously shows. Libraries and information centers are beset with the problem of under-utilization of information resources and the tasks of implementing ICT educational policy that can improve reading culture. Though, marketing is not built into culture of academic library, until the last decade, and in line with Madhusudhan (2008) who consider information technology as a gateway for information services, information products and other programs is a multiplicity of format for competition and alert for both libraries and information centers, but it must be adopted aggressively like that of special library to address this stated problem by influencing or changing relationship between students and the school so as to arrive at a more positive user behavior.

4. Research Methodology

Out of the 14 academic departments of the institution, 7 construction related departments were selected viz-a-viz Agricultural Engineering, Agricultural Technology, Architectural Technology, Building Technology, Estate Management, Quantity surveying and Urban and Regional Planning. In each of the selected 7 departments, Class representatives and their deputies were purposefully picked totaling 14. They were invited to watch a documentary film at Saki Campus Library of The polytechnic Ibadan on the construction of World's Tallest Hotel in Dubai, as part of orientation activities for fresh students. The advertisement was placed through text messages and also on notice boards. The last minute reminder was done by text messages few hours before the event came up on 13th February 2013 for a period of 2 hours. Each group was given either KLCC Twin Tower in Malaysia or the Eiffel Tower in Paris as another documentary film to watch at home for comparison with The World Tallest Hotel. The subjects were divided into two discussion groups to debate on relevance of library to academic growth. They were later asked to move round the library collections to select books related to construction based on the televised documentary. Within 10 minutes, their selection ranges from three to ten books by each participant. They were further asked to go online and find out the difference on the lifespan of various building constructions, architecture layout, materials, project equipment, inspection, and construction workers between African countries and

Asian countries and borrow any number of books needed for the assignment. Their response is that if the circulation policy allows them, they will prefer to borrow more than 3-5 books for a period of 3-4 weeks like the lecturers do, contrary to the policy of the institution (that is two books for two weeks). The aim of the program was explained to them and they were asked to post their comments later by text message to Campus Librarian.

5. Results and Discussion

The study shows that the event (of film shown to the construction related departments) was meant to run for one batch, later became a repetitive for many students as people were trooping to the library to copy the documentary into the flash drives, burn into digital video disk (DVDs,) and watch again. The benefits of this program are:

The interactive orientation exposed users to the new information and knowledge, with the assistance of library staff on extra needs at the program. New patrons were able to see the library as a center for community development as it accommodates recreational, educational and information facilities. Students were sensitized on the fact that the library is a supportive tool for theoretical and practical learning of all time. This simple strategy improved the library image and addresses the under-utilization of libraries and other information centers as part of justification for its relevance and funds collection. The introduction of this program has presented the institutional library as an integral part of the academic sector and the event served as a spring board for future programs and events like book fairs, authors visit, book talks, art exhibitions, etc that can be introduced later.

The library is now promoting its services aggressively as it adopt marketing a mix of products (books and periodicals loan), price (cash and discount on photocopying and printing), Place (distribution channels, inventory and location as more collection center is meant for materials borrowed from library) and promotion (advertising, personal selling and a good public relations can leads to an influx of program sponsors). The program permits the library staff to spend some time with students thereby facilitating effective use of the library.

5.1. Effects of Programs on Future Plan

Currently, the library accommodates one hundred and twenty seats at a time, but the average gate count at the end of semester is Three Thousands One Hundred and Twenty eight, an increment of 25% over the last year patronage. This program can still be organized on monthly basis across campuses. The program is a collaborative learning style meant for environmental and engineering students only, which later on pull all the students from other departments, academic staff, non-academic staff and distance learners as accidental library users.

This is a means to get another form of study areas as it can either be done formerly or informally without affecting the serene environment for study and research. It is an eye opener for the design team of the new library to incorporate comfortable and adequate space for the facility, programs and resources. This is so since academic library relies heavily on collection of print materials as opposed to a large variety of video, audio and other forms of media commonly found in school collections in Nigeria.

6. Conclusion

The library is a gateway for intellectual development as it is always equipped with information sources, resources and skills for faculty instructions and student learning. Connection of library with educational consortium and creation of menus on web homepage using Google, Twitter, Face book and LinkedIn promote library visibility and sensibility to her users. All efforts are geared towards

ensuring that the library is not relegated into the background after home, work place or classroom using marketing mix such as product, place, price and promotion. The adoption of marketing strategies has improve library products, services, program, library staff skills and users be it active or potential for academic growth and development so that everybody will be more satisfied at the end of the day.

Recommendations

- There is need for marketing of library and other information centers to improve on poor patronage and low academic performance. Users especially students perceived library effectiveness from an electronic paradigm, this preference must be catered for, to market services, collection and program.
- In addition, program that is of high value related to different departments like documentary film shown to construction related departments must be included as a means of reaching out to non-users of the library so as to improve users' patronage and poor academic performance of students.
- The paper also recommends that this marketing strategy should be adopted and extended to other academic campuses to sustain academic culture nationwide. As librarians willing to justify their relevance in academic environment and library vote from their parent body, marketing techniques and strategies should be adopted in order to satisfy the library users' needs

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