

# Marketing Information Products and Services

*A Primer for Librarians and  
Information Professionals*

*Editors*

Abhinandan K Jain

Ashok Jambhekar

T P Rama Rao

S Sreenivas Rao



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# MARKETING

INFORMATION PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

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### Editors

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**International Development Research Centre**

**Ottawa** Cairo Dakar Johannesburg  
Montevideo Nairobi New Delhi Singapore



**Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Company Limited**  
NEW DELHI



*McGraw-Hill Offices*

**New Delhi** New York St. Louis San Francisco Auckland Bogotá  
Caracas Lisbon London Madrid Mexico City Milan Montreal  
San Juan Singapore Sydney Tokyo Toronto

ARCHIV

002:380

J3

© 1999, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad

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**Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data**

Main entry under title:

*Marketing information products and services: a primer for librarians  
and information professionals*

Co-published in Asia by Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Company Ltd.  
ISBN 088936-817-1

1. Information services—Marketing.
2. Information resources—Marketing.
3. Marketing—Management.

I. Jain, Abhinandan K.

II. International Development Research Centre (Canada)

HF5415.124M27 1999 659.1'902 C99-980192-9

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Jointly published by International Development Research Centre  
PO Box 8500, Ottawa, ON, Canada K1G 3H9 (<http://www.idrc.ca/books/>)  
and Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Company Limited,  
7 West Patel Nagar, New Delhi 110 008 (<http://www.tatamcgrawhill.com>).

Typeset at Anvi Composers and printed at Rajkamal Electric Press,  
B-35/9, G.T. Karnal Road, Delhi 110 033.

RZXCRRBTRYRBA

## *Foreword*

Recognizing the importance of information in the process of development, Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) has over the years supported a large number of projects aimed at developing information systems and services in support of research and development activities. An important objective related to the development of such projects was to ensure that the systems and services developed could be sustained over the long term. A crucial element in the sustainability of information systems and services is effective marketing. It presents avenues to generate revenue and reduce the financial constraints that many information services are facing in developing countries. This has long been recognized by IDRC, and the development of marketing plans has been introduced in several information projects to study how this could be achieved.

A literature review conducted in 1993 revealed that marketing of information was a relatively new issue in developing countries and that most of the literature on the subject originates in the North. The review concluded that marketing potential is underestimated by libraries and information services and that information professionals were generally reluctant to embrace the marketing concept. Information professionals need a better understanding of marketing concepts and approaches to be able to introduce them into their services and to recover the costs of the information services and products that they provide.

In this framework, leaders of a number of IDRC-supported information projects were brought together with a team of specialists in marketing of information at a meeting held at the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad (IIMA), India, in February 1994. The discussion at this meeting focussed on how institutions in developing countries could be assisted in evolving relevant

marketing strategies. The meeting recommended the preparation of marketing guidelines and case studies that would help information specialists to design proper marketing strategies and marketing plans. Participants at the meeting prepared an outline for a manual that would respond to this need, and IIMA indicated its interest in coordinating the arduous work of compiling the manuscript. In October 1994, IDRC agreed to finance the activity.

This book is the result of IIMA's work. IDRC hopes that the guidelines and approaches proposed to introduce marketing activities within information services and systems will assist information professionals in developing countries with the development of sound marketing strategies. IDRC is proud to have contributed to this work—a collaborative effort of several information and development specialists from around the world.

RENALD LAFOND  
*Senior Information Specialist*  
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*Ottawa, Canada*

## *Preface*

The information era is here. Even at the beginning of the last decade, John Naisbitt in *Megatrends* (1982) indicated that over 60 per cent of the people worked with information. He pointed out that between six and seven thousand scientific articles were being written each day, scientific and technical information was increasing by 13 per cent per year, and the rate would soon jump to perhaps 40 per cent per year.

On one hand, computers and networking have tremendously enhanced information storage, retrieval and dissemination capabilities. However, the new facilities require significant investments, which many libraries and information centres, particularly in the developing world, cannot afford.

On the other hand, economic reforms, globalization and privatization trends in the developing world lay emphasis on private enterprise and competitiveness. Consequently, government funding of libraries and information centres has been declining, and librarians and information managers have been forced to generate revenues not only for acquiring state-of-the-art facilities but also for their own survival.

Information is power, and more so in a competitive environment. Businesses, governments and individuals are collecting and storing more data than any previous generation in history (Alvin Toffler, *Powershift*, 1990). Moreover, information is being recognized as a critical resource for socio-economic development. As a result, libraries and information centres have an opportunity to tap.

This marketing guide, therefore, introduces librarians and information professionals to marketing concepts and approaches, helps them to adopt a marketing orientation, and provides them

with a step-by-step approach to developing marketing strategies and plans for their libraries or information centres.

The guide contains nine chapters and two cases studies.

- **Chapter 1:** Prof. Sreenivas Rao highlights the need for adopting a marketing approach by librarians and information managers.
- **Chapter 2:** Drawing upon an earlier research on assessment of needs of management information, Prof. Jain and Prof. Rama Rao explain concepts of marketing management and how they are useful and relevant to libraries and information centres.
- **Chapter 3:** Ms. Gumbs describes the marketing plan developed by the Technology Information Centre at the Argus Institute of Technology and, through this example provides guidelines for developing a marketing plan.
- **Chapter 4:** Prof. Koshy explains the meaning of products and services in the context of libraries and information centres, and provides guidelines for planning a portfolio of products and services.
- **Chapter 5:** Mr Vespry, Ms. Vespry and Ms. Avery discuss price—one of the four important marketing decisions. With the example of National Information Centre on Management (NICMAN) at IIMA, they explain the various considerations in taking pricing decisions.
- **Chapter 6:** Prof. Sreenivas Rao discusses another of the four marketing decisions, promotion, with examples of various libraries and information centres, such as INSDOC, ICRISAT, and CEIS; and provides guidelines for making promotion decisions.
- **Chapter 7:** Prof. Koshy deals with the rationale, procedure and steps of conceiving, designing and introducing new information products and services.
- **Chapter 8:** Mr. Chin and Prof. Jain discuss the what, why, and how of marketing research along with brief descrip-



tions, illustrations, and guidelines for planning and executing selected marketing research designs.

- **Chapter 9:** Dominique Beaulieu describes how the Centre de recherche industrielle du Québec switched from free service to charged service and brought about changes in the outlook, attitude and structure of the organization to achieve a marketing orientation.

Towards the end of the guide, two case studies have been included.

- **(A) “Caribbean Energy Information System”** by Ms. Whyte and Prof. Sreenivas Rao and
- **(B) “Asian CD-ROM on Health and Environment”** by Mr. Chin and Prof. Jain.

CEIS was set up to enhance the capabilities of the Caribbean countries in energy information collection, storage and utilization for optimum conservation and utilization of the region’s energy resources. The other case presents the market research conducted for assessing suitability and utility of CD-ROM publishing, a modern information technology, and the process of developing suitable marketing plans for the same in developing countries.

This guide can be used as

- a *text* to understand marketing concepts, tools and techniques relevant to a library/information centre,
- a *reference book* to draw up marketing strategies and plans, and
- a *training manual* in educational and training programmes for librarians and information managers.

EDITORS

## *Acknowledgements*

This guide is an outcome of a workshop held at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad in February 1994, where project leaders of the International Development Research Centre, Canada, expressed the need for a marketing manual for librarians and information professionals. IDRC entrusted the job to the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad. Mr. Renald Lafond, Senior Programme Officer, IDRC, gave us valuable guidance through-out the project. We are very grateful to him and to IDRC.

In August 1996, authors of the guide and other professionals discussed the draft threadbare. We are thankful to the following for their contributions to the guide by

- Ms. Swati Bhattacharya, Librarian, Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta;
- Mr. Chikkamallaiiah, Librarian, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore;
- Dr. Roshan Raina, Librarian, Indian Institute of Management, Lucknow,
- Ms. Rumma Sharma, Librarian, All India Management Association, New Delhi.
- Dr. N.K. Gopalakrishna, Librarian, Administrative Staff College of India, Hyderabad;
- Dr. I.K. Ravichander Rao, Professor, Documentation Research and Training Centre, Bangalore;
- Mr. V.W. Karnik, Librarian, British Library, Ahmedabad; and
- Mr. P.C. Shah, Manager, National Information Centre on Textiles and Allied Subjects, Ahmedabad.

We received enthusiastic cooperation and guidance in preparing the Asian CD-ROM case study from Ms. Maria Ng Lee Hoon, International Development Research Centre, Singapore, and Dr. G.P. Phondke, National Institute of Science Communication, New Delhi, and in preparing the CEIS case study from CEIS project staff. Our special thanks to all of them.

At IIMA, Mr Ravi Acharya, DTP Coordinator, put the manual into shape. Mr PS Seshadri, Editorial Associate, edited the manuscript. Ms Shakuntala, Ms Heena Shah and Ms Sunitha P. Naidu assisted us at various stages of the project. Ms Sarala Nair and Mr R. Mahadeva Iyer shared the major responsibility of typing the manuscript. The staff of the Vikram Sarabhai Library helped us at all stages of the project. They all deserve our thanks.

Many more have directly or indirectly contributed to this work. We are grateful to all.

EDITORS

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## *How to Promote Information Products and Services*

■ *S. Sreenivas Rao*



### **PROMOTION—THE FOURTH ‘P’**

After an information product or service has been developed, the price for it has been determined, and the way to reach it to the clients, at the places, where they want it has been worked out, then, the potential clients must come to know of the product or service. Without this basic information or awareness, they cannot act. Therefore, the fourth ‘P’ in marketing, after product, price, and place, stands for *promotion*, i.e., the communication activity. The basic purposes of promotion are to:

- ▶ Attract and hold the attention of the clients (both potential and existing).
- ▶ Make the clients aware of the product or service and the organization providing it.
- ▶ Position the product or service and the organization in the minds of the potential clients in a unique and favourable manner.
- ▶ Motivate the clients to actually buy the product or service.
- ▶ Constantly reinforce the message on the clients.

S. Seetharama points out:

Promotion involves mechanisms by which the target groups are informed about the resources available, services and products offered by the library/information centre. Essentially, the purpose of promotional activities is said to be to communicate, to convince, and to compete. Therefore, the library's promotional packages need to be so designed as to achieve these objectives. In this context, the information collected in the market segmentation stage, would be useful.

Dr T. Viswanathan, Director of Indian National Scientific Documentation Centre (INSDOC), New Delhi, gave an example of what would happen if promotion was not done. Speaking at a workshop on 'Marketing of Information Products and Services' held by the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, and the International Development Research Centre, Canada, in February 1994, he pointed out that INSDOC's CAPS (Contents, Abstracts and Photocopies Services) could only achieve '50% of the target in the first two years.' (Jain *et al.*)



## PROMOTION METHODS

In general, promotion, as Philip Kotler points out, involves one or more, or all, of the following methods to reach the clients:

- Direct marketing
- Public relations
- Advertising
- Sales promotion
- Personal selling

The most relevant promotion methods for librarians and information managers are direct marketing, public relations, and advertising—in that order. For them, sales promotion and personal selling may not be much relevant. Fairs, trade shows, presentations, demonstrations, and meetings, which librarians and information managers do sometimes conduct, are more the

direct marketing and public relations kind, rather than the sales promotion and personal selling variety.

Moreover, given that the nature of a library or an information centre is that of a social and service institution educating the clients becomes an important promotion tool, particularly about how to use the library and how to use the new information technology available in the library. Therefore, educational and training programmes may have to be organized for clients to help them make the best use of the library or the information centre, and of the new information technology. Teaching, participating in educational programmes of academic institutions and community organizations and conducting short training programmes for clients become major promotion activities of librarians and information managers.

Libraries and information centres have to do promotion not only to their clients, but also, to their own staff and to the managers of their sponsoring organizations. Without the internal bridges, the external promotion activity will not be effective. The importance of internal marketing and promotion is dealt with in Chapter 9.



## PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

Some of the relevant promotion activities for librarians and information managers under direct marketing, public relations, and advertising, (adapted from Kotler) are as follows:

<b><i>Direct Marketing</i></b>	<b><i>Public Relations</i></b>	<b><i>Advertising</i></b>
Catalogues	Press kits	Print and broadcast ads
Mailings	Speeches	Packaging
Telemarketing	Seminars	Packaging inserts
Electronic shopping	Annual reports	Brochures and booklets
TV shopping	Charitable donations	Posters and leaflets
Direct response: radio, magazine, and newspaper	Sponsorships	Directories
	Publications	
	Community relations	

Kiosk shopping  
Free samples

Lobbying  
News (events/  
people/ products)  
Public interest articles  
in media

Display signs  
Point-of-purchase  
displays  
Audiovisuals  
Symbols and logos



## HOW TO DEVELOP A COMMUNICATION PROGRAMME

### The First Level—Objectives, Target Segment, and Message

To develop a communication programme, first decide the objectives to be achieved, in a specific target market segment, and with what message.

Objectives	Target segment	Message
------------	----------------	---------

These three communication elements interact with one another. It is irrelevant with which element you begin. Which comes first is like the chicken and the egg question. Although the order does not matter, the iteration among the three elements and their matching does.

The objectives indicate the direction for action. They tell us where we want to reach, whether we are on the right track, and finally, whether we have reached where we wanted to. Any evaluation, during or at the end of the programme is possible, only, if clear objectives are available.

On the need for specifying objectives, Kotler writes

Once the target market and its characteristics are identified, the marketing communicator must decide on the desired audience response. The ultimate response, of course, is purchase and satisfaction. But the purchase behavior is the end result of a long process of consumer decision making. The marketing communicator needs to know how to move the target audience to higher states of readiness to buy.

The marketer can be seeking a *cognitive, affective, or behavioral* response from the target audience. That is, the marketer might want to put something into the consumer's mind, change the consumer's attitude, or get the consumer to act.

Therefore, to be effective, the objectives must be:

- Realistic to the situation and the organization.
- Specific and measurable.
- Prioritized.

The objectives, as Kotler points out, should specify for the market as a whole, and for each target audience the stage at which it is and the level to which it needs to be moved on the following dimensions:

#### **Communication Goals: Percentage Target Audience**

<i>Stages</i>	<i>Hierarchy of Effects</i>	<i>Current Status (%)</i>	<i>Desired Status (%)</i>
Cognitive stage	Awareness		
	Knowledge		
Affective stage	Liking		
	Preference		
	Conviction		
Behaviour stage	Purchase		

Libraries and information centres cater to two different types of *markets*, i.e., individuals or households and organizations. The individual and organizational markets can be segmented on different criteria called bases of segmentation. General types of bases used for segmentation are as follows:

<i>Individual</i>	<i>Organizational</i>
Socio-cultural (social class, life style)	Industry (sector of the economy) Function (production, finance, marketing, HRD, staff/line, etc.)
Geographical (towns, states, nations, etc.)	Level of Managers (top, senior, middle, etc.)
Personal/Demographic (age, education, income, etc.)	Location (headquarter, branch, field, project, etc.)
Psychological (risk prone/averse, etc.)	

The understanding of the target segment should lead to the identification of the client who would be interested in the product or service and his/her motivations to buy it.

Having decided on the target audience and the objectives, the third decision to be taken is about the creation of a message for achieving these objectives. There are three steps in creating messages: generation of message options, evaluation and selection of an appropriate message, and execution of the message. Alternatively, messages can be generated around two dimensions: type of experience and type of reward (Maloney).

*Type of Experiences* include: (i) end result of the use of the product/service (like value of time saved), (ii) in process benefit of the product/service (like time saved in locating literature), and (iii) benefit incidental to use (like learning to work on internet through an on-line information product).

*Type of Reward* could be: (i) rational (like time or value of time) and, (ii) emotional (like I use the least reference service).

By combining the two dimensions several types of messages can be created. The ultimate purpose is to generate message options which fit a situation. Artists/advertising people might do this creatively, rather than going through the above systematic route.

Whatever may be the method of creating messages, ultimately only one/two messages need to be selected for execution. You might like to evaluate the messages generated through research. Messages may be evaluated on parameters of desirability, believability, and uniqueness from the point of view of the target audience in the context of competing messages. Obviously, a message which is desirable, believable and also unique should be chosen. Usually, the options in message execution emerge through a combination of ideas, words, pictures, and promises. Broadly, the message execution can be classified on the basis of the senses they appeal to (presentation), and their tone.



<i>Senses</i>	<i>Tone</i>
Sight	Positive
Sound	Negative
Smell	Balanced
Taste	Emotive
Touch	Logical
Combination	Combination

In information products and services, sight, sound, and touch become very important. The buyer may like to experience the book (i.e. see it and touch it) before deciding to buy it. The social esteem and self-actualization needs may predominate in motivating a professional, or an educated adult, to buy an information product or service. Straightforward logical appeals (without any hype) would interest an educated adult. But a little bit of hype may be in order to attract the educated youth to join an educational or a training programme.

The test of a good message is that, it is both rational and emotive and that it moves the client towards the desired action. It is useful to test the message on a sample audience before implementing the promotional programme for achieving the objectives set.

Talking about the designing of promotional messages in the publishing industry, Mr. Chin Saik Yoon of Southbound, Penang, Malaysia, said at the workshop:

A former director of marketing, with the Cambridge University Press in New York, wrote an interesting article on Scholarly Publishing, which has influenced many of my designs of promotional materials for the books I publish. He pointed out:

Librarians prize straightforward information. They dislike hyped-up promotion . . . over designed and full of breathless superlatives. Such ads are thought to be misleading and wasteful. They are likely to be quickly passed over or chucked out by most librarians, who would rather see plain descriptive copy in simple format with full bibliographic data . . . What does persuade librarians to invest their institutions' money in books and journals? Reviews and endorsements by established authorities are probably most important. It makes sense, since the acquisitions people can't

be experts in all fields. They are fearful of drawing criticism for purchasing a 'bad' or non-authoritative publication and being accused of wasting money. Therefore, ads and promotion materials should ideally carry a review quote for every publication listed.... (Jain *et al.*)

## The Second Level—Media, Time, and Place

At the second level, find the media which reaches the target audience at the time and place suitable for the objectives and the target audience. The iteration among these three items and between the objectives, target segment and message is important.

Media	Time	Place
-------	------	-------

For instance, if an advertisement in a newspaper is chosen as a medium, it is important to know that the time when the newspaper will be read depends on the convenience of the target audience. The page or pages which are read more often, or more carefully, depends on the reader's interests. For instance, managers, businessmen, and investors are more likely to read the business page than the other pages. Therefore, an advertisement placed on a business page is more likely to reach them than if it is on any other page. Similarly, an advertisement on TV during the cartoon programmes is more likely to reach children.

Often the choice of media lies, at the first cut, between mass media (like a newspaper), specialized media (like a computer magazine), or direct media (like letter through regular or electronic mail). Within the mass media, the choice is between print, radio, television, and internet. The choice is often decided by (i) which medium reaches the target audience, (ii) how fast, (iii) at which place, and (iv) at what cost.

The direct mail—both regular and electronic—is the cheapest medium. The next cheapest one is the print medium (mass and specialized) and then the radio. Television is the costliest medium and often unaffordable by libraries and information centres. However, special publicity or educational programmes of

common interest to a mass audience could be presented on television, as part of public affairs programmes, to achieve high reach at low cost. Such programmes, may also be able to attract sponsorship of outside organizations.

Seetharama points out:

It is believed that 'word of mouth' campaigns are the best mechanisms for promoting the use of libraries. Alternate mechanisms include—direct contact with target groups either by mail or in person; indirect contact through the medium of brochures, pamphlets, posters, guides, handbooks, newspaper releases, advertisements, tape-slide shows, video, radio transmission, etc., exhibitions and demonstrations, etc. It should, however, be remembered that promotion activity is not a one-time affair but is a continuous process. Further, while each mechanism has its own advantages, it would be ideal if different approaches are adopted at different point of time. Perhaps, the most effective way is through the library staff who should be courteous, efficient, and possess the necessary knowledge and skill.

Some, however, believe that a very well directed user education programme (or user sensitizing programme, as it is often referred to nowadays) will promote better utilization of the library.

The consensus, among the participants of the Ahmedabad workshop, about low cost media was as follows:

. . . costs of promotion through mass media were extremely high. Therefore, librarians and information managers should develop budgets using the least costly media for . . . marketing of products and services.

The low cost and most frequently used media were direct mail and publicity, particularly for creating awareness among the target customers. CEIS [Caribbean Energy Information System] found that allowing a leading newspaper to publish an article of interest helped in generating tremendous awareness. Cards, logos, etc. could also be used for creating awareness. Advertising could be resorted to only in very limited areas.

Creation of awareness and interest was presently being done through catalogues, brochures, slide shows, exhibitions and fairs. Generating commitment and actual purchase was thought to be best influenced by word-of-mouth, the cheapest means of promo-

tion. However, visits, seminars, and demonstration workshops were found to be useful in getting subscriptions to complex products and services and memberships.

Given the pressure on budget, selection of limited target audience was considered important. However, prioritization of target audience was not easy in the absence of knowledge about their status in the communications hierarchy. Also, sharp focusing of messages was required. Messages and their execution was different for different segments (Chin). The type of messages used were primarily product specific rather than emotive, which in some cases could play a significant role in creating interest, commitment, and purchase. One reason for lack of emotive messages was lack of understanding of what could be promised and fulfilled by the information.

It was proposed that media habits, usefulness of information, etc. be included in the information to be collected through research on buyer behaviour so as to decide appropriate messages and media. Scanning of academic literature on advertising and promotion would also help a great deal in fine tuning promotion (Chin). (Jain *et al.*)

Indicating that publicity could be helpful in promotion, Ashok Vijayavergiya, chief executive of INFUSE Inc, New Delhi, said at the workshop:

What we have earned in these years is decent press coverage. There were a couple of articles in the Financial Express, Business World, Economic Times, and some of the leading journals and magazines of India. That publicity has helped in getting wider awareness of our products and services. (Jain *et al.*)

ICRISAT (International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics) has undertaken more aggressive promotion methods, like travelling workshops, to market their products. Dr L J Haravu, Senior Manager of the Library and Documentation Services of ICRISAT, explained its methods, as follows, at the workshop:

A number of travelling workshops have been conducted at user sites (research stations and academic institutions) in different countries of SAT. One or two information specialists have been

going to user sites in a country to make presentations to potential end-users. Specifically, the workshops have the following objectives:

- ❑ To improve the awareness of end-users to the value of information in general and to the products and services of the Library and Documentation Services (LDSD) and Semi-Arid Tropical Crops Information Service (SATCRIS) in particular.
- ❑ To build contacts with libraries and documentation centres to (1) examine how they can be enlisted to act as switching centres or distribution channels for SATCRIS products and services, and (2) to encourage and develop exchange relationships encompassing documents, databases, and services.

The workshops are targeted to researchers, academicians, post-graduate students and research scholars, policy-makers, and intermediaries such as librarians and extensionists. The presentation highlights the rationale, purposes, and advantages of each service. The presentation is followed by a demonstration of searches of the SATCRIS database (using a subset mounted on a laptop computer under Micro CDS/ISIS) on topics of interest to the participants. Then the potential end-users are encouraged to enrol on the Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) services or ask for a specific search.

Librarians and documentalists, among the participants, are encouraged to act as focal points or as channels of distribution for our services. Access tools (e.g. the International Agricultural Research Centres (IARC)—Union Catalogue of Serials) are made available to such libraries, and they are encouraged to utilize our document delivery and other services. Software developed at SATCRIS, which may be useful to the libraries visited, is also demonstrated and made available.

Travelling workshops have been conducted in nine countries of Africa and three countries of Asia. More than 40 user sites in these countries have been visited. About 800 participants have attended these workshops.

The workshops have contributed substantially in making potential users aware of our products and services and enrolling new users

from these countries. Very importantly, the workshops and enrolment of new users have started a multiplier effect in these countries because satisfied users do 'advertise' our services with their peers.

Presentations and poster sessions are organized at ICRISAT whenever potential end-users congregate in regional or international workshops or seminars. We have found this useful in spreading the word about our services. A colour brochure explaining our services is given away to all visitors to ICRISAT and the LDSD. We have found, however, that presentation, followed by discussions and demonstration, is far more effective in generating interest and demand for our services than the brochure. (Jain *et al.*)

Elaborating at the workshop, the promotional activities that libraries and information centres could take up, Dr H. Arthur Vespry, consultant to the Library and Regional Documentation Centre at the Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, said:

You may consider publishing a newsletter. Certainly your annual report is a good way to attract the attention of your community.

Although it often involves extra work, libraries should not shy away from holding exhibits and displays. Use a display to show the benefits of using the library collection.

At all times, use your imagination. Displays need not be limited to within your library or information centre. You may well use a storefront or other locality, with the permission of the owner. Remember the local groups are always interested in displaying the work of their members, whether they be handicrafts, photographs, paintings, or faculty publications. The public relations value of all these activities, by raising customers' interests, may be very great.

We are supposed to be experts in the new information technology. We should therefore grasp these technologies and use them for our benefit. It is always possible to borrow equipment for audio-visual displays from a photographic centre in the community, and do a slide and sound presentation. The company lending the equipment could receive free advertisement. (Jain *et al.*)

Indicating how some kind of a joint venture could also be helpful for promoting one's activities, Dr Vespry pointed out that:

AGE [Asian Geotechnical Engineering Information Centre] is working with the international and regional geotechnical societies to forge closer links with the societies and to become a clearing house for them. This could make joint membership possible, and be beneficial to all parties. (Jain *et al.*)

Dr Vespry also cited the following promotional publications of the Regional Documentation Centre of the Asian Institute of Technology.

- ❑ Abstract bulletin
- ❑ Newsletter
- ❑ Primary journal
- ❑ Pocket guides
- ❑ Reprints
- ❑ Do-it-yourself manuals
- ❑ State-of-the-art reviews
- ❑ Children's book(s), comics
- ❑ Proceedings of conferences (on contract)
- ❑ Surveys, studies
- ❑ Literature surveys

Publication is one of our major activities at the RDC. We need to think in a commercial manner, and not be afraid to go out and seek advertisements to put in our publications.

Even when you are producing an 'academic' publication, you should try to include news items on projects, people, and happenings. Including these items gives your publication a more human aspect, and hence it is more readable, and more people are likely to subscribe. It is also a way of informing your readers of who you are and what you are doing. Remember, you are trying to gain funds to support yourselves. (Jain *et al.*)

At the Ahmedabad workshop, Ms Mona Whyte, Project Coordinator of CEIS, cited the following promotion activities of the CEIS:

- Publishing a newsletter.

- Establishing a marketing theme around which factors in sales talk can be built. The slogan is 'The One-Stop Shop' for information on energy in the Caribbean.
- Attending energy seminars, exhibitions, etc. where CEIS products have been displayed and more subscriptions solicited.
- Distributing announcement fliers for publications which are being marketed.
- Distributing a brochure on the network, including price lists.
- Developing a booklet on the detailed services at the National Focal Points.
- Approaching companies to encourage them to purchase large numbers of copies for distribution to educational and youth institutions which are unable to presently subscribe.
- Obtaining endorsements of products and services from high level ministers and politicians.
- Encouraging leading journalists to critique articles published in the CEIS newsletter.
- Encouraging contributors of articles to CEIS to hold discussions about CEIS on radio programmes.
- Seeking advertisements in national, regional, and international publications.
- Exchanging advertisements on CEIS with those of other companies.
- Adding a section in the newsletter for comments which would allow for positive/negative feedback. (Jain *et al.*)

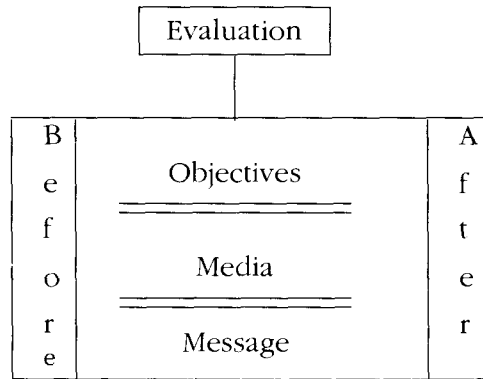
### **The Third Level—Evaluation**

At the third level, think of *what*, *when*, and *how* you would like to *evaluate*. Keep in mind that:

- The evaluation will be as good as the clarity and concreteness of your objectives.
- The two major items of evaluation are message and media options.
- The two stages of evaluation are:
  - ❑ Before the launch of the programme (to develop the objectives and fine tune media and messages).



- ❑ After the programme (to ascertain the results, assess the effectiveness of the promotion, and draw lessons for future campaigns).



For pre-launch evaluation of the message options for their effectiveness, the most commonly used research method is the focus group discussion. The post-launch evaluation of both media and message is done through survey research.

### The Fourth Level—Budget

Finally, at the fourth level, determine whether the budget matches the decisions that you have taken in the first three levels.

Budget, as Kotler points out, is decided upon by:

- Affordable method
- Percentage-of-sales method
- Competitive parity method
- Objective-and-task method

The first method, *affordable method*, is what the organization thinks it can bear.

In the second, *percentage of sales method*, an arbitrary percentage of the sales is the reference point in many businesses. But for information products and services, the reference point could be the overall budget of the library or the information centre.

In the third, *competitive parity method*, the reference point is what the competitors are spending. If information products and services of other libraries and information centres are attracting more attention, the reference could be how much the others are spending on promotion.

Finally, the fourth method, the *objective-and-task method*, appears to be more rational. Having decided the objectives, the audience, the messages, the media, one has an idea of how much money is required to implement the communication programme.

In reality, a mix of all these methods are used. If the budget is not sufficient, either try to get an increase in the budget or rework the major items so as to fit in the available budget.

The four major items of promotion budget, in order of monetary value, are:

➤	Media
➤	Message
➤	Evaluation
➤	Administration

Media is the costliest item of a promotion budget. For developing the media budget through objective-task approach,

- ❑ Assess the current percentage of audience on each objective and what percentage of audience should be moved from the current to the desired level.
- ❑ Estimate the cost of moving the audience from the current to the desired level.

Advertising companies normally peg their fee to the media cost—usually 15 per cent of it. They charge for the cost of preparing the message and conducting the evaluation either as a percentage of the media cost, or separately. In addition, they charge the actual costs of copy creation, like photography and cover design, and actual costs of data collection and analysis.

In addition, there are administration costs like the time spent by the information managers on the development of the promotion programme, coordinating with the advertising agency, and mailing letters, brochures, etc. Sometimes, it is difficult to identify and categorise these costs. If well managed, these costs may remain insignificant as a part of the overall management costs. If not, these costs may become a long-term financial burden to the organization, irrespective of whether any promotion activity is undertaken or not on a regular annual basis. For instance, you may hire staff on a permanent basis for *ad hoc* jobs like doing mailing for a campaign.

### **Integration through Iteration**

The development of a communication programme is an iterative process rather than a linear one. The communication dimensions interact between themselves at each level and between the levels. They coalesce into one, to form the kaleidoscopic impression or image on the client.

To process the thought, iterative operation is necessary. But, to implement or to act, a linear or sequential matching of these elements is essential. Therefore, for the successful implementation of the communication programme, it would be useful to have a map by writing down the details at each stage and checking whether they make a meaningful whole.



### **CONCLUSION**

Promotion of an information product or service is the essential communication process to let the prospective client or buyer become not only aware of the new products and services available, but also to motivate him/her to actually subscribe to the products or services. Therefore, promotion forms an essential fourth pillar among the four Ps of marketing.

What happens when promotion is lacking was explained at the workshop by Dr A. Lahiri, Joint Adviser of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, with reference to NISSAT (National Information System for Science and Technology) centres as follows:

Authorities are often found to say with much conviction (with a touch of ego) that they need not take pains to tell others what they can do for them; if somebody is interested in knowing things, let them take pains to find out for themselves; after all when somebody comes for assistance, they are not sent back disappointed (splash of ego indeed!).

While the 'word of mouth' is the best means of communication, additional promotional efforts are indeed necessary. So far the centres have widely used brochures. National Information Centre on Leather Technology (NICLAI), Chennai and National Information Centre on Drugs and Pharmaceuticals (NICDAP), Lucknow print desk and pocket calendars, desk top engagement diary sheets, and posters. Few of them participate in the annual conventions of industries by putting up exhibition stalls. Unfortunately, none of these is done systematically; the hand-outs are also not circulated periodically. Earlier the NISSAT Newsletter had offered them free space to advertise their information products and services, but the response of the centres had been lukewarm, and therefore, the offer was discontinued.

In one case, the product/service was not appropriately defined. Since 1976, NISSAT has been trying to bring in and popularize the 'on-line technology' by setting up various facilities. All the while, the services were being promoted as 'on-line technology' in the brochures, talks, and in TV discussions without realizing that the potential users were not aware of the technology and the benefits that would accrue through its use. A concept test carried out by a well-known market researcher at the instance of NISSAT brought out the lacuna in communication. Since then, the services of NISSAT centres are being promoted as information services through international database facilities. While 'information service' goes well with people looking for information, the concept of 'international database facilities' reflects that it provides comprehensive state-of-the-art trends (and trendy touch of class at the same time). (Jain *et al.*).

**Appendix 6.1****GUIDELINES FOR PROMOTION****1. The Basic Promotion Tools Relevant to librarians and Information Managers are*****Direct mail***

Sending information letters, catalogues, free samples, etc., using radio/TV/magazine/newspaper direct response, etc.

***Public relations***

Conducting fairs, trade shows, and demonstrations, making presentations at seminars and meetings, publicising news—events, people, and products, participating in charitable activities and community relations, sponsoring publications, lobbying, etc.

***Advertisement***

Print and broadcast ads, packaging, brochures, audio-visual presentations, posters, leaflets, directories, display signs, audio-visuals, symbols and logos, etc.

Using these tools, develop the communication programme as follows:

**2. Decide and Match the Objective, Audience and Message**

Indicate for each target audience the stage (cognitive, affective, and behaviour) at which it is and specify the level (awareness or knowledge; liking, preference, or conviction; or purchase) to which it needs to be moved. Differentiate the individual and organizational target segments as follows: Individuals on socio-cultural, geographical, personal, and psychological dimensions and organizations on industry, function, and level of managers. While creating or evaluating the messages, check the durability, believability, and exclusivity of the messages. Also check the execution of the message in terms of its tone and the human senses that it would appeal to. Make sure that the message is both rational and emotive to move the client towards the desired action.

### **3. Decide and Match the Media, Time and Place**

Find the medium which reaches the selected target audience at the time and place suitable for attaining the objective. The choice may have to be made between mass media and direct media or the use of both. The choice is to be decided by (a) which medium reaches the target audience (b) how fast, (c) at which place, and (d) at what cost. The direct mail, both print and electronic is the cheapest medium. The next cheapest is the print medium (mass and specialized) and then the radio. Television is the costliest medium.

### **4. Decide the Evaluation Process and Test the Programme**

The two major items of evaluation are message and media options, and the stages of evaluation are before the launch and after implementing the programme. Focus group discussions are used for pre-launch evaluation of messages and survey research for the post-launch evaluation of campaigns.

### **5. Decide the Budget**

For deciding the budget, the methods often adopted are: (i) affordable method, (ii) percentage-of-sales method, (iii) competitive parity method, and (iv) objective-and-task method. Very often a combination of all the four may work. The four major items of promotion budget, in order of monetary value, are: (i) media, (ii) message development, (iii) evaluation, and (iv) administration.

### **6. Finally, Remember that Development of a Communication Programme is an Iterative and not a Linear Process**



#### **HOW TO DEVELOP A COMMUNICATION PROGRAMME (AN EXAMPLE)**

Let us take an example of building a communications programme for a management school library which wants to increase its membership.

## 1. Objectives/Target Segment/Message

First, the library may decide to enrol 500 members in the next three months.

Further, the library may decide what type of members it would like to have. For instance, would it like to have more of undergraduate management students, graduate management students, doctoral or research students of management, management teachers, or managers? Let us assume that the library would like to encourage managers to enrol because the management school to which the library belongs would like to provide opportunities for continued education to the managers.

The library would have to think of the message to be sent out to the potential members. For instance, would it be in the interest of the managers to become members of the library for the improvement of their self, or their work, or their family, or all of these? How do they fulfil these needs now without being members of the library? How would the membership distinguish them from managers who are not members? Therefore, the profile of these managers is needed. The profile would help in pitching the message at the right wavelength to persuade the managers to become members of the library.

If the library wants 500 members, how many managers should it reach. Not every manager approached would become a member. Therefore, a large number of managers, say, *triple* the number (i.e., 1,500 managers) would have to be contacted. This multiplier would depend on the assessment of rate of conversion of contacted to actual members. The conversion rate can be assessed through results of past campaigns or judgement. Then create a list of these 1,500 managers. The library may get the lists from the alumni associations of its own school and other management schools, from management or industry associations, and from companies. If the list is much larger than 1,500 managers, some priority would have to be established among the groups. If the list is much smaller, say about 700 or 800, either scale down the objective of getting 500 members or change the target audi-

ence by taking other segments like including management students of various level and management teachers.

When the objective or the target audience changes, the message which was relevant to the managers would no more hold good. Moreover, when you deal with more than one target segment, you might run the danger of having conflicting messages in the open and thereby confusing the audience. What is pleasing to one may be repugnant to another group. The message would have to be reworked.

## **2. Media/Time/Place**

Now think of how to reach these 1,500 managers—through direct mail, public relations, or advertisement, or all three. An ad can be put in newspapers or business/industry journals which are likely to be read by these 1,500 managers. Editors or reporters can be persuaded to cover a news item in their publications on the new offerings of the library. Direct mail could be sent to these managers. Notices or circulars could be sent to companies, industry associations, and management schools for further dissemination to their members. While writing to a company, think of whom to write for help in circulating the information. Get someone to write an article on the various products, services, and activities of the library and its uniqueness as a management library for the relevant newspapers and journals. If any trade exhibitions or professional conferences or seminars are being held during this period, announcements could be made at these places.

Having got an idea of what media to use to reach these 1,500 managers on the list, the timing or sequencing of media activities would have to be decided. Should the direct mail be received by the prospective clients before or after they see the ad? Should the article appear before or after the ad has appeared? Should the circular from schools, associations, and companies follow or precede the letter? If the direct mail is sent, should it be sent to the office or home? Where should the ad appear in the newspaper or



the magazine? Once this set of questions are answered and matched with the first set of questions on objective/audience/message, it is time to move ahead.

### **3. Evaluation**

Now decide how to evaluate the communication programme. The evaluation, could be at three levels:

1. How many became aware of the product or service? And how many did not, and why not?
2. Out of the aware category, how many decided to become members and why? And how many decided not to become members and why?
3. Among those who became members, how many were satisfied with the promises made? And how many were not satisfied and why?

### **4. Budget**

Finally, what should be the budget to implement the communication programme? Does what the task demands match with what is available? if it does, that is the happiest situation for a manager. But it is too much to expect to happen in real life. Therefore, some effort is needed to increase the availability of the budget and to prune the task elements.

### **5. Integration**

The real test is whether the communication programme has been able to get the library the required number of members within the targeted time and money? Sometimes the communication programme may be so successful that the number of managers seeking membership is more than expected. In such a situation, the library would have to expand its original objectives. Or the membership may actually fall below expectation. In such situations, the library would have to be satisfied with reduced objectives, or increase and improve the communication programme, or change the product or service, or its price, or the delivery method.

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