

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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International Development Research Centre

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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
International Development Research Centre
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;
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- 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

Contributors

1. **Mr Dominique Beaulieu**, a management expert, is with Centre de recherche industrielle du Québec, Québec, Canada. He has been responsible for designing the marketing strategy and plan of CRIQ for its Business and Industry information services.
2. **Mr Chin Saik Yoon** served with the International Development Research Centre as a senior professional, and now owns the publishing company Southbound Sendirian Berhad Publishers, Penang, Malaysia.
3. **Ms. Barbara Gumbs** was Head of the Technical Information Service at the Caribbean Industrial Research Institute, and has done consulting assignments for setting up information systems and developing marketing strategies and plans. She is now a Principal Consultant in Information Resources Management, Trinidad & Tobago.
4. **Prof. Abhinandan K. Jain** is professor at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad in the area of marketing. His specialization is in the field of quantitative models in marketing, strategic marketing, international marketing.
5. **Prof. Abraham Koshy** is professor at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad in the area of marketing. His specialization is in product and brand management, international marketing, and strategic marketing.
6. **Prof. T.P. Rama Rao**, is professor at the Indian Institute of management, Ahmedabad in the area of computers and Information Systems. His specialization is in management information systems, DSS and software project management.

7. **Prof. S. Sreenivas Rao** was a faculty in the Business Policy Area at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad. His specialization is in communications. He is now among the visiting faculty at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad and consultant to a business organization in Ahmedabad.
8. **Mr H. Arthur Vespry** was Director of LARDIS (Library, Reference, Documentation, and Information Service) at the Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand. He is now a private consultant to libraries and information Services.
9. **Ms. Mona Whyte**, Project Manager, Caribbean Energy Information System (CEIS), has been associated with the setting up of the regional information system, with its headquarters at the Scientific Research Council, in Jamaica.
10. **Ms. Marienne Vespry**, was programme officer in the Programme Management Division of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). She had previously worked in various capacities as an editor and information officer with ESCAP, and earlier with United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in Vienna, the National Library of Singapore, and the IDRC, Ottawa.
11. **Ms. Christa Avere** is a Marketing Consultant.
12. **Mr Ashok Jambhekar** is Librarian and Head, National Information Centre on Management, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad.

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Introduction to Marketing of Information Products and Services

■ *S. Sreenivas Rao*



CHALLENGES OF TODAY AND TOMORROW

In the last decade, significant changes have taken place all over the world, and they have been posing challenges to various professions and professionals.

First, the information revolution, triggered by personal computers and networking, has been one major change, which brought about a revolution in the information profession. Libraries, as we know of as buildings with stacks of books and periodicals and signs of 'silence' all around, may become extinct in the coming decades. One may not run to the library or a librarian for information, but to one's own computer. Information would be at finger tips rather than in stacks. As the boundaries and utility of information, and the speed and quantity of handling it expand, the initial costs of hardware and software will increase dramatically. New economies of scale would have to be discovered to make this investment economical.

Second, the winds of globalization, marketization, and privatization have been sweeping away the long-held political and economic beliefs. Governments and social sponsors have been propagating that social institutions—be they hospitals, schools, colleges, and libraries—become self-sufficient if they are to purposefully work and demonstrate their relevance and competence to their clients. Institutional excellence will now have to be achieved through competition, that too worldwide, rather than through rules, regulations and controls. The age-old generosity for the socially desirable institutions is drying up, because of the change in the political outlook and the economic squeeze that the governments, donors, and sponsors are facing. Librarians and information managers, therefore, are being asked to generate revenue to become self-sustaining as much as possible.

Third, countries are clamouring for immediate fulfillment of ever-rising social and economic expectations, and are therefore asking what information can do for the overall national development. Developing countries are no longer interested in information for the sake of information, knowledge for the sake of knowledge, or education for the sake of education. The new thought wave is that information is power only if you use it, not if you store it. Information appears to be the 'life saver' for the developing world. This point is well brought out in 'The case of CEIS' given in the section 'Case Studies' towards the end of this guidebook.

As a consequence of the radical changes in the last decade—information revolution, globalization, marketization, privatization, and using information for development—the clientele interested in information services and products has been on the increase. Till now, librarians and information managers have been happy in catering to the limited clientele of the school, college, university, research organization, government department, or public organization that has sponsored them. Increasingly, clients outside these limited groups are equally interested in information, for instance, practitioners of any profession and planners at national and organizational levels. Business and commercial

organizations have become conscious of information as a resource. The information age has truly arrived. So far, libraries and librarians existed in islands. Whatever little networking existed was through the exchange of books and periodicals—that too at the minimum level. But today's computer and information technology allows for, not only, a huge possibility for networking among information centres, but also for making information available to a larger clientele than the existing one. Moreover, the new technology will allow creation of newer information products and services, and make them available quickly. Constraints of the print medium no longer exist.

As a result, librarians and information managers are facing a four-pronged challenge:

- Increase in clientele, their variety, their demands, and their expectations.
- Increase in the initial or capital cost of information and information technology, and the need to leverage the technology and find new levels of economies of scale to serve the increasing potential clientele.
- Drying up of the public sponsorship and subsidy and the need to find alternate sources of revenue.
- Complexity in ways of identifying clients and their requirements, and servicing them.

Librarians and information managers are, therefore, called upon to show their initiative and entrepreneurship. Time has come to rethink, shed many old beliefs, and find new ways of doing things. The traditional concept of a library or an information centre as a social service for knowledge, for the sake of knowledge, and library, for the sake of library, has outlived its need. The warehouse and custodian perspective of librarians and information managers needs a change. Preparing information products and services only when asked for, has to give in to a more systematic anticipation and research of the future requirements of different clients, leading to the preparation of appropriate products and services and making these available to the clients. Membership-patronage-subsidy comfort has ended.

Duncan Smith of CARL Corporation writes about libraries, librarians, and their role:

Each generation of librarians must define for itself and its users what the library is and how it will add value to the information exchanges of its community. Libraries and librarians have traditionally added value to these exchanges in three major ways. They have provided physical access to information, they have organized this information for use, and they have provided assistance in locating and utilizing this information. . .

In this context, Mary C. Bushing of the Collection Development, Montana State University Libraries, raises the following questions:

. . . What will this library look like? What services, programmes, and materials will be offered? How can we find answers to important questions about such things as: the relationship of access to ownership; the appropriate content and extent of collections; the right mix of services for a specific community of potential clients; and sources of adequate support for library activities? In order to address these concerns, we must first determine what the role of the library is to be. What is the business of the library? It is the answer to this question which is the crucial first step in defining the future.

Renald Lafond, Senior Programme Officer, International Development Research Centre, Canada, explains the changing scenario from the IDRC's experience of supporting over 700 information projects all over the world:

In the early years, ISSD (Information Sciences and Systems Division of the IDRC) concentrated on the development of the basic capacities of information and documentation centres to produce bibliographies, abstracts, and later to computerize these systems. Relatively little attention was paid to issues such as the use of information and sustainability of information systems and services, and impact of information on development. A large proportion of the projects aimed at serving researchers in research organizations, and the information products were mainly bibliographies, newsletters, and similar products.

During the last decade, more attention was given to the identification of user needs and the promotion of information products and services. At the same time, information projects

evolved to target decision-makers at government level, local communities, small scale industries, and other groups of users. Bibliographies did not meet their needs. Therefore, user needs surveys were required in these user communities to determine their specific needs, and new approaches in information delivery had to be adopted. More recently, information products in electronic format, such as CD-ROM, appeared.

The cost increases in accessing information through on-line databases, purchasing databases on diskettes or CD-ROM, and acquiring journals, and the need to purchase and update information technology, such as computer equipment, to provide appropriate information services are forcing information and documentation centres and libraries to charge for some information services to recover, at least in part, the cost of providing information and to re-inject the funds generated for updating information or equipment. Such measures were initiated several years ago with charges for photocopy services, on-line access, and subscriptions to newsletter and other publications.

In short, the time has come to get at the *sine qua non* of information. Libraries and information centres need to ask, what business are they in? Is it information sorting, storage, securing, and retrieving it if someone wants it? Or is it something beyond it—to look for needs, wants, and demands of various clients, innovate products, and reach out to the client rather than wait for the client to come. What role would information managers like to play in this transition from an industrial to an information society?

Lafond indicates the present status as follows:

In its new strategy, which was implemented some three years ago, the ISSD decided to give importance to the use of information, the long-term sustainability of information services and systems, the impact of information on development, and therefore marketing of information products and services.



RELEVANCE OF MARKETING FOR LIBRARIANS AND INFORMATION MANAGERS

In the early conceptualization of a library's and information centre's business, Dr S R Ranganathan had the concept of customer orientation embedded into it.

He described a library as:

... public institution or establishment charged with the care of a collection of books, the duty of making them accessible to those who require the use of them and the task of converting every person in its neighbourhood into a habitual library goer and reader of books. (Kumar)

Moreover, Dr Ranganathan's concept of the Five Laws of Library Science had the marketing concept at their core. The five laws were:

- *First law:* 'Books are for use.' (Maximize the use of books.)
- *Second law:* 'Every reader his book.' (Reader is the prime factor and his/her need must be satisfied.)
- *Third law:* 'Every book its reader.' (Find a reader for every book.)
- *Fourth law:* 'Save the time of the reader.' (Organize information in such a way that the reader finds the wanted information promptly.)
- *Fifth law:* 'A library is a growing organism.' (Emphasis is on comprehensive and evolutionary growth.)

A focus on customer needs (second law) and wants through saving of time (fourth law) is clearly emphasized in these laws, as far back as 1931. Also, the third law relates to finding a reader, probably implying that the library should reach out to the customers. A closer examination indicates that modifications are needed in the interpretation of the laws. Firstly the definition of a customer, only as a reader, needs to be widened to include the purpose of reading and ways of using the information. Secondly, in today's context the process of use of information (like use of computers/information technology (IT) to process the information obtained from the library/information centre) may give rise to totally new needs and wants (like getting information through e-mail which can be used directly on the personal computer (PC). Thirdly, given the usefulness of information in one library/centre to customers in different and far off locations, reaching out to customers is becoming far more important. Thus, though customer focus has long been advocated in the library profession, it may be refined to suit the current context of the market.



WHAT IS MARKETING

Smith writes:

Marketing is a stance and an attitude that focuses on meeting the needs of users. Marketing is a means of ensuring that libraries, librarians, and librarianship are integrated into both today's and tomorrow's emerging global culture. Marketing is not separate from good practice. It is good practice.

Peter Drucker, the management guru, defines Marketing as follows:

It (marketing) is the whole business seen from the point of view of its final result, that is, from the customer's point of view. . . . Business success is not determined by the producer but by the customer. (Kotler)

Philip Kotler, the marketing guru, calls *Marketing* 'a social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating, offering, and exchanging products of value with others.'

Further, Kotler defines *Marketing Management* as 'the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of goods, services, and ideas to create exchanges with target groups that satisfy customer and organizational objectives.'

Finally, Kotler defines *marketing concept* as follows:

The marketing concept holds that the key to achieving organizational goals consists in determining the needs and wants of target market and delivering the desired satisfactions more effectively and efficiently than competitors. . . . The marketing concept rests on four main pillars, namely target market, customer needs, coordinated marketing, and profitability.

Most organizations in general, and those involved in information and development areas in particular, may not have profit as their sole objective. The fourth pillar of the marketing concept may need to be changed to 'achievement of organizational objective(s).'

Bushing explains:

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 quality products—services, programs, and materials. A marketing audit and the resulting plan can contribute to a library's ability to find a niche in the present as well as in the future and to fill that niche by an optimal allocation of resources. A marketing orientation can assist libraries in defining their role and in guaranteeing their future. Marketing provides a theoretical framework within which to address the specific library and information science questions facing public, school, special, and academic libraries in both the public and private sectors. What the library will look like and what it will offer as products can be determined through the use of modern marketing theory and practice.



THE MARKETING APPROACH

The marketing approach in managing a library or an information centre, therefore, involves the process of asking questions and seeking information on the following four-fold dimensions to evolve an organizational strategy:

➤ *Market*

- ❑ What is the target public or audience and what are their needs, wants, and demands? What adds value to whatever they are trying to achieve or perform?
- ❑ What is the competition? How should the product/library/centre be viewed by the target public in relation to competition?

➤ *External Marketing*

- ❑ What is the product/service and what should it be? Should there be an introduction of a new product/service? And what kind of support could be provided to the client in using the information effectively?

- ❑ How should it be priced so that the client can pay his/her fair share and it can still generate the required revenues?
- ❑ How should it be promoted to selected customers to communicate the desired position?
- ❑ How should it be delivered to the place where the user needs it, when he/she needs it, and the way he/she needs it?
- ❑ What should be the organizational image, and how should it be projected to support the product image?

➤ *Interactive Marketing*

- ❑ How should the requirements of the target audience be assessed and value delivered to the customers? What kind of customer contact personnel and systems should be employed to assess the requirements?
- ❑ What should be the mechanism to constantly update systems and recruit, train, and motivate customer contact personnel so as to assess and deliver the requirements of target customers?

➤ *Internal Marketing*

- ❑ How should the internal organization be oriented to serve the external target segments and how should customer contact personnel assess, produce and deliver the required products and services?
- ❑ What kind of planning, control and organizational mechanism should be set up to achieve all the above steps?

In short, the marketing approach provides a manager the mental map to think systematically about:

- Target audience, competition and own distinctive offer.
- Design of four Ps (i.e. product, price, place, promotion).
- Systems to interface with target audience.
- Production and delivery systems.
- Planning, organization and control of all the above.

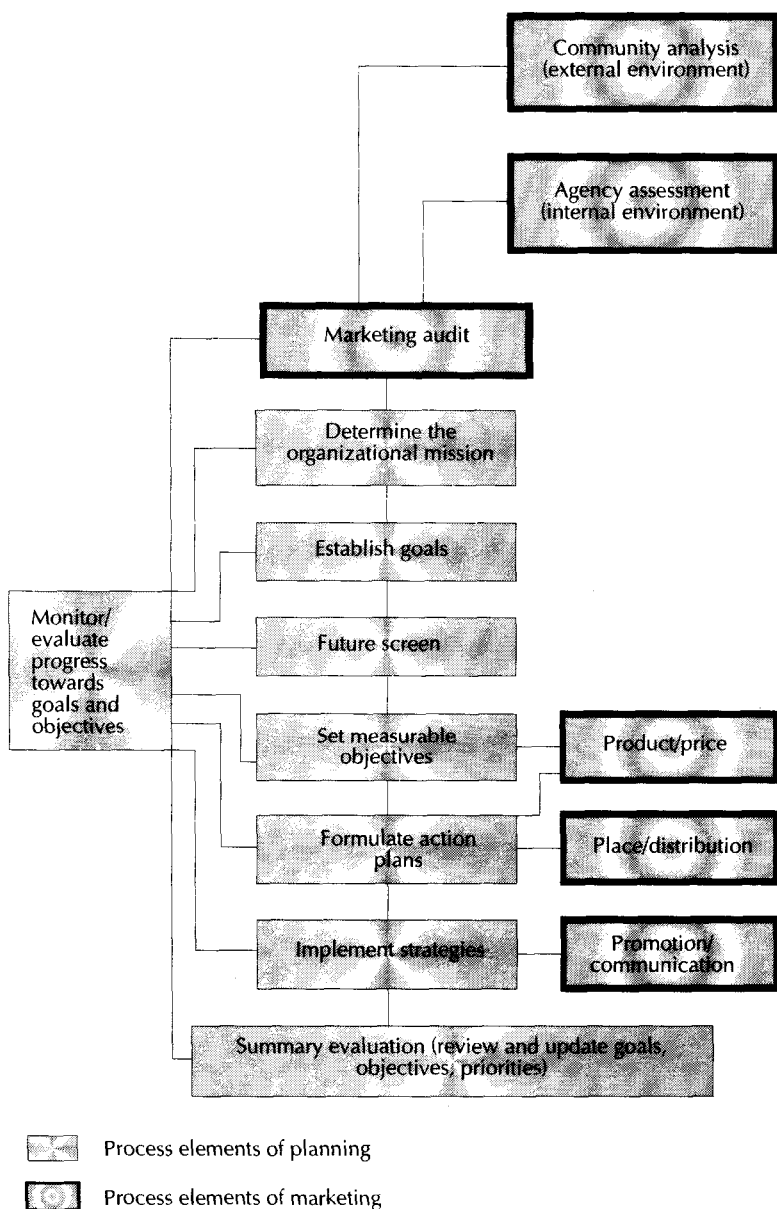


Fig. 1.1 *Fusion of planning and marketing processes*

The marketing approach can be used to make the existing planning process of a library or an information centre more rig-

orous. Darlene E. Weingand of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, (see Fig. 1.1) indicates the fusion of planning and marketing processes.

Once this fusion of planning and marketing takes place, a time would come when the annual reports of libraries and information centres would look like that of any business organization indicating the targets set at the beginning of the year and the performance achieved rather than, a mere indication of how many books have been acquired, how many have been catalogued, and how many new members came into the fold. Moreover, organizational planning and performance evaluation will lead to individual staff planning and performance evaluation which, in turn, would lead to the much needed vitality in the information profession and management.

The fusion of planning and marketing and its positive after-effects would lead to the organic and dynamic sustenance, and growth, of libraries and information centres. At least, a map of the organizational functioning would be available to guide the information managers to monitor and intervene as and when needed.



WHAT INHIBITS FROM BEING MARKETING-ORIENTED

What inhibits the librarians and information managers from adopting the marketing approach? The same reasons which inhibit any other social organization or profession. Kotler writes:

The resistance is especially strong in (service) industries where marketing is being introduced for the first time, for instance, in law offices, colleges, hospitals, or government agencies. Colleges have to face the hostility of professors, and hospitals have to face the hostility of doctors, because each group thinks that marketing their service would be degrading.

Bushing writes:

Librarians . . . may have failed to adopt marketing theory and practices for a variety of reasons. It may be because they misunderstand marketing and believe it to be simply another term for public relations and publicity. At another level it may be because of a real or perceived lack of resources to devote to marketing processes and the coordination of a marketing approach even when many of these processes, if not the organizational orientation, are already part of their organizational culture and operation. Lastly, libraries may not have adopted marketing because of a concern with the basic tenet of marketing theory that moves the locus of control from the librarian-expert to the clients . . . A societal-marketing orientation as described by Kotler (1982) and interpreted by Baker (1993) provides for both the satisfaction of immediate client needs and the long-term needs of society which might be identified by experts or, in this case, librarians.

Lafond indicates:

Because most librarians and documentalists have not been trained with the concept of 'marketing,' the introduction of marketing to information services has not always been easy. There is also some reluctance to market because many documentalists and librarians still feel information should be free. In most cases, because of lack of expertise in marketing, documentation and information centres have difficulty in introducing the marketing concept which starts by the identification of the potential users to fulfil the mandate of the service, the identification of their needs, etc.

I visited some documentation centres in Vietnam . . . where the generation of revenues from information services is slowly starting. But there are information and documentation centres having difficulties in promoting their information services and products even when they are free. The project leaders confirmed that they have a lot of difficulty in developing strategies, not only to generate revenues, but simply to reach their target users. I saw the same situation in Africa at the end of last year.

The lack of use of marketing concepts and tools in libraries and information centres, according to Seetharama may be attributable to the following reasons:

- Confusion at the conceptual level among librarians and information scientists that marketing is nothing but promotion and sales.
- Lack of a definite marketing policy—end user policy, product policy, distribution policy, tariff policy, services policy—either at the national or at the local level.
- User Needs Assessment Studies are inadequate due to methodological deficiencies and due to the fact that they are not carried out on a continuing basis.
- Lack of proper market research and segmentation studies.
- Product development and targeting leaves much to be desired due to the absence of market research and segmentation.
- Reluctance on the part of the users to pay for information services resulting in the adoption of economy measures. As a consequence, the physical quality and get-up of products are adversely affected.
- Evaluation of information services and products is conspicuous by its absence (Gopalkrishnan, 1988).
- Marketing concepts are either not taught or least emphasized in library schools. In most cases, it does not form part of the curriculum.
- Information is a low priority item of users, and the motivation to share is even lower.
- Information consolidation activities/products, especially, value-added products which are very useful to users are not generated to the extent needed.



THE FOUR BARRIERS TO MARKETING

In short, the four barriers to the adoption of the marketing approach are:

- Attitudinal
- Structural
- Systemic
- Environmental

Attitudewise, information professionals, like many other professionals, have been inward looking—happy with satisfying a limited clientele, that too when asked for, and happy with jealously guarding their importance. To be outward looking, from the client's point of view would require them to make a 180 degrees turnaround.

Structurewise, the staff which comes into contact with the public or clients are the counter clerks and less frequently, the reference librarian and the librarian. As a result, there is no staff to reach out and capture the point of view of the client. To introduce any such layer would be resisted from the existing staff and the turf holders. Moreover, the libraries and information centres are a part of a large organization which does not follow the marketing approach as well. Also, traditional security of the job, common to public institutions, and lack of involvement of professionals in the management of the library or the information centre, in developing countries, is conducive to a no-change syndrome.

Systemwise, libraries and information centres, so far, have been more storage, security, and audit conscious. They do not allow the client or the client's point of view inside the system. Guarding or protecting the information is more important than utilizing it for the satisfaction of its clientele. Therefore, any changes in the system to make it more client or service oriented, would be to ask for both attitudinal as well as structural changes.

Environmentwise, the culture, especially in the developing countries, still believes that information should be free and should be sought by clients themselves. Dependence on government and private largesse in many areas is taken for granted. There is no attempt at seeking out clients. Marketing and payment for a variety of services, like education or information, is considered infra-dig both for the giver and the taker.



STATUS OF THE USE OF MARKETING CONCEPT IN LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION CENTRES

A library is a social and service institution providing information to its members. Its traditional functions include selection, acquisi-

tion, storage, processing, circulation, and reference. Over a period of time, due to change in the nature of demands by the clients, libraries have expanded their functions to include documentation and document delivery systems.

The activities and services/products of libraries and information centres, as Seetharama indicates, is enumerated in Table 1.1.

Translation, editing, publishing, and reprographic services have been lately added to the traditional services mentioned in the table.

The size of the unit and the activities undertaken, govern the design of the organization of a library/information centre into various sections like acquisition, circulation, etc. It may be noted that many functions in a library/information centre are back office functions. Only limited members of the staff interact with customers and that too, mostly at the initiative of the customers themselves. There would be hardly any library/information centre where there is a function/section called marketing.

The five laws of library science (Ranganathan) did imply a sharp focus on customer. However, a closer examination of the laws reveals that the focus is on a customer who came to the library rather than, the library reaching out to the customer. Marketing concept, as presented above (Kotler) has hardly been used in libraries/information centres in developing countries. Seetharama points out:

The concept of marketing of information services and products in India can be said to be still in infancy. This is in spite of the fact that the doyen of Library Science, Dr S R Ranganathan had focussed on the need for marketing (though, perhaps, he did not use the term) when he enunciated the Five Laws of Library Science in 1930. As a matter of fact, the Five Laws can be used as a basis for the development of marketing principles in the context of libraries and information centres.

Seetharama further points out the need for strategic intervention to adopt the marketing approach, for improvement in providing service to customers:

TABLE
1.1
Activities and services of libraries and information centres

<i>Activities</i>	<i>Services/Products</i>
Selection and collection of documents	Bibliographies, current awareness.
Indexing and abstracting	Indexed bibliographies, abstracting bulletins, custom searches.
Extraction	Digest extracts, descriptive reviews/ state-of-the-art report/trend report, compilations (unevaluated).
Evaluation	Critical review of area, critical compilation of data, criteria for experimentation, recommendations, solutions to (immediate) problems, correlation of data, prediction of properties.
Other activities	Translation, editing, publishing, and reprographic services.

Increasingly, in recent times, R&D efforts have been mainly focussed on problems which require access to information that cuts across many disciplines. As an immediate response, new services and products were designed and developed. Ironically, however, the users felt that they were not being served adequately and appropriately. This led to an in-depth analysis which revealed, surprisingly, that the services were not user oriented largely because of the non-involvement of users (in their design) and also that the extent of use made of these services was unknown to the generators of the information services. In other words, libraries and information centres instead of being 'responsive' tended to become unresponsive organizations. This, perhaps, is true of many a library and information centre in this sub-continent. Probably, by designing and developing an appropriate marketing strategy, the situation could be altered and improved upon.



NEED FOR STRATEGIC INTERVENTION

Therefore, any change in approach would have to be thought through, planned for, and implemented over a long period. Staff, managers, and professionals would have to be reoriented and

trained to start thinking afresh. The target client and his/her needs, wants and demands become the *raison d'être* of the organization and the focal point of its strategy, structure, and systems. Along with external marketing, internal marketing and alliances are equally important, i.e. the library needs to be marketed to the internal people who matter for the library, or take decisions regarding it, in the sponsoring organization. Moreover, information is a commodity which requires constant interaction and interpretation in its use. Hence interactive marketing, i.e. interaction with the client on a one-to-one basis, will become very essential in understanding the client as well as, to help him/her use the information in the best possible manner. Therefore, the total preparation—preparation of the library, its sponsoring organization, and its clientele—is very important for the changeover.

In this process of external, interactive, and internal marketing, the following strategic needs have to be kept in focus:

- Reaching financial viability. In information, as in education, broadcasting, or print media, it will become difficult to achieve total financial self-sufficiency through the generation of revenue from the immediate user, alone, in the near future. The client cannot afford all the costs really involved even with the processing of information, leave alone generation of information. Therefore, it would become essential to decide, in each case, what should be the contribution of the client, the library or the information centre, and the society.
- Increasing the clientele and the reach to them. Unless information is used, the question of impact of information on the development of the individual, organization, and country does not arise. And the use of information has become essential for the survival and progress of nations.
- Innovating products and preparing flexible products to suit various clients becomes important because of the nature of the product, i.e. information. Dr Yoneji Masuda identified four unique qualities of information:

Information is inconsumable, untransferable, indivisible, and accumulative. Goods disappear through use, informa-

tion is used but not consumed. Goods are moved from A to B. When information is moved, it stays at A as well as moving to B. Goods can be divided and used, but information, as opposed to data, can only be used as a set. Goods are accumulated by not being used, information accumulates through use. (Vespry)

Hence, packaging and repackaging of information becomes important to suit various client needs, wants and demands.

- Moreover, a library or an information centre is a service organization. Therefore, innovating and providing new services is as important as the innovation and providing of new products.
- Orienting, acculturizing, and training the staff. Services are not tangible. Therefore, they require personal interaction. Some libraries and information centres who have become conscious of the need for marketing the information products and services, have acquired a marketing department or a marketing manager to perform the task of external marketing. But this is not enough. The personnel who interact with the client system also need to be oriented. The attitudinal change would have to come across the total management and staff of the immediate and the parent organization, and not merely the marketing department or marketing personnel. Without this overall change, the marketing department or marketing manager may not be able to achieve much.
- Seizing the opportunity provided by the computer and information technology, Dr Masuda added: "Information technology adds four more properties to information: concentration, dispersion, circulation, and feedback." (Vespry) How best can one use these characteristics to improve the information product?
- Measuring the impact of information on development. Only by demonstrating the need to use information for and its impact on development, libraries and information centres would be able to persuade the organization and the community to bear part of the costs of information.

In essence, marketing provides conceptual and analytical tools to plan and manage the information organization for achieving the financial viability or balance, as well as other objectives, germane to the business and profession of libraries and information centres. Therefore, marketing is not merely a tool to achieve economic results but to achieve total information results. Information professionals have been accustomed to utilizing user studies. The five laws of library science inculcate the customer perspective. Now, only a jump is needed for the librarians and information managers to use marketing effectively so as to meet the challenges facing them.

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