P^4AC – A refined marketing mix ratio for Academic Libraries

Dr.P.Chellappandi
Assistant Professor,
Department of Library & Information Sciences
Madurai Kamaraj University
Madurai – 625 021. Tamilnadu. India
E-mail: pandi_chella@rediffmail.com

Dr.J.P.S.Kumaravel
Associate Professor and Academic Coordinator
Department of Library & Information Science
DDE,
Madurai Kamaraj University
Madurai – 625 021. Tamilnadu. India

Introduction

- Libraries, including university libraries, are public institutions that serve the society. -- Dr.S.R. Ranganathan

- "A library is an investment in humanity in its progress and its struggles and its traditions" -- Paterson

- Now all Libraries despite their type are in a transition from Document oriented to Digital information providers

Academic Libraries in Transition

- Libraries as a physical space containing printed documents (physical building) to libraries as a social space.

- Owners of information to providers of access to information

- Change in the philosophy and roles of library.

- Reference services to information delivery centres.

- A center for merely creating informed citizens to producing communicative citizens.

- Library as service-oriented to user-oriented centres.

- A shift from library cooperation to library consortium.

- information literacy to information overflow.

- shift from "here and now" to a more virtual information services providers that will cross the boundaries of time and distance.

Marketing of Library and Information Services

Marketing – What?

- *"first we need 'marketing' which looks upon the entire business from the point of view of its ultimate purpose and justification that is from the point of view of the customer (or rather the 'customers' since every business and every product has at least two, and usually many more quite different types of customer to satisfy. – Peter J Drucker*

Modes of Marketing in Library and Information Services

- *displaying new arrivals;*

- *sending newly acquired book titles accession lists and e-information resources (e-journals) via email and print formats to staff;*

- *posting information on notice boards in around campus;,*

- *producing brochures to promote e-information resources (mainly e-journals) and*

- *development of Library Website which can be accessed locally.*

Marketing Mix

- The prominent marketer, Jerome McCarthy, E proposed a Four 'P's classification in 1960, which has since been widely used by marketers throughout the world. The 'four Ps' are
    - Product
    - Price
    - Promotion
    - Place

    Almost all the proposed marketing mix are based on promoting business based on some tangible products. But Libraries are concerned with information which are intangible. Hence I feel that a new marketing mix which is specifically for marketing of Information is the need of the day.

P^{4}AC – A proposed mixing of mix for marketing of Library and Information Services

- **Product**
- **Processes/Procedures**
- **Personalization**
- ***Professional Skills and Competencies***
- ***Ambience***
- ***Clientele***

P^{4}AC - Product

- Human thought and experience that are tacit knowledge are recorded and converted into explicit knowledge and available as products in Library and information Centers. They should be made available to all either free of cost or at nominal cost.

P^{4}AC – Processes/Procedures

- Traditional libraries had adopted to classification, cataloguing and reference service to enable the knowledge embedded in documents to reach the knowledge seekers. In modern libraries, OPAC, digital repositories have become the tools for knowledge storage and dissemination

P^{4}AC – Personalisation

- Personalization technology enables the dynamic insertion, customization or suggestion of content in any format that is relevant to the individual user, based on the user's implicit behaviour and preferences, and explicitly given details.

- The users behaviours may vary in their information seeking as well as their psychological behaviour.

- For example a scholar may require information on a specific topic and then, on receipt of it he/she may use it for making power point presentations.

- Here the librarians job is to design a personalised information retrieval system which can satisfy the needs of the users.

P^{4}AC – *Professional Skills and Competencies*

The librarian is supposed to have certain marketing skills such as

- a belief in service and trying to achieve customer's satisfaction;

- a clear understanding of the organization's overall aims and objectives;

- an ability to assemble and interpret information for the benefit of the clientele; good communication skills, both oral and written;

- enthusiasm and commitment; and

- ability to take criticism, not always constructive.

P^{4}AC – *Professional Skills and Competencies … contd*

Ranganathan provocates that like a host, the libraian should provide full hospitality to a user - as a supreme guest at the premises of the library. According to Ranganathan (1961):

❖ Give service with full attention and sincerity.

❖ Give him/her service to the best capacity at your command.

❖ Give him/her service in all modesty and in full freedom from any touch of prestige or ego.

❖ Give him/her service in full measure there should not be any offence to the laws of library science.

P^{4}AC – Ambience

- The implementation of ICT alone cannot encourage the clientele to visit the library frequently. A library having good ambience will naturally attract more readers to the Library. In order to achieve this, many libraries are changing themselves from traditional look to the development of Learning commons.

P^{4}AC – Clientele

- Library and information professionals should strive hard to gain a far vision of 'who our customers are', 'what they want', and 'what are their social characters, values, desires, aspiration'. The advancement of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has enabled education and technology in self-help and do-it-yourself activities in libraries. The 21st century clientele will place high value on self-reliance, adaptability and survival under difficult conditions and the ability to do things of his/her own.

Marketing mix in Academic Libraries – A Proposed Ratio

Though the components of proposed marketing mix **P⁴AC** are equally important, they can be organized in the order of preference in the following manner

Professional Skills & competencies	30%
Clientele	20%
Ambience	20%
Product	10%
Personalisation	10%
Processes and Procedures	10%

Conclusion

Academic libraries rely on their host organizations for operational costs. To gain some self-sufficiency, university libraries think seriously about not only recovering the costs incurred but also making a profit through their services. Whenever librarians meet and chat among themselves, the main theme is the changing trend in the user approach and the environment in which the libraries work. What ever may be the case, the librarians should give prime importance to the major share of marketing mix – Professional skills and competencies, to prove their identity.