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E-Marketing of Library and Information Products and Services

Abstract:

The idea of marketing library and information products and services is very innovative. Users of the library are treated as a king and whole library products and services develop according to their demand. The concept of marketing changed from traditional- off line marketing to electronic- on line marketing; market-oriented to customer-oriented as people spend more and more time on web. The trend of teleshopping and e-shopping is now developing; especially young generation prefers these advance mints to buy and sell their products and services. Traditional marketing principles are applied in the e-marketing to attract consumer and to increase the use of the library and information products and services. In e-marketing, library products and services have been promoted through new tools like online advertising, website, e-mail, facebook, twitter, blogs, e-conference, etc. For survival in electronic environment, libraries have to adopt new technologies and revise its principles and policies, functions, services and resources. In this paper, attempted have been made to explain the meaning E-marketing, its advantages and limitations as well as the concept of E-marketing in libraries.

Keywords: E-marketing, Library products and services

Introduction ::

Today, technology has indeed revolutionized our world in to an electronic era, a so called 'e-world'. E-world has introduced new trends like e-business, e-commerce, e-finance, e-banking, e-marketing, e-governance, e-library, etc. Electronic resolution directly affects lifestyle of the people. Television, computer, mobile, internet, etc. have become basic need of the most of the people of the world.

India is the third biggest country in terms of the internet users in the world. It is estimated that 121million Indians are logged on to the internet in 2012. About 59% of Indians access the internet via mobile. Internet advertising is expected to grow by around 18% in 2012 (internetworldstats). Various studies on internet users have shown that people spend more and more time on web. The trend of teleshopping and e-shopping is now developing; especially young generation prefers these advance mints to buy and sell their products and services. Some well-known sites for online shopping are homeshop18.com, mantra.com, infibeam.com, naaptol.com, etc. Online market places allow buyers to see the best deals available without moving from their desktop and choose the products they want which they could not find at the local supermarket.

The idea of marketing library and information products and services is very innovative. Library and information products and services are now being recognized as commodities and so it can be sold, exchanged, let and transmitted. In marketing concept, library/librarian is the seller and the user is the customer of information product and services. Marketing is the systematic plan that focuses on development of products, place or mode of delivery, adjustment of price to the market and promotion to specially targeted groups of the library market. Libraries not always focus on producing new products, but some time old products are repackaged and promoted in different place or for a new segment of consumers. Libraries are facing greater competition from many sources like bookstores, publishers and vendors who try to provide some of the same services that libraries provide. These competitors sometimes provide their services faster and more efficiently. To compete with all competitors, libraries have to introduce various innovative products and services and use various marketing tools to reach their users at global market.

In electronic era, the concept of marketing changed from traditional- off line marketing to electronic- on line marketing; market-oriented to customer-oriented. Traditional marketing principles are applied in the e-marketing to attract consumer and to increase the use of the library and information

products and services. Information technology has created a new gateway for information products and services. Information products and services in a multiplicity of formats have made libraries and information centers more competitive and alert. Libraries are being subjected to significant pressure from the information explosion and electronic revolution. The challenges of budget cuts, increased user expectations, the rapid growth of material in new formats, rising network demands, complexity of information requirements and competition by database vendors are forcing the professionals to adopt marketing concept to improve the management of libraries. In e-marketing, library products and services have been promoted through new tools like online advertising, website, e-mail, facebook, twitter, blogs, e-conference, etc. For survival in electronic environment, libraries have to adopt new technologies and revise its principles and policies, functions, services and resources.

E-marketing ::

E-marketing is the process of marketing a brand using internet. E-marketing is also known as online marketing, internet marketing, cyber marketing, net marketing, digital marketing and web marketing. The basic concept of E-marketing is to provide the valuable products to the customers with speed. Traditionally, telephone, postal services, news papers, radio and television were used as sources to communicate to customers, but now a day along with these tools internet is also being used as a source to reach and communicate to customers.

E-marketing refers to the application of marketing principles and techniques via electronic media and more specifically through internet (Fialkoff, 2006). E-marketing is the art and science of selling products or services over digital network such as internet and cellular phone networks.

According to Dave Chaffey, E-marketing can be considered to be equivalent to internet marketing; simply defined as, "Achieving marketing objectives through applying digital technologies".

E-marketing is the process of utilizing information technology in the conception, distribution, promotion and pricing of goods and services that satisfy individual and organizational objects (ckbooks.com).

Advantages of E-marketing ::

- Global reach
- Easy, speedy and effective
- Low cost
- Targeted audience
- Effective and constant measurement and analysis
- 24X7 days marketing
- Two way communication channel
- Immediate impact
- Personalization
- Powerful and interesting campaigns
- Instant purchase facilities
- Advantage in competition and increase in service quality
- Instant access to information
- Convenience
- Accountability
- Wide scope
- Increase interactivity
- One to one marketing
- High return of investment

Limitations of E-marketing

- Dependability on technology
- Worldwide competition
- Barrier of speed of internet connection
- High maintenance cost
- Problem of security
- The consumer is unable to physically feel or try on the product
- Many internet products are outright scams or promoted with deception make it difficult for purchase decision
- The quality, size and color of the product may be different from its image on webpage

- Poor after-sale services

The Concept of E-marketing in Libraries ::

The advent of Information Communication Technology (ICT) has change the approach and demand of the users. E-revolution has increased a greater demand for remote and speedy online access of information on user's desktop and is accessible 24X7 days. Advanced technology, facility of digital storage media, availability of wealth of information resources accessible through internet, reduction in cost of computers and other integrated equipments as well as easy, speedy and cheap internet access facilities make it possible for libraries to introduce IT based tools, i.e. e-products and e-services, to fulfill information needs of their customers as well as objectives of the library. There are five factors namely, the information explosion, the technological revolution, competition in the market, users behavior and increasing library costs which have forced the libraries to develop an E-marketing approach in its operation and services.

Schmidt believes that, "The products and services provided by libraries have changed considerably, due to change in education, the impact of technology, new methods for information provision and declining budgets".

The Internet represents a new electronic channel for conducting all of a library's marketing activities including advertising, customer service, marketing research, transactions, distribution, and even new-product and service development. Libraries that embrace Internet technology can gain advantages, especially in the areas of marketing channels, finance, marketing research, marketing communications and marketing strategy. E-marketing allows librarians to help their customers to access information via electronic environment, using various methods such as e-mail, facebook, chat, website, e-conference, blogs, etc. Additionally, for providing various services like alerting services, virtual reference services, current content services etc. to users all such tools are proved very effective in libraries. Libraries and information centers have begun to realize that E-marketing of library and information products and services is an integral part of administration, especially as a mean of improving user satisfaction and promoting the use of services by current and potential users.

A blend of both the E-marketing and Traditional marketing should be undertaken to promote information product and services of the library. Using following tools of both marketing methodologies in campaign, library can engage customers to its products and services.

E-marketing Tools:	Traditional Marketing Tools:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pay per Clicks ○ Web sites ○ Banner ads ○ Article writing ○ Blogging ○ Wiki ○ Email marketing ○ Podcast ○ RSS feed ○ Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, MySpace, etc. ○ YouTube 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Direct mail ○ News paper ads ○ Magazine ads ○ Print media of any kind ○ Radio advertisement ○ Television advertisement ○ Brochures ○ Posters ○ Car magnets ○ Business cards

Conclusion ::

The electronic technology has the power to improve library's image and allow the library to develop and offer innovative products and services. A library web home page serve as a promotional tool advertising library services and electronic resources on the web. Pages including e-mail link to library make easy to contact with librarian. Social network like blogs, facebook, linkdin etc. help to create library users group which helps to develop users oriented products and service. Adopting new electronic technology and the marketing approach will help the library to improve their products and services for their users and thereby enhance the reputation of the

library services.

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Dr. Vaidehi Chandrakant Pandya
M.Com., M.L.I.Sc., Ph.D.
Librarian, Law College, Himatnagar

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