

USE OF ONLINE STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE MARKETING OF LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper examines use of online strategies for effective marketing of library resources and services in Nigeria. It preempts online marketing strategies as an integral part of the social promotion of library resources and information services for greater patronage, essentially without library resources there cannot be library, therefore, the library make up of collection of organized resources for easy retrieval, accessibility and dissemination, to promote the use of available materials in the library, to optimize the use of information within limited resources, to improve the image of library online marketing of library resources and services is necessary. Furthermore, it is very essential for librarians to acquire skills to be able to effectively market library resources online, Online marketing strategies for promotion of library resources, benefits of online marketing were emphasized. Finally, the paper highlights some benefits of using online marketing strategies effectively as follows: exchange of library information resources globally, round-the-clock accessibility of library services everywhere, enhanced information services for employees, and low cost. etc. This paper recommended that the constant awareness and effective use of online marketing strategies to promote library image by librarians is very essential, particularly in this digital era for libraries to be relevant in global world to their various users

Article History

Received May 25, 2023

Revised September 05, 2023

Accepted September 15, 2023

Available Online September

31, 2023

Keywords:

Online, Marketing Strategies,
Library Resources and
services, Library patronage

Introduction

The dynamism of the library resources and information services continue to have a catalytic demand on individual students in higher institution particularly in Nigeria University, the concern now is how do we promote the needs through online marketing strategies since the world is changing moment by moment. In academic libraries the use of ICT in their processes and operations has increased tremendously. Access to online databases and OPACs through the internet has seen a surge in the demand for such services. The development of hybrid libraries leading to eventually becoming digital libraries is a definite trend. Promotion of library resources is very essential in Nigeria and the aim of promotion should be to create readership and to satisfy identified needs and wants by providing library resources and information services in books; including "felt need".

However, Okusaga, Akalumhe, Sulaiman, Ekeh. (2021) different applications of Web 2.0 to 3.0 in the form of social media are being used by millions of people in the world. Social media is an instrument of communication. It is a broad term and covers a large range of websites which enable people to interact with other users. These media are Social news (Dig, Propeller), Social Bookmarking (Del.icio.us, Simpy, Blinklist), Social Networking (Facebook, Myspace, LinkedIn), Social Photo and Video Sharing (YouTube, Vimeo, Flickr) and Wikis (Wikipedia, 2011). In July 2011, it was reported that there are over 750 million users of Facebook around the globe. Twitter is used by 250 million users worldwide., 115 million people use LinkedIn, MySpace is used by 50 million users and the users of Google Plus are 25 million (Googlefan, 2011).

Online marketing strategies is an integral part of the social promotion of library resource and services because it has

to do with basic principles of librarianship, that is, to develop a good collection of the library from authors for the consumption of society through reading “A marketing plan is the heart of a business plan” Kotler and Armstrong, (2012) give a broad definition of marketing as “the process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships to capture value from customers in return”

Marketing strategies

Marketing Strategies means selecting various techniques in proper proportion and balance, it is important to note that not all enterprises or organizations can afford to use all the marketing techniques because different situations require different techniques Yusuf (2019). Bradley (2013) emphasises marketing strategy consists of an internationally integrated but externally focused set of choices about the organization that addresses its customers in the context of a competitive environment. Jain, (2016) “marketing Strategic means looking at the whole of a company’s portfolio of products and markets, and managing the portfolio to achieve the company’s overall goals”. McDonald (2011) the term “marketing strategy” reflects the company’s best opinion as to how it can most profitably apply its skills and resources to the marketplace. It is inevitably broad in scope. Marketing strategies are how a company achieves its marketing objectives and are usually concerned with the 4 ps.

Camara (2017) observed marketing strategy as the general principles objectives that contain the main directives of the marketing expenditure, marketing actions, and resource allocation in this area. It includes decisions making like segmentation strategies, positioning, and communication. The definition of marketing strategies refers to the marketing plan: “it is one of the sections which integrate the marketing plan and its objective is to present an action plan which will be utilized to reach the marketing plan

objectives.” Bennet (2015) considered marketing strategies as the process of planning and executing the “conception of pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational goals.”

At the far-reaching level, (Varadarajan, 2016) perceived marketing strategy as an organization’s incorporated array of decisions that stipulate its critical varieties regarding products, markets, marketing activities and marketing resources in the creation, communication and delivery of products that offer value to customers in exchanges with the organization and thereby allows the organization to achieve specific objectives. Irrespective of the type and size, marketing strategies are very vital for all organizations. The main concern of any marketing strategy is customer satisfaction.

Traditional Methods for Prompting Library Resources

Library display is the traditional method of collecting and arranging the information resources like books, serial articles, theses, photographs, diagrams others on a central theme in a prominent place for a short time to attract the attention and arouse the interest of users in the topic presented. Displaying or exhibition means that the library is demonstrating or showcasing what it has to offer to the various interest groups: businessmen, academics, artists and so on. Library display helps to draw attention to the items or programs the library is promoting. Library display and exhibition helps to create signs for the library programs at a particular time or point’s library patrons to correct area of the library Abimbola and Affiong (2020). It helps to draw the attention of users to new books, special collections, under-circulated titles and services that are offered within the library that are unnoticed.

Ubogu (2021) emphasises on the display of books, and covers purchased by the library, providing open access to book collections, an exhibition of lists of new arrivals with

particular notices, newspaper clippings and posters of databases subscribed are some of the methods of promoting library resources. Others are striking signage signifying library circulation counter, reference area, and Internet cell to attract more and more patrons to the library were the common practices. A Library Manual assists consumers to know about the dream declaration, library profile, acquisition policy for books, journals, various databases, equipment/infrastructure of the library, membership rights, rules for loss of books, information about library groups, and physical clarification about the library.

Library courses for new students joining the institution, and arranging essay competitions and questions were promotional activities followed in many libraries. All these are very much noticeable to clients visiting libraries. But, today's consumers are occupied by their academic enterprise. Time is shifting and consumers want to amend to all these routines as they are engaged in their work and desire to new tech that enabled information and services on their handheld devices (Aloysius, Awa & Aquaisua, 2019).

Online Marketing Strategies

The world of online marketing strategies is a new one, for that reason there are many different definitions and projections. It is not clear where to make the difference between online marketing and internet marketing. Very often online marketing is also equalized with "Online Advertising", "Performance marketing" or "Search engine marketing", although these terms do not have equal meanings Lammenett, (2014).

Online marketing is referred to as Internet marketing. It includes search engine marketing and email marketing. Online marketing strategies entered the new millennium battered and, perhaps, showed its age. It is difficult to establish in which precise direction it was going, not so much because of a 'mid-life crisis' but because many

'concepts-in-use' needed time either to develop or work their way out of the system before their true effect may be known. Online marketing strategies are valuable tools for the promotion of library resources and information services to users. Erdur (2016) posited online marketing could be considered the foundation of the web economy. Library marketing is a planned approach to identifying, attracting, serving and gaining support from specific user groups in a manner that furthers the goals of the library and the organization that support it Wiener, (2019). According to O'Driscoll (2004), "a current robust conceptualization of marketing that reflects and codifies existing and emergent 'best practice' in the marketplace".

Online marketing strategies are a good communication tools for library resources, particularly in this postmodern era where dynamism involves all daily and business activities. The Internet phenomenon of social media marketing internet allows business leaders to incorporate Internet communication in their business plans and has become a platform for advertising (Cant & Wiid, 2016). Online marketing communication is significantly different from traditional marketing and it has become one of the most critical aspects of a company in the publishing industry. Nobre and Silva (2014) reported that online communication assists the branding efforts of small business leaders with a technological structure and platform. The results of their study provided insight into Internet sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube. These Internet sites are highly used by businesses to promote the companies' brand awareness, increase consumer connections, and reach millions of users synchronously

Library resources offer substantial communication benefits, empower purchasers, and reduce marketing costs (Boling et al., 2014; Leventhal & Swanson, 2016). Promotion of library resources implied that using online,

internet or social media as a tool to target more library users effectively and is intended to reach multiple audiences Jones et al. (2015). Using online marketing strategies offers librarians access to new markets with improved communication with library users and the identification of emerging trends.(Corley, Jourdan, & Ingram, 2013). Online marketing strategies are cost-effective and increase the growing importance of social media presence (Corley et al., 2013). Online marketing is a pervasive strategy for increasing usage leading to more revenue for parent institutions, and more visibility of library products and services further increases patronage (Erdur, 2016).

Susanne and Monika (2015) reiterate that online marketing has a lot of pros, namely: it can reach library users more effectively; it is cost-effective; results can be reliably measured, it can be personalized, etc. However, it has also a lot of cons, the most significant of which is too high a level of competition.

What are the Library resources and services to be marketed?

It is generally known that without library resources there cannot be a library, composition of books, journals, and both print and non-print resources make up of library irrespective of the types. One must not also assume that books that are in printed format are resources in the library and is only marketable, but there are whole lots of electronic useful resources that can be marketed by library professionals.

Nevertheless, these are expectable and marketable library and information products and services: books, periodicals, reports, electronic documents, online databases, inter-library loan, reference services, international databases, internet services, audiovisual, video camera compact disks, abstracting and indexing services, and reprographic services current awareness services selective dissemination of information can be marketable. The library products and

services that can be marketed to satisfy the needs of library users according to Vig (2012) ranges from books, periodicals, and reports to electronic document to other allied services from traditional ones like circulation, interlibrary loan, reference services, access to international databases, online researches and CD-ROM searches.

Needs to market library resources online

The opinion of Ubogu (2021) is that the library profession is experiencing rapid change and many factors are reshaping the function of libraries, therefore several things have forced librarians and information professionals to learn about marketing and adopting marketing strategies. Marketing of library and information services has emerged as an increasingly major area for libraries and information centres.

Online marketing is to provide vital products to consumers with speed. Before now, telephone, postal services, newspapers, radio and television were used as sources to communicate to consumers, but now along with these tools, the Internet is also being used as a source to reach and communicate with patrons (Pandya, 2013). Online marketing refers to the application of marketing ideology and techniques through electronic media and more specifically through the Internet (Mutongi&Chiwanza, 2016). Aloysius, Awa and Aquaisua (2019) opined that online marketing remains the most effective antidote to remedy poor patronage and continue library services in Nigerian academic libraries. Online marketing is the method of utilizing information technology in the formation, sharing, promotion and pricing of goods and services that please individual and organizational objectives.

Kutu and Olajide (2018) view marketing as an electronic management method answerable for identifying, anticipating and pleasing consumer requirements gainfully. From the library's point of view, it is

conceptualized as the process of creating awareness of the existing materials and services in the library using digital technologies. The use of electronic tools such as email and Web 3.0 technologies helps to create consciousness of the existing materials and services in the library (Ubogu, 2021).

Jose and Bhat (2007) summed up the basic philosophy underlying the needs for Library and Information Service marketing as: to focus on the users, to improve the image of the library, and to build relationships with the corporate world recovery. Nonetheless, the needs are inexhaustible, according to Patil and Pradhan (2014) highlight the reason for marketing library resources online as follows:

1. To promote the use of available reading materials in the library and create awareness among the users.
2. To optimize the use of information within limited resources and manpower.
3. Limited Budget for the library needs to market services and generate funds for the library
4. To improve the image of the library.
5. Due to the information explosion, readers require precise and correct information for their research and study.
6. Maintaining the relevance of the library
7. Rising expectations of users
8. For easy accessibility and user ability globally
9. To prevent of been obsoletes
10. To connection distance users of library

There is no future in any business we are doing without being driven by technology, it doesn't matter what we do; the future is technocrat i.e. technology. Thus, Ukwoma (2014) revealed from her study that, inadequate funding, lack of training and education of librarians on marketing, lack of ICT infrastructure and lack of internet facilities to reach out to the global world are the challenges hindering

effective marketing of library services and averred that showcasing the resources available in the library, promoting the image of the library, sustaining the survival of the library, creating, awareness among the university community as well as ensuring the visibility of the library as the major reasons for marketing library services. With this assertion, it will lead the study to agree that one of the divine requirements is online marketing strategy.e technology (ICT facilities).

Required skills for librarians to market library resources online

Today's libraries are investing huge amounts to purchase reading material and subscriptions to periodicals and online databases to fulfil the needs of their students, faculty members and research scholars. Investing such an amount for the resources, the usage of these resources should also increase. Libraries should think and work out the cost-benefit analysis of this investment. Therefore it is quite necessary to literate people about the services provided by libraries and promote its use. Concerning professional skills for marketing, Adekunmisi, (2013) submitted that library personnel requires professional knowledge and skills to market and attract users to the library and these include perception of users' needs and ability to obtain feedback from users, technical knowledge such as the ability to use the Internet and other electronic resources and databases and knowledge of various marketing strategies for promoting information skills.

Ukwoma (2014) in her study of strategies for marketing library services by library and information science (LIS) professionals in Nigeria identify good communication skills, face-to-face interaction with the user, community networking among professional colleagues, using bulletin boards, seminars and workshops, newsletters, publicity through advertisements and announcements, and the website as the major strategies for effective marketing of

library and information services. Perception of user's needs knowledge of conducting user's surveys etc. In addition, the following are good requirements for the library to be able to market library resources properly for users:

1. He must possess good technical skills or knowledge such as: use of internet, web page design, and product design and presentation skills.
2. Ability to obtain feedback from users and skill to analyze the feedback.
3. Ability to take most right decision at right time.
4. He should have knowledge of various marketing strategies
5. Highly information communication technology inclined
6. Should be able to use computer and internet facilities effectively
7. Constant up to date training of librarian
8. Available to learn new things in field of librarianship

Online marketing strategies for promotion of library resources and services.

Chary (2014) noted online marketing strategies content draws in purchasers, increases volume, and improves a company's image. Henceforth, online marketing is a primary indicator of growth and will increase as the number of internet end-users increases (Demishkevich, 2015). Social media marketing measures are designed to create a strong web presence and are a necessity to reach more customers effectively, reliably, and efficiently (Chary, 2014). Schwarzl and Grabowska (2015) noted key indicators of development are the growth of the number of Internet users.

Online marketing strategies or social marketing advocates the application of marketing to enhance social as well as commercial ends and frequently deals with behaviours which require a long-term effort to change (e.g. types of

books and reading culture etc). The development of second-generation, Internet-enabled applications, specifically Web 3.0, was significant in business online communication concepts (Atwong, 2015). It however noted that the Internet creates a need for balancing priorities and contributing to successful advanced marketing strategies in small businesses (Boling, Burns, & Dick, 2014; Caruth, 2016). Online marketing strategies are an essential tool to help business leaders succeed with online sales (Jones et al., 2015).

Abimbola and Affiong (2020) observed that the 21st century has virtually turned everything virtual. The library and its users have gone virtual. To keep pace with evolving information technologies, librarians use a group of software applications including blogs, wikis and podcasting, media-sharing tools such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, myspace, WhatsApp, LinkedIn and Flickr, and social networking services such as Twitter and Facebook (Hinchliffe and Leon, 2011; Moulaison and Corrado, 2011; Yi, 2014) to market their services and resources with mixed success. Blogs and wikis, as well as social networking and information-sharing sites such as Facebook, Flickr and YouTube, create new types of content. Information professionals use tools such as RSS (Really Simple Syndication), tagging and bookmarking as a means of promotion. YouTube is a video-sharing site which allows people around the world to communicate and interact, making it a distribution point for user-created content (YouTube, 2015).

The high percentages for the social media techniques used indicate that the era when libraries were considered to be only a depository of information has passed and current libraries as interactive hubs where users gather to seek and share information and find entertainment have come into being. Social media (including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube) as the tools, platforms and applications that

enable customers to connect, communicate and collaborate with others online are now often used by libraries in their promotion campaigns because social media can support user-generated content that can be distributed among the participants to view, share, and improve. As found by Polger and Okamoto (2013) a large percentage of libraries (70%) are using social media to reach library users and non-users.

Benefits of Online Marketing for Library Resources and Information Services

Effective use of online marketing provides how users are made aware of the services of the library and their value. Heavy patronage determines the worth of the library and justified the value of the funding of the library. Effective marketing is only one of the factors that determine library use, Adekunmisi, (2013) asserts that libraries depend on the support of the people they serve for their survival. A library should therefore, communicate, and work with its customers and funding authorities to provide information about what the library is doing and to enable the library to learn about the community its serves. Marketing of library resources and services enables the library managers to justify the funds expended on the library.

Abimbola and Affiong (2020) chorus promotion as the means of informing your users what you do and what you can do. The success and survival of libraries is dependent on getting the users to use the library resources and services. A library without users is useless, to succeed there is a need to make the users aware of the existence of the library and its services and this can be achieved through marketing. This study presents the facts that the libraries and customers of the library which is user stands to benefit from online marketing as follows: It Increases Users' Patronage, It Increases the Value of the Library which justifies the funding, It Enables the Libraries to Survive In this Era of Information Explosion and Digital Age and It promotes the image of the library globally.

There are some benefits of online marketing for library resources and services as observed by Ubogu (2021)

1. Exchange of library information globally.
2. Round the clock accessibility of library services and information everywhere.
3. More consumers at a time can access the library.
4. Enhanced information services can be provided with fewer employees.
5. Client's time and working cost are condensed.
6. Uniformity can be attained with potential changes
7. Global reach, Simple, quick and efficient
8. Low cost
9. Targeted audience
10. Two way communication channel
11. Immediate impact
12. Personalization
13. Influential and interesting campaigns
14. Direct purchase of facilities
15. Immediate access to information, convenience, responsibility and wide extensive range
16. Increase in communication and High return on investment

Online promotional tools for marketing library resources (products)

Information technologies change rapidly. Information products and services are in a multiplicity of formats in libraries. For libraries and information services to stay viable in the current climate, it is important that they adopt marketing strategies to help meet organizational mission, goals and objectives. Marketing has long been associated with the selling of a product in order to make a profit, but was extended to the non-profit sector including libraries in the (Enache, 2018).

Promotional tools that can be used by libraries to promote their services and resources include: digital media, such as

the library's Website, e-mail lists, blogs and podcasts; print materials, such as posters, handouts and giveaways; events such as orientation tours and workshops; and other tools such as library publications, contests, brochures, direct mail, Web 3.0 applications and displays (Fisher and Pride, 2016; Mathews, 2019; WebreckAlman, 2017).

A good Website helps to bring services and resources together in a unique way, because it is a direct link between the library and its specific users (for example students and academics) and the services it is seeking to promote. It also provides a channel for communication with target clients. Some media can be cross functional; for example, traditional tools, such as flyers, brochures and posters, can be used to promote events and programmes, which are promotional tools in themselves.

Nevertheless, newsletters can introduce new developments as well as highlight current services. Target audiences can be easily and effectively targeted through e-mail lists and the Internet. These services are cost effective, as they require little investment in resources and reach the intended client directly. Librarians may use the results to reflect on the effectiveness of these online marketing strategies, to balance the weight of the lack of online marketing strategies for library resources and services. This will enable them to promote especially academic library services and resources more effectively in the future. In online marketing, library products and services have been advanced through modern tools like online publicity, website, email, Facebook, Twitter, blogs, e-conference, etc. For continued existence in the digital environment, libraries have to accept modern technologies and amend their values and policies, functions, services and resources (Chandra, 2019).

Patil and Pradhan, (2013) reiterated that to attract more and more users to the library, library staff need to extend promotion and cooperation to users and market their

services. The basic purpose behind the promotion is to educate the users on how to use the library and its resources and also to upkeep their knowledge by providing information appended in various sources available in the library. Like Companies promotion and marketing concepts, library promotion and marketing services are different. The primary purpose of marketing company products is to increase sales and ultimately to gain more profit from it. The libraries are non-profit organizations; It is a social organizations and service centre and they aim to increase users' information needs satisfaction.

Traditionally, There are several ways by which librarians can attract users into libraries employing extension activities or other publicity methods. All of these can be done through promotional techniques like libraries' produces materials (brochures, flyers, library e-mails, and library websites, reading lists, bibliographies, Newsletters, posters), Events (users' education, library orientation, workshops, seminars.), Library display, exhibitions, social media and others Abimbola and Affiong (2020).

The marketing mix refers to a set of variables that can be used by a library to promote its services and resources to users. The marketing mix is traditionally referred to as the 4Ps: price, product, promotion and place; however, the fifth P, people, is now commonly included. Although the marketing mix was developed for imparting the advantages of a tangible product, with a focus on product marketing, the literature agrees on the importance of applying this focus to service promotion. As the need for the promotion of services has grown and is now more widely recognized, the marketing mix has been refined and adapted to include services, not just products (Mollel, 2013).

Planning Perspective of Online Marketing Strategies for Libraries

Consequently, there is little difference between online and traditional marketing. In both cases, there are attempts at

achieving customer satisfaction to ensure regular patronage by customers, attract new customers, retain present customers and win over lost customers. Relevancy and usefulness of products and services to customer needs are required to make sure there is constant and continuous utilization. The approaches to the effective use of technologies in marketing will need to be studied and experimented (Rowley, 2012). Rather than marketing online only it might be prudent to mix traditional and online marketing techniques and methods to tap the advantages of both and for mutual reinforcement.

Marketing requires strategic planning. Limited resources have to be maximized. Decisions have to be made as to the best course of action in a given situation. Agha (2020) Outlined the following as some of the planning perspectives of online marketing strategies for libraries that should be given due consideration:

1. Maximize the strengths of the Internet for marketing.
2. Study on how best online market approaches could be used together for maximum effect.
3. Identify methods and approaches for marketing which are cost-effective and within the limits of capability.
4. Train and prepare staff to carry out online marketing-related activities.
5. Integrate marketing activities into the mainstream functions of the library.
6. Determine indicators which denote the effectiveness of the marketing effort.
7. Review periodically methods and approaches to online marketing for appropriate adjustment.
8. Explore and consider cooperative marketing and other forms of affiliations and alliances to enhance online marketing effectiveness.

Conclusion

Today's libraries need serious overhauling in terms of marketing their resources online through the use of online databases to meet the needs of their users /students, the usage of these all categories of library resources should be marketed online to increase the wider usage of the resources. Nevertheless, online marketing offers an enormous amount of possibilities for libraries. It is an evolving world which is why constant development of online marketing strategies is necessary. It is much easier for library users to find substitutes from alternatives on the internet because of the minimal effort a person has to make to get to another website. Every internet page is full of different kinds of touch points as advertisements and offers which makes it hard for libraries to guide potential users to a certain website without "losing" them through their way of the internet.

Recommendations

Thus the paper recommends the following as effective use of online marketing strategies for library resources by librarians in Nigeria:

1. Librarians should think about and work out the cost benefits analysis of this investment
2. They should create an environment and update as often as possible to reach wide users through the library web page
3. The library should understand their user's behaviour is so important
4. There should be library staff promotion and cooperation with users and marketing skills
5. The librarians should possess the required skills for effective use of online marketing strategies.

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