

Implementing Marketing In The “Lucian Blaga” Central University Library Cluj

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The marketing of library activities happens at several levels and in various fields. Thus, one may speak about marketing at an institutional level (top management), as well as at the level of products and services offered by different departments of a library.

According to letter c. of art. 1 of the Romanian Libraries Law, published in the *Monitorul oficial* (Official Bulletin) nr. 422, June 18, 2002, a university library is defined as “a library primarily serving the students, teaching staff, and researchers from universities and other institutions of higher education and research, which within the limits provided by the rules of organization may also function as a public library.” From a marketing viewpoint the services of a library comprise three types: basic services: book loan, guidance of readers, activity of book promotion, book presentations, meetings with authors, exhibitions; auxiliary services: acquisition and processing of publications, bibliographic information; additional services: scientific and artistic circles, contests, bindery, copy shop.

With regard to these latest legislative possibilities I would like to present the stages of the marketing process using as an example a new service – fictive, for the time being – in order to emphasize the importance of marketing from the very moment when it is born.

The new facility offered for the users would be a database containing the doctoral dissertations sustained at the Babeş-Bolyai University, and the professors’ scientific works. Its relevance stands in the expanding of accessibility of these types of works, and their archiving, making them available for later scientific research.

The first step was made: an **idea** was outlined. The second step towards the achievement and elaboration of this idea is the **marketing research**. We must see whether this service also exists elsewhere, if it does, how much it is used, and which other institutions offer it. Then the identification of the possible consumers is also a task of marketing research. The consumer does not only mean the reader who needs a work contained in the database, but also the author of the dissertation, who via

this database will have a new method of promoting, presenting and publishing his/her work.

The next step is the **target consumer survey**. This hopefully leads to the possibility of answering the following questions:

- Is this service required?
- How will they react to our idea?
- Will it be useful?

The best way to test such a product seems to be a **focus group**, which is a discussion of 1.5 to 3 hours between the members of a group made up of max. 12 persons, conducted by a moderator, starting from the use of databases and the importance of doctoral dissertations, and arriving at the new service about to be presented to the users.

After this stage of research the next step is the elaboration of the **marketing-mix** which means service development, establishment of the price and the brand, ways of distribution and promotion. When elaborating the marketing-mix we must keep in mind both our viewpoint, that is, the producer's who sees the process as product, price, distribution, and promotion, and the viewpoint of the consumer – representing by this the role of marketing as opposed to that of sales – about:

- **the product** (the company's reason of being on the market) as **the consumer's value (needs and wants)**;
- **the price** (direct costs: the soft, staff wages; indirect costs: electricity, telephone, internet connection, price of sale – if any) as cost, meaning the invested time and energy;
- **placement/distribution** (the environment where the service is offered, where the firm and the client interact, or any other tangible object which facilitates service performance and proceeding; the most important variable: accessibility – when, where, and in what conditions the product can be accessed), as **convenience** (in acquisition);
- **promotion** (publicity, sales promotion, human relations, public relations. Public relations refer to a favorable publicity and the creation of a positive image. Of the main means of promotion this is the least used, although it has a huge consumer attraction and information potential. Using public relations means the establishment of objectives, the choosing of public relations messages and tools, application of the public relations plan and evaluation of its results), as **communication**, response for the offer.

Beside these elements we must also consider three extra elements in the services sector as compared to profit-making sector:

- **the human factor**, all those who contribute to the creation of the service (the personnel), who use it (the consumer), and who is in the usage environment of the service;
- **physical environment**, that is, the environment where the service is offered, where the user-supplier interaction happens, or any other financial event which facilitates the operation of the service;
- **the process**, a set of procedures, tasks and plans, different mechanisms, activities, and rhythm by which a service is delivered to the consumer.

The last phase of the marketing process is **evaluation**.

Evaluation methods:

- are the objectives being reached?
- is the plan not being implemented fully?
- have external factors caused it to be amended?
- how effective has it been?

Then we must check out whether the plan worked, whether the product corresponded to our expectations. If the success is not the one hoped for, we must ask the following questions:

- Was there a wrong decision in our plan?
- Was the objective realistic?
- Did we have enough time to elaborate and complete the plan?
- What measures can we take to correct the errors?

Beside the services offered a library may also have other products, usually the scientific or semi-scientific works of the librarians or professors, or printed or electronic databases. In most cases these products are free of charge, yet they can also bring profit to the library if sold for a price.

In the “Lucian Blaga” Central University Library there have only been some minor attempts of marketing. In the year 2001 a team made up of a number of employees of the library succeeded to make an important contribution to the library’s budget. This team managed to put on the market and sell a considerable number of the following publications: *Hermeneutica Bibliothecaria – Antologie Philobiblon* (An anthology of the *Philobiblon*, published in 1998, *Management pentru viitor – Biblioteci și arhive* (Management for the future – Libraries and archives), published in 2000, and of the bibliographic database *Literatura*

bibliologică românească: Articole din publicații periodice 1990-1998, Bază de date analitică, bibliometrică și de nivel (Romanian bibliologic literature: Articles from periodicals 1990-1998, An analytical, bibliometric and level database). They successfully combined the four elements of marketing-mix, the product, the price, distribution, and promotion.

In these cases the first step was the formulation and sending of the offers to the libraries in Romania with the support and evaluation of the Ministry of Culture and Cults. Together with the offer, the envelope also contained the order form for the product. In response, around 48 letters of request arrived at the library, ordering 6 to 12 volumes of the books on sale. In addition to the letters of "offer" we may also count as promotion of our products the reviews published in the periodicals *Biblioteca* (The library), *Biblos*, and *Buletin ABIR* (A bulletin of the Romanian Librarians' Association), following which we received new orders.

Even if these previous attempts cannot be called proper marketing strategies or plans, due to their success and the experience gained, they may be regarded as the basis of a systematic marketing process in our library. We wish and hope therefore that we will manage to create a marketing office in the future, which will exclusively deal with the marketing problems of the library, and thus will improve its functionality and image.

If one browses through art. 50 and 70 of the new Romanian Libraries Law, one realizes that marketing will play a major role in the life of libraries, offering new possibilities of completing the library budget and acquainting the users with the library's new services.¹ We

¹ Here are the paragraphs in question: **Art. 50** of the law 334/2002 (1) It is the duty of the direction of a public right library and the main credit ordinator to ensure the continuous professional formation of the specialized staff, allocating for it a minimum of 5% of the staff expenses from the budget. (2) The programs of continuous professional formation contain: library management and marketing, sociology of reading, specialized scientific information, methodological training, documentation in general and specific legislation, practical activities and permanent education. (3) Professional associations in the field may organize courses for librarians' continuous professional formation, with the approval of the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Labor and Social Solidarity. **Art. 70** (1) The main credit ordinator has the duty to finance the activity of public right libraries according to the operation standards fixed by the present law. (2) The Ministry of Culture and Cults provides funds from its own budget meant exclusively for the acquisition of specific documents for public

may thus change the image of the library and redirect its activities for the benefit of the users if we make use of these techniques.

libraries. (3) The Ministry of Education and Research provides funds from its own budget meant exclusively for the acquisition of specific documents for the libraries in its subordination. (4) The financial and logistic support of libraries may be achieved also by other income from the users, by annual fees established by the direction of each library for special services, and the equivalent value of postage for internal and international inter-library loans. (5) The gained fund can be used for the construction, arrangement, and development of library places, inclusively automation and supplying with specific documents and equipment. (6) The financial resources available from these sources at the end of the year are taken over in the next year with the same destination. (7) Technical documentation and building material for libraries in the national system, as well as acquisitions for information technology, specific documents stock, equipment for public reading service are duty-free, and a value-added tax of 0% is applied to them. (8) Private investors who sponsor public rights libraries for constructions, equipment, acquisition of information technology and specific documents, financing librarians' continuous formation programs, exchange of specialists, scholarships for specialization, participation to international congresses are exempt from taxes for the value equivalent with the value of that work or action plus 2% of the profit. (9) The postage fees for all the documents meant for internal or international inter-library loan benefit of a discount of 50%.