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## THE NECESSITY OF THE APPLICATION OF MARKETING IN THE LIBRARIES OF THE EASTERN CROATIA

### NUŽNOST PRIMJENE MARKETINGA U KNJIŽNICAMA ISTOČNE HRVATSKE

#### ABSTRACT

*Marketing, as a business philosophy, can be applied within the library service in the form of non-profit marketing. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the library-information experts strive to establish a dialogue in which, by employing elements of marketing mix, they offer services, aid and time-saving to their users, while their ultimate goal is the transfer of knowledge, and through that, meeting the needs of their users. This project is about the necessity of application of marketing in libraries and library service, which should represent an integral process of considering the ways to meet heterogeneous user needs, all for the purpose of showing the possibilities of systematic application of specific marketing methods in the libraries of the Eastern Croatia, and through that, also increasing the number of library users and the frequency of reading a wider range of various books on their part, and with this, helping to increase the level of education and general knowledge of Eastern Croatia's population in the future.*

**Keywords:** Eastern Croatia, library, library service, marketing

#### SAŽETAK

*Marketing se kao poslovna filozofija može u knjižničnoj djelatnosti primjenjivati u obliku neprofitnog marketinga. U 21. stoljeću knjižnično-informacijski stručnjaci nastoje uspostaviti dijalog u kojem, služeći se elementima marketing-mixa, svojim korisnicima nude usluge, pomoć i uštedu u vremenu, a krajnjim je cilj transfer znanjai time zadovoljavanje potreba njihovih korisnika. U radu je riječ o nužnosti primjene marketinga u knjižnicama i knjižničnoj djelatnosti koji bi trebao predstavljati cjelovit proces promišljanja načina zadovoljavanja heterogenih korisničkih potreba, a sve u cilju prikaza mogućnosti sustavne primjene određenih marketinških metoda u knjižnicama istočne Hrvatske, te na taj način I povećavanja broja korisnika knjižnica i učestalosti čitanja šireg raspona različitih knjiga s njihove strane, te na taj način pripomaganja i povećavanju razine obrazovanosti i opće kulture stanovništva istočne Hrvatske u budućnosti.*

**Ključne riječi:** istočna Hrvatska, knjižnica, knjižnična djelatnost, marketing

#### 1. Introduction

For several decades, owing to the economic changes and the changes in library business, marketing has been becoming an increasingly important component of library business in the world, as well as in Croatia. The importance of marketing in libraries is evident primarily in the attraction of an increasing number of users to the libraries, who, in this age of modern technology, utilize many

other sources of information, often of questionable quality. Furthermore, the need for various sources of financing, as well as the rise of competition, are reasons enough for urgent presentation of libraries at the market. Marketing, as a complex business concept, requires excellent knowledge of marketing strategies and patient implementation of marketing procedures in order for the desired results to be noticeable.

According to the American Marketing Association, marketing is the process by which the creation and implementation of ideas, products and services are conducted, the setting of their prices, the promotion and distribution, in order to achieve the exchange which will satisfy the goals of individuals and organizations. (Klaić, 1986, 849). Marketing represents a modern business concept which focuses on user and his needs. It is based on the research of the needs of a user and ultimately, meeting them. The main goals of marketing are to raise the overall consumption and satisfaction of a user, to enable him to be able to select that which suits him and to raise to the highest degree the quality of life of both an individual and the society as a whole. (Ivanović, 2003, 107). Up until recently, marketing has usually been associated exclusively with profit institutions. However, social and economic changes have caused the marketing to become an important component of the activities of non-profit institutions. In the non-profit institutions, marketing is important for the building of an image or reputation in society, as well as differentiating institutions which offer similar services, but also for attracting and keeping donors and volunteers. In short, the non-profit marketing is the application of marketing techniques whose goal is to improve the objectives and tasks of a non-profit organization. (Wymer, et al., 2006). The term 'non-profit sector' concerns all non-profit, benefactory and non-government organizations (religious congregations, universities, hospitals, environment protection groups, museums, recreational societies, group for the protection of certain rights, various local community foundations, worker associations, social clubs and the like). (Wymer, et al., 2006, 4). It includes all those activities which are included in the marketing in profit organizations as well - from advertising, public relations, gathering of funds, as well as gathering and processing information for the purpose decision making, cooperation with executive bodies, board members, donors and volunteers.

## **2. The implementation of marketing within libraries**

For the successful implementation of marketing within libraries, the elementary requirement is that all library personnel must participate in it, and they must be trained to do it. The other requirement is that librarians have to carry out all those steps which comprise marketing, starting with research and market analysis, to the planning of services and the promotion thereof. The first step is the research and analysis of the market at which the libraries and information services offer their services, then, identifying the needs, analyzing the library's strengths and weaknesses in regard to the information sources, personnel and professional areas which are covered by the library, understanding competition, inventing the supply (of services and goods) which will be satisfying the identified needs of users, making both current and potential users aware of the existence of library services, and monitoring and measuring the satisfaction of users. (Coote, 1997, 2).

The first step of the marketing process is the research of market in order for the library to become aware of the situation on the market, of direct and indirect competition, of financing sources, and of the expectations and needs of users. The research of market implies systematic gathering, filing and analyzing the data which concern the required service or product. There are two basic functions of market research - to decrease the incertitude of decision-making concerning the process of marketing itself, and the supervision and control of the execution of marketing activities (Nicholas, 1998, 53).

The marketing program is based on the interests and habits of users which are important for the planning and introduction of innovations. The four instruments of marketing program are:

product/service (*P-product*) price, (*P-price*), distribution (*P-place*) and promotion (*P-promotion*), or their combination. Modern marketing introduces the fifth element, which concerns the factor of an employee (*P-people*) because nowadays, the employee plays an increasingly important role both in selling and in maintaining loyalty of a consumer. After laying out a marketing plan, the next step is to establish the marketing strategy and to determine the goals which the library wishes to achieve through marketing process.

Within a library, information is the product, and it can be stored on various media, from classic paper format, audio-visual material, video cassettes, to a simple oral information (Može, 1992, 60). There are also products (catalogues, brochures, bibliographies) which the personnel produce successively, as sources of information. The places of borrowing and distribution (free access to the material, book points, branches, bookmobiles) enable access. Promotional activities are part of the job description for library workers (the windows and bulletin boards are regularly arranged, forums and children activities are organized, posters created, invitations written, the media are informed of the weekly programme, radio and TV shows are organized, also social networks - *facebook* etc.) The price is present in the charging of membership fees, membership cards and demurrages, although lately other services are being charged as well (for example, photocopying).

After researching user's needs, future trends and available sources, the library may begin planning marketing goals and sources which is it going to be using, and determine the time period in which it will be implementing the laid plan. The forming of a strategy enables the library to concentrate on library services, and at the same time, it provides it with guidelines to achieve the desired goals. Marketing strategy is comprised of six basic steps - the setting of goals, envisioning the complete strategy, preparation of the plan of implementation, the implementation of the plan, monitoring the success, and the feedback on the results and the adaptation of the plan. The strategy has to be simple and short in order to be implemented more easily, and formed adequately to prevent inaccuracies.

The key elements of a marketing strategy are the estimate of that which the buyers want, what services they desire, the expectation and benefits which they expect of libraries and information centers, and the analysis of strengths, weaknesses and the abilities of the library and its services, the estimate of the strengths and weaknesses of competition, the understanding of real differences between the library and the competition, and the envisioning of a practical plan which is based on the understanding of market and the setting of measurable plans which will aid the realization of set goals. (Coote, 1997, 6). Also, it is important to incessantly value one's activities through surveying the satisfaction of users, and plan the continuation of the laid plan according to the results.

The promotion, the last step of the marketing process, comes only when all other elements of the marketing planning are complete. The promotion's purpose is to inform customers, or users, about that which the library does and can do for its users. Promotion is communication with attitude. (Šegota-Novak, 2003,27). Promotional plan extends from the marketing plan, and involves the description of services which require publicity, the description of users for which that publicity is intended, the details of campaign implementation (kind and method of distribution), the fashion of executing the campaign and the analysis of its execution. (Nicholas, 1999, 302). Also, each marketing plan should take into account the use of electronic media which can lead to a large number of potential users, since many users, especially younger ones, utilize technology.

Various activities, which are created by the organization, comprise the communication bond between the mass, the individual and the source. The elements of promotional activities are: public relations, printed forms of promotion, organizing events within and outside library, cooperation with media, and web promotion. The motivation for the promotion and services of public libraries is the education of citizens, raising the cultural level of a society. Although libraries and similar informational institutions do not have such direct competition, it is still important to differentiate

and study the competition. It's important to discover what are their strengths and weaknesses, so we can counter them with our services and our promotional activities. The direct competition are the users and subjects who have their own on-line databases or bases on CD-ROMs, as well as information brokers, whose numbers are rising these days. The indirect competition are individual users who possess their own information sources. One should do a research on where do the users usually receive the information which they need, are they are satisfied with it, and how do they use it, as that will enable the librarians to focus and to promote their services even more effectively. (Coote, 1997, 12-13)

Modern marketing is oriented exclusively towards users. Before we decide who our target users are, it is necessary to have a certain amount of information about them. This can be found out through key information which we shall receive by answering the questions: who are they (groups of users should be large enough to be significant and small enough for the marketing plan to be able to get developed according to their needs), what are their characteristics and needs (not only that which they say they want, but also that which influences their wishes), what are their triggers for using library services, what services they want, what services would they like to be using in the future, what services could the librarians entice them to purchase in the future, what are their expectations and perceptions (their expectations will be formed by various conditions which include their experiences with libraries and that which they had heard from others, their perception is based on that which the library truly does or says), what benefits they want (the key marketing concept is that users purchase benefits - they purchase that which the library can do for them), what are their buyer factors (they include the ease of access to services, reliability, price, speed of delivery of a service)? (Coote, 1997, 8-12). Also, it is necessary to keep in mind the age structure of users, because their needs depend on that. Children are the segment of users to whom a library must provide special services, both because of the social goal of more successful upbringing, and for the creation of an increasing number of regular users in libraries since childhood. A library may attract the youth through organizing forums adapted to the specific age of users, through showing of movies, and strengthening and more adapted structuring of library materials. For workers, a library should be organizing forums and lectures, and founding club-reading halls with interesting themes. The elderly population also has its own demands and expectations, especially the need for social-communication services. For this kind of population, a library should be organizing user forums, provide special publications source, as well as aid for selecting publications, and discussions regarding the publications. (Kobaš, 1985, 93-96).

### **3. Library marketing - example of Osijek and Vinkovci**

There are various options and ways of presenting library activities in a library and outside it: direct work with library users, cooperation with kindergartens, schools, local committees, organizing various individual occasional or even permanent programmes for users of various age structures and interests, cooperation with the media, the publishing of operating plans and reports, various research, especially that which includes questionnaires.

Under the cultural-promotional operation of City And University Library of Osijek (GISKO), the following has been achieved: 30 great exhibitions of library-related and other materials, and a large number of other smaller occasion-based ones, 20 literary meetings, 77 book presentations and other activities of lectures/forums/round tables.<sup>83</sup> All the important anniversaries of Croatian and world history, culture and art have been celebrated. Through cultural programmes the Library strives to promote all the forms and capabilities of its operation to the entire population of Osijek and its region, with the goal of reviving the cultural events in the City. During the Cultural Meeting Days in Osijek, aside from other cultural institutions, the Austrian Reading Hall of City and University

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<sup>83</sup> <http://baza.gskos.hr/izvjestaj2011gotovo.pdf> (accessed 17 March 2013)

Library of Osijek has also participated through an array of activities. Special attention has been paid to the celebration of the City Day of Osijek (2nd December), Children Book Day (2nd April), and Croatian Book Day (from 15th October to 15th November), and all other significant dates. Along with most of the activities, the following was printed: posters, invitations, catalogues, bookmarks and other related materials. Cooperation has been realized with the Center for pre-school education, Gallery of fine arts, and various associations and schools. In collaboration with the Our Children of Osijek Society, a masked ball was organized for all the City's children. The department for work with children and youth offers programmes which are carried out in the playing halls, and which are mostly based on games. Various activities are prepared, such as video projections, discussion groups, music listening halls, imagination halls, creative workshops (art, acting, puppetry), exhibitions, writer meetings, presentations of books, lectures for children. Through work with children, librarians promote the contents of education for peace, tolerance, communication, and children rights, care for others, care for environment and for oneself. The Library has the maximum of 5,000 friends on Facebook profile and around 200 followers on Twitter<sup>84</sup> which, on a daily basis, informs and reports on the activities and services which the Library offers. The users are also notified about the new titles, interesting facts from the world of literature and culture in general, books and reading are promoted, and each day at least one title is recommended, with a short synopsis. Through the use of Facebook and Twitter profiles, new content is created on these channels, which is considered supportive for the marketing, for the major part. On the other hand, through communication with users and answering their comments in almost real-time, this particular means of communication belongs to the function of user support.

The City Library and Reading Hall of Vinkovci is the example of a library which had also implemented marketing in its operation, and rather successfully. It is a public library which involves the widest and most diverse population, and which strives to satisfy various reader tastes and to attract as many users as possible. On the desks of borrows and children's department, the Library offers bookmarks with the picture of the Library, and calendar or the working hours and basic information about its operation. Also, one may also find brochures regarding the stop points of the Bookmobile and the terms of membership and borrowing. The Library regularly organizes various events in there, intended for users of all ages. For children, there are presentations of fairy tales or picture books, novels or books for reading class, with occasional visits of famous writers. The Library often hosts professional lectures intended primarily for librarians and library personnel. Inside the Library one can often view small exhibitions on certain subject, such as displaying the most important works of a writer, presenting important Slavonian customs, or exhibitions of children's art creations. The exhibitions are changed on the weekly or monthly basis, depending on the occasion which the Library honors. During winter or spring holidays, the Library gathers the youth into a reader's club, at which, every two weeks, there is a discussion about the read book in order to activate and motivate the young users of the Library for further reading and the use of the services of the Library. Each Saturday, the youngest ones are able to utilize the children's playing room as part of the Children's Library of Peace, at which an educated librarian and paedagogist assigns them a small task such as the manufacturing of ornaments out of modelling clay, candlesticks out of plasticine, origami figures and the like. The Children's Library of Peace cooperates with the Mala Terezija Rehabilitation Center, whose users visit the Library few times a month, at which time they paint, draw, write poetry or produce various objects. The Library also cooperates with the City Museum of Vinkovci, which often organizes lectures at the Library for the presentations of its discoveries.

As part of the Vinkovci Health Fair which is held each year in spring, the Library sets up its stand and presents its services to the visitors. The Library also cooperates with the local media, such as Vinkovci Radio Station and Vinkovci Gazette. Also, in the TV show 'You, We, Book', the librarians present the newest topicalities related to the Library. The Vinkovci Gazette actively informs the

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<sup>84</sup> <http://baza.gskos.hr/izvjestaj2011gotovo.pdf> ( accessed 17 March 2013)

readers about the activities and events at the Library on a weekly basis, and offers top lists of most read books at the Library, as well as the recommendations of the librarians for reading.

On the Library's website one may find all the information about its operation, one can search through the web catalogue or make an inquiry through the Ask the Librarians service.<sup>85</sup> If the users have information-based inquiries, there is an option to send an e-mail to the Central or directly to the librarians.<sup>86</sup> The Library is an active member of the Facebook social network, where one may also find all about the news and events which the Library organizes. Through the coming of the Internet and new technologies, the horizons of finding new ways for marketing of libraries have been expanded. By employing new technology in their operations, the libraries have much greater capabilities of processing publications. Also, the technology has become a precious tool for managing information, especially in regard to storing and retrieving information, handling, keeping and accessing data, through which it strengthens its function of an information center. With the aid of telecommunications and network, libraries have never had better access to outer databases, which in this modern times comprise an important part of an assortment which libraries offer to the users. The greatest objections to the librarian networking area is the lack of actuality, delays with data, and the lack of promptness of data.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The marketing at libraries is truly necessary for several reasons: for attracting funds for financing libraries and attracting new users, but also for building its own image within society, wider or closer local community. A library is a local informational center which enables its users direct access to all kinds of knowledge and information, provides conditions for lifetime learning, and is considered a vital power in education, culture, informing, cherishing peace and spiritual welfare.

Since marketing is often understood as a modern business philosophy, strategy, activity and business concept which focuses on the consumer (user) and his needs, it is clear that it shall have a very significant place in modern and future library activities, whose goals is to inform as many people as possible about public libraries, and that as many of them as possible get enticed to satisfy their needs for a book, a newspaper text, magazine, information on electronic network, at a public library. There are more and more sources and holders of information and data, and they become increasingly diverse. Belletristic, professional, popular-science and publicistic texts are scattered throughout books, magazines, newspapers, they appear in electronic format, on electronic networks, at the Internet. The needs of users and potential users are increasingly diverse and constantly susceptible to changes. The librarians must be active intermediaries between the material and the users, and they must be open to changes.

One of the goals of library operation is to entice through various ways the still unrecognized readers' interests and informational needs by offering the user (current and potential) professional services, library supply, and special programmes. The marketing is both the help and the weapon. The marketing concept of business-conducting as part of the library operating will result primarily in raising awareness and comprehending as to what a public library may signify to each individual within a community and what use of it each individual may have in every moment of his life.

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