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# E-Marketing: The Library Perspective

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## E-MARKETING: THE LIBRARY PERSPECTIVE

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### ABSTRACT

*The power of “E” helps marketing by anyone, from anywhere and anytime in just a mouse click. E-Marketing refers to the paperless exchange of business information using electronic data interchange. Generally libraries are provided free service but some special services/products need to be marketed through exchange of price for its fund which helps towards its growth and development. In E-Marketing efforts, libraries need to be serve through electronic/online media for user satisfactory services in basis of cost, time, place etc., because only satisfied users come back again and again and dissatisfied users will find some other suppliers of information to meet their information need. The concept of e-marketing of library services is still not fully understood by many librarians. To consciously practice marketing librarians have to be convinced that marketing is good for libraries. They should be aware that marketing definitely improves and increases the effectiveness of libraries. Each library needs to identify the primary target markets and the composition of needs that it would like to serve as its key constituency. E-marketing will be a successful business model for libraries. E-marketing of information product and services will be essential for libraries very soon and the value of Library and Information Science Professionals will be bright and trained as Information managers of E-marketing efforts.*

**Keywords:** digital, electronic, library user, service, e-commerce, e-market, B2B, B2C

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Use of World Wide Web and rapid development in broad brand connectivity makes easy to transaction of information products and services. The providers of Information products need to think about the emerging of Information Communication technology (ICT) with business/commerce sector which are well known as E-Business, E-Commerce today. After the E-Commerce Framework was announced by the US government in 1997 (at the time when the internet was allowed to be use by commercial organizations), “all the federal purchases would be made paperless that gave an impetus to the new way of conducting trade and commerce”. E-

Marketing refers to the paperless exchange of business information using electronic data interchange, electronic mail, electronic bulletin boards, electronic funds transfer, World Wide Web and other network based technologies. The application of internet and ICT to the practice of marketing is known as “E-Marketing”. Initiative of E-markets spread over all most sectors used our daily life such as amazon.com, flipcart.com, snapdeal.com, 99acre.com, matrimony.com, yatra.com, bookmyshow.com, redbus.com, olx.com, quicker.com, etc. Libraries and information centers also initiated e-marketing of information products and services against cost paid.

The library can be called as an information market and the users are as consumers of information. Information is a vital resource for national development, which has resulted in the establishment of information systems to provide a variety of information products and services. Library

acquisition, organization and dissemination must be based on the modern concept of marketing to achieve reader satisfaction. It must endeavor to nurture culture of customer service to enhance its image in the eyes of the users.<sup>5</sup>

## 2. E-MARKETING: CONCEPTS AND RELATED TERMS

The term “E-commerce” is a more specific and focused term which refers to buying and selling transaction related processes through electronic means.<sup>8</sup> This term is inclusive of both “E-Procurement” and “E-Marketing”. “E-marketing” as a term which refers to the marketing domain of e-commerce and includes the organization’s efforts to communicate to present and potential customers to promote and sell its products/services over the Internet. The prefix “E” which means electronics, generally used as prefix for any applications associated with internet tools. The power of “E” helps marketing by anyone, from anywhere and anytime in just a mouse click. The related terms of E-Marketing are: E-Business, E-Commerce, E-Marketing etc. In

E-market transaction, the principal participants are- the buyer, the seller, the brokers, the transaction handler, and the banks of the buyer and seller.<sup>3</sup> These parties can broadly categorized two basic participant groups- Business Group, Individuals/ Consumer Group. As Libraries are the provider of e-marketing, it communicates, promote, and sell its information products/services to its existing and potential users as its customers and purchase from the vendors/suppliers as its providers over the internet. All these activities are on pay cost basis. The marketing of information products and services challenge the digital age which has influenced planning, designing, and strategy for E-Marketing.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

**Kalakota and Whinston (2005)**

Electronics commerce is a modern business methodology that addresses the needs of organizations, merchants, and consumers to

cut costs while improving the quality of goods and services and increasing the speed of service delivery.<sup>8</sup>

**Kotler, Philip (2014)** Marketing is about identifying and meeting human and social needs. The American Marketing Association defines “Marketing is the activity, set of instructions, and process for

creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners and society at large”.<sup>9</sup>

**Sople, Vinod V (2011)** E Marketing is the marketing side of e-commerce. It consists of company efforts to communicate,

promote, and sell products and services over the internet.<sup>12</sup>

Marketing is a major parts of commerce/ business which contains the basic activities i.e. sell, purchase, promotion, target, costing, payment, profit/loss etc.

Thus, E-Marketing can be defined as:

- Moving elements of marketing strategies and activities to a computerized, networked environment such as the Internet.
- The strategic process of creating, distributing, promoting, and pricing goods and services to a target market over the Internet or through digital tools.
- It is a network of interactions and relationships market where information, products, services and payments are exchange.
- In an E-market, the business center is not a physical building but an internet networked based location where business interactions occur.
- It is a site on the internet where shoppers and sellers meet.

#### 4. OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the term “E-Marketing” and its use for library services.
2. To realize the benefits of e-marketing both for a library as well as its users.
3. To know classification, activities, organizing and setting up of E-Marketing.

#### 5. NEED OF E-MARKETING FOR LIBRARY

The interest in marketing has been increased over the past few decades in libraries like other service centers, education, health, transportation, insurance, banking, etc. Generally libraries are provided free service but some special services/products need to be marketed through exchange of price for its fund which helps towards its growth and development. In E-Marketing efforts, libraries need to be serve through electronic/online media for user satisfactory services in basis of cost, time, place etc., because only satisfied customers come back again and again and

dissatisfied customers will find some other suppliers of information to meet their information need. Libraries usually charge a membership or subscriber fee to cover their costs. For the e-marketing effort, it is important to distinguish between services and products which are to be made available to the subscribers free of any additional charges and those for which their maybe a specific additional charge. There are some unique reasons that require marketing orientation in library and information services and it will help us in:<sup>10</sup>

- ❖ Management of Libraries
- ❖ Commitment to Customer Satisfaction
- ❖ Understanding Customers
- ❖ Welcome Again and Again
- ❖ Libraries need to grow
- ❖ Improving our Image

## 6. E-MARKETING OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

The concept “E-Marketing of library and information services” is still not fully understood by many librarians. In order to appreciate e- marketing of library services, knowledge of what library marketing entails would be useful. In essence marketing encompasses the following:<sup>4</sup>

- Know the purpose of the library
- Identify the core business of the library
- Understand the changing relationship between the library and its environment.
- Know enough about the library users to establish meaningful and mutually beneficial relationship with them.
- Assess and monitor the information needs of library users periodically.
- Determine the products and services that would best meet the information needs of users.
- Plan and design identified products and services within the limits of available resources.
- Create awareness among the users on the existence and availability of products and services.
- Monitor the use of products and services.
- Periodically evaluate products and services.

A library is a process where research, strategy and action are continually taking place at various stages of the process with the purpose of achieving user satisfaction. Regular interaction with users enhances greater understanding of user’s information needs. Purposeful action to increase the visibility of the library and its services creates constant awareness among users, which encourages greater use of the library. Regular monitoring of library use and user feedback help to understand user’s expectations and preferences, then enables a

library to go beyond user demands and expectations leading to the path of achieving user satisfaction. Librarians have to be convinced that e-marketing is good for libraries and they should be aware that marketing definitely improves the effectiveness of libraries. Libraries can apply classic marketing principles to attract and better serve new generations of users. Although libraries no longer have a monopoly on information sources, libraries do offer value-added services.<sup>6</sup>

## 7. BENEFITS OF E-MARKETING

Marketing of information products and services benefited both for the customers/ users as well as the providers in e-market. E-marketing breaks down the boundary and limitation of business. On one

hand where Internet has proved to be an empowering tool for the customers it has also emerged as a more enabled marketer/provider.<sup>4</sup>

| Customer/Buyer/ User Benefits   | Provider/ Seller/Library Benefits  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Convenience</li> <li>■ Time and place Flexibility</li> <li>■ Greater product access/selection</li> <li>■ Access to comparative information</li> <li>■ Interactive and immediate</li> <li>■ Easy and private</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Relationship building</li> <li>■ Increased speed and efficiency</li> <li>■ Reduced costs</li> <li>■ Flexibility</li> <li>■ Global access, global reach</li> </ul> |

### 8. CLASSIFICATION OF E-MARKETING

As marketing is a major part of commerce, it is necessary to look at the major domain of e-commerce before classify

E-Marketing. E-marketing can be classified into four categories on the basis of the chosen target and segments.<sup>11</sup>

|                         |                        |                       |
|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
|                         | Targeted to businesses | Targeted to consumers |
| Initiated by businesses | B2B                    | B2C                   |
| Initiated by consumers  | C2B                    | C2C                   |

(E-Commerce Domain)

- **Business to Consumer (B2C)** refers to exchange between business and consumers. These are retailing transactions with individual shoppers such as online shopping from amazon.com, flipcart.com, and snapdeal.com etc.
- **Business to Business (B2B)** marketing includes the inter-organizational electronic market transactions between organizations/business or among suppliers, vendors, ancillaries, collaborating partners, etc
- **Consumer to Consumer (C2C)** involves transactions between/among consumers such as olx.com, quicker.com, propey.com which gives chance to consumer to sells/purchase directly to another consumer or individual.
- **Consumer to Business (C2B)** marketing refers to consumers bound together to present themselves as a buyer group and sell products and services to organizations such as online consultancy.

The spread of internet has given rise to two different kinds of marketers:<sup>4</sup>

- **Click only:** marketers who operate online only and have no brick and mortar presence (Amazon.com, Flipcart.com etc.). The Click Only group also includes the search engines and portals which initially

began as search engines (Google and Yahoo) and later expanded to provide value added information services such as news, stock market reports, entertainment, share and commodity prices etc. These could be seen in direct competition with the libraries.

- **Click and mortar:** marketers on the other hand represent the established

## 9. ORGANIZING E-MARKETING

The first essential elements of e-marketing are a presence of a websites. It is rather similar to the geographical or postal address in the physical world of a business

A set of sequential activities to be performed step by step for organizing an e-market:<sup>4</sup>

- Understand the consumer needs
- Segments and targets of e-markets
- Select Appropriate Marketing Mix
- Create and set-up e-market
- Offer online Products and Services
- Evaluate e-marketing

### Step-01- Understand the consumer needs:

E-marketing efforts are conventional marketing efforts. Understanding consumer needs is the vital prerequisite to the objective of satisfying consumer needs and achieving marketing objectives. Various

- Consumer/user profiling
- Surveys and questionnaires
- Focus groups

### Step-02- Segments and targets of E-Markets:

Libraries today face direct and indirect competition from other institutional providers as well as search engines and portals on the web. Segmentation helps in selecting a particular group or identified needs to serve, in the case of limited

- The most prolific Customers/users (research/PG students, faculty etc.)

organizations which later embraced the power of information technology to extend the visibility and effectiveness of their marketing efforts. These companies, therefore, have both a physical and a web presence and benefits of both types of existence. Most libraries would fall in this category of marketers.

organization. In the electronic world to market the company's products website address is a must.<sup>12</sup>

tools of marketing research can be applied to understand the information needs of the consumers. Some of the commonly used tools that can be applied are:

- Technology based or technology enabled research
- Qualitative research techniques

resources. Each library needs to identify the primary target markets and the composition of needs that it would like to serve as its key constituency. Some of the criteria for select segments for e-marketing are:

- The largest customer/user base (Undergraduate students)
- Specifically defined groups been served well by existing means



- Customers/Users who are difficult to reach by other means

- Potential/Temporary customers/users

**Step-03- Select Appropriate Marketing Mix:**

There are four decisions should be taken at the time of selecting appropriate market mix:

**1. Product and Service Decisions:**

The marketing mix adaptations required to be made for thee-marketing effort for information products and services-

- a. The core product - Consumers seek,
  - b. The tangible product – Delivered materials
  - c. The augmented product- Value added
- 2. Pricing Decisions:** Mobilizing information resources, making them ready for use by paying for royalties and other intellectual property related costs and creating systems for electronic delivery of these products and services are expensive propositions. Assessment of cost per user is a better way of pricing which can be used to deciding the user fee.
- 3. Promotion Decisions:** The promotion decisions comprise all the decisions taken to make the consumers/user aware of what the library has to offer and thus, promote

the usage of the services on offer.

The key decisions of promotion are:

- Who should the target audience?
  - What should the message?
  - How the messages will execution?
  - Which media will promote?
  - Who will the responsible person?
  - The evaluation method will be?
- 4. Distribution Decisions:** Distribution decisions in context of marketing efforts represent decisions on how to make the products and services of the organization available at the place and time of consumers' convenience. Within the specific context of e-marketing efforts, distribution decisions would include:
- Whom the product/services should be distributed?
  - When the product/services should be distributed?
  - How the product/services should be distributed?

**Step-04- Create and set-up e-market:**

- Website site Develop & Design (Either it may be have specific pages or sections on the institutional website. Or have an

independent marketing website specifically)

- Online advertising and promotions (Ads/tickers Banners,



content sponsorships, Tele-marketing, bulk-messaging etc.).

- Creating or using Web communities (Social

communities, Work-related communities)

- E-mail Delivery (E-mail marketing)

**Step-05- Offer online Products and Services:**

After created a web presence, the electronic marketer is now ready to implement his/her marketing mix decisions in respect of products and services, Promotion decisions, involving a creation of awareness and interest among the potential and target population, and the preparation of the public resources and process elements will need to precede the placement of products and services on the site for exchange. Being dynamic in nature, online

provision of information products and services is constantly required to be responsive to the usage patterns that emerge once the services have been put on offer. Based on the information on most frequently used services or products, gaps that emerge between customer needs and services on offer, irritants in the access and search processes once the consumer exchanges begin.

**Step-06- Evaluate e-marketing:**

Apart from the usual quantitative measures of tracking the number of hits on the site, online marketers evaluate the marketing effort in terms of:

- Value of transactions in respect of different products and services
- Growth in different customer segments in defined time periods
- Relative growth rates as compared to competitors
- Financial measures like return of investment and earnings
- Qualitative measures such as types of queries, respond Capability etc.
- User satisfaction generated as measured by tracking studies and user surveys

**10. FUNCTIONS OF E-MARKETING: A SUMMERY**

The main path of e-marketing is fully depending on the internet. It functions over the internet on three major media i.e. website, email, blog/social sites to cover the entire process of marketing. The summery of the entire business process of e-marketing is as follow: <sup>7</sup>

|                | Website  | Email   | Blog/Social sites   |
|----------------|--|---|---|
| <b>Purpose</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To inform about product/brand</li> <li>• To encourage visitors to make a purchase</li> <li>• To engage with your other platforms (e.g. email, social networks)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To remind Subscribers about your brand</li> <li>• To inform about new offers</li> <li>• To keep users updated</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To inform and entertain readers</li> <li>• To position your brand as an expert in the field</li> <li>• To explain the need for your product</li> </ul> |

|                 |  |   |  |
|-----------------|--|---|--|
| <b>Audience</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potentially anyone</li> <li>• People already interested in your brand/product</li> <li>• People looking for a solution to a problem</li> </ul>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing customers</li> <li>• Interested people who can be converted to users</li> <li>• New contacts you want to introduce to your brand</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of your brand's community</li> <li>• People in your industry</li> <li>• Readers interested in our content but not necessarily your brand</li> </ul> |
| <b>Content</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informative and detailed</li> <li>• Promotional</li> <li>• Highly organized</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interesting and relevant</li> <li>• Value-added material</li> <li>• Condensed and regular</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informative, useful, valuable and educational</li> <li>• Indirectly related to your product</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Action</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Become a customer</li> <li>• Engage with other marketing channels</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Click through to your website</li> <li>• Forward to friends and colleagues</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comment and engage with material</li> <li>• Share the content with friends and colleagues</li> <li>• Convert to users</li> </ul>                            |
| <b>Style</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open and honest</li> <li>• General and explanatory</li> <li>• Simple, scannable and well structured</li> <li>• Repetitive</li> <li>• Conveys brand personality</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brief and conversational</li> <li>• Entertaining and readable</li> <li>• Promotional</li> <li>• Tailored to your readers</li> </ul>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conversational and engaging</li> <li>• Personal and friendly</li> <li>• Open-ended</li> <li>• In-depth and informational</li> </ul>                         |

(Business process of e-marketing)

### 11. E-MARKETING CHALLENGES

Market is vibrant leading to an excellent prospect for all those business that want to open up in a new vibrant market. Young customers are becoming more and more brand conscious and doing their entire

- Digital Divide
- Privacy and security
- Copyright issue
- Lack of Confidence
- Delivery Issue

daily works online. There is lot more areas still to be touched by developing technology and internet. However, there are following strong challenges before the e-marketing in India. <sup>12</sup>

- Pricing Issue
- Feeling the products
- Online fraud
- Internet hacker
- Purchase decisions

## 12. CONCLUSION

Recent technological advances have made it possible for the provision of information products and services to move out of the restriction of physical brick and mortar buildings and be made available to the community of users and learners anywhere in the world. The libraries can apply classic marketing principles to attract and better serve new generations of users. Although libraries no longer have a monopoly on information sources, libraries do offer value-added service. E-marketing however requires a fresh look on the components of the marketing mix and the

implementation of the marketing effort. Although there are a few challenges for E-Marketing i.e. navigating the Web problem, the digital divide, online privacy and security, copy right issues, internet fraud, access by hackers, unauthorized groups etc.; it can be promised as E-Marketing will become a successful business model of libraries; E-marketing of information product and services will be essential for libraries very soon; the value of Library and information Science Professionals will be bright and trained as Information managers of E-marketing efforts.

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