

THE MARKETING MIX AS THE BASIS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LIBRARY'S MARKETING STRATEGY

ELENA RAILEAN

Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova
Chisinau, Republic of Moldova

Email account: railean.elena@lib.ase.md

ORCID ID: [0000-0001-5205-7971](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5205-7971)

NATALIA CHERADI, PhD,

Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova
Chisinau, Republic of Moldova

Email account: cheradi@lib.ase.md

ORCID ID: [0000-0002-8261-6815](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8261-6815)

Abstract: The article proposes the use of the concept of marketing management in a modern library, analyzes the formation of the marketing mix and its use in long-term planning. The features of the use of marketing mix tools in the library's marketing strategy, based on seven elements of the mix, are highlighted. The library's main marketing goal is to ensure the quality of its documentary potential and the availability of resources and services to users. What is important is not just the creation of a new demand, but the development and the most complete satisfaction of the existing one, using all the available means of the library.

The concept of the marketing mix allows you to clearly structure and analyze the activities of the organization, identify new development opportunities and implement specific measures for its prosperity. The use of the marketing mix in practice is useful in analyzing the implementation of an organization's strategy, as well as when introducing a new product or service to the market.

The non-commercial marketing tools in the work of the library make it possible to achieve its competitiveness through the constant study of the target audience, the creation of new information products, the study of market conditions, the provision of loyal users, and the effective promotion of the organization's products and services.

The activity of modern libraries is becoming more intelligent and complex, therefore there is a growing interest in marketing techniques, such as the marketing mix, which ensures effective planning in the organization and contributes to the maximum adaptation of the library and information services system to the needs of users. Marketing helps organizations, including libraries, taking into account the needs and requirements of users, as much as possible correspond to the time, the market, and fully satisfy their needs.

Keywords: marketing mix, marketing strategy, library services, information users, information needs, planning

JEL Classification: M31; I23; I29

Introduction

Rapid market changes, new trends in consumer behavior, saturation of markets, new realities of the technological and information order force organizations to monitor these changes, adapting to them in order to function successfully.

Marketing helps organizations and libraries, including, taking into account the requirements and needs of users, to meet the time and market as much as possible, fully satisfying their requests.

Marketing activity of libraries is a creative management activity, the task of which is to develop the market of library services through the assessment of information needs of users, finding ways to meet them, conducting practical activities to educate users and meet their needs. With the help of this activity, the possibilities of creating library services are coordinated, as well as steps to promote information services to the end user are determined.

The concepts of marketing activity and library have been used in economic literature since the 70s of the last century. Back in 1976, Peter Drucker noted the importance of marketing actions for libraries, positively assessing the reorientation of the activities of library institutions. He argued that ‘there are two areas where it is not enough to be smart. The first is personnel decision-making, the second is marketing. To find out what a particular audience wants or expects from a library, it is not enough only mental efforts, intuitive ones should also be used’ (Drucker, 1976).

In 1980, Alan Andreasen wrote in the *Journal of Library Administration*: “Being fully convinced that they know what consumers need, librarians who believe in marketing strategies start planning special events, find inventive ways of advertising and try to convince the public” (Ястребова, 1990).

The library's marketing activities cover:

- information market areas;
- types of library services;
- various segments of consumers;
- servicing market segments;
- promotion of libraries and library services in the information market.

The Library's marketing strategy model

At the present stage, most scientific and public libraries in Moldova have development strategies, an important component of which is a marketing strategy.

A well-thought-out marketing strategy is based on the implementation of a number of mandatory sequential actions combined into stages of its development.

Thus, the development of a marketing strategy includes the following stages (Савчук and Райлян, 2015):

- Information market analysis;
- Goals and objectives of the library;
- Identification of resources and tools for the implementation of the strategy;
- Development of policies in the areas of the marketing mix;
- Monitoring and control over the implementation of the strategy (Fig.1.).

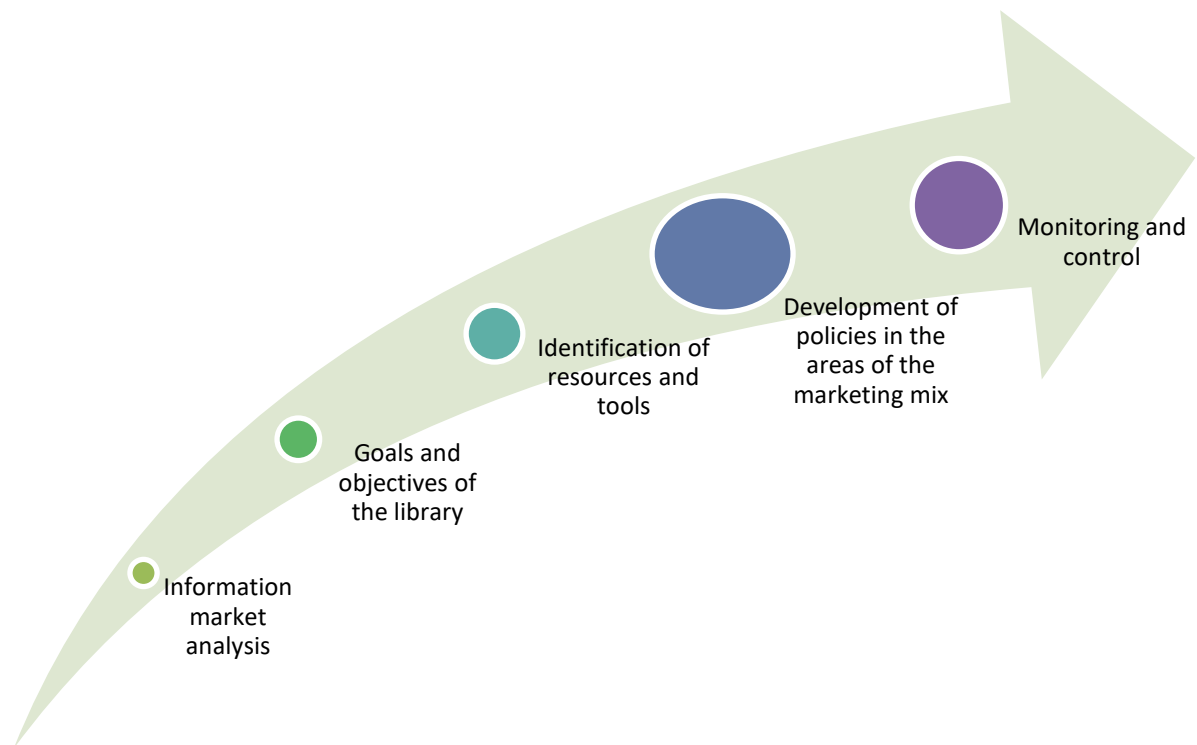


Figure 1. The Library's marketing strategy model

Source: elaborated by authors

A thorough analysis of the information market: suppliers, users, competitors, features of supply and demand, becomes the foundation for the next stages of the marketing strategy.

Based on the market situation, the place of the library in the information market, goals and objectives are set that the organization seeks to implement over a certain period. Goals should be achievable and specific.

To achieve these goals, it becomes necessary to choose suitable marketing tools and resources, which in general can be called a marketing strategy.

The development of the library's policies

The next stage is a more detailed development of the library's policies in various areas of its activities. The logic of modern library management is based on the principles of marketing and corresponds to traditional marketing concepts.

The concept of a marketing mix, proposed in 1964 by Nel Borden, and systematized later by Jerome McCarthy, is more popular. It allows you to more effectively manage the marketing of an organization based on such 4 elements as product, price, distribution and promotion (Fig.2).



Figure 2. Marketing mix

Elements of the marketing mix actively influence the user, closely intertwining and interacting with each other (Kumbar *et al.*, 2014).

Two important components of the market: organizations and consumers interact closely through four main flows: product, price, distribution and promotion (Fig.3).

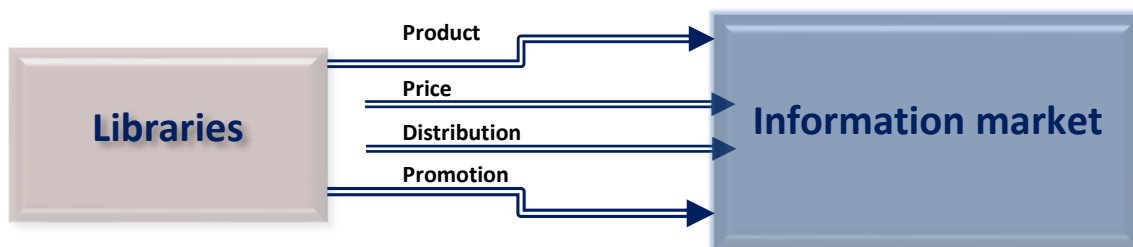


Figure 3. Channels of interaction between the library and the user

Source: elaborated by authors

The success of the marketing mix is explained in particular by the fact that it combined four types of marketing strategies under names starting with the letter – P: product, price, place promotion. This

easy-to-understand mnemonic rule made it possible to clearly identify and classify four groups of marketing functions related to the formation of a product portfolio, its price, delivery methods and promotion.

This model has found wide application in marketing practice and has been further developed through the addition of elements of the marketing mix. In the scientific literature, various scientific schools offer to expand the marketing mix, so you can find ideas of a complex of 5, 7 or even 12 elements. For example, the concept of a marketing mix is widely used in library activities, as a rule, this is the concept of 7P (Fig.4).

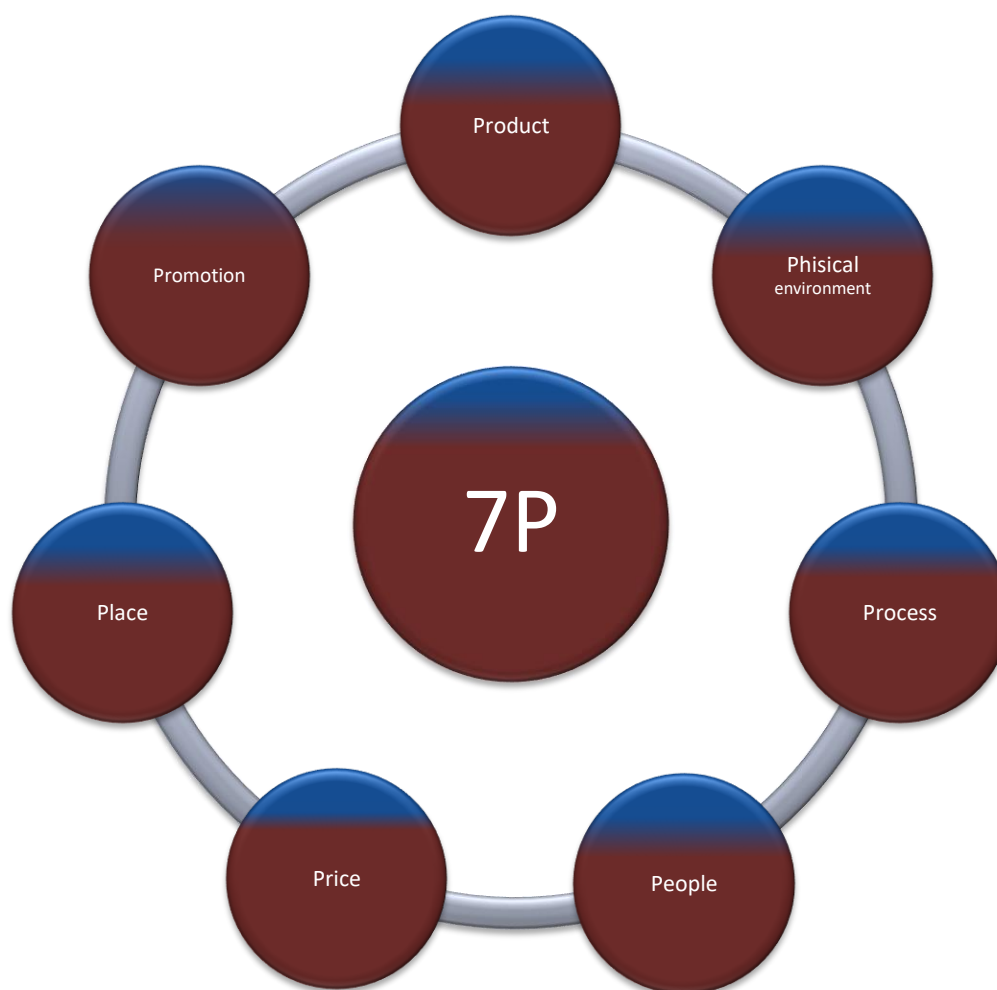


Figure 4. Complex of marketing services

Additional three elements: people, process and environment play an important role in the effective operation of the organization providing services (Палий, 2012).

Libraries track changes in the marketing environment and develop marketing policies based on elements of the marketing mix.

The library management needs to pay attention to all seven elements of the marketing mix.

Of paramount importance is a product or service, in relation to a library, these are: library collections, access to databases and various additional library services. They are traditionally given a lot of attention by the managers of the organization (Суслова, 2000).

The ways in which library services are provided are reflected in an element such as location, distribution or marketing. We often say the marketing policy of the organization.

To ensure maximum satisfaction of the information needs of users, the library strives to use various formats of library services: library visits, online consultations, electronic access to licensed scientific resources, etc. For example, during the coronavirus pandemic, the library mainly served users through the network.

Libraries at the present stage are fully developing such an element of the marketing mix as promotion. Libraries actively use all the tools of promotion: traditional advertising, public relations, personal sales, direct marketing. Libraries also try to use sales promotion tools, offering contests and sweepstakes to their users.

The marketing mix concept adapted to the activities of libraries

The pricing policy of libraries is implemented through the provision of certain types of paid services. However, this element of the marketing mix in the activities of libraries does not play a primary role, since the mission of libraries is to provide free and comprehensive access to information. In turn, it should be noted that the price regulations approved by the Ministry of Culture require updating and revision due to the rapidly changing economic situation in the country.

People are of great importance in the marketing of services: the provision of all types of services is based on the knowledge and competencies, experience of staff and intermediaries. It is almost impossible to separate the service from the person representing it. Therefore, working with staff, their constant training and retraining are at the heart of the effective provision of services.

The last element in the marketing of services is the physical environment. Since the service that the consumer consumes or plans to purchase is intangible, the user is exposed to more risks when purchasing it. Just the office of the organization, the diplomas of the staff on its walls, the uniform of the staff is the starting point that allows us to draw a conclusion about the organization, reduce risks and convince a potential user to apply here for the necessary services.

Understanding the synergistic impact on the effective operation of the library of all seven elements of the marketing mix allows you to comprehensively pay attention to all areas in the management of the organization.

The main objective of the marketing complex is to increase the significance and value of the product and service to ensure the long-term development of the organization.

The use of a marketing mix in practice is useful when analyzing the implementation of an organization's strategy, as well as when introducing a new product or service to the market. This analysis assumes detailed answers to the following questions:

By product

- What product or service should I offer the user? What is the value of this service?
- How to position a library service correctly?

- How competitive is this service?

By distribution

- How and in what format do users purchase the library service?
- How to choose the optimal distribution channels?

By price

- What is the cost of the library service?
- Is there a segment of users willing to pay for some exclusive library services?
- What should be the cost of such services?

By promotion

- How to promote library services?
- Which promotion channels to use?
- How to measure the effectiveness of the promotion of library services?
- How to choose the optimal time to promote the library and its services?

By people

- Who are our users and what are their information needs?
- To what extent does our staff have the necessary competencies to meet the information needs of users?
- How to improve the professional competence of employees?
- How to interact more effectively with the library's contact audiences?

By process

- How optimal is the process of providing library services?
- Is the procedure for servicing library users well thought out?
- Are we able to save users' time resources?

By physical environment

- How convenient and attractive is the physical space of the library for the user?
- What techniques and methods are used to create a favourable environment that attracts the user?
- What prevents the user of our library from feeling comfortable and spending more time in it?

Thus, having answered the above questions, we are working through the mix of library marketing for each of its elements.

When developing a marketing mix, it is necessary to use measurable indicators for ease of their adjustment and control, which is the last stage in the development of a library strategy (Fig.1).

It is necessary to monitor and evaluate the real state of the library service at a certain point in time for all seven elements of the marketing complex from three angles: own opinion, opinion of experts and users.

The information obtained as a result of monitoring forms the basis of a plan for correcting the library's activities and its strategy, if necessary. Competent prioritization, phased implementation of corrective measures will allow you to build a well-thought-out tactics and will definitely increase the efficiency of the library. Changes in the external environment require constant monitoring and correction of the organization's activities, which minimizes painful adaptation to them.

Conclusions

Thus, a marketing strategy based on a mix of marketing is a useful and practically easily applicable tool for effective functioning in the market.

The concept of a marketing mix allows you to clearly structure and analyze the activities of an organization, identify new development opportunities and implement specific measures for its prosperity. Thus, the use of both traditional and non-commercial marketing is justified, however, with the priority of the latter. Obviously, the main marketing goal of the library is to ensure the quality of the documentary potential and the availability of resources and services for users. It is important not just to create a new demand, but to develop and fully satisfy the existing one, using all available library tools. Successful marketing activities provide new ideas and strategies, helping library staff to successfully solve problems, both in the short and long term.

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