

A Model Of Branding Public Library In Nigeria

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Abstract:

Purpose: Generally, it has been observed that misconceptions and negative stereotypes of the image of public libraries still prevail today despite libraries diversifying and offering a range of services to their local community and contributing to local and national development. This paper examined a model of branding of a public library in Nigeria. It also highlighted the change in the role of library service providers in the present day information age which necessitated brand and branding of a public library in Nigeria to create a more positive and effective image. Crucial activities were considered extensively to be embraced in branding public library in Nigeria for more patronage in the face abundant information sources available to library clientele via the internet.

Design/Methodology & Approach: The methodology adopted was contextual analysis that involved the review of materials ranging from publications, textbooks and the relevant internet sources.

Implication: Any reluctance or resistance to embrace the branding of a public library in Nigeria would render the Libraries and Library Information System (LIS) professionals functions ineffective and become irrelevant in the present-day information explosion age.

Originality/Value: This paper concludes that brand and branding of public libraries in Nigeria are imperative if the public libraries are to offer satisfactory and efficient user-centred library services to clientele and enjoy high patronage.

Keywords: Brand, Branding, Library, Public Library, Model of branding public library in Nigeria.

Paper Type: Conceptual research.

I. INTRODUCTION

The interconnection of the world through the use of internet and web has changed the fundamental roles, culture and paradigm of libraries and librarians. In the prevailing situations, the librarian is called to assume new roles and perform tasks like guiding, facilitating, sifting information resources and preserving the access to information. The collaboration with computer and information technology scientist in the design and maintenance of information access systems for the effective use of internet and web in the interest of information seekers has become imperative for the librarians, therefore, the need for education and retraining of Library Information Science (LIS) Professionals/Librarians cannot be overemphasised.

Gone are the days when library and information scientists sit in their offices (libraries) waiting for patrons to come inquiring for information. The present information explosion age has opened vast access to information users through information and communication technology, thereby seemingly relegating the relevance of the library and librarian to a secondary role for accessing information sources. A more dynamic approach has to be inculcated in the practice of librarianship through the branding of library services and libraries, in particular, public library. The role of the library and LIS professionals has to change from the posture of the patient dog (passive) to the aggressive dog (Proactive). Thus connecting library users with quality information regardless of their ability to source information via the Web. In the present information age, LIS professionals must make contact with

their target audience to be visible. It implies that all library staff irrespective of status should be trained to take to the street if the need arises to sell information that is crucial to its target population. This training would bring about a change in the role of librarians in Nigeria that before now operates the traditional system of library services. With the retraining, library staff, library and in particular public library could now be branded to attract more patronage from the community and remain relevant in this age of information explosion.

II. LIBRARY

The library and the services rendered have undergone a revolution in recent years and yet current perceptions of libraries and librarians seem to be firmly rooted in the past. The word "library" seems to be used in so many different aspects now, from the brick-and-mortar public library to the digital library. Public libraries and indeed, all libraries are changing to dynamic places where librarians help people find the best source of information whether it's a book, a web site, or database entry.

The word Library has been derived from the Latin word "Libraria, which means a place where books and other reading materials are stored. According to the Oxford English Dictionary "Library is a building, room or set of rooms, containing a collection of books for the use of the public or some particular portion of it, or of the members of some society, or the like; a public institution or establishment charged with the care of a collection of books, and the duty of rendering the books accessible to those who required to use them"(Oxford English Dictionary). Furthermore, the collection of written knowledge and information in the repository is a practise as old as civilisation itself. The name such of repository became known as the library. The word library is derived from the word "liber" meaning book which can be described as an organised collection of published and unpublished books and audiovisual materials with the aid of services of library staff who can provide and interpret such materials as required to meet the needs of its users. Also libraries are regarded as agencies through which sources of information, accumulated knowledge and experiences are selected, acquired, organised, preserved and disseminated to library users. Accordingly, Onwubiko and Uzoigwe (2004) defined the library as an information centre located in an organisation, institute, agency, industry etc to satisfy the information needs of the individual clients and the realisation of the broad goals and objectives of the parent organisation. Also George Eberhart (2010) posits in *The Librarian's Book of Lists* (Chicago: ALA, 2010), that "A library is a collection of resources in a variety of formats that is (1) organized by information professionals or other experts who (2) provide convenient physical, digital, bibliographic, or intellectual access and (3) offer targeted services and programmes (4) with the mission of educating, informing, or entertaining a variety of audiences (5) and the goal of stimulating individual learning and advancing society as a whole". Thus, a library is a place where the experience and expertise of the past can meet the needs of the present.

Libraries traditionally have played a significant role in education and giving access to information and knowledge to different users (clientele). The different library performs different functions to both potential and existing users. The vast information resources available in libraries ensures different access to scholarly information for the members of the community. Libraries which have been previously referred to as the purveyor of information, custodian of knowledge and the house of learning plays a vital role in the development of any society by catering for the information needs of thousands of people within a particular community. The main goal of a library, therefore, is to acquire, process, organise, preserve and provide easy access to its users in the most convenient way to knowledge and information. According to Leheman, (2011), the future of library will be as a dynamic knowledge centre where not only the librarian, the books (whether real or virtual) and the users engage in the interchange of ideas. Hence the satisfaction derived from the use of libraries is dependent on its resources, branding, personnel and their zeal in service provision by Library Information Science professionals.

III. PUBLIC LIBRARY

A public library is defined as a library which is accessible to the public and generally funded from public sources, such as tax money, and may be operated by civil servants (Anil Kumar Dhiman and Yasoda Rani, 2011). As its name suggests, it is for the people by the people and of the people. It has been in existence from the civilisation of mankind and acts as important custodian of human culture, knowledge and social customs (Kaliya Perumal and Bahskarn, 2010). Also, Laila, T. Abraham (2010) posited that a public library is a welfare centre which gives useful services to the community by fostering education, promoting culture providing scope for healthy recreation and disseminates information to all section of the society. (www.lisbdnet.com). However, the most widely accepted UNESCO definition of a public library, which was formulated in 1949, and revised in 1972 and 1994, is known as the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, which definitions public library as follows:

- ✓ It's a local gateway to knowledge which provides the necessary conditions for (i) lifelong learning (ii) independent decision making and (iii) cultural development of the individual and social groups;
- ✓ A living force for education, culture and information, an essential agent for the fostering of peace and spiritual welfare through the minds of men and women;
- ✓ The local centre for information, making available all kinds of knowledge and information readily and freely to its users;
- ✓ Accessible for all regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status and lastly, The libraries, which have collections and services, all types of appropriate media and modern technologies, as well as traditional materials with high quality and have relevance to local needs and conditions. The material must reflect current trends and evolution of society, as well as the

memory of human endeavour and imagination UNESCO, (1994), Public Library Manifesto, UNESCO, Paris.

Objectives of Public Library. Public libraries function based on their objectives. In Nigeria the functions and objectives of the public library are similar to the UNESCO (1994), Public Library Manifesto:

- ✓ To provide up to date and authentic information on all subjects.
- ✓ To services free of charge or at a nominal rate to each member of the society without discrimination.
- ✓ To provide a harmless and elevating use of leisure/recreation.
- ✓ To be responsible for the preservation and development of the cultural and antiquarian heritage of the community.

However, a public library performs different functions to achieve the above objectives and works as:

- Information dissemination centre.
- Live long learning centre.
- Community intellectual centre.
- Recreation Centre.
- Community's Culture Preserving Centre.
- An instrument of Social Change.
- A representative of Democracy.

BRAND

Before defining branding, we should know what exactly a brand is? "Technically a brand is a mark, or logo combined with specific colours and fonts that identifies a particular product or service to potential users. More generally, a brand is shorthand for the story that an organisation wants to tell potential users about how it can meet a need in their lives (Docuett, 2008)." The only objective behind a brand is just to establish its relevance for its users. Since 1950, when the American Marketing Association established that the word, "brand" refers to something which identifies or differentiates a product in the marketplace. Brands have increased in number to the point where they are ubiquitous. In a 1998 review of the literature, de Cheratony and Dall'Olmo Riley, found twelve major themes related to brands: (1) a relationship, (2) a logo, (3) a legal instrument, (4) shorthand (an abbreviated way of representing the product), (5) risk reducer (from a social, financial, time, performance, and psychological perspective), (6) a positioner (something which insures recognition), (7) a personality (such as celebrity or the type of people who use the product), (8) an identity, (9) a vision in the minds of those who manage the brand, (10) a value adder, (11) a cluster of values, (12) an image, (13), a company, and (14) something which is evolving.

As David Arnold notes (1992), brands have evolved into personalities of their own, outgrowing the simple technical definitions of the past. As brands have become more numerous and part of modern culture, so have the methods used to analyse them. Methods may vary from simple surveys to techniques, which are designed to uncover subtle, subconscious meanings, e.g. the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (Zaltman, 2007) and Clotaire Rapaille's Culture Codes (Adams, 2006). Such creative attention maybe because brands are the "art and cornerstone of marketing" (Kotler, 2003, p. 418). However, the contextual definition of a brand in

this paper could simply be described as uniquely distinctive signage or image that differentiates or identifies, a product or service or an organisation from others to the potential users or in the market. It may take the form of Mark, Logo, Colour(s) or fonts. Thus, branding can be approached on various levels of complexity and sophistication, (Isacc, 2000).

BRANDING

Branding may be defined as "The process involved in creating a unique name and image for a product in the consumers' mind, mainly through advertising campaigns with a consistent theme. Branding aims to establish a significant and differentiated presence in the market that attracts and retains loyal customers" (Dictionary, 2017).

BRANDING OF PUBLIC LIBRARY

Although it is observed that aspersion is often cast on public assets in Nigeria, the public library is no exception. The need to mark it out with distinctive services and signage that will excel all other libraries in Nigeria through branding is a sine qua non if the public library is to retain high patronage in its community to efficiently and effectively achieve its set objectives.

Branding a public library in Nigeria connotes having distinct service rendered to clientele which cannot be found in other libraries. A model of branding a public library would entail giving the service points in the library attractive names, slogans, signage and having a total look at the requests of users, installing what prevented them from patronising public libraries and what attract users to private libraries. This, however, would require the involvement of library stakeholders; library users, library staff, members of the community and other professionals eg. ICT Professionals with specialised skills to have a broad acceptance of the brand and branding.

IV. MODEL OF BRANDING PUBLIC LIBRARY IN NIGERIA

The following logos could be adopted as a model of branding a public library in Nigeria.

LIBRARY FOR THE PEOPLE BY THE PEOPLE

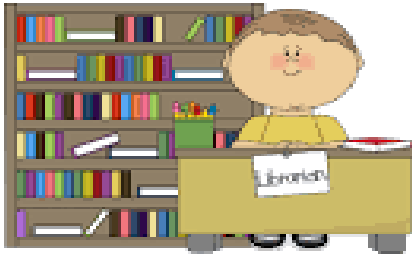


Source: <http://clipart-library.com/search2/?q=library#gsc.tab=1&gsc.q=library&gsc.page=1>

Figure 1: The Logo To Be Placed On Top Of The Main Entrance

Reference Section. This section could be branded customer-centred section.

CUSTOMER CENTERED SECTION



Source: <http://clipart-library.com/search2/?q=library#gsc.tab=1&gsc.q=library&gsc.page=1>

Figure 2: To Be Placed At The Reference Section

Library Reading Section. A branded logo of a graduate rejoicing on a book carved with a motto: Reward of knowledge. This is to be hung at the entrance of the library.

REWARD OF KNOWLEDGE



Source: <http://clipart-library.com/search2/?q=reward%20of%20knowledge#gsc.tab=1&gsc.q=reward%20of%20knowledge&gsc.page=1>

Figure 3: This could be Hung on the Wall of the Reading Section

Circulation and Reader Services Sections. Could have colourful slogans/Paintings like (Read and Get Informed; Knowledge is Power).

CIRCULATION AND READER SERVICES SECTION

READ AND GET INFORMED



Source: <http://clipart-library.com/search2/?q=knowledge%20is%20power#gsc.tab=1&gsc.q=knowledge%20is%20power&gsc.page=1>

Figure 4: To Be Placed at the Circulation and Reader Services Sections

Newspaper and Magazine Stand. The sections could be made distinct with the slogan in English and local languages (Get Value for Time Spent, Visit the NEWSSTAND). New papers are magazines in indigenous languages are stocked in public libraries to meet the needs of indigenes who are literate in the local languages.

Get Value for Time Spent, Visit the NEWSSTAND



Source: <http://clipart-library.com/search2/?q=news%20paper%20stand#gsc.tab=1&gsc.q=news%20paper%20stand&gsc.page=1>

Figure 5: To Be Placed in the News Paper and Magazine Stand



Source: <http://clipart-library.com/search2/?q=news%20paper%20stand#gsc.tab=1&gsc.q=news%20paper%20stand&gsc.page=1>

Figure 6: To Be Placed in the News Paper and Magazine Stand

The Technical Section. This section could have the slogan (ACQUIRE SKILLS TO ACCESS INFORMATION SOURCES).

ACQUIRE SKILLS TO ACCESS INFORMATION SOURCES



Source: <http://clipart-library.com/search2/?q=Acquire%20skill#gsc.tab=1&gsc.q=Acquire%20skill&gsc.page=1>

Figure 7: To Be Placed at the Technical Section



Source: <http://clipart-library.com/search2/?q=Acquire%20skill#gsc.tab=1&gsc.q=Acquire%20skill&gsc.page=1>

Figure 8: To Be Placed at the Technical Section

PACKAGING: With the introduction of the User-Centred Approach in library services, packaging of information sources, would require the customisation of user's needs. This implies getting clientele to communicate to the Librarian what they want, remember it and get it back to them as specific individual packages (Peppers, Don 1995). Librarians are therefore to be involved in a high degree of customisation. For instance, a counselling section, not for free, can be established in the public library where university students struggling with their thesis could be help thorny areas like; choosing topics, referencing amongst others.



Source: <http://clipart-library.com/search2/?q=customer%20service%20in%20the%20library#gsc.tab=1&gsc.q=customer%20service%20in%20the%20library&gsc.page=1>

Figure 9: To Be Displayed in the Customer Focussed Services Section



Source: <http://clipart-library.com/search2/?q=customer%20service%20in%20the%20library#gsc.tab=1&gsc.q=customer%20service%20in%20the%20library&gsc.page=1>

Figure 10: To Be Displayed in the Customer Focussed Services Section

This degree of customisation is often a measure of service quality or trust agreement tailored to meet the clientele specific needs. In branding and packaging, every creation and delivery of library and information services involve the participation of clientele to a great extent. On the other hand, for the librarian, every service activity is taken as an opportunity to serve the clientele in an improved way as it is easier to satisfy an individual already in the library than to source for new clientele (Gupta, D.K. 2000).

PRODUCT DESIGN: In a model of a branded public library, a product like 'skill acquisition to access the internet' could be designed for the clientele on Saturdays and students on vacation for an hour free of charge. Films, that could stimulate their interest on library usage, on contemporary issues like Immunisation, Voters Registration or National Identity Registration, a documentary on a prevalent epidemic, organised Talks could be shot, to mention but a few.

AWARENESS. With the support of professional marketer, the librarian is to create the awareness of the brand and products/services available in the model branded public library to the potential users, stakeholders within and outside the community. Handbills, fliers, social and electronic media of these brand, services and products are to be distributed to the communities with the assistance of the local education district officers and also solicit financial assistance from the local government and other distinguished members of the community who are friends of the library.

CONSTANT QUALITY CHECK. In a model branded public library, the librarian is to constantly supervise the other library staff in the various sections to ensure constituent quality control and customer-centred services are rendered to the clienteles. Again, the librarian must ensure continuous improvement process is put in place and functional, and regularly audited. Training and retraining of library staff on technical and customer focus service skills, for useful, efficient and dedicated service in the branded public library are to be regularly implemented. Some of the quality checks adopted could take the form of weekly, monthly, quarterly and biannual checklists to be filled in and signed off by staff. In addition to this, bimonthly or monthly reports, by sectional and departmental heads, with emphasis on deviations from agreed standards are to be written and submitted to the librarian. Monthly meetings of the heads of departments with the librarian must be held to address the deviations and improvement areas to remain attractive to the clientele. This would ensure that none of the agreed actions to satisfy the clientele is left out.

Also, a feedback mechanism must be developed to measure the level of satisfaction of the library users and other stakeholders. Apart from these, a reward system must be put in place to honour the best section and worker of the month to reinforce the user-centred library service approach in the branded public library. The reward system could be the display of the portrait of the best library staff of the month visibly at the main entrance of the library or the enquiry front desk in the library. The constant quality checks aspect of branding if implemented would to a large extent enable public libraries in Nigeria to sustain and enhance patronage as well as maintain effective and efficient user-centred library services.

V. CONCLUSION

Although public libraries in Nigeria are not profit-making, their presence ought to be made visible through the provision of satisfactory library services. To achieve the desired patronage in public libraries in Nigeria, there is a need for branding and promotion of library services. Branding is essentially about the communication of the basic identity of an organisation in a clear, compact, and compelling manner. It is an exercise through which libraries can think about and reinforce their underlying purposes and even re-invent themselves. Branding is rooted in the idea that institutions, like people, create a set of impressions about themselves; a bundle of meanings in the minds of the individuals who interact with them. As a brand ambassador, librarians have to tell the stories of their success to the patrons to attract more clientele. Working in the competitive world of consumers in the present day information explosion age will help the librarians to be more competitive, customer-focused in library services and help them to reallocate their resources for better services and more satisfaction of their users. Public libraries in Nigeria must recognise and respond positively to branding expertise, and continue to develop their brands. This is because branding has become a long term strategy in a public library.

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