

Library marketing exemplars within Metro Manila schools: A necessity within schools of today

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Received: 15 November 2019
Available Online: 8 July 2020

Revised: 18 April 2020
DOI: 10.5861/ijrse.2020.5117

Accepted: 31 May 2020

ISSN: 2243-7703
Online ISSN: 2243-7711

OPEN ACCESS



Abstract

In today's schools, the role of the school library is not only limited to the repository of books, but has become quite dynamic that encompasses various forms and functions. However, still many users are not that familiar with the new libraries' actual potentials. Hence, there is a need to expand the school library marketing activities. To better understand how schools are doing in Metro Manila, the current case study shall review five school libraries and analyze how their library marketing are accomplished. Commonalities and differences are both noted with best practices being highlight. Results show that there is indeed a gap between the larger and smaller libraries. However, the use of social media and information communication technologies or ICTs should be able to help narrow the gap. In sum, school library marketing is only effective, if information are able to reach and understand by its users.

Keywords: library; high school; marketing; competitive advantage; case study

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1. Introduction

Typically, a school library is a place wherein students, teachers, staff, and sometimes even parents have access to various educational resources (Latrobe, 2019). Within a modern school library, a new name has been adopted; the media center or more accurately educational resource center (Merten, 1975). In addition, an educational resource center contains various multi-media resources that are made available to students and teachers with the core purpose of encouraging self-learning.

Although some scholar have mentioned the important need for active library marketing strategies in the early 1990s (Weingand, 1995), marketing of the library is still a fairly new concept that emerges within the past two decades (Gupta, Koontz, Massisimo, & Savard, 2006). Bhardwaj and Jain (2016) noted that library marketing is quite important, since it is a vital approach to achieving users' (or readers; library goers) satisfaction. Moreover, marketing and promotion is vital for libraries to enhance their reputation and usage. More importantly, a positive attitude towards marketing is a prerequisite for a successful plan and execution to market library products and its services (Bhardwaj & Jain, 2016).

Bhardwaj and Jain (2016, p. 119) further noted that there are some key features to remember within library marketing, namely:

- Marketing is user-centered;
- Marketing anticipates the changes through time;
- Make use of the power of information technology; and
- Collaborations between library users and library managers are a must (such as use students' ideas and feedbacks).

With the current technological advances, may it be with ITC or social media, many libraries have started to venture into the active use of social networking sites, such as Facebook, Instagram, and even twitter (for information dissemination) (Brookbank, 2015). One common advantage is the extensive use of Facebook for library marketing (Xia, 2009). However, it is true that updating the library's social media page constantly would take a lot of effort for small libraries; nonetheless, some libraries can try to market their library services directly with the use of email and hyperlinks from the school's main web-page (Henderson, 2005).

2. Methodology

The current project is considered as a case study, wherein Yin (1984, p. 23) noted that an empirical method that inquires and investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. More important as for the current study looks into several school libraries within the Metro Manila region, hence multiple sources of evidences (school libraries) are examined in order to make better connections between phenomenon and context of study (Yin, 1984). A total of five school libraries are examined and analyzed, namely:

- *Ateneo de Manila High School Library* (<http://emc.hs.admu.edu.ph/>),
- *Arellano University, Jose Rizal Campus High School Library* (<https://www.facebook.com/aujoserizal/>),

- *Cainta Catholic College Library* (<https://www.facebook.com/ccclearningresourcecenter>)
- *University of the East - Caloocan Campus Library* (<https://www.ue.edu.ph/manila/library.html>), and
- *Malabon National High School Library*.

Initial selection of libraries included a search and review of the school libraries' websites; this is followed by contacting the person in charge (or Chief Librarians) for visitation opportunity. A brief tour and short interview with the person in charge (or librarians) is then accomplished. Local information are collected and analyzed.

3. Results and discussions

The following are the summaries of the findings within the various marketing strategies of the five school library cases.

3.1 Ateneo de Manila High School library

The Ateneo de Manila High School library is also known as the Ateneo High School Educational Media Center (Library and ITC). With its vast collection of print and e-books, and special resources such as historical and personal archives of Filipino writers and artists, and Filipiniana materials, it is a haven for students of all levels. The mission of the library is *to provide information and service in support of the teaching, research, and community service functions of the school*.

Various strategies Ateneo High School library uses both technology and person focused marketing strategies. For the technology focused the library makes use of social media, such as Facebook to post announcements, such as schedules and special library activities. The library also posts pictures of activities. It is believed that internet memes (*the concept of an idea spreading from one person to another*) can proved to be very effective means of conveying a message to the library's users (Sagun, 2013).

As for the more personal focused, the library carefully selects staff for areas that has frequent and direct contact with users. They conduct user survey regularly as a means of eliciting feedback for the continuous improvement of the library. In essence, *relationship marketing* is a successful practice, which showed a marked increase in the use of library resources and services (David & Sagun, 2011).

3.2 Arellano University, Jose Rizal Campus High School Library

Jose Rizal Campus is an extension of the Elisa Esguerra Campus of Arellano University in Malabon. This school is formerly known Gregorio Sancianco High School Campus. The campus was closed down in 1980s and redeveloped later by Arellano University in 2017 and was named Jose Rizal Campus. The library mission is *to support the university and its academic programs through an effective and efficient delivery, initiation, and dissemination of information resources by committed, productive, and service oriented personnel*. While the library's vision is to have an ideal library for information resources and the technology needed in various curricular programs services and research activities.

Currently, the Jose Rizal Campus Library uses traditional marketing strategies. Such as the use of a library flyer distributed to students; the flyer contains information about the library and notes on how to use the library. In addition, newly acquired books are posted on the bulletin boards informing students. An added feature would be a time allocated for each class to use the library.

3.3 Cainta Catholic College Library

The Cainta Catholic College Library was established early in the nineteen sixties. In 1975, the library was housed in a new building which was connected with the Main school building. Followed by the improvements in

1990, increased usage of non-print materials (such as multi-media resources) is added. In support of the mission vision of the school, the Cainta Catholic College Library mission is to participate in the research and education of the college by selecting, collecting, organizing for easy retrieval, preserving, and conserving books and other learning materials that are relevant to the information needs of students, faculty, and administrative staff.

Library marketing strategies of the Cainta Catholic College Library includes both the use of *print media* and *maximizing the use of its resources and facilities*. For instance, the provision of a library handbook (as seen in the picture above); the handbook is a very comprehensive manual with information regarding its collection and functions. In addition, the library also provides services to the community. Furthermore, the library also hosts various activities and workshops, and together with a library club. Lastly, the library makes use of *social media platform* such as Facebook to disseminate activities held within the facility (see pictures below for various activities).

3.4 University of the East - Caloocan Campus Library

Within the University of the East – Caloocan Campus there are three libraries. First is the Benjamin C. Chua Jr. Library, which is located on the 6th floor of the Tan Yan Kee Academic Building. There are six sections in this main library: Circulation and Reserve, Periodicals, Filipiniana, Fine Arts, Reference, and Multimedia. The second is the engineering library, which is located on the 3rd floor of the Engineering Building. This library provides reference service and collections, which provide support to research and instruction of the civil, computer, mechanical, electronics and communications, and electrical engineering programs. The collection consists of over 18,000 volumes of books. Last is the Elementary and High School Department library, which is located on the 5th floor of the Dr. Lucio C. Tan Building. It is equipped with a multimedia facility. This library was inaugurated during the 66th anniversary of the university. The primary mission of the Library is *to support the teaching, research, learning, extension service, and cultural endeavors of the school community*. It is committed to provide accessible, cost-effective, and innovative information services and programs.

Marketing strategies of the library consists of information provided in the schools' website. Information such as students' satisfaction survey, new acquisitions, online services, and facilities are also provided. Typically, the library marketing strategies is similar with modern libraries. In addition, the library provides instructional assistance and promotion in the use of library resources and services by providing a user-friendly and total care environment conducive to student needs. Furthermore, the library also establishes appropriate linkages with other libraries and research institutions to enhance scholarly information resources and promote resource sharing. Lastly, the library develops and encouraged qualified and service-oriented staff which is to the provision of high quality services.

3.5 Malabon National High School Library

Being the biggest high school in the division of Malabon City, Metro Manila, the school continues to aim at attaining quality education in public school. The fulfillment of this goal is not far behind as proven by the numerous awards it has won in division, regional and even national competitions. The library vision is to prepare dynamic learners in an information rich environment to be resourceful, reflective and responsible readers and users of information. While its mission is to be at the heart of the learning community, providing resources, programs, learning opportunities, and support for the academic and personal interest of the students. The library also offers open access to students and the school librarians collaboratively plan with teachers to formulate student centered, resource-based learning activities that support the curriculum and promote recreational reading.

Continues upgrading of the library resources is seen as a means of marketing. The drafting of a plan for effective use and management of resources is also a part in streamlining the functions of the library.

Table 1*Summary of analysis*

Library	Strategies	Comments
Ateneo	Technology (social media) and person focused	The library can continue to expand the use of memes to post announcements
Arellano	Print media (bulletin board) and use of flyers	The library should apply the use of information technology to enhance its marketing strategies
Cainta	Print media (library handbook) and maximizing use of facilities	The library should apply the use of information technology to enhance its marketing strategies
UE	Technology (website) and personnel training	The library could make use of social media such as Facebook to provide a more personal interaction with the students
Malabon	Traditional use of bulletin boards and flyers, and the continuous upgrading of resources	The library should apply the use of information technology to enhance its marketing strategies

4. Conclusion

As mentioned earlier, the libraries of today do not merely just provide valuable services; they also need to consider how these services are being perceived by the users. Therefore, the promotion or the marketing of library resources and services has now become an integral part of the librarian's duties and responsibilities. In the Philippines, most traditional libraries (*the researcher would consider that majority of the smaller libraries are considered as traditional*) still uses posters and bulletin boards to provide announcements, suggestion boxes to solicit comments from their users, and the distribution of pamphlets, brochures, flyers, and other promotional materials.

As with the more advanced libraries, evolution in terms of their resources such as the use of information technology and multi-medias has now become a necessity. The spread of these digital libraries (or multi-media / information technology / educational resource centers) has also promoted the increased use of internet as a platform for marketing. These information and communication technologies (or the so called ICTs) has actually presented some financial challenges but in many ways provided various opportunities for library marketing. Here we can see a clear view on how **digitally divided** the libraries are. Nonetheless, library marketing is still a must.

Noting what Bhardwaj and Jain (2016) presented earlier, marketing plays a key role in ensuring that the library is being acknowledged and used by the community it serves. Marketing strategies should communicate clearly the services that it offers. In essence, a satisfied customer is a loyal customer, thus instrumental in bringing in more users to the library.

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