Relationship marketing and Library 2.0: Successful prospective partnership?

Aira Lepik

This paper aims to discuss possibilities of relationship marketing theories in the framework of the concept of Library 2.0. This paper provides an overview of various approaches to include relationship marketing concepts in Library and Information Science based on a literature review. This paper will consider the current and future direction of this topic within Library 2.0 developments.

Marketing and LIS

The concept of marketing has been analyzed in Library and Information Science (LIS) professional literature since the 1970s. The principles of marketing were accepted, and an analytical relevant overview can be found by using the annotated bibliographies that contain secondary information from 1970 to 2002 (Norman 1982, 1989; Cox 2000, Hamilton-Pennell 2002, Owens 2002).

Analyzing the publications in 2000 concerning the library marketing in professional literature, M. Cox identified the following trends:

- Increasing integration of the marketing and planning processes, emphasis of the need for marketing surveys, increasing usage of the pro-active management methods in librarianship;

- The continuous thorough analysis of the main concepts of marketing: the basis of marketing, the analysis of marketing and public relations, advertising; common and different in sale communication;

- Increasing adjustment and implementation of the business world marketing methods in library marketing processes;

- Analysis of usage of new marketing methods and means in the development of library marketing strategies (Cox 2000).

The application of marketing concepts to LIS offers great potential for addressing these issues. In particular, the theory and methods of relationship marketing may help enable libraries to develop successful strategies for Library 2.0 as well.

Marketing concepts in LIS

Marketing has been identified as one of the areas of competency that is important for Library and Information Science (LIS) professionals in many studies and projects – European Curriculum Reflections on Library and Information Science Education (2005), Education and Research for Marketing and Quality Management in Libraries (2002), IFLA Guidelines for Professional Library/Information Educational Programs (2000) etc.

A review of the professional literature shows clearly that marketing concepts and techniques have become a topic of interest and a point of concern for LIS professionals – for example, Gupta, Koonz, Massisimo, Savard (2006), Singh (2005), Walters (2004), de Saez (2002), Rowley (2001, 2006), Weingand (1998), – and LIS educators as

well - for instance, Mahesh, Gupta (2006), Webber (2002, 2006), Mittermeyer (2002, 2006), Georgy, Lepik, Petuchovaite (2005), Bouthillier (2002), Savard (1988, 2000).

Entire books on LIS marketing are few. There are "how-to-do guides" for librarians providing step-by-step instructions for every phase of a comprehensive library marketing program (Siess 2003, Walters 2004) and a profound analysis to ensure that librarians and information professionals understand marketing concepts and can apply marketing techniques (de Saez 2002, Rowley 2006).

The LIS marketing literature reflects that the growth in marketing studies continues. From the beginning of the 2000s researchers have started to pay attention on the following research issues: attitudes of librarians and information professionals towards marketing (Koonz, Rockwood 2001), internal marketing (Broady-Preston, Steel 2002), relationship marketing (Besant, Sharp 2000; Maycock, Weech 2007), market orientation and culture (Singh 2004), public relations (Marshall 2001).

The LIS marketing literature shows a development from general discussion, based mainly on the functional aspects of marketing, to research in the form of case studies grounded in the management literature, more concerned with strategic issues. There are no wide reaching studies across sectors, no longitudinal studies, and no meta-analysis.

Relationship marketing
The most well-known and most often used definition of marketing by Philip Kotler states:

> *"Marketing is analysis, planning, implementation, and control of programs designed to create, build, and maintain beneficial exchange relationships with target audiences for the purposes of achieving the marketer's objectives"* (Kotler, Andreasen 1991, 15).

Marketing can also be considered, as Harmon has pointed out,

> *"finding, diagnosing and filling the needs of relevant clientele through mutual beneficial exchange relationships, and doing so better than one's competitors"* (Harmon, 2002, 61).

Both of the mentioned definitions emphasize that marketing is an exchange relationship, but there is no clear identification what kind of relationships are behind of these exchanges.

Relationship marketing is a form of marketing that evolved from direct response marketing in the 1960s and emerged in the 1980s, in which emphasis is placed on building longer term relationships with customers rather than on individual transactions. It involves understanding the customers' needs as they go through their life cycles. It emphasizes providing a range of products or services to existing customers as they need them (Morgan, Hunt 1994).

Traditional marketing has emphasized the importance of acquiring new customers, whereas relationship marketing has put a more overt emphasis on the importance of developing long-term supportive relationships with existing customers and posits that energy and resources are better spent on (Grönroos, 1997). Grönroos suggest a framework of relationship marketing which includes an interaction process as the core, a planned communication process as the marketing communications support through distinct communications media, and a customer value process as the outcome of relationship marketing (Grönroos 2000).

In the context of LIS the relationship marketing approach suggests that:

- Libraries are required to go beyond the needs, wants, and demands of their customers and should try to fulfil them by anticipating them as far as possible (Singh 2003);

- Relationship marketing offers specific benefits to libraries, and can be applied to particular effect in marketing digital library services (Henderson 2005);

- Libraries should consider at least six relationships and partnerships: customer markets, internal markets, supplier and alliance markets, referral markets, recruitment markets and influence markets (Besant, Sharp 2000).

Thus, the focus of relationship marketing is not just on gaining customers for single exchanges but on retaining and building meaningful connections with customers as the foundation for an ongoing long-term relationship.

Library 2.0 and marketing

The information environment within which libraries are functioning today is changing faster than ever before. The contemporary Library 2.0 is a concept of a different library service: towards the needs and expectations of library users.

In this understanding, the library makes information available wherever and whenever the user requires it, and seeks to ensure that barriers to use and reuse are removed. Library 2.0 can be seen as a reaction from librarians to the increasingly relevant developments in Web 2.0 and social software. Library 2.0 is also an environment that is saturated with information available through more easily accessible channels (Curran, Murray, Christian 2007).

Maness defines "Library 2.0" as *"the application of interactive, collaborative, and multi-media web-based technologies to web-based library services and collections,"* and suggests that this definition should be adopted by the library community (Maness 2006). The concept of Library 2.0 has been developed by analyzing it as a user-centred change (Casey, Savastinuk 2006), focused on web-services (Abram 2005), a user-centred virtual community (Maness 2006), and as a concept that operates according to the expectations of today's users.

A recent study of Maness shows that the concept of Library 2.0 could be understood to have four essential elements:

- It is user-centred,
- It provides a multi-media experience,
- It is socially rich,
- It is communally innovative (Maness 2006).

Habib defines Library 2.0 as follows:
"Library 2.0 describes a subset of library services designed to meet user needs caused by the direct and peripheral effects of Web 2.0".

This definition of his explains that Web 2.0 precipitates changing user needs and that Library 2.0 services meet these needs. It implies all implementations of Web 2.0 methodologies and technologies by libraries (Habib 2006).

Conclusion

Marketing is not a new subject in LIS yet at the same time it is not assumed to be skilfully used. Marketing is rather the method to realizing the main basis of the library mission and planning of future techniques. Marketing concepts, and relationship marketing in particular, offer challenging possibility for libraries, especially for Library 2.0 to see and understand how to develop successful strategies for prospective partnerships. 📖

As Crawford has put it:
"there is at least sixty two views and seven definitions of Library 2.0 and … do keep an open mind to ideas and tools that started outside the library field -if you haven't already been doing so" (Crawford 2006).

References
Abram, S. (2005). Web 2.0 — huh?! library 2.0, librarian 2.0. *Information Outlook*, 9 (12), 44-46.

Besant, L., Sharp, D. (2000). Libraries need relationship marketing. *Information Outlook*, 4 (3), 17-22.

Broady-Preston, J., Steel, L. (2002). Internal marketing strategies in LIS: a strategic management perspective. *Library Management*, 23 (6/7), 294-301.

Casey, M., Savastinuk, L. (2006). Library 2.0. Library-Journal.com, September 1, Avalilable at: www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6365200.html

Cox, M. (2000). Library marketing research trends – a survey: 1988-1999. Available at: http://www.clmc.org/Research/ (20.12.2000).

Crawford, W. (2006). Library 2.0 and "Library 2.0". *Cites & Insights*, 6 (2). Available at: http://citesandinsights.info/civ6i2.pdf

Curran, K., Murray, M., Christian, M. (2007). Taking the information to the public through Libray 2.0. Library Hi Tech, 25 (2), 288-297.

Grönroos, C. (1997). Value-driven relational marketing: from products to resources and competencies. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 13, 407– 419.

Gronroos, C. (2000). Service Management and Marketing: A Customer Relationship Management Approach, 2nd ed. Chichester: John Wiley.

Habib, M. (2006). Toward Academic Library 2.0: Development and Application of a Library 2.0 Methodology. A Master's Paper for the M.S. in L.S degree. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, School of Information and Library Science, November, 2006. Advisor: David Carr. Available at: http://etd.ils.unc.edu/dspace/bitstream/1901/356/1/michaelhabib.pdf

Hamilton-Pennell, Ch. (2002). Bibliography of Library Marketing articles 1999-2002. Available at: http://www.clmc.org/Research/ (08.01.2003).

Harmon, G. (2002). The importance of marketing in the library and information science curriculum. *The Acquisitions Librarian*, 27, 61-79.

Henderson, K. (2005). Marketing strategies for digital library services. *Library Review*, 54 (6), 342-345.

Koontz, C., Rockwood, P. (2001). Developing performance measures within a marketing frame of reference. *New Library World*, 102 (1163/1164), 146-153.

Kotler, P. Andreasen, A. (1991). Strategic marketing for nonprofit organizations. 4th ed. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Maness, J. (2006). Library 2.0 Theory: Web 2.0 and Its Implications for Libraries. Webology, 3 (2), Article 25. Available at: http://www.webology.ir/2006/v3n2/a25.html

Marshall, N. (2001). Public relations in academic libraries: a descriptive analysis. The Journal of Academic Librarianship, 27 (2), 116-121.

Maycock, A., Weech, T. (2007). Relationship marketing and the academic library: preparing future librarians to market information services. In: *Marketing of information services*. Proceedings of 15th BOBCATSSS symposium, Prague 29-31 January 2007, 299-309. Prague: Charles University.

Morgan R., Hunt S. (1994). The commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing.
Journal of Marketing, 58, 20– 38.

Norman, G. (1982). Marketing libraries and information services: An annotated guide to the literature. *Reference Services Review*, 10 (2), 69-80.

Norman, G. (1989). Marketing library and information services: An annotated guide to recent trends and developments. *Reference Services Review*, 17 (1), 43-64.

Owens, I. (2002). Marketing in library and information science: A selected review of related literature. *The Acquisitions Librarian*, 27, 5-31.

Rowley, J. (2006). Information marketing. 2nd ed. London: Ashgate.

Saez de, E. (2002). Marketing concepts for libraries and information services. 2nd ed. London: Facet Publishing.

Siess, J. (2003). The visible librarian: asserting your value with marketing and advocacy. Chicago: American Library Association.

Singh, R. (2004). Branding in library and information context: the role of marketing culture. *Information Services & Use*, 24, 93-98.

Singh, R. (2003). Developing relationship marketing with customers: A Scandinavian perspective. *Library Management*, 24, 34-43.

Walters, S. (2004). Library marketing that works! New York, London: Neal-Schuman.

Aira Lepik, Associate Professor of
Department of Information Studies
Tallinn University, Estonia
email. aira.lepik@tlu.ee