
Information repackaging to target groups for a fee: A strategic plan

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Abstract: Repackaging of information is very inevitable for maximum utilization of information resources and to achieve a breakthrough in fee based information services. This work focuses on how specialized information can be strategically repackaged for maximum utilization by the various groups of users that may not be privileged to access the visible library and information centers as at when needed. Focus discuss group was used for the study. The discussion group comprises of undergraduate students in the Department of Library, Archival and Information Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Ten target groups were used in the discussion for the study, namely: lecturers/scholars, policy makers, children, refugees, travelers, grass root, physically challenged, prisoners, patients and clergy/religious leaders. The study brought to the lime light the various prerequisites, the media and champions that are necessary to execute a fruitful fee based information services to the various target groups.

Keywords: Information Repackaging, Target Groups, Marketing, Strategic Plan, Library, Information Centers

1. Introduction

Marketing of information services and products becomes very imperative for the survival of libraries and other information providers in this era of economic recession. The role of the library and information centers is to mediate between the user and the information resources, working out a plan of action from amongst the various available options for database searching. This role is by no means inferior to that of their counterparts in medical and judiciary that offer fee based services. Most importantly, some people tend to belittle and despise products or services that are offered free, just as Jain (1995) stated that giving information away free may give the impression that what is given free is of no value. These factors amongst others necessitate information marketing or brokerage in library and information centers.

Information is known to be a vital force to man and for societal changes and development. Information carries along with it answers to varied human issues, it permeates every discipline and profession of human endeavor including: medicine, law, economics, marketing, politics, security, recreation etc. Information is known to be very useful in decision making. Its availability enables the

individual, group or nation to make rational decisions and reduce their level of uncertainty. Advanced economies have maximized the creation and use of hard information and are constantly in dear quest for information.

Information in form of product or services is a tradable commodity that is capable of being sold and bought in the product market. It is the fifth and very unique factor of production. It must be noted that the absence of information can ruin the efficacy of all other factors (Land, labour, capital and entrepreneur). For instance as good and valuable as land is, if you don't acquire adequate and accurate information about the land you want to purchase, there will be trouble especially if the land has been sold before.

Relevant information about the labor to be hired is mandatory in order to maximize profit and to ensure organizational sustainability. If someone out of ignorance (due to non or insufficient utilization of information) decides to hire labour for his poultry farm, without considering the services of a veterinary doctor, he will definitely be at risk with his poultry farm. On the other hand capital investment without adequate knowledge of the

proposed business venture can be a waist pipe and regrettable venture. In all there must be adequate and appropriate interaction between the four factors of production including the entrepreneur, of which information is a key player that enhances positive outcome on the long run. The value of information cannot be over emphasized, it is denuded for its completeness, accuracy, relevance, reliability and when conveyed through the right channel.

It is pertinent that despite the invaluable benefits of information, many still despise the use of same. It is disheartening that some people can pay any amount for ephemeral things like cars, clothes, cosmetics, but when it comes to paying for information (which commands greater value) needed for their total wellbeing and optimal performance of their valuables, they are reluctant to pay. This attitude has to be corrected if librarians and information scientists are to run a profit making outfit. A change in attitude necessitates a change in the way and manner information is packaged. Information needs to be repackaged in the most attractive and acceptable way bearing in mind that users cut across diverse backgrounds e.g. socio-cultural and economic backgrounds.

Information repackaging goes beyond the use of audio visual, it includes the assemblance of relevant information resources in the most useful and attractive way. It therefore behooves the librarian entrepreneur to put into consideration not only the acquisition, processing and storage of useful resources but also how to render information products and services attractive for easy and quick marketing.

It must be born in mind that a good product is as good as nothing to the producers without good sells. Sells are what determines profit and ensures sustainability in every business enterprise. How then can good and continued sells of information products and services be achieved? This can be achieved by taking the products/services to the right clients that need them in a shape quantity, quality and time they need them using the right strategy.

According To UNESCO (1986) repackaging of information refers to the presentation of information in a more understandable, reliable, acceptable and usable forms. For instance academics/researchers usually need information for research. Considering that the final outcome of research is typed and printed, the electronic copy of the information needed for researchers are more appropriate to save the time of retyping the item of information, even the citation can easily be copied and pasted. This aligns with Aboyade, (1987) report that information Repackaging (IR) is "the collection and redesigning, remodeling, restructuring, reorganization and dissemination of information to a peculiar group of people taking into cognizance the socio- economic, cultural and political background of the people". Information repackaging, also known as information consolidation, refers the public knowledge specifically selected, analyzed, evaluated and possibly restructured and repackaged for the

purpose of serving some of the immediate problems and information needs of a defined clientele or socio group, who otherwise may not effectively efficiently assess and use this knowledge as available in the great amount of documents or in its original form.

2. Information Repackaging and its Significance

From the ongoing, the significance of information repackaging has become very glaring. Iwhiwhu (2008) described packaging as the bundling of products and services to address specific needs. It can be done by:

- Reformatting and synthesizing raw information;
- Combining expertise or consulting on a subject with access to relevant information sources;
- Providing training or assistance to a user in accessing an information product.

Quantum Dialog (2004) noted that to add value to a product, the information provider must understand the types of information access problems most frequently encountered. Based on this knowledge, packaging can add value to services that are not readily available elsewhere. Person-to-person communication is one important form of repackaging. Sturges and Neill (1998) argue that people prefer personal contact as means of acquiring practical information.

Information Repackaging is very useful due to the under listed reasons:

1. It saves time. It ensures timely delivery of relevant information. Information repackaging saves the time user group spend on labourous perusal of bulky information. Bearing in mind that time and labour can be quantified as money, if information can be repackaged for different target group, no doubt they can afford to pay a fee when considering the time and labour they would have spent trying to retrieve the same information from bulky files.
2. Repackaging of information based on a user group need ensures wider access to relevant, reliable and usable information. If information is translated in various language dialects selected on the bases of the users needs and presented in a format that are mostly useful to them, surely users can part with their money in order to have them. The reason why some people refuse to pay for information is that most often than not they cannot decode the message or knowledge content.
3. Repackaging of information gives user group the opportunity to correlate the world of practice with the wealth of information emanating from research structures, experiments and act projects. If there is a direct connection between theory and practice definitely user group will sacrifice to pay.
4. It keeps user group updated on the latest information available and relevant to them.

To ensure effective services to target group, one needs a strategy for information repackaging. Singh and Shukla (2009) described marketing strategy as a process that can allow an organization to concentrate its limited resources to grab the greatest opportunities, to increase sales and achieve a sustainable competitive advantage. Based on this definition, the strategy will include the audience, their current attitude, approach needed to reach out to them, the channel/media and the champion. It must be noted that an approach that delivered to academia can prove very abortive to the grass root.

The following factors are therefore to be considered while choosing formats and channels:

User group: A user group or user community consists of individuals, who by virtue of their professions, positions and activities share common areas of interest and require similar type of information (Unesco1986). A user group is identified by its culture, they share understanding expectation and approach. User groups can be classified by: age, culture, profession, personal attributes and environment.

Generally user group fall into four categories:

- Research subsystem;
- Development subsystem;
- Practice subsystem; and
- Consumption subsystem.

Specifically target group or (special group) are: armed forces, clergy (religious rulers), policy/decision makers, refugees, aged, children, travelers, prisoners and differently able.

The ability and information preference/priority of user group determine the type and content of information to be repackaged. Therefore, there is need to examine the audience/users, their priorities/preferences so that focus can be channeled on their preferred information needs with the most appropriate repackaging activities. It can be noted that the most useful information can be useless if such is not directed to the right people who need them at the right time or with the wrong channel.

Two important factors to be considered in this regard are: the physical and mental capability of the people and professional attributes.

The physical attribute has to do with the fitness of the person. When giving out information to any user, it is important to present it in the most attractive way. This will ensure that the best result will be achieved. When targeting user group in information repackaging, it is expedient to consider the user group culture. E.g. the librarian\ information scientist need to be conversant with the terminologies of the user group. For instance the professional group of users (like doctors) do not have 'the time to wait' due to the urgency of their needed information, so their information pack need to be made brief. It should be realized that the best is to use home base information (take it to them at home) let your phone be in good condition. In contrast, when dealing with children you have to be patient due to their attention span is very short, you

need to introduce plays in between so that they can grasp. You need a mix of audio-visuals and realia to sustain their attention.

Furthermore, for information to be meaningful, useful and valuable, it operates in a setting. These are the surrounding conditions that make information appreciable. When a particular information gets out of its environment, it may become useless to the other environment. The environment may be human or geographic. The environment affects information presentation and assimilation.

Outreach program is very crucial in this regard. Outreach program is an extension service that has to do with thinking in term of reaching out to the public or target group. Mishra (2010) considers the following ways of disseminating library services: interlibrary loan, selective dissemination of information (SDI), current awareness service, learner service, circulation etc. The activities taken to reach out to people who may not be aware of the library, include:

- Lecture
- Workshops
- Film shows
- Seminars
- Symposia
- Exhibitions
- Display
- Demonstration
- Excursion

The ability and information preference/priority of user group determine the type and content of information to be repackaged and the mode of packaging. Therefore, there is need to examine the audience/users, their priorities/preferences so that you can focus on their preferred information need with the most appropriate repackaging activities.

In the light of the ongoing, the main objective of this research is to device a strategic plan for information repackaging to target group.

The specific objectives are to:

- identify the various target groups (audience) the library and information centers can reach out with information brokerage/fee-based services;
- determine the various strategies for repackaging of information, in order to ensure effective services to target groups.
- ascertain the target groups' current attitude to information (Positive/Negative/ Questionable attitude);
- determine Approach needed for the different groups of information users;
- find out the Channel/media that is required to serve the target groups better.

3. Methodology

The study deployed focus group discussion. The discussion group comprised of undergraduate students in

the Department of Library, Archival and Information Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Ten target groups were used in the discussion for the study, namely: researchers/ lecturers/scholars, policy makers, children (0-12years), refugees, travelers (tourist, drivers, businessmen), grass root (illiterate, farmers, artisans, villagers, market women), physically challenged (blind, deaf, lame), prisoners, patients and clergy/religious leaders.

During the discussion, each target group\audience was picked out and discussed based on their current attitude to information, the approaches needed to reach out to the group effectively, channel/media for communicating the information and who will be used to champion or lead the program. The result was analyzed and documented with the use of table titled strategic plan table.

3.1. Findings

The findings are discussed with the use of three tables: Strategic plan table 1.Strategic plan table 2. And Strategic plan table 3.

The tables highlight the ten target groups used in the study, with various strategic plans for information repackaging that the library and information centers can use to reach out to them with information brokerage/fee-based services.

Strategic plan table 1. illustrated the findings for three target groups viz: researchers/ lecturers/scholars, policy makers and children (0-12years).

Strategic plan table 2. Highlighted four target groups namely: the refugees, travelers, grass root and the physically challenged. While

Strategic plan table 3. illustrated prisoners, patients and clergy/religious leaders.

3.2. Strategic Plan Table

Table 1. For information repackaging for a fee.

Target group	Current attitude to information: (Positive/Negative/ Questionable attitude)	Approach needed (proactive/reactive)	Channel/media	Champion
1.Researchers/ Academia/scholars	Positive	Proactive/reactive: a. Get to Know their subject/research interest b.SDI	a. Email/other internet facilities b. Phone calls c. Personal contacts d. Speed post	a. Personal assistant b. Head of Departments
2.Policy makers (Government, permanent secretary, Armed forces, Politicians, people in position of authority e.g. lawyers)	Positive	Proactive/reactive a. Make information available both formal and informal. b. Encouragement c. Advise them d. Make materials available (current research data)	a. Interviews, b. Personal contact c. Speed post d. Periodicals, Newspapers, E. radio, television, online information, a. Storytelling b. Songs c. Fictions d. Films e. Demonstration f. Audio-visuals g. Picture books	a. Personal assistant b. Head of ministries c. Media houses d. Relations
3.Children (0-12years)	a. Positive c. Questioning attitude	Proactive/reactive a. Ask them questions. b. Educate them c. Exhibit childlike behavior.		a. Children leaders b. Parents/relatives c. Peers d. Teachers

Table 2. For information repackaging for a fee.

Target group	Current attitude to information: (Positive/Negative/ Questionable attitude)	Approach needed (proactive/reactive)	Channel/media	Champion
4.Refugees	a. Positive b. Questionable attitude	Proactive/reactive a. Organize aids for them e.g. foods, clothes. b. Visit them. c. Arrange accommodation d. Transportation e. Reading classes for them at their school age group.	a. Aural and visuals b. Discussions c. Dramas d. Pictures	a. Voluntary organization b. Red cross and c. philanthropist
5.Travelers: Tourist, Drivers, Businessmen	a. Positive	Reactive	a. Oral b. Discussion c. Books and magazines	a. Library/ information representatives
6.Grass root (illiterate, farmers, artisans, villagers, market women)	a. Positive b. Negative give reasons:	Proactive a. community information center b. educate them.	A Aural and visuals b. Discussion c. Interview d. Drama e. Picture f. Poster	a. Community leaders b. Town criers c. Respectable people in the community d. Women leaders

Target group	Current attitude to information: (Positive/Negative/ Questionable attitude)	Approach needed (proactive/reactive)	Channel/media	Champion
7. Physically Challenged: blind, deaf, lame,	Negative and Questionable attitude: -They feel inferior, They lack self confidence and are easily irritated.	Proactive/reactive a. Initiating b. Interviewing them. c. discussion	g. Bill-boards h. fliers a. Aural b. Visual c. Drama d. Picture e. Film show	a. Identifying people with leadership trait among this group.

Strategic plan table 1. illustrated the findings for three target groups viz: researchers/ lecturers/scholars, policy makers and children (0-12years).

From the findings, researchers, lecturers and scholars are very receptive to information, They have a positive attitude to information. The approach needed to communicate their need information is to be both proactive and reactive. The information professional need to know their subject/research interest in order to constantly select and disseminate relevant information to them. The channel/media for an effective information delivery are: Email/other internet facilities, phone calls, personal

contacts and speed post. The information communication service can be facilitated or championed by the head of departments and personal assistants.

The policy makers have positive attitude to information as highlighted in the table. The library can reach out to them by interviews and discussions in order to establish a personal relationship with them. Then regularly interact with them by emails, face book, phone calls\ text messages, newspapers, periodicals. The outreach programs will be effective through their personal assistants, head of ministries, media houses and relatives.

Table 3. For information repackaging for a fee.

Target group	Current attitude to information: (Positive/Negative/ Questionable attitude)	Approach needed (proactive/reactive)	Channel/media	Champion
8. Prisoners	Questionable attitude: -They feel withdrawn, not too sure of their attributes.	a. Teaching, encouraging, counseling. b. Reactive: Educate, medical attention.	a. Documentation b. Film show e.g. people from prison to height, Illustration posters	a. Their leaders (Chairman, president) b. Lawyers c. Human right activist d. Prison workers e. Prison relatives f. Religious leaders
9. Patients	(Positive) They are eager to get information.	a. Question regards to their needs. b. Encourage them c. Give them books to read.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitation: • Documentation • Film shows • Word of mouth • Books • Photocopy • Songs 	a. All health practitioners (doctors, nurses, workers) b. Relations of the sick. c. Hospital librarian d. Leader of the patient.
10. Clergy/religious leaders	a. Positive	a. Make information available in both formal and informal. b. Encouragement c. Make materials available d. Interview	a. Email/other internet facilities b. Phone calls c. Personal contact d. Speed post	a. Personal Assistants

From the table above, children are very positive to information, they are very inquisitive. Information can be given out to children through their teachers, children leaders, peer group leader, utilizing strategies like storytelling, songs/drama section, fictions, films, demonstrations with the use of Audio-visuals, picture books, talk shows etc. The approach needed to get across the information package to them is to ask them questions, and educate them using childlike behavior.

Strategic plan table 2. Highlights strategies for reaching out to four target groups namely: the refugees, travelers, grass root and the physically challenged.

According to the table, the refugees are unpredictable in their approach to information, some are positive while

others are negative. The approach for reaching this group is to be proactive: To organize aids for them e.g. foods, clothes, visit them, arrange accommodation, transportation, and reading classes for them.

On the other hand the travelers are positive to information. From the findings, the media that will be appropriate in this regard are oral, discussion, flyers etc. The services of library/information center representatives can be hired to champion the programs.

The attitude of grass root to information is quite negative as exposed in the table. The best ways to reach out to this group with their information needs according to the findings are through aural and visuals, discussions, interviews, drama, pictures, film shows, posters flyers and

bill-boards. The community leaders, town criers, women leaders and respectable people in the community can be used to convey or champion their information needs.

Table 2. shows that physically challenged are usually not so receptive to information. The information provider needs to be proactive and exercise his initiatives when interviewing and discussing with them. Aural, visuals, drama, pictures, film show will be relevant for this group. There is need to identifying people with leadership trait among this group to lead or champion the information communication.

Strategic plan table 3. Illustrated strategies for reaching out to the prisoners, patients and clergy/religious leaders.

Prison inmates attribute to information has been identified to be very uncertain. Good teaching method, encouragement, counseling will be of great help to transmit information to this user group. Documentaries, film shows e.g. people from prison to height, talents/skills and illustrative posters. Their leaders (Chairman, president), human right activist, prison workers, prisoners' relatives, Religious leaders can champion the outreach.

From the findings, patients are eager to get information .The information professional has to ask questions regarding to their needs, encourage them, give them books to read and visit them. Bibliotherapy, documentation, film shows, word of mouth, photocopy and songs are relevant media for this user group. All health practitioners (doctors, nurses, hospital workers), Relations of the sick, hospital librarian, and leaders of the patient have to be involved.

Table 3 further revealed that the clergy/religious leaders are highly positive to information. The needed information can be passed across to them through email and other internet facilities, phone calls personal contacts and speed post with the assistance of their personal assistants.

4. Discussions

4.1. Researchers/ Lecturers/Scholars

From the findings (table 1.), researchers, lecturers and other scholars are very receptive to information and so an aggressive effort need to be channeled towards reaching out to them with specialized information packages. This user group has a very high level of information consumption and utilization capacity. Every aspect of their profession is yawning for quality, accurate and timely information. For instance, many times scholars have academic and research targets to be reached within a specific short period of time, this and many other coinciding issues contending for their time make the use of the library and information centers a thing under "perpetual postponement". If the library or the information broker should target this group of people, and begin to assemble and extract literature from both electronic and book format, then matching these customized literature to each users need, definitely they will be willing to pay. Not only being willing, they can

afford to pay.

Policy makers which include the government, permanent secretary, armed forces, politicians and lawyers are a viable ground for information brokerage as they have positive attitude to information. They need abundance of information in diverse issues such as population census, economic aspect, security, health, industries etc. In all, they need information about what worked and propelled development in other countries and what does not work, as well as current relevant research data in order to make rational decisions for the good of the citizens. These people are armed with a great task and so need to be surrounded with adequate appropriate information. Many times citizens blame and criticize the people in positions of authority, not knowing that their decisions and actions are based on the information at their disposal. If this group of people is targeted with specialized information, especially on the current research reports on the various issues and fields, there will be remarkable societal advancement. Not only that, the librarian entrepreneur/libraries will continue to be in profit oriented business, bearing in mind that the bulk of the nations' economy resides with the government, so they can afford the cost of any satisfactory service rendered to them.

Children are peculiar in their information need and utilization. Though they cannot afford the financial cost of information when repackaged, however their parents can. There is an adage that says "catch the young". It is also a general statement that "a reader of today is a leader of tomorrow, and that " you are what you read". Parents and wards are aware of all these sayings, at the same time want the best for their children. It is passion for the best for their children that cause many parents to put their children in very expensive schools. This set of parents can as well be able to part with some fund for specialized children information package if they are enlightened. From the table above, children are very positive to information, they are very inquisitive. Infact if their information needs are well repackaged based on their level of intelligence, using appropriate format and media, they will be the ones disturbing their parents to buy the packages. Information can also be given out to children for a fee utilizing other strategies like storytelling hour, songs/drama section and films/ talk shows.

The refugees are a user group that are unpredictable in their approach to information. Some are negative, irritated, withdrawn and psychologically affected by their predicament, yet some tend towards the positive and always thirsting for news about their root and countries.

These set of people can be supported with beneficial information in order to make a meaningful living, pending the time they will go back to their homes. It is obvious that this target group cannot afford the information cost, but the libraries in business can arrange with sponsors, foundations and other philanthropic /voluntary organizations to support and pay the fee.

Travelers, tourist, drivers, and businessmen are very

busy group who can rarely access formalized information, yet they are very positive and inquisitive to know what is happening while on board, in the car, or in the hotel.

These people will appreciate and can as well afford to pay a fee to access relevant information while on their trips. This could be seen by the way travelers patronize vendors. Book sellers do make it a point of duty to publicize and sell their books at car parks. Information about road traffic, safety while on a trip will be well bought and utilized by travelers, tourist, drivers, and business men and women. Sometimes some people place books and some other reading materials for this group of people to read at the hotels, due to the fact that being away from home can be boring as well as create room for loneliness. Well packaged appropriate information/library publications will no doubt, make good sells to this group. The use of oral and discussion for publicity is good.

The attitude of Grass root (illiterates, farmers, artisans, market women, villagers) to the use of information is usually negative due to ignorance, inferiority complex and lack of needed sources to access the information. Yet they need information on health issues e.g. HIV and AIDS, security, economy, education agriculture and transportation. The best ways to reach out to this group with their information needs according to the findings are through aural and visuals, discussion, interview, dramas, pictures, film shows, posters flyers and Bill-boards. The community leaders, town criers, women leaders and respectable people in the community can be used to convey their information needs. Health information, literacy campaign, food and agricultural information can be well conveyed using this methods.

The physically challenged usually feel inferior. They lack self confidence and are easily irritated. The information provider needs to be proactive and exercise his initiative when interviewing and discussing with this target group. Aural, visuals, dramas, pictures, film shows will be relevant for this group, especially when integrated with a great deal of humor. There is need to identify those with leadership trait among them and let them be part of the champion. The library can source for fund through foundations and other philanthropic /voluntary organizations hence it is obvious that this target group cannot afford their needed information.

The prison inmates usually feel withdrawn as well, their attitude to information is quite uncertain. Good teaching method, encouragement, counseling will be of great help to transmit information to this user group. Documentaries, film shows e.g. people from prison to height, talents/skills and illustrative posters will be appropriate. Their leaders (Chairman, president), human right activist, prison workers, prisoners' relatives, religious leaders can be used to champion the outreach.

From the findings, patients are eager to get information on health matters, diets and so on. The information professional has to ask questions regarding to their needs, encourage them, give them books to read and visit them.

Bibliotherapy, documentation, film shows, word of mouth, photocopy and songs are relevant media for this user group. All health practitioners (doctors, nurses, hospital workers), relations of the sick, hospital librarian, and leaders of the patient have to be involved. This group might not afford the needed information but their relations who are eager to get them well will be ready to pay for any health information that will assist them.

The clergy/religious leaders are a user group by virtue of their position, require huge qualitative information. This is as a result of their job complexity, they help in molding lives. The society therefore depend so much on them. The quality of their messages depend so much on the information at their disposal. That is why most clergymen are voracious readers; they have a very positive attitude towards information. The information professional/library targeting this user group with relevant and up to-date religious information and sermons will by no means make loses.

5. Conclusion

The first step to satisfying a user group is to know the group you are serving. To be in a sustainable information broking business, the library should therefore identify and understand the attributes of the group she is serving or to be included in her services, through research and personal contacts. This is due to the fact that if you cannot understand the people, you cannot serve them effectively. Therefore for you to serve your clients effectively, you have to go after them, "read" them as individual human being, and as a member of a target group (Psycho-analysis) in order to design customized information packages that will suit them. The library can borrow a leaf from corporate organizations like banks, insurance companies and pension administrators. They do not always wait for their customers to come to patronize them, instead they go after their potential clients. It is high time libraries and information centers started canvassing for customers and strategically tailor their information packages to meet their peculiar needs, due to many of the users who can afford the price of their needed information are either very busy or may not be privileged to access the physical library and information centers effectively and efficiently.

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