Marketing library services.
A case study at **University of Illinois at Urbana – Champaign USA**

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The University Library at the University of Illinois at Urbana – Champaign (UIUC) consists of over 40 departmental libraries with more than 10 million volumes, making it the largest public university library and the third largest among all university libraries in North America. As a departmental library within the University Library, the Business & Economics Library (BEL) primarily serves students and faculty at the College of Business for their research needs. Each year, approximately 3,500 students and faculty in its various programs, such as business administration, finance, and accounting, receive services from BEL.

Starting in 2002, BEL sought to reshape its image from a "house of books" to an electronic business information center. Until then, the main use of BEL by undergraduate business students had been to retrieve course-reserve materials, and graduate business students and faculty members generally used BEL to check out books for their research. As business information increasingly became available in electronic formats – easily retrievable via the Internet in most cases – BEL subsequently placed more emphasis on providing electronic resources than paper-based resources. This change reflected new pedagogical needs of business education as well.

Graduate business programs, especially the Master of Business Administration (MBA), seek to train business professionals, and the curriculum for those students are designed to train business decision-makers who can make difficult decisions based on the information given to them in a fast-paced environment. As a result,

they need quick access to quantitative databases with which they can quickly retrieve numeric data. On the contrary, their use of scholarly journals or other materials is minimal at best, compared to graduate students in other subject fields such as humanities and social sciences. Business students and faculty members need information resources which they can easily access and which are continuously being updated, and electronic information has thus become the perfect solution for them. Electronic information can easily be manipulated and then incorporated into their business presentations and project assignments, while data from paper-based resources often require laborious and time-consuming process to copy data into computer software programs for further analysis.

As the nature of library services changed, BEL strongly felt the need to change students' perceptions of the library from a "house of books" to an electronic information center. In other words, BEL needed to develop a branding strategy and to market itself to students and faculty members as a new kind of service provider. To accomplish this goal, BEL decided to follow basic marketing research techniques that would involve careful analysis of data. This paper presents a case study in which how BEL created marketing campaign strategies based on the data collected.

Customer Segmentations

The first step was to determine the target population. The three main segmentations of BEL's user group consist of students, faculty, and staff at the College of Business. These segments can also be broken further into several segments:
- Students
- Undergraduate students
- Graduate students
- International students
- Domestic students
- Faculty
- Fields of study (e.g. marketing, finance, accounting)
- Tenure status
- Staff
- Functions (e.g. admissions, career services, facilities)

It was clear that no single marketing strategy would work effectively for all segments. BEL needed to build different strategies for individual segments. BEL determined that the first target segment would be graduate business students, both domestic and international.

Data Collection

Understanding students' current perceptions and expectations of the library was critical to formulate marketing strategies. BEL conducted two surveys with questionnaire in 2003 and 2004. The questionnaire was designed to understand demographics, satisfaction with various library services, and the use of the Internet. The questionnaire was distributed to business students on various locations on campus, and a total of 271 valid responses were received. To measure students' satisfaction with and importance of various library services, the author used the Likert-scale (5 = very satisfied or very important, 4 = somewhat satisfied or somewhat important, 3 = neutral, 2 = somewhat dissatisfied or not too important, 1 = very dissatisfied or not important at all). The author mainly performed descriptive statistical analysis due to the insufficient number of the respondents for meaningful inferential statistical analysis; however, the author also performed t-tests and simple regression analysis as necessary.

Summary of findings

The author reported the survey results and analysis in detail (2003 & 2004). This section provides a summary of key findings from the survey results. First, library instruction proved to be an excellent tool to change students' perceptions of library services. The survey results showed that students in general were more motivated to use library services after they received library instruction, and especially international students indicated that library instruction helped them learn library services which they would not know otherwise. Secondly, it was interesting that space for personal study was the most important library service to most respondents, and students showed little interest in virtual reference services via e-mail and online chat, which the University Library was promoting heavily. Thirdly, the length of stay at the College of Business did not correlate with the frequency of library use. In other words, simply spending more years at the College of Business did not lead to the increased use of library services. Fourthly, graduate business students generally did not have a clear understanding of subject librarians' roles, and they did not have confidence in subject librarians' knowledge in the field of business. Lastly, international students had much less experience with electronic business information resources in their home countries than did domestic students.

The rapid adoption of the Internet undoubtedly affected the nature of library services in many ways. The survey results showed that approximately 80 percent of graduate business students had broadband access to the Internet, and thus telecommunications infrastructure was not a barrier to using electronic business information on the Internet. Surprisingly, over 80 percent of international students

indicated that they had broadband access to the Internet in their home countries, but about an equal percentage of them had not used electronic business information via the Internet for research or assignments. The results suggested that advanced Internet connection did not automatically lead to the use of electronic information provided by their home university libraries. In addition, such information seeking behavior was very likely to continue, even after they started studying in the U.S.

About a half of the respondents spent the most time on a number of career-related Internet sites, and it was potentially the most significant piece of information in developing marketing strategies. Business schools at graduate level sought to train business practitioners, not business academicians, and their quality of education was ultimately measured by the employment rate of their students and starting salaries. Similarly, graduate business students' main motivation for going to business schools was to find jobs with high salaries after graduation.

Implications for developing marketing strategies

The survey results provided important insights into graduate business students' information seeking behaviors. Based on some key findings, BEL developed appropriate strategies. The following describes those key findings and BEL's action plans.

1) Career was the main driving factor for graduate business students when searching for information on the Internet. As mentioned previously, business students' primary concern was their employment after graduation. They spent most of their time searching for career-related information on the Internet, and they actively participated in campus programs and activities that provided information on companies and industries in which they were interested. This finding suggested that BEL could effectively increase its visibility to business students by offering career-related information services.

Collaboration between libraries and career services is not unusual. The library literature provides substantial amount of cases where libraries maintain close relationship with career services. Hollister (2005), for example, describes how he was able to cultivate continuous relationship between the Undergraduate Library and the University's Career Service Office at the University at Buffalo. He successfully built a strong partnership with the Career Services Office by integrating information literacy instruction into the offerings of the Career Services Office. Furthermore, library instruction has been strongly advocated as a tool to build liaison relationship not only with faculty but also with non-academic units (Glynn & Wu, 2003; O'Sullivan, 2002; Feast, 2003; DeHart, 1996).

2) Most graduate business students had broadband access to the Internet. Internet infrastructure was not a barrier to students; in fact, BEL was once concerned that there might have existed a digital divided among students in terms of

broadband access to the Internet. BEL now had to emphasize the fact that electronic information could be accessed from anywhere at any time, regardless of location and time, as long as students had reliable Internet access. Especially since many international students had little previous experience with electronic information provided by libraries in their home countries, BEL had to make extra efforts to promote the convenience of accessing electronic information resources using the Internet.

3) Students did not initiate learning library services but library instruction greatly changed students' perceptions of library services. However, the survey results showed that library instruction was a very effective marketing tool to introduce new library resources and services to students. Most students stated that they learned library services that they would not have known otherwise, and library instruction motivated them to explore library services further. Based on the survey results, BEL decided that library instruction would be the main marketing channel to communicate the value of BEL's services to students and build relationship with them.

4) Library was still viewed as a physical place rather than a service point. Students valued the space provided by BEL, but they did not know other services such as reference, instruction, and individual research consultation. Such a perception might be due to their lack of understanding in the role of librarians and lack of confidence in librarians' subject knowledge in business-related fields. Library instruction sessions were excellent opportunities to help students to have confidence in librarians' knowledge in business and to help them realize that BEL was more than a physical space but a service point where they could receive valuable assistance for their research.

Formulate and implementing action items

The survey results convinced BEL that career-related activities would be most attractive to graduate business students. BEL contacted the Business Career Services Office (BCSO) to discuss providing collaborative programs to help students with their career search. BSCO's primary responsibility was to assist graduate business students in obtaining desirable jobs by hosting prospective employers to the campus, holding seminars on writing resumes and cover letters, and providing individual career counseling. Recognizing the fact that comprehensive research on companies and industries was the critical element in successful job search, BCSO requested BEL to provide a workshop on how to use electronic business information resources provided by BEL.

During the workshop, the author discussed the importance of careful company research in job search process, and introduced key electronic databases that provided valuable information on companies and industries in which students were most

interested. Prior to the workshop, the author contacted all the participants and asked if they had specific questions. The author then conducted extensive research to answer those questions at the workshop. The workshop led students to learn BEL's electronic information that was easily accessible, and, after the workshop, those students who did not participate in the workshop request additional workshops for them. As a result, nearly 40 students participated in the two workshops. The success of those workshops led to more requests from BCSO in the coming year. Most electronic information resources introduced during the workshops could be used for academic purposes such as class assignments, thesis, and projects. Hence, career research workshops became an excellent marketing venue to promote BEL's rich electronic information collection that could be used for a variety of pedagogical purposes.

Furthermore, BCSO incorporated BEL's career research workshop as a regular component in the new student orientation, and, as a result, BEL could start building relationship with students at the early stage of their programs. Since the length of stay at the College of Business had no correlation with the frequent use of library services, promoting library services early was very important. In addition, the successful collaboration with BCSO led to a new opportunity with other departments. The Finance Department requested BEL to host a library research workshop during its orientation for new students in the finance program and the technology management program within the Business Administration Department asked BEL to help target potential sponsors for its new program as BEL's electronic information resources were their primary tools for researching potential sponsors.

When providing library instruction in the forms of workshops, seminars, and classroom teaching, the author carefully designed the instruction so that any instruction would be a marketing opportunity to communicate BEL's services and increase its visibility. Library instruction was generally designed around the concept of information literacy, which was to help students to become competent in identifying and retrieving relevant information according to their purposes. In addition to information literacy, two other components were included in library instruction designed by BEL. As the survey results clearly showed, students initially had low expectations on librarians' expert knowledge in their subject areas, and the author sought to change this perception during instruction. The survey results suggested that such a lack of confidence in librarians' subject specialty was especially prevalent among international students. Changing the perception that they had carried over from their home countries proved to be a challenge, but instruction was an excellent opportunity at least to demonstrate that subject librarians' deep knowledge in business fields.

4 P's of marketing mix

Data collected from the survey were analyzed and resulted into the 4 P's of market-ing mix. The 4 P's of marketing mix (product, price, promotion, and place) were the fundamental concept for marketing, which were widely used by marketing practi-tioners in developing marketing strategies. Based on the survey results, the author constructed a marketing strategy using the 4 P's of marketing (Table 1).

Product	The product that BEL is to market to graduate business students is a collection of electronic business information resources accessible via the Internet.
Place	Library instruction will be conducted at computer labs and classrooms where students can have hands-on experience.
Promotion	The primary promotion tool is library instruction in the forms of workshops, seminars, and guest lecture for specific courses.
Price	Students need access to the Internet (preferably broadband access). Research shows that most graduate business students have broadband access to the Internet already, and thus there is no extra cost.

Evaluation

Devising methods of evaluation is a critical factor in any project, but it is also one of the most difficult items in project management. The author used several methods to assess the success of BEL's ongoing marketing efforts. One key indicator was that 8 pt experienced a significant increase in individual consultation requests from graduate business students. Individual consultations usually took more than one hour in length, and appointments were usually required. In 2002, there was no individual consultation request, but in 2004, there were a total of 38 individual consultation requests, all of which were related to career research. During each consultation, a student shared personal career goal, interest, and some unique situation she/he faced in exploring job opportunities. The author, in turn, drafted research agenda and plans based on the student's needs, and provided suggestions in identifying and using relevant electronic information resources.

Also, BEL's career research workshops became a regular component of BCSO's year-long education program for graduate business students. BEL was asked to provide three career research workshops during the new student orientation, to participate in career seminars along with corporate recruiting managers, and to

help students in writing resumes and preparing for actual interviews. The number of attendees at BEL's career research workshops grew from 42 in 2002 to 126 in 2004. The role of BEL in helping students with career research expanded significantly as a result.

Conclusion

Reshaping user perceptions of BEL was a challenging initiative, especially because the traditional perception of BEL as a house of books had been shared among students and faculty members for a long period of time. To formulate effective marketing strategies, collecting data to understand current perceptions and expectations was necessary instead of simply depending on librarians' opinions and observations; subsequently, transforming survey findings into actual marketing plans through analysis greatly helped build BEL's new identity as an electronic business information center. Undoubtedly, new strategies will need to be developed when BEL targets different segments such as undergraduate business students, the faculty, and the staff. Regardless of the target segment, however, collecting and analyzing data through careful research design and implementation will serve as the foundation for developing marketing strategies.

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Abstract:
Due to changes in pedagogical requirements for business education and students' information seeking behaviors, the Business & Economics Library (BEL) at the University of Illinois at Urbana – Champaign sought to launch a marketing campaign to promote its new services. BEL conducted extensive survey to study students' experiences and expectations of library services, so that it could develop marketing strategies that would meet students' needs based on the survey results. This paper discusses how BEL constructed marketing strategies by applying statistical analysis, and preliminary results of the marketing campaign.

Background: The University Library at the University of Illinois at Urbana – Champaign (UIUC) consists of over 40 departmental libraries with more than 10 million volumes, making it the largest public university library and the third largest among all university libraries in North America. As a departmental library within the University Library, the Business & Economics Library (BEL) primarily serves students and faculty at the College of Business for their research needs. Each year, approximately 3,500 students and faculty in its various programs, such as business administration, finance, and accounting, receive services from the BEL.

Challenge: Starting 2002, the BEL sought to reshape its image from a "house of books" to an electronic business information center. The authors conducted extensive research to study user experiences and expectations of library services and developed marketing strategies to promote the BEL's services.

Solution: Overall, the key elements of the BEL's marketing strategies were collaboration with the Career Services Office in the form of co-branding and relationship management with faculty. Research activities also provided valuable insights into user experiences and expectations, which became the foundation of marketing strategies.

User Expectations and Experiences
In 2003 and 2004, the authors conducted two separate surveys to study business students' perception and use of library services. In so doing, the authors discovered different use patterns of library services between domestic and international students, as well as their current use of electronic library services. Segmenting domestic and international students was important since approximately more than a half of business students were from overseas. The responses to the questionnaire were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics.

Marketing Strategies

The BEL then developed several marketing strategies using the 4P's of marketing mix. To increase its visibility and awareness, the BEL determined that collaboration with the Career Services Office was critical and proposed to hold joint programs. The BEL also developed instruction programs on business databases which students expressed their strong interest to learn. Most instruction sessions were held at computer laboratories to be hands-on classes, so that students could immediately see and learn the benefits of electronic resources. In addition, the BEL continuously cultivated and maintained close relationships with business faculty members who would then become strong advocates of the BEL, and in so doing, the BEL could establish strong presence as a pedagogical partner.

Evaluation

Various methods were used to assess the success of the BEL's ongoing marketing efforts. One key indicator was that the BEL experienced a significant increase in individual consultation requests from international students who had traditionally not been active users. The BEL's special instruction programs also received high ratings from participants. The Finance Department also embedded the BEL's library instruction sessions into the official orientation program for graduate finance students. Graduate students also rated the BEL's services highly according to the survey administered by the University Library.