



The Marketing Mix and Branding



5.1 WHAT IS THE MARKETING MIX?

Once the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis, the PEST (political, economic, social, and technological) analysis, market research, segmentation, targeting, and positioning have been carried out, an information organization's marketing plan has a foundation upon which to start with the development of its core marketing strategy. This core strategy consists of the actions and deadlines that an organization wishes to take in order to meet their marketing objectives (Andreasen & Kotler, 2008, p. 83). This involves identifying target markets and developing a marketing mix (Andreasen & Kotler, 2008, p. 83).

The marketing mix, first proposed by Edmund Jerome McCarthy in 1960 and also called the 4Ps and the 7Ps now, "is a term used to describe the combination of tactics used by a business to achieve its objectives by marketing its products or services effectively to a particular target customer group" (The Chartered Institute of Marketing, 2009, p. 2). From the perspective of an information organization, it refers to a set of choices of services and resources that an information organization can offer to its target market. It is very important to market the right product or service to the right user via the right place and time (CIM, 2009, p. 2).



5.2 THE SEVEN Ps

The marketing mix is the term referring to the 4Ps of marketing: Product, Price, Place, and Promotion and the 7Ps: Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical evidence (CIM, 2015, pp. 5–7; Grönroos, 1994; Kotler & Armstrong, 2014, pp. 54–55; Potter, 2012, p. 7; Welch, 2006, pp. 52–57).

The different perspectives of the seven Ps (CIM, 2015, pp. 5–9; Potter, 2012, pp. 7–9) are described in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 The different perspectives of the seven Ps
7Ps

	Described by CIM (2015, pp. 5–9)	Described by Potter (2012, pp. 7–9)
P1—Product	“Successful companies find out what customers need or want and then develop the right product with the right level of quality to meet their expectations, both now and in the future.”	“What we offer our users.”
P2—Price	“A product is only worth what customers are prepared to pay for it.”	“What people pay for the product, but of course in most cases libraries are free to the user.”
P3—Place or Placement	“The place where customers buy a product, and the means of distributing your product to that place.”	“Where and how the product is delivered and promoted.”
P4—Promotion	“The way a company communicates what it does and what it can offer customers.”	“The way which we communicate what we do for users and potential users.”
P5—People/ participants	“Many customers cannot separate the product or service from the staff member who provides it, so your people will have a profound effect—positive or negative—on customer satisfaction.”	“The people are both the users and the staff—customers often associate a product or service very strongly with the person who provided it.”
P6—Process	“The process of delivering the product or service, and the behavior of those who deliver it.”	“Actually giving the service, and the way in which users experience it.”
P7—Physical evidence	“Helping potential customers ‘see’ what they are buying.”	“The environment in which the product is delivered.”



5.3 CREATING THE MARKETING MIX

Information organizations can utilize the marketing approaches to identify user needs, design products and services to fulfill those needs, communicate and raise awareness of these products and services, and

deliver the products and services in a manner that satisfies the user needs and wants (Garoufallou, Siatri, Zafeiriou, & Balampanidou, 2013). Targeting refers to the selection of target markets involving identifying distinct user groups. This allows the information organization to tailor relevant services and resources based on the particular needs of certain user groups (Welch, 2006, p. 46). Once the target markets and their unique needs are identified, the information organization can begin the development of the marketing mix. The marketing mix which consists of the 7Ps: product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence, can be used strategically to create services and resources for users in order to satisfy users' wants and needs. This is vital for an information organization to meet users' increasing expectations in a rapidly changing information environment.

There are many descriptions of the marketing mix consisting of the 4Ps: product, price, place, and promotion. From the perspective of a profit organization, according to Kotler and Armstrong (2014, pp. 54–55), product refers to “the goods-and-services combination the company offers to the target market”, price means “the amount of money customers must pay to obtain the product”, place refers to “company activities that make the product available to target customers,” and promotion refers to “activities that communicate the merits of the product and persuade target customers to buy it.” From the perspective of a non-profit organization, Welch (2006, pp. 52–53) describes it as “if you get the individual parts of the process right—if the product suits the client’s needs, if the way it can be obtained (the place) is right, if the price (money or convenience) is right, and if the message is spread effectively then success is bound to follow.”

The product refers to the products/services and resources that an information organization is trying to offer to a target market. The products and services that an information organization offers to its users include tangible and intangible ones. For instance, the product refers to the items but it also includes how the items are catalogued (Adeyoyin, 2005). The products and services chosen for the target market are derived from the environmental analysis, the significant segment identified by the information organization, and the market research conducted to determine what products and services should be offered. Products can depend on the types of information organizations such as libraries, archives, and museums. In libraries, products not only represent materials such as books and journals, but also the services such as computer classes and outreach

programs. Products and services should meet the needs of a user base. If these are the products and services that market research has shown that the target market wants, and which will offer the value to the users, these will remain the products aimed at this target market as long as the feedback that the library receives continues to point to this being what they need, and the collection of this feedback must be ongoing (Chartered Institute of Marketing, 2009, pp. 2–4).

An information organization is a non-profit organization. However, it has its own pricing objectives and needs to carefully consider the price element. For example, “for art museum, which earn only an average of 5% of their revenues from admission charges, pricing can send a message that affects their public image and the amount of donations and sponsorships they receive” (Kotler & Keller, 2009, p. 384). According to Welch (2006, p. 54), “products and services can be charged for, to recover costs or to return for a profit, or they can be provided regardless of costs.” The pricing arrangements for services and resources should be appropriate and reasonable. In a public library, the services are available to its users free of charge as they are “viewed as being of community benefit” (Welch, 2006, p. 54). However, there is a cost to the library in providing these services, just as the users can incur costs of their own in accessing the library and its services. In terms of the information organization’s budget, it must be understood what costs the information organization to offer the target market its products and services, and the service and resource prices to the users must be evaluated and considered to see whether these prices are going to be acceptable to them or not.

The “place” within the mix is where and how the services and resources should be delivered and promoted to the target market. The physical place refers to the buildings of information organizations. In the digital age, it is important to note that the place can be virtual and accessed 24/7. The physical buildings and facilities should be made available to target market and attract existing and potential users to visit the information organizations. The delivery of services and resources can also reach the users of the target market in the virtual space by way of 24/7 remote access to services and resources via the websites. Information and communication technology tools have enabled information organizations to be more responsive to users’ needs. Hardcopy resources can be delivered by mail, but most of the interactions with user groups occur online or via email, and the services are distributed to users via email or by phone. While most of the provided services and resources are online, the

scope of where the users are needs to be considered. The way that users have access to services and resources should also be evaluated.

Promotion includes communicating what is offered and persuading existing and potential users to use the available services and resources (Welch, 2006, p. 56). It consists of five elements: advertising, promotion, personal selling, direct marketing, and public relations (Chartered Institute of Marketing, 2009, p. 3). This is how the information organization is going to position its products, or make them an attractive proposition for the target audience (Dolnicar & Lazarevski, 2009, p. 277). Promotion, one of the important elements of the marketing mix, needs to be planned to maximize exposure of the information organization's message using a variety of channels (Welch, 2006). Every staff member has a role in the promotion activities of the information organization, and staff committed to providing a quality service and fostering the relationships with users must demonstrate the values of the information organization by the way they conduct themselves in the provision of services and resources to the users (Enache, 2008; Welch, 2006).

The element of people/participants includes both staff and users. With regard to staff, this involves developing "a sense of mission . . . to provide the best possible service" (Welch, 2006, p. 58). In terms of the users, this involves their effect on each other, such as clashes and disturbances among groups with regard to physical space or behavior (Welch, 2006). Staff need to make a positive impression on users while providing high quality services and resources. Staff involvement plays a very important role in the success of marketing efforts, as every transaction needs to be seen as a marketing exchange and users will remember their interactions with staff and how satisfied they are with them. In service industries, it is very important that staff are cheerful, treat users well, and have the knowledge, skills, and expertise to offer the high quality service that their users require (Ewers & Austen, 2004, p. 10).

Process refers to "the procedures, mechanisms, and flow of activities by which the reference and information services are acquired" (Sharma & Bhardwaj, 2009, p. 463). It is about the processes of how the services and resources of information organizations are delivered to the users and how the users' experiences are. This involves how to make services user-friendly, helpful, and timely (Chartered Institute of Marketing, 2009). These are important factors for user satisfaction.

Physical evidence is "the environment in which the reference and information services are delivered that facilitates the performance and

Table 5.2 The elements of marketing mix illustrated by examples

The elements of marketing mix	Examples
Product	Services, resources, programs, books, eBooks, online journal access, DVDs, CDs, activities, workshops, a community space, seminars, electronic devices
Price	Costs associated with services; charge for internet, printing services, or maintenance of programs; no charge for services; subscriptions, fees, or fines
Place	Comfortable workspaces, meeting rooms, websites, reference desk
Promotion	Social media, electronic billboards, personal selling, pamphlets, mail-outs, online social networking, newsletters, posters, flyers, library displays, email, local newspaper, word of mouth, brochures, exhibitions, advertisements, announcements, newsletters, library guides
People	Well-trained staff, users, the facilitators of the programs
Process/participants	Service, experience, access, loan/renewal automation, telephone or online assistance
Physical evidence	Environments, buildings, book bus, the building's lighting, facilities, websites

communication of the service” (Sharma & Bhardwaj, 2009, p. 463). It is about the spaces of information organizations and the proof that the information organization is a reliable organization that delivers quality services, resources and values to its users. This is often “instrumental in customers’ assessment of the quality and level of service they can expect” (Potter, 2012, p. 9).

The marketing mix is a marketing strategy tool used to achieve marketing goals and objectives and the elements of marketing mix should be considered as a whole while developing a marketing plan. The elements of marketing mix are illustrated by examples in Table 5.2.



5.4 BRANDING

A brand is defined by the American Marketing Association (as cited in Kotler and Keller, 2009, p. 236) as “a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended the goods or services of one

seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors.” Information organizations have their own brands.

There are many definitions of branding. According to [Kotler and Keller \(2009, p. 238\)](#), branding is “endowing products and services with the power of a brand”. [Shaffer \(2002, p. 82\)](#) states that branding is more than marketing a product or public relations, it is internal and “what lies at the heart of those intangible attributes that define a product, service, or entity,” and it is about the “consumers’ perception of the offering—how it performs, how it looks, how it makes one feel, what message it sends . . . a way of communicating with people who may use or purchase a product/service” (as cited in [Walton, 2008, p. 771](#)). In fact a strong brand increases user trust, allows users to form an impression of the service before they use it, and can be viewed as “a process that conveys the nature of services/products being provided, and gives the customer an enhanced insight into the quality level” ([Walton, 2008, p. 772](#)).

[Welch \(2006, p. 60\)](#) determines that “branding is a powerful tool in the marketing strategy, used to link a set of values or an image to a product and persuade us that we can be like that image by purchasing the product.” Information organizations can use branding or rebranding to allow existing users and potential users to form a “better understanding of their role and function” ([Walton, 2008, p. 775](#)). The aim of branding is to portray the values associated with the information organization, while the values “communicate the Ps of the marketing blend—the people, product, place, and price” to current and potential users ([Welch, 2006, p. 60](#)).

Information organizations need to consider the following commonalities while creating an effective brand ([Walton, 2008, p. 772](#)):

1. Establish which customers are to be targeted by the brand and develop an understanding of their needs and values.
2. Explore the competition to the service/product and identify what the customers’ value from the competition monitor competitors’ progress and developments.
3. Design a compelling brand that encompasses all activities.
4. Achieve employees buy in to the brand and give them the skills, tools, and support to deliver the customer experience promised by the brand.
5. Measure and monitor how the brand is received and how it is delivered.
6. Show a level of patience, react to competitors and further develop the brand informed by effective evaluation.



5.5 SUMMARY

Usually, marketing contains the marketing mix using 4Ps which are “product, price, place, and promotion” according to Grönroos (1994, p. 4). Currently, the 7Ps, the extended version of the marketing mix, add “people, process, and physical evidence.” One way to understand how marketing is applied to information organizations is by observing 7Ps introduced by Booms and Bitner (as cited in Potter, 2012). The 7Ps is a model for marketing based on the original 4Ps that has been introduced by Booms and Bitner in order to be better applied to service industries. To ensure that the information organization takes a holistic approach to marketing its new services and resources, the marketing mix framework should be utilized. This will enable the information organization to plan in advance and keep track of what is working (Chartered Institute of Marketing, 2009, p. 4). It is suggested to use the entire marketing mix including evaluation in order to successfully market the information organization and its services and resources (Koontz & Mon, 2014).

The marketing plan needs to include marketing mix strategies that enable information organizations to accomplish their missions, goals, and objectives (Fisher & Pride, 2006, p. 73). The minimum requirement is that the marketing mix must contain strategies for the traditional elements of product, price, place, and promotion (CIM, 2009, p. 2), although this mix cannot ignore the element of person to person interaction between staff and the users which information organizations would hope to develop into long-term relationship marketing benefits such as increased loyalty and reducing relationship costs (Grönroos, 1994, p. 4).

Branding involves credibility, trust, and consistency in how the information organization presents itself in person and image, on paper, via electronic forms and through the messages presented often by the information organization (Welch, 2006, p. 61). Branding of information organizations should be credible, consistent, and attractive. It is vital for the branding of information organization to focus on the portrayal of the values to its users and communities.

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