Libraries and Marketing as a Strategic Element of Improving the Quality of their Services

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1. The Concepts of Marketing: A First Approach

There are a number of views on the definition of the term, content, role and purpose of marketing. Marketing is constantly evolving as the economic, social and political conditions change, as well as the needs of the people it is called upon to serve, so at times many definitions of marketing are constantly changing and enriching (Tilikidou, 1996, Tsakalgas, 2000).

One of the first definitions given is by the American Marketing Association Definitions Committee, which was published in October 1948 in the "Journal of Marketing", defining marketing as: "all business activities that direct the flow of goods and services from the producer to the consumer or to the user of the goods and services" (p. 28). Also, in 1979, the British Institute of Marketing defines marketing as "all business activities aimed at identifying, anticipating and satisfying consumer needs and achieving business objectives". In addition, in 1985 the American Marketing Association (AMA) revised its original definition to extend it to the achievements of the marketing process. So, according to the revised definition: "Marketing is the process of designing the capture, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, products and services to create exchanges that meet the individual goals of individuals and organizations. (Sandhusen, 1993, 25). In addition, Philip Kotler, who is considered to be the leading marketing author of books and articles, has formulated several different definitions of marketing from 1967 to 2000, proving that marketing as a discipline is evolving dynamically. Indicatively, we refer to 1976 where it comes up with a new definition, which is in line with the modern marketing concept-philosophy, focusing on the needs and desires of consumers: "Marketing is a human activity directed at satisfying needs and desires with the help of exchange processes" (Kotler, 1976). Finally, in his books published in 1994, 1999, and even more modern ones such as 2000, he now includes the following definition: "Marketing is a social and administrative process by which

individuals and individual teams get what they need and want through the production, supply and exchange of products that are of value to them with other products." This definition recognizes that marketing is not just a social process but an administrative process, combining analysis, design, implementation and control, covering goods, services and ideas, based on the concept of exchange and aiming to generate satisfaction[1] for the parties involved. (Kotler, 2000, 62).

In conclusion, marketing went through several phases until it evolved into its modern form, called the marketing concept, ideology or philosophy, and "was established academically in the late '70s, and only in the late 1970s and especially in the 1980s it was established at a professional or wider social level" (Tilikidou, 1996, 9).

2. Library Marketing: Quality Management in Modern Libraries - Information Services

The increasing competition due to the multitude of information sources, the technology development and the increasing demands of the library public, set a new framework for action in order to promote their services. Libraries must keep up with the new needs created by their users, creating an environment of up-to-date products and reliable information services. Our international literature reveals the ways in which foreign libraries have, for decades, utilized the marketing techniques, development techniques, that Greek libraries must adopt and apply in order to improve their image and enhance the recognition of their educational, scientific and social work.

The term 'marketing' first appeared and was introduced in the commercial arena, mainly to create a competitive advantage among businesses (Kotler, 2000; Siomkos, 2004). Marketing is a social and administrative process, covering all stages of production, promotion, and distribution of products and services to the consumer (Lambropoulos and Dionysopoulos, 1994; Kotler, 2000). In addition, it contributes significantly to the objectives of an organization, so it was soon adopted in the field of non-profit businesses and subsequently in libraries (Papadimitriou, 1988; Papastathopoulou, 2005; Cronin, 1992). After all, many of the definitions for marketing converge that "marketing means meeting human needs" and the truth is that libraries have always tried to meet the growing and differentiated needs and interests (Wood and Young, 1988, Renborg, 1997, Dimitriadis & Georgatzaki, 2010).

When in 1969 Kotler and Levy published their classic article, "*Broadening the concept of marketing*", they argued that "marketing is not just a business function, but also an effective function for non-profit organizations", (10-15), an

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[1] As stated by the founder of marketing science, Philip Kotler (2000): "the starting point for marketing science lies in human needs and desires" (p. 52), an idea advocated since 1912.

opinion that caused both controversy and interest from researchers (Kotler, 1979, 298). In the mid-1970s, the interest in exploring the appropriateness of applying the concept of marketing to non-profit organizations began to grow, until it was eventually recognized as being equally useful to both profit and non-profit organizations. However, after years, there continued to be some phobias and skepticism, resulting from misunderstandings due to the identification of marketing [2] with promotional and advertising processes (Kotler, 1979, Lovelock and Weinberg, 1990, 3-15). However, in a modern competitive environment, fragmented and spasmodic actions with a clearly short-term horizon cannot guarantee prosperity. So it turns out that the real challenge for nonprofits is to focus on designing and developing integrated marketing strategies that are consistent with their mission and assure the achievement of their vision. (Kotler, N., & Kotler , 1998). So in order to take advantage of the marketing utility the following are needed:

- firstly, to understand the differentiation of marketing from the sale, promotion and sub-functions it involves, and,
- then develop an organized and planned implementation of the marketing processes that will help them improve their effort and performance (Kotler, 1979, 297-305).

Kotler (1979), with regard to the application of marketing to non-profit organizations, argued that the real contribution of marketing would be to lead each organization in the search for a more prominent position, which would differentiate it from others offering the same services, while at the same time offering more thoughtful services based on understanding customer needs. Therefore, the redefinition of their management in order to offer better products and services according to the needs of the customer, has essentially led the librarians, by contrasting the libraries with the non-profit organizations, to adopt and apply the marketing principles at their functions and information services (Cronin, 1992). And while it was proven that marketing in the library could contribute to both achieving its goals and improving its services, there was a growing interest in its application by more and more libraries in the 1980s (Cronin, 1992, Gupta, 2003, Koontz et al., 2006). International articles have cited several examples of marketing application including all types of libraries: academic, public and special, coming from different countries worldwide (Owens, 2002; Gupta 2003), even from developing ones, such as: Ghana, Sri Lanka, Botswana and Kenya (Martey, 2000; Nkanga, 2002; Arachchige, 2002a; Block and Edzan, 2002; Kavulya, 2004). The above articles reveal that the application of marketing principles and techniques to library services has proven to help to clearly identify and achieve their goals, while also reaching the needs of their users.

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[2] It is true that marketing theories and practices that apply to a product-producing company cannot be applied precisely to a cultural organization. This is due to the fact that the central role of marketing is to maximize profit (Kotler, N., & Kotler P., 1998).

3. Marketing mix for use in libraries

The marketing mix is the combination of the factors that need to be controlled and identified so that the product offered meets the needs and desires of the target market (users). Therefore, developing an effective marketing strategy requires defining the marketing mix. The 4 key elements that make up the marketing mix are often referred to as "4P" because the corresponding English words all start with the letter "P": "Product", "Price", "Place", "Promotion" (Wood and Young, 1988, Sandhusen, 1993, Weingand, 1999). Blackstead and Shoaf (2002) argued that if librarians paid particular attention to identifying Kotler's "4 Ps"[3], they would be able to create effective marketing plans that would reflect the culture and environment of each library. One such adaptation of the basic marketing mix (4P) is set out below, which was created by combining adaptations of Greek and foreign researchers (Stavropoulos, 1997; Blackstead and Shoaf, 2002 Owens, 2002; Andronikidis and Zafiriou, 2009):

Product: the services, resources and programs the library offers e.g. customer service, lending, interlinking, opening hours, website, books, magazines, online magazines, computers, photocopiers, user training, seminars, and events.

Price: the cost that someone pays to use the library services, resources and programs offered either indirectly: through taxes - or through direct user charges: charges for specialized services, such as interconnection and the use of photocopiers, as well as fines in cases of delayed return or deterioration of books.

Place: the way the library accesses its resources and services so that interested people can use them, for example, through a branch of the library, over the phone, and online either through the website or solely as a digital library.

Promotion: the way of communication and the actions-tools used to inform the public about the way and the advantages of using the library services, resources and programs offered. The promotion process includes: public relations, advertising, publicity and personal contact. In addition, a set of tools is used e.g. brochures, posters, newsletters, promotional gifts, library websites, organization of seminars, conferences, events, press releases and media presentations.

In addition, it should be noted that some libraries have used the more expanded version of the "7P" of service marketing, which includes the following 3 basics (Ewers and Austen, 2004; Andronikides and Zafiriou, 2009):

People: people who come into contact with users (information department). Staff behavior and service play a key role in the quality of services provided, as they create either positive or negative impressions on users. This depends on specific characteristics of the staff e.g. level of training, professional experience, appearance, courtesy, communication skills, speed of service and number of people available.

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[3]Kotler, P. and Keller, K. (2006), Kotler, Philip (2012.

Physical evidence: the environment in which the services are offered. Impressions created by users are influenced by certain characteristics in relation to the physical or virtual environment of the library, eg physical environment: architecture, decoration, cleanliness, lighting, air conditioning, privacy, technological equipment and accessibility for the disabled / virtual environment: usability, completeness of information, organization, ease of search and navigation speed.

Process: effectiveness in organizing and managing human resources and library functions to meet the needs of users, e.g. automation of book lending and repayment processes, the ability to remotely service online and provide electronic resources.

In summary, it is stated that libraries have occasionally used marketing elements either independently or as part of the broader process of strategic marketing planning. In addition, the adoption of the marketing mix and the adaptation of its elements in the library space, helping to identify all the factors and ways of action related to their users' satisfaction, ultimately helped libraries to develop their own marketing campaigns (Wood and Young, 1988, Weingand, 1999, Arachchige, 2002b, Naqui, 2004).

4. Strategic marketing and strategic marketing planning

Strategic marketing is defined by Sandhusen (1993) as: "designing the managerial process of developing and maintaining a strategic fit between the organization's resources and objectives and changing market opportunities" (43). In addition, strategic marketing is based on developing a clear mission statement of the organization and supporting its objective and strategic objectives through the implementation of coordinated operational strategies. Most know-how guides, as well as articles on how to implement library marketing in libraries, suggest designing and developing a strategic marketing program because through its implementation stages it has proven to be an integrated and versatile mode of action - a tool for any kind of library (Wood and Young, 1988, Vardakosta, 2002, ACRL and Reynolds, 2003, Schmidt, 2006). Libraries must develop a strategic planning process before developing a strategic marketing plan that they will rely on to plan and achieve their strategic goals. Whatever strategic planning process they use, in the end it should result in a clearer view of where they want to get to (Caballero, 2002).

Mohamedali (1999: 3) states that "the marketing planning process is defined as the administrative process that recognizes, anticipates and meets customer needs satisfactorily and profitably and includes a series of logical steps that help managers make credible decisions about the survival, development and progress of their libraries." In addition, it emphasizes in "examining and reviewing customer needs and proposes the development of products that meet these needs".

Marketing planning, we would say, is a dynamic process that consists of a series of steps that lead to the evolution of the cultural organization, in this case the

libraries, taking into account their financial potential and exploiting them to achieve predefined goals. The key processes of a strategic marketing planning that libraries must develop and rely on to achieve their strategic goals (Kassel, 1999; Caballero, 2002; Tsalkitzi, 2002; ACRL and Reynolds, 2003) are:

1. Analysis of the external and internal environment:
The library's readiness to face the challenges of constant changes in the environment in which it exists and operates is assessed. The assessment of the current situation is made taking into account both the available resources and skills[4] that relate to its internal environment with its strengths and weaknesses and its external environment with the threats and opportunities it provides[5] (Hambouri-Ioannidou, 2003: 50):

- *The analysis of the external environment* relates to factors that may affect the future functioning of the library eg. readers / users, competition, analysis of their demographic, social, political, economic, technological and other characteristics.
- *The analysis of the internal environment* is related to understanding the basic mission of the library, its purpose and objectives (Makri, 2003: 94-95).

The above processes are carried out through the "SWOT Analysis" (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats), also known as "analysis of the present situation". SWOT analysis is the process by which the library can identify its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in relation to its functions and the external environment in which it is located (Coote and Batchelor, 1997, Macartney, 1989, cited in Vardakosta, 2002).

Another helpful process is market research. With the help of market research libraries can obtain the necessary information about the use of their products and services, the views of their users about them, as well as determine their satisfaction and real needs (Morgan, 1998, Owens, 2002, ACRL and Reynolds, 2003). Before proceeding to develop the basic design of strategic planning, we should first of all clarify that the public visiting the library site is not a homogeneous sample but is composed of categories with different traits, interests, perceptions, needs, desires, or specific features. In addition, the visitor does not function as a passive receiver but instead expects to experience a wide range of experiences during his visit (Athanassopoulou, 2003: 119). Therefore, audience analysis should allow for a closer examination of its identity, and more specifically, the assessment and proper translation of its expectations, needs and desires, with regard to the content and quality of services to be received. (Kastoras, 2002: 79).

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[4] visibility, public relations, marketing, financial resources and human resources management.
[5] political, economic, social, technological, institutional, legislative, competitors, the existence of relevant cultural networks, etc. (Mintzberg et al., 1999: 59).

<u>*2. Develop a master plan of strategic marketing*</u>:
- *Segmentation is the first strategic part of the marketing planning process and is about dividing library users into groups that share common characteristics.* In this way each library can identify the key target groups to which it will then target its promotions (Dodsworth, 1998; Helton and Esrock, 1998).
- *Defining tactics, goals and objectives is the next ste*
    - ✓ Tactics are short-term programs designed to achieve long-term programs (Sandhusen, 1993).
    - ✓ The goals should be in line with the core mission of the library and the goals to be specific, measurable, widely accepted, realistic and with a predetermined duration[6].
- *The development of marketing strategies and mixes.*
    - ✓ Marketing strategies are long-term programs that describe how the target groups will be combined with the marketing mix.
    - ✓ The marketing mix is related to identifying and analyzing the elements of the products and services offered according to the needs of the target groups (Sandhusen, 1993).

<u>*3. Implement the strategic marketing plan*</u>.
Implementation of the strategic plan and ultimately its implementation in the library area is the most interesting part of the strategic planning. After designing all the steps that need to be followed, there will now be coordination and funding, so that the marketing tactics, strategies and mix can be used to achieve the goals and objectives set, so that " do not leave the marketing plan on a dusty shelf"(Caballero, 200: 52).

<u>*4. Monitoring and evaluation of the application.*</u>
The final stages of strategic planning are control and evaluation. Monitoring of progress towards achieving strategic goals and objectives should be carried out regularly after the implementation of the strategic marketing plan. Together with the audit, the evaluation procedure should also be applied. Evaluation either using specific performance measurement tools or questionnaire surveys should be used to determine the effectiveness of marketing, identify potential problems and the reasons for these problems, and improvements to the use of library services offered (Weingand, 1999, Caballero, 2002, ACRL and Reynolds, 2003). In addition, the results of the audit and evaluation processes should serve as feedback and be used by libraries to:
- redefine the goals and objectives, while also meeting the needs of their users,

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[6] Targets should be SMART (SMART is the origin of the words specific, measurable, agreed, realistic, time constrained) (Kastoras, 2002:79).

- redesign solutions and strategies to improve marketing techniques, as well as corrective action on the problems identified.

According to Balta (2008:4), strategic marketing planning through its application allows libraries to:
- identify their user groups (target groups),
- understand the characteristics and needs of each target group,
- discover market segments not covered by their products (and services),
- make appropriate administrative decisions to make their services more effective, efficient and, in particular, more competitive;
- be able to design the most appropriate communication policy, using appropriate tools, to highlight their role and improve their image.

5. Different approaches to marketing

The specialized applications of marketing, its techniques and tools, presented so far, have been borrowed from traditional marketing libraries and adapted to suit their own needs and those of their users. Although they have been and continue to be used successfully at times, criticism of the application of traditional marketing models to libraries and information services has led some researchers to look for new ways of managing this particular administrative and social process (Owens, 2002).

Besant (2000), in particular, suggests that libraries abandon traditional marketing methods and use "relationship marketing" instead. Relationship marketing, which is not a new marketing concept, is appropriate for libraries because it reflects the mutual-interest between libraries and users (Besant, 2000; Schimdt, 2006). Relationship marketing differs from traditional marketing because while traditional emphasizes on attracting (users), relationship marketing has the dual purpose of attracting and maintaining them at the same time by building long-term, trustworthy relationships (Besant, 2000, Owens, 2002, Rowley, 2003, Broady-Preston et al., 2006). This dual value of creating - maintaining customer relationships is emphasized by Rowley, stating that "if organizations do not create and retain customers, users, or members at the same time, they deteriorate the reason for their existence" (Rowley, 2003: 16). Whereas, according to Owens, relationship marketing goes even further than the idea of 'repeat customers', to the idea of 'lifelong learning' (Owens, 200: 21).

Another alternative technique of marketing application, which proposes collaboration between staff and users, is 'word of mouth marketing'[7]. This particular type of marketing in the library is primarily intended to persuade users through their library services, to talk to other users about them in order to increase the number of people using them, and thus services, but also the library itself to become more popular (Orava, 1997, Alire, 2007).

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[7] Also known as word of mouth advertising.

The 3 key components of "word of mouth marketing" are:
- interpersonal rather than mass communication,
- the exchange of information based on a particular product or service,
- the impartiality of the persons conveying the information (Kirby and Marsden, 2006 cited in Alire, 200: 546).

"Word of mouth" marketing has proven to be a more economical and much more powerful tool than conventional marketing and its techniques. In any case, it is a free promotion of products and services, whereby happy consumers / users verbally convey their satisfaction about a particular product or service they have used, helping to promote them. It is one of the most successful ways to advertise products / services with a high reliability index, as the consumers involved in this process operate spontaneously, without any personal interest (Orava, 1997; Alire, 2007). However, librarians who prefer it should be even more cautious about the quality of their services, as "word of mouth" marketing is not only effective for exchanging information about a good service, but also perhaps even more effective for a poor quality service (Schmidt, 2006).

6. Marketing and Public Libraries

Libraries have been collecting, preserving, and organizing knowledge for centuries to make it easier for anyone to use. Although for most libraries there are no clear written goals, the main and undoubted goal of each library is to provide access to information. Libraries have always been trying to meet the needs of their audiences (Prabha and Bolander, 2000). The volume of information material and the different needs of the library public have resulted in their 'specialization' and consequently the creation of different types of libraries (Bokos, 2001).

At this point it should be clarified that the approach of marketing application to the Public Libraries comes through the research work on the application of marketing generally in the field of libraries as identified in international bibliography. Specifically, it has already been demonstrated (Owens, 2002) that articles on marketing applied exclusively to Municipal Libraries (including other types: special and school libraries) occupy the smallest proportion. However, useful information, which can also be found in the Public Libraries, such as statistical analysis and study and in addition a number of examples and efforts, are derived from the already rich articles of foreign researchers for the application of marketing in academic and research libraries.

Municipal Libraries, in order to support their role and position as an integral part of the community to which they belong, in addition to their primary function, which is to serve all citizens at all times, must provide value-added information services to the wider scientific community, research and student audiences. This is achieved by providing documented information of all forms (printed, electronic, access to internet services) and simultaneously guiding the users to the librarians in its proper use in order to satisfy their needs and requirements (Vlach-Hulk, 1996; Syngel and Harbila, 1996).

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The information boom, the increasing competition, revolutionary technological developments in a digital environment, and the ever-increasing cost have now changed the day-to-day activities of Municipal Libraries around the world, setting a new framework for action to improve the quality of services provided. (Dodsworth, 1998; Kassel, 1999; Weingand, 1999; Cullen, 2001; Vardakosta, 2002; Gupta, 2003; Naqvi, 2004). Providing information resources through search engines, in a simple and user-friendly environment (such as Google), has created new requirements in relation to library services (Morgan, 1998; Rowley, 2003; Broady-Preston et al., 2006, Schimdt, 2006; Zafiriou et al., 2008).

As part of these changes, foreign researchers have expressed various views on how libraries can adapt to new needs and emerging data, addressing them as challenges rather than threats, creating an environment of modern and quality products (Bushing, 1995; Martey, 2000; Cullen, 2001; Vardakosta, 2002; Kumbar, 2004). Among them, Rowley (1995), who suggested that libraries look for ways to differentiate their services from those of competition, and finally some other researchers argued that the quality of library services provided should be successfully communicated simultaneously, using the appropriate marketing methods (Ojiambo, 1994; Rowley, 1995; Adeyoyin, 2005).

7. Reasons for marketing failure

Contrary to the abundance of bibliographic material regarding the successful application of library marketing and the benefits of this application, many libraries have not yet adopted marketing, nor do they know how to use it successfully. According to Bushing (1995) the main difficulties in adopting marketing strategies in libraries relate to:

- misunderstanding of marketing and its applications,
- failure to recognize marketing orientation and its functions,
- disagreeing with the basic principles of marketing, which give priority to the customer rather than the product, the profit or the organization itself.

The association and misunderstanding of marketing and sales, as well as its incorrect identification with promotion, advertising and public relations, seems to be a common phenomenon in the field of libraries, as there has been a great deal of concern in international literature from many authors (Ojiambo, 1994, Bushing, 1995, Rowley, 1995, Kavulya, 2004, Naqui, 2004, Ewers and Austen, 2004, Adeyoyin, 2005, Koontz et al., 2006). In addition, many librarians and researchers refuse to dispense with their perceptions and prejudices about marketing and are reluctant to apply it to working libraries (Gupta, 2003). In addition, Kumbar (2004) referred to some other difficulties that prevented the application of marketing to library services, including: old standards in the way librarians work, lack of information and education, passive attitude towards users and lack of funding.

8. Librarian Organizations that promote the application of marketing

Developing partnerships between libraries has been found to be able to provide mutual support, easier achievement of the goals to be set, and jointly tackle potential problems.

Overseas libraries[8] are strongly supported by librarians who work in concert to provide information and tools, as well as to organize seminars on understanding and applying marketing properly. A typical example of a Library Organization supporting the implementation of library marketing is IFLA[9], which through the Management and Marketing Section aims at enhancing the use of management and marketing in library services and systems, providing access to newsletters and annual reports in full-text format (pdf files), and a glossary of marketing-related terms. Also, theACRL[10], Division of the ALA[11], provides online, free useful information and resources for developing a marketing campaign "marketing@your library[12]" for the libraries concerned. In addition, all of the above are supplemented by know-how books published by curatorial libraries, such as the Aslib (Association of Special Libraries & Information Bureau) (Coote and Bachelor, 1997) and ACRL (Association of College and Research Libraries) (ACRL and Reynolds, 2003).

As far as Greek practice is concerned, a few decades ago there was no concerted effort to apply marketing to Libraries. However, in the age of new technologies and information, it was quickly realized that libraries and their cultural practices needed an appropriate cultural policy to rethink the relationship between society and culture using key concepts such as cultural identities, rights, multiculturalism and diversity, etc. It was obvious that libraries needed policy, program, strategy and goals.

A new political agenda that had to take into account the development dimension and link the cultural field with critical parameters such as development, technologies, education, the labor market and, libraries, had to play a central role in this. So they began to reconsider their role and position in Greek society and the new conditions prevailing, and, adapting their action and function to the requirements of the time, adopted and developed Management & Marketing strategies[13] to enable them to respond to the challenges they faced.

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[8] mainly in America

[9] International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions

[10] Association of College and Research Libraries

[11] American Library Association

[12] http://www.ala.org/acrl/issues/marketing Last access 03/01/2018

[13] Academic Libraries' Total Quality Unit, which was founded in 1999 as part of the project "Networking of Higher Education Libraries", is a major contribution to Greek academic libraries. The primary purpose is to collect, analyze and publish statistics for Greek academic libraries (Zachos, 2001). Source: http://www.mopab.gr. Last access 30/10/2018

The library management of customizable, flexible, foldable and fast-paced libraries began to exploit the opportunities systematically. Productivity, quality, flexibility and innovation, the four criteria of its performance, are nowadays increasingly adopted by Greek libraries.

However, the emergence of the strategic role of integrated communication and marketing in the development and pursuit of libraries has also required the leadership and socially responsible role of the Union of Greek Librarians and Information Scientists, which is also the collective body of expression for library professionals in Greece. Its immediate aims are primarily to collaborate with relevant bodies, which will promote the science of librarianship as an exclusively scientific discipline, linked to the modern international trends in science, policy and cooperation of all cultural institutions, to highlight and preserve cultural heritage, in order to become a community and channel for new ideas that reflect a wider kinshi In today's complex and interconnected global society and economy, the Union of Greek Librarians and Information Scientists aspires to be a living space for the exchange of ideas for the formulation of a policy that will stimulate thought and actually inspire professional information scientists, relying on critical thinking to promote the profession with a new, innovative framework for action for libraries. Taking into account social and cultural priorities, it seeks to set out a strategy of approaching integrated communication and marketing with a view to:

- how to incorporate values into decisions,
- how cultural, economic and social benefits can coexist,
- what efforts can be made to show the competitive advantage of collaboration between the different categories of libraries, public, wider public and private sector,
- what role does the existence or absence of social capital of cultural policy play,
- how to develop new forms of communication with users-consumers,
- how to make libraries a cultural organization, a book a cultural good and services at the service of people and societies,
- how professional librarians learn to 'listen' to society, produce interesting learning experiences, be able to draw on experiences through collaborations and further encourage their development, finally,
- how to address emerging challenges and dilemmas, through concrete examples, and possible ways of addressing them so that libraries can analyze and formulate their policy based on three key factors:
1. Environmental material data, building, furniture, collection, equipment[14],
2. Social environment data such as social and economic changes, new information needs with the use of new technologies, new cultural and

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[14] National Documentation Center-National Research Foundation, (2004), Guidelines for Public Library Buildings, Athens: NDC.

multicultural needs, new forms of user behavior with regard to the aesthetics and organization of space,

3. The data of the subject, in this case of the librarian, which relates mainly to the roles and activities of the librarian[15].

In conclusion,

applying marketing to libraries shows that it is a proven auxiliary practice. However, there are also cases of Municipal Libraries that would not want to apply marketing techniques mainly because of misunderstandings or prejudices. At this point it should be clarified that the reasons for the difficulty of adopting marketing stem solely from the fact that there are no recorded data reflecting the Greek reality. International Library Organizations could provide solutions to such problems[16], as they provide the necessary information and rich material for properly organized marketing in libraries. Coordinated evaluation efforts to ensure the best quality of services offered in recent decades in Greek libraries are indirectly linked to marketing as it undoubtedly contributes to its implementation. After all, evaluation is the final stage of strategic marketing planning, while striving to provide better quality services is a common goal. Perhaps this fact, namely the provision of quality services, in accordance with the needs and increasing demands of the public, can recover any reactions, doubts and objections and thus become a springboard for the implementation of the necessary marketing tools in the Public Libraries.

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PS: The study is part of my thesis on: "Municipal Libraries in a Crisis: Designing and Creating a Communication Action Plan for Libraries Survival and Development". It was prepared in 2015 as part of the Master's Degree Program in the Department of Cultural Management of the Hellenic National Academy of Sciences, supervised by Professors Irene Sifaki and Marianna Psylla.