Customer Relationship Management: An Essential Tool for Librarians

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Abstract : This paper helps to understand the need of Customer Relationship Management in Libraries and why Librarians should implement the marketing concept of Customer Relationship Management in their libraries. As like any industry, libraries too face growing challenges to continuously meet customer expectations, and attract and retain users in light of overflowing competition. The ability to understand customers, build relationships and market diverse services is essential when considering ways to expand service offerings and improve Return on Investment. Since Library is service oriented Enterprise, hence the Customer/User/ Reader/Patron are the most important element of Library & Information System to whom and for whom library offers various services. How to provide better and most efficient services to its users is the main concern of every Library & Information centre in the present era. The basic difference between Business Enterprise and Library Information System is that 'in Business System 'the efficiency is measured in terms of 'profit' or 'monetary gains'; whereas in a Library & Information System, the efficiency is measured in terms of 'services' and therefore the goals that are set in Business Enterprise are' profit oriented' whereas goals set in the Library & Information Centre are 'Service-oriented'. With the explosion of information and advancement of technology readers have so many choices to get information rather than visiting a library. Everything is available at the click of a mouse, library customers have become more knowledgeable and demanding in an era marked by abundance of information resources and services. With this explosion of information in every field of knowledge and choice in selection of service, satisfying user has become a challenge now a day for libraries. Accordingly, Libraries have to build good relationship with its users by adopting Customer relationship Management. CRM refers to the methods and tools which help an organization to manage its relationship with its customers in an organized way. The Customer Relationship Management (CRM) combines business strategy and technology to identify, acquire and retain good customer relationship. The goal of CRM is to optimize management of customer information needs & interests and increase customer satisfaction and loyalty. Implementing CRM in Libraries can improve customer data and process management, customer loyalty, retention and satisfaction.

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