

# **Journal of Soft Skill in Management**

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# **Journal of Soft Skill in Management**

## **Aims and Scope**

Journal of Soft Skills in Management is a Peer Reviewed Journal The journal focuses on the application of various concepts of communication and behavioral aspects of personal effectiveness. The journal will address all issues of soft skills in Management. It would also address issues on stress and attitudes. The journal aims to be a medium of expression and exchange of ideas among soft skills trainers that would be of interest to academicians and industry professionals. It would also be a medium for industry professionals to share their best practices.

# Journal of Soft Skill in Management

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# Paradigm Shift: Traditional versus Contemporary Techniques in Mentoring

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Man being a social animal requires assistance and guidance to walk the path of virtue, integrity and righteousness. The principal goal of a mentoring program is to establish a trusting, nurturing, positive relationship between an experienced individual and another person, who over time becomes a friend, guide, role model and advocate. The Mentor enhances and sharpens the mentees personal qualities, life skills and goals through a series of meetings that are time bound, one-on-one conversations, mostly confidential and often associated with new learning. Mentoring is a mutually beneficial process – the mentor gets an opportunity to channel the mentee in the right direction through his/her wisdom and experiences and in turn learns about his/her own professional competency. This transaction assists to evolve both their thinking, broaden skills and build a new relationship. The descriptive research paper reviews traditional mentoring versus the contemporary mentoring techniques like Reverse Mentoring, Wise Mentoring, Flash Mentoring, Situational Mentoring, Career Mentoring, etc., that are being pursued rigorously in both the academic and professional world. The paper highlights the mentoring process, various stages and the activities of the stage that fulfill the purpose through a Mentoring Framework.*

**Key words :** *Traditional mentoring, Mentoring Techniques, Mentoring Process*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Mentoring is an ongoing process, regarding transferring and sharing of self imbibed experiences, skills, beliefs, values, ethics, and resources by the experienced person to an inexperienced learner. It has been devised as the most effective tool in the professional world used for inspiring loyalty in employees. Mentoring is the most effective way to transfer skills and knowledge quickly and obtain co-operation from a new employee in an organization (Robinson, 2001). Ideally, a mentor adopts the

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mentee and influences him both professionally and personally. In the academic world, mentoring is the assistance by a well-informed faculty or teacher to a student through considerable sharing and transfer of knowledge, thinking or work (Clutterbuck, 1991).

### **Definition - Mentoring**

Mentoring is viewed as a long-term, two-way relationship with face-to-face interaction, between a supervisory adult and a learner student that fosters the mentee's professional, academic, or personal development (Donaldson, Ensher, & Grant-Vallone, 2000). First mentioned in 1977, mentoring was one of the four stages of professional career in Dalton, Thompson, and Price's research, which greatly enhances the mutual professional growth of the individuals.

According to Russel & Adam (1997) mentorship is “an intense interpersonal exchange between a senior experienced colleague (mentor) and a less experienced junior colleague (protégée) in which the mentor gives direction, provides support regarding career and feedback on personal development”.

Mentoring in organizations can be viewed as a developmental relationship where managers provide support and help to particular subordinates (protégées) on an individual basis (Kram, 1985, Orpen, 1997; Higgins and Kram, 2001). Effective mentoring within an organization serves firstly as a pathway of workforce development, skill transfer and continuous learning. Secondly, it addresses employees' need for emotional fulfillment and establishes a route for their future professional growth and development (Wu et al. 2009).

According to the study, undertaken by RIT Faculty during the session (2013-2014) 58% of the respondents to a great extent agreed that the mentoring relationship met their expectations. It was further claimed that 66% were “happy with the type of mentoring in the relationship.”

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

**Traditional Mentoring:** Mentoring dates back its origin to the Roman mythology, mentioned in Homer's The Odyssey that King Ulysses before going to fight the battle of Troy, entrusted his friend Athena the duty to mentor his son Telemachus with appropriate grooming worthy of a Prince (Rajendran, 2012). Thus, in this a mentor was considered as a confidante, teacher and one who could sharpen skills of Telemachus. A similar example is witnessed in Indian Hindu mythology, the system of Gurukulum, where a prince was asked to stay away from his family and trained to learn various skills by

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his Mentor also called Guru. In essence, the relationship of Mentor and Mentee has been passed down to us through generations.

This concept of mentoring witnesses a reference in the famous Indian mythology of Ramayana; the Guru-Shishya relationship shared between Ram and his respective Gurus Vashishta and Vishwamitra. Guru Vashishta shaped Ram's Spiritual outlook towards world, whereas Guru Vishwamitra trained Ram for the various defence mechanism for saving mankind, his wife and family. Both played an important role in shaping the life and skills of Ram.

The great teachings and guidance which were passed by Lord Krishana to Arjuna during the great war of Mahabharata are also a great allusion of the protégé and protégée and how well the mentor can shape and give direction to his disciple. So, the concept of mentorship has its roots well ingrained in the Hindu mythology which has grown over a period of time.

**Contemporary Mentoring Concepts:** Contemporary interest in the practice of mentoring dates back from the late seventies having been instigated by Levinson's study into the career development of men in 1978 (Levinson, 1978), followed by Kram's seminal 1985 publication, "Mentoring at Work", which provided a theoretical foundation for understanding developmental relationships in the workplace (Kram, 1985, HSCB 2014).

According to a case study done by Carlo Hansen (2000) on Virtual mentoring, where he observed that the method of virtual mentoring was a successful method for providing busy teachers with training, without disturbing their busy schedule.

Yin che chen (2014) stresses on the incorporation of reverse mentoring techniques for the development and growth of medium and large scale enterprises in Taiwan.

**Benefits of Mentoring:** A recent study on the impact of mentoring across the diverse disciplines of nursing, anthropology, business, education, psychology and social work reported that mentoring can improve job satisfaction and confidence, job retention, and facilitate learning through role-modeling, guidance and sharing experience (Mijares et al., 2013). Hence, following are the various benefits of mentoring:

1. **Knowledge sharing.** Through various ways of mentoring a plethora of knowledge is shared among all the sections of society, both vertically and horizontally. Manager both at the senior and junior level come together and share their experiences and knowledge, hence increasing the growth abundantly.

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2. **Supports Diversity:** Mentoring allows mentors to work with employees of different age groups, backgrounds, values, styles of working, and professional expertise (Schooley, 2010). While working in companies, people from diverse background come together to share knowledge and work. Hence it helps in supporting diversity among the working masses. A platform is set for unique perspectives and ideas hence a new direction is given to the working environment.

3. **Retains Talent:** An effective mentoring program may result in improved employee job performance, contribute to faster learning curves, and result in a better trained workforce. It may also increase employee satisfaction and retention by reducing a new employee's sense of isolation (Dash, et al, 2012). Mentoring relationships can help retain talented people because they have a stronger commitment to the organization(Schooley, 2010). “77% of all companies surveyed state that mentoring is an effective tool to increase the retention of valued employees.”

4. **Develops Leaders:** The main objective of any organization is building successful leaders, hence once of the main focus of mentoring programs is development of future leaders. Mentors benefit by strengthening their knowledge base and improving leadership, communication, teaching, and coaching skills, encouraging them to become more reflective practitioners(Dash, et al, 2012).

5. **Enhances Productivity:** Modern mentoring is also a great way to help create a more productive and effective workforce. In a 2012 study by McKinsey Global Institute, companies saw 20 to 25 percent increases in productivity in the average knowledge worker as a result of their participation in technology-enabled social collaboration(Emelo, 2013).

6. **Enhances self confidence:** Mentees benefit from the guidance and support of their mentor, promoting self-confidence and professionalism, and reflecting the mentees' commitment to personal and professional growth (Dash, et al., 2012). Because of being able to accomplish a tough task easily the mentee's level of self esteem is boosted greatly and hence he feels motivated to fulfill the task assigned.

7. **Enhances Professional Growth:** Mentors hone their coaching, leadership, and communication skills as they advice their mentees, which they can in turn apply to their own day-to-day work. Some find that mentoring reenergizes them by empowering them to bring new business ideas to the table (Schooley, 2010).

Forrester (2015) has stressed the incorporation of technology based mentoring software for HR professionals which helps in decreasing the attrition rates and increases the employee engagement in organizations.



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## MENTORING PROCESS

Mentoring has been considered as a major asset in companies in order to reduce attrition rate and increase the employee satisfaction and productivity of companies. Various processes have been talked about in relation to mentoring. The mentoring process (adapted from the International Mentoring Association) is being discussed in regard to the professional scenario, which assists to enhance the productivity and efficiency of the companies:

### Stages of Mentoring

- 1. INTRODUCTION STAGE:** During this getting to know phase, the mentor and mentee meet face to face for the first time. Through the medium of ice breaking exercise, first impressions are made. The mentor and mentee may come from various diversities, cultures and genders so a sharing of backgrounds, personal information and interest takes place to create a sense of understanding. The purpose is to build a connection between the two so that the process of hand-holding takes shape.
- 2. FOUNDATION BUILDING STAGE:** The second phase is related to understanding of the role and responsibilities of the mentor-mentee. The mentor discusses the expectations from each other; the association is defined to get clarity and consensus on key functioning of the mentoring relationship.
- 3. INDUCTION & ORIENTATION STAGE:** In the third phase the mentor orients the inexperienced person about the management, department, staff, facilities and benefits. The person is slowly and gradually apprised about the new environment, job responsibilities, working procedures, job competencies, and expectations. During this phase a feeling of belongingness is instilled among the mentee. It assists in giving the feeling that the person is a part of the team and system.
- 4. COOPERATION & COLLABORATION STAGE:** Once the mentee is well aware about the role, responsibilities and the environment. This phase works on the planning and delegation of work on various assignments to be undertaken. Team is established through mutual sharing of ideas, discovering work flow, time paper work management. Through this joint collaboration and support both partners' work effectively and cohesively towards the shared learning development and growth.

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5. **PROBLEM SOLVING& CRITICAL ANALYSIS STAGE:** This further strengthens the bond where a joint analysis of issues and problems are addressed and solutions are sorted out. Sometimes this discussion helps a person in finding solutions to their own problems. Development of strategies, plans are made to be successfully implemented and subsequently an evaluation of results is done. The purpose of build critical thinking skills.
  6. **PERSONAL FRAMEWORK STAGE:** Once both have reached a level of professional understanding. Then the foundation of a strong mentor-mentee's relationship is established. This helps in reinforcement of mentee's self-esteem, confidence and self belief. Both start exploring each others' career aspirations, strengths - both as professionals and individuals. A feeling of trust and honesty is established without being judgmental. A level of mutual understanding is developed.
  7. **PROFESSIONAL FRAMEWORK STAGE:** After reaching a level of unity in thought. Both start working towards discovering the "big picture" and successfully implementing the same. So in order to achieve this, sequential planning of various activities, routine assessment of results, altering the activities in order to increase the effectiveness as well the efficiency of the end product is undertaken. There is a change of purpose: following a plan to successful accomplishment of it.
  8. **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STAGE:** The professional bond is further strengthened by building a 2-way relationship through mutual constructive feedback and support. The main norm being more efficient professionally and effective personally.
  9. **TRANSITION STAGE:** The final phase is development of peer relationship, helping the mentee to work independently while having virtual support. The mentee is motivated to work cohesively. Hence, promoting learning support links with other faculty/ members and in turn creating a broader team concept.

## MENTORING TECHNIQUES

Mentoring typically describes an elongated process that is developmental and career focused and covers all life structures (Hansman, 2002). Rockwell Collins has seen a shift in reasons for mentee participation in the program from “encouragement and support” (2007 mentoring survey results) to “building and expanding their networks” (2009 mentoring survey results).Moreover, the modern methods of mentoring has given an altogether a new dimension to this field. So, following are discussed some the various techniques in order to enhance mentoring:

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1. **Counseling:** Counseling is an important function in relation to the mentoring because it can lead to an improved relationship between the mentor and mentee. It consists of support, feedback, providing counsel, consultation, teaching, evaluation, motivation and the monitoring of professional issues (Abiddin et al, 2012).

2. **Coaching:** 'a collaborative, solution focused, result orientated and well thought out process in which the coach facilitates the enhancement of work performance, life experiences, self directed learning as well as the individual growth of the coachee'(Grant,2000). Coaching is still a very prevalent technique which is being imbibed by various organizations to train their employees. This is one of the most effective ways used since early times.

3. **Virtual/E- Mentoring:** Virtual mentoring uses videoconferencing, the Internet, and e-mail to mentor individuals. This is beneficial for those who are unable to leave their workplace and for those who live in rural or remote communities (Ilesanmi Oladele Ayodeji, Osogbo, Lasisi, Fatai Adebayo, 2015). This also helps in reducing the cost as compared to other form of mentoring. A most widely used technique which is computer mediated for the development of the mentor-mentee relationship, in order to promote learning, sharing of ideas, values, ethics in an egalitarian manner. It may include the use of chat rooms, e-mail, collaborative or shared web space, or other electronic media to facilitate communication between mentors and mentees. E-mentoring may serve as a 'long-distance' way to build capacity between and among research partners in different country settings and networks (Cameron & Jesser 1990).

4. **Peer Mentoring:** Peer mentoring connects colleagues at the same hierarchical level in the organization but who may be in different functions or divisions (Emelo, 2013). Learning in this form of alliance is more enjoyable and productive. Peer mentoring is not hierarchical, prescriptive, judgmental or evaluative (Ilesanmi Oladele Ayodeji, Osogbo, Lasisi, Fatai Adebayo, 2015). In this form of mentoring there are less chance of ego problems and more development of cohesive relations and growth.

5. **Reverse Mentoring:** Reverse mentoring relates to the relationship pattern in which junior, subordinate or younger employees guide senior, mid- to high-level or older employees (Yin-Che, 2015). This kind of mentoring can also be helpful with bringing your older employees at home regarding new skills, processes, and technologies, with younger generations - like Millennials and Gen Xers (Emelo, 2013). An altogether a new technique which is much sought after method, being used in organizations. This is mainly used in context of technology.

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6. **Flash Mentoring:** Flash mentoring being a novel concept in mentoring, is gaining tremendous recognition and popularity among academicians and professionals. It is a low budget and easy option to select mentors from the pool of busy executives and senior employees for developing the skills of employees without investing lot of time. The basic requirement being, one-hour or less of a mentor's time to meet with a protégé. During the one-hour session, mentors can guide and share lessons learned as well as their life experiences with the aspiring protégés. (Ilesanmi Oladele Ayodeji, Osogbo, Lasisi, Fatai Adebayo, 2015).

7. **Group Based Mentoring:** Group mentoring involves a mentor building a relationship with a group of mentees, facilitating and guiding them (Dash et al 2012). Group mentoring leverages internal experts and facilitators to facilitate collaborative learning experiences for multiple learners at one time (Emelo, 2013).

8. **Situational Mentoring:** Situational mentoring gives people a way to address immediate learning needs with one or more advisers. Several people can offer ideas simultaneously so that learners can get quick-hitting answers on a high-impact problem or opportunity quickly. (Emelo, 2013) It is usually short term addressing an immediate situation but can transition to a more long-term connection (Ilesanmi Oladele Ayodeji, Osogbo, Lasisi, Fatai Adebayo, 2015).

9. **Supervisory Mentoring:** is an inherent responsibility of leadership. The Individual Development Plan usually delineates expectations for supervisory coaching and feedback. This type of mentoring being informal, relates to day-to-day guidance about the current job. As leaders, supervisors should also encourage external mentoring collaborations, informal and formal, and allow their employees the time to work on them (Ilesanmi Oladele Ayodeji, Osogbo, Lasisi, Fatai Adebayo, 2015).

10. **Wise Mentoring:** A special form of mentoring which has been devised for the higher managements such as CEOs, CFO of reputed firms. According to research conducted, majority of the CEO's reported that they were making better decisions (69%) and were more proficiently fulfilling stakeholder expectations (76%). Moreover, these CEOs credited their mentors for helping them avoid costly mistakes and become adept in their roles faster (84%). On behalf of them, Patterson called mentoring “a more practical way to develop” (Janasz & Peipe, 2015).

11. **Project-based mentoring:** This is often referred to as “functional mentoring” in the literature, where pairing of junior faculty is done with mentors who have the desired skill set, expertise and interest required for a specific project, either individually or as part of a group. The mentoring association may cease when the project is completed or it may continue depending on the interest of the mentee in the project area.

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12. **Career Mentoring:** A young person (mentee) follows one or more adult employees on the job over the long term to learn more about a particular occupation. Career exploration is a more profound process than just job shadowing. Mentors help the mentee develop the hard and soft skills they need to succeed in the workplace. They may learn time management, stress busting activities, teamwork and resolve workplace conflicts. The mentee may decide the future career path in consultation with the mentor.

13. **Academic Success Mentoring:** Incorporates an intentional effort to exert positive influence on academic success relating to teaching-learning of the students. The activities between the mentor and the mentee are determined jointly by the academic institution and the mentor (provided as an activity guide to mentors). Mentors supervise, support and tutor students with class work and/or special projects on a regular basis. Mentors provide all information related to education including internship opportunities. The aim is to prepare the student for academic success in the program of study.

## CONCLUSION

Mentoring relationships can take place at all academic and professional levels. The key feature of a mentoring relationship is that a more experienced individual helps another achieve his or her goals and develop as a person. The person can mentor the inexperienced individual through knowledge sharing, hand holding, job shadowing or simply guiding. The mentor may facilitate the protégé to develop emotionally, learn specific skills or leadership capacities. The mentor may come from the same community, society, academic institution, work in the same organization, have experience in the protégée's organizational context or have experience in the same field. The mentor will always be valued, revered and respected for the role played in the mentees life.

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# Case Method of Teaching - A Tool For Skill Development

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Learning is the essence of teaching. Under traditional lecture method, student's participation in the classroom is minimal; the case method is an active learning method, which requires participation and involvement from the student in the classroom. It is now documented that students can learn more effectively when actively involved in the learning process (Bonwell and Eison, 1991; Sivan et al, 2001). The case study approach is one way in which such active learning strategies can be implemented in our institutions. This article takes stock of the main characteristics of the case method, clarifies its learning goals, and exposes, in particular active-learning theory and experiential learning.*

**Keywords :** *Teaching Pedagogy Case method, active learning .*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

*In lecturing, success meant that students paid attention, laughed at my jokes, and applauded me. I told them what to learn, and they learned it. When I teach now I worry about such questions as whether everyone in the group has participated. Have questions generated energetic (but respectful) controversy? Has the group really pried the case open, created an agenda for further study, and developed a strategy for addressing its own questions? I*

This quote characterizes the transformation of a medical school lecturer from the use of traditional to case-based teaching. College instructors work to assure their students acquire knowledge of discipline specific content (i.e. financial accounting, auditing and tax), as well as developing critical thinking, analytical reasoning, decision making, and communication skills. Also it is generally important that students gain self confidence and demonstrate they have attained these skills. Traditional lecture versus case teaching differ because they are based on different underlying assumptions as to *how* students may attain these skills. In case teaching, we assume students learn best by practicing skills. For example, we all learned to write by writing.

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A case is usually a "description of an actual situation, commonly involving a decision, a challenge, an opportunity, a problem or an issue faced by a person or persons in an organization."<sup>1</sup> In learning with case studies, the student must deal with the situation described in the case, in the role of the manager or decision maker facing the situation. A kindergarten teacher once told that she used what she regards as the case method every time she holds up Mary's or Johnny's drawing in art class and asks her class to tell her what they see going on in the drawing.

Case based teaching has been the hallmark of Harvard University for many years. Whether it was law, business, medicine or other areas, the case method was adopted as the most effective teaching and learning method. They have determined that cases are best used to teach people about realistic decision making situations.

Case teaching moves the professor from being the focal point of the class (the expert with the "right" answers) to a facilitator of the class. In this role as a guide, the students engage in discussion and formulate alternative solutions to questions posed by the instructor or other students.

Note: there are NO answers, NO check figures and NO one in the room is perceived to be the expert in a case based class.

## **Review of literature**

Research shows greater student engagement is a strong predictor of success; Students more engaged in class are more likely to earn higher grades (Gooden ow 1993; Voelkl 1995). Moreover, from cross-cultural studies of the sociology and psychology of international students we know a culturally diverse classroom brings special needs to bear on students and teachers (Volet & Ang 1998)

**Grant (1997)** outlines the benefits of using case studies as an interactive learning strategy, shifting the emphasis from teacher-centred to more student-centred activities. **Raju and Sanker (1999)** demonstrate the importance of using case studies in engineering education to expose students to real-world issues with which they may be faced. Case studies have also been linked with increased student motivation and interest in a subject (Mustoe and Croft, 1999). They "bridge the gap between theory and practice and between the academy and the workplace" (Barkley, Cross, and Major 2005, p.182)

They also give students practice identifying the parameters of a problem, recognizing and articulating positions, evaluating courses of action, and arguing different points of view. **Tony Prehn** pointed out



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that "The case study method ... is also an organic learning tool that updates itself as business environments and contexts change and evolve." **Steve Dietrich** said that "The beauty ... is that it is not about learning to solve today's problems, but rather about developing the skills and discipline(s) which are timeless." Responsibility for learning is placed into the hands of the students, creating a learner-centred classroom where learning is an interactive process, Brenner, et.al., wrote:

The case method of teaching connects students with real world contexts and injects the complexity of the environment in which accountants work and make decisions. This approach goes much further than simply having students tackle the strictly technical nature of many accounting issues. The case method of teaching can facilitate deeper conceptual learning that reinforces the retention of content knowledge. Additionally, it can go beyond facilitating the acquisition of technical skills and enable students to develop complex analytical decision-making skills by getting them to step outside a narrow technical framework in which most accounting exercises are presented. This type of learning environment develops the skills necessary for life-long learning and the ability to adapt to a complex and ever changing business environment.

## **Learning Foundations of case method**

### **Technique for Case Analysis**

- Depending on the course objectives, the instructor may encourage students to follow a systematic approach to their analysis. For example:
  1. What is the issue?
  2. What is the goal of the analysis?
  3. What is the context of the problem?
  4. What key facts should be considered?
  5. What alternatives are available to the decision-maker?
  6. What would you recommend — and why?

Six steps embody the technique of the circumstances in which the events of the case take place and the problem is situated .

### **What is the Issue?**

**Develop an understanding of the circumstances in which the events of the case take place and the problem is situated.**

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1. Typically the analyst will look first to the way the company has managed its assets, and likely to be able to manage them, by asking such questions as:

2. Is the company capital intensive? How expensive is to add capacity or enhance a product's reputation? If the company is capital intensive, how old is the equipment, and how long will it continue to be useful?

3. How much of the firm's assets are long –term and difficult to redeploy and how much can be changed rapidly? Firms with significant investments in short term assets often have much more flexibility in dealing with rapid changes in the economic environment and / or industry

4. How well the firm coped with the changes in the recent past – has it managed to maintain control of its assets in both good and bad times – how likely is to be able to maintain control in the foreseeable future.

5. What are the opportunities for new products and processes that are on the horizon? Is the company in a position to identify and take advantage of these opportunities?

Secondly the analyst will consider where and how the firm has financed itself and how will it be able to finance itself in future by asking such questions as:

1. How much of the firm's investments have been financed from profits, and how stable are the profits. Companies that have relatively stable profitability are more insulated from the vagaries of the capital markets.
2. How much of the funds used, and those likely to be used, have been and will be raised from outside sources?
3. Are the firm's liabilities short term or long term? Do the lenders place any restrictions on the firm by virtue of their position?

- Finally, the analyst will determine the company's unique strengths and weaknesses.

**2. Validate the problem as stated by individuals in the case and identify unstated, hidden problems.**

In this stage technique of financial analyst becomes especially important. The student can quickly eyeball the financial situation and the changes in financial relationship to pick up any major variations. For example if sales have doubled over five year's time, have assets doubled as well? Has debts/ has equity /has profits?

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### **3. Develop alternative solutions to the problems validated and identified.**

After deciding the problem, the student must undertake to define the options – the alternative courses of action for dealing the problem. A case will frequently contain one or more of suggested ways of resolving the problems that are specified. For example, if the company needs funds (a common situation for an interesting financial discussion), an alternative such as entering into long term debt or issuing common stock may be stated. Student can also develop creative ideas like in addition to raising funds, could the company reduce the need for financing by increasing its profitability? By reducing dividend? By reducing capital investment or instead of debt financing, might lease financing be appropriate?

The creativity used to develop the alternatives is put to the test in the following step.

### **4. Select the alternative that appears most attractive.**

The task is to create a strategy that will create the most value for the firm's owners over the long term.

### **5. And recommend the best alternative that can be implemented**

#### **Opening Questions**

Read the case and underline key facts and numbers. Identify the issue faced by the protagonist. Identify the possible decisions he/she could make. Look for facts to support each one. Formulate your questions. You have your questions and it is the day before you teach. Prioritize your questions. Look for major “hard” questions where you do not know the answer. Questions where students can vote are a great way to begin. For example: Should we invest? Should we price high or low? Should we move fast or slow? Is this an attractive opportunity with the Key Success Factors you suggest? Do we have the right people in the right places? Should we choose customer A or B? Opening questions set the stage for the discussion and energy in the room. Choose three or four questions that should provoke the most spirited debate. These will be “anchor” questions. Arrange them in an order that seems logical. Try to craft questions that will allow you to transition from one debate to another once the energy in the first debate subsides.

#### **Look for Role Plays**

Are there any questions or issues where it would be helpful to assign two or more students to roles from

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the case and ask them to debate an issue? Phrase the first question in such a way as to encourage a debate based on evidence versus an exchange based on vague questions.

### **Create a Time Plan**

On a separate piece of paper, break out your available class time into blocks of time, starting with your launch, followed by each of your anchor questions and ending with a student summary and your summary. Estimate the time and mark it in the margin.

### **Use of Case Studies to Develop Key Skills**

**Learning by Discovery:** The student has to find meaningful information in the facts given to them, by interpreting the quantitative analysis. They have to dig out the relevant information that may be dispersed throughout the case. Secondly, discovery comes through interchange of ideas among students and difference in perception, values, and bringing up of the students.

**Learning by Questioning:** A case puts the student to think intelligently to use the information given as evidence judiciously. A response from one student may spark a question from another like (“what do you think our customers will say”) or (“how competitors would react to your suggestion”). This type of probing leads to mind stretching. The instructor can appreciate good performance of a student by a brief comment.

**Learning through practice:** Case analysis serves to ingrain certain habits of thought certain ways of breaking down problem situations, an ability to reason analytically about each issue, draw conclusions and develop plan of action.

**Involvement and Motivation:** A major point of difference between lecture/ reading modes of learning and case study is that the latter invites student involvement. Role play can also be done by encouraging students by addressing him/her by case character's name.

If a teacher addresses the students by name both in the class and out, it affirms the teacher's interest in each student as a person. It leads to greater sense of responsibility to the learning process. Teacher–student relationship plays an important role in learning. Such personal recognition goes a long way in toward creating a sense of student-teacher “partnership” in the educational venture that lies ahead for both of them.

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**Presentation skills:** Most of case studies require students to present their work in a variety of formats; these include oral presentations, articles, posters and reports.

**Practical skills:** Some of case studies involve practical work on the components that are being studied. Feedback has shown that many students enjoy the hands-on approach.

**Team working:** The benefits of group working are well documented, and we have found that a team case study approach can add to the learning experience. In Sports and Materials Science course group work has the added benefit of allowing students to share their personal knowledge and experiences of sport (many students on this course play sport to a high level). Care is needed with group working activities e.g. selecting group membership to ensure smooth group operation/training of students in group working skills. This is particularly important for longer case studies.

**Information gathering and analysis:** Many case studies require resource investigation and encourage students to utilise a number of different sources, i.e. Internet, library, laboratory results and contacting experts in industry.

**Time management:** Longer case studies require students to really consider how best to carry out the work so that it is completed to the set deadline. Interim meetings with academic staff ensure progress is made during the case study rather than all the work being left to the last week.

**Communication skills:** It enhances the students communication ability as they give reasoning, put questions and interact with other students.

## Summary

Therefore, along with the lecture method, case study method should also be used as teaching pedagogy, because we cannot become a great swimmer by reading a book on swimming. While the knowledge obtained from books can be valuable, the real gains come from practice at analysing real business situations. Learning to think, perform analysis, deal with ambiguity, and make and substantiate decisions with facts, are key to success in the modern world. May we choose to educate for a lifetime so we may have the leaders we need to move our nation.

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# Communication Skill – A Key to Success

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The present paper starts with discussion on the meaning and process of communication. Communication pours life in to an organisation. Every organisation established to achieve certain objectives. Communication refers to an art of transferring ideas facts and feelings from one person to another and making them understandable. In its most basic form the process of communication involves a sender who takes these thoughts and encodes them in to a structured form of verbal and non-verbal messages and attempts to understand what the sender meant to communicate. It later goes to various types of communication which are –oral and written communication. Importance of effectiveness of communication is emphasized and various points are explained to increase the effectiveness of oral and written communication. Oral communication involves two types such as One to one and one to many. One to one oral communication is a situation where there is a one sender and one receiver only. This can take the form if direct face to face conversation or it can take the form of indirect conversation such as telephone or internet relay chat. One to many is a situation wherein you are asked to address a larger audience. it may be planned. In written communication the information is exchanged in written form, it is called written communication. It includes letters, magazines, newspapers, bulletins, reports etc.*

## **Meaning of communication**

Communication pours life in to an organisation. Every organisation established to achieve certain objectives. The accomplishment of objectives becomes possible by having proper coordination among various human activities. Coordination and exchange of ideas among different individuals is possible only through communication. Communication refers to an art of transferring ideas facts and feelings from one person to another and making them understandable.

Word communication comes from Latin word communis which means common, means there by common among two or more than two people. Thus communication is the sharing of thoughts among different people in such manner that the listener receiving them in the same spirit with which they are being told.

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## **Communication process:-**

In its most basic form the process of communication involves a sender who takes this thought and encodes them in to a structured form of verbal and non-verbal messages and attempts to understand what the sender meant to communicate. The communication process is complete when the receiver transmits feedback to indicate his reception and understanding of the message. This process take place within a context, also known as a rhetorical situation which includes all that affect the communication process such as the sender-receiver's culture, the sender-receiver's relationship, the circumstances surrounding the sender-receiver's interaction and the physical environment of interaction.

## **Communication goals:-**

Many people think that good speaker just “get up and talk”. Actually the most effective speaker only makes it appear it as it they are speaking off the tops of their heads. In reality, an effective message is the result of clear goals and well planned efforts.

The first step is to focus on what you want to accomplish with the message. There are four basic types of purposes:-

- To inform
- To persuade
- To entertain
- To accomplish a given special purpose

The general goal for an informative speaker is to act as an instructor for the audience. the purpose of an informative speaking is to provide information without promoting a specific viewpoint or advocating specific actions from the audience. a speaker whose goal is to persuade act as an advocate for a specific position and seeks specific type of attitude change and the action from the audience. While all communication act can be said to have some persuasive intent. The goal of a persuasive speech is focused on a specific agenda of action and attitude change a speech to entertain focusses on entertaining the audience. Although these speeches can also inform and persuade, the general goal of the speaker is entertainment. The specific purpose since this is an assigned subject, the general purpose is already is decided. However, the sender will have to formulate his own message for the specific purpose. In other words, what exactly are you going to inform or persuade your receiver about? The sender must spend a little time thinking this through, because a clear goal makes it easier to develop an effective message.



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## **The three principles of communication:-**

The process of communication is based on main three principles. These cardinal principles are the foundation of successful completion of the process of communication. Let's now see these principles:-

Content

Conciseness

Clarity

**Content** is the message that is sought to be conveyed. Correct content can only generate a correct response. The sender must take care to ensure that the content is adequate to generate the required response. An effective receiver should not take the receiver's understanding of messages for granted.

**Conciseness** means being brief or to the point. A person must not beat about the bush or it may lead to a dull response from the receiver. The message must be enough to give all the essential details without being overly lengthy. More communication does not equal better communication. What's the use of more communication if it is ineffective or bad communication? An effective public speaker focuses on the quality of communication not the quantity.

**Clarity** is the structuring of the messages in an unambiguous manner. The message should be devoid technical jargon or confusing terms. It must be kept in mind that "what the sender intends to communicate is not always what the receiver decodes". The communication process can break down in any number of ways. An effective speaker makes sure to learn all that is possible about the receiver's and to adapt the message to them.

## **Types of communication (the communication matrix):-**

Because the basic communication process is same in every situation, there are some similarities across all types of interactions. Just the same, each interaction remains distinct and therefore each rhetorical situation will be different. For now it is important to understand the various types of communication which are as:-

### **1. Oral communication:-**

One to one oral communication is a situation where there is a one sender and one receiver only. This can take the form if direct face to face conversation or it can take the form of indirect conversation such as telephone or internet relay chat. One to many is a situation wherein you are asked to address a larger audience. It may be planned. Both these forms require an understanding of your audience and to achieve proficiency in oral form of communication; practice and keeping a few things in your mind is very essential.

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## **Points for effective oral communication:-**

These points can be enumerated as follows:-

The **Volume of the speaker** is a key to understanding his state of mind and his intention for the message. One should speak in a soft tone and a reasonably audible volume so as to not create any unwarranted, negative feeling. Voice and control modulation requires practice. This can be achieved by simple exercise like practicing before a mirror or saying your speech aloud many times before final presentation in a selected place.

**Eye contact** must be always maintained in these types of situations as the eyes will indicate to the sender whether the receiver has understood the message or not. It is a well known fact that eyes are the windows to a person's mind. Careful observation reveals a lot from a person's eyes. For e.g. the listener is constantly blinking his eyes he may have not understood the message. Another common e.g. is when he has closed his eyes for a long period and has fallen off to sleep.

**Body language** is an important aspect of one to one direct conversation as action speaks louder than words. It is a fact that non-verbal messages are usually believed more than verbal messages. Body language can be an effective mirror of the audience's interest in the speaker's message. Certain give away clues like the yawning in audience or restlessness in them should be understood as serious failures in the communication process.

**Posture** is another important factor in oral communication. The posture of the speaker is an indicator of his seriousness to a particular conversation. Correct posture will also give an impression of professionalism. Correct posture combined with a positive body language is an indicator of the preparation and awareness of the speaker. When there is a conflict between verbal and non-verbal messages. The receiver tends to believe the nonverbal. An effective speaker makes sure that the nonverbal messages compliment and strengthen the verbal messages.

In a one to one communication situation the above four points occupy paramount importance. In a high stress situation such as an interview, correct usage of the above key topics can lead to a favorable result.

## **2. Written communication:-**

Written communication is an art form. Constant practice and guidance from experts can most definitely help the writer. Here it is pertinent to note that the three basic principles of communication discussed

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in the beginning; if understood and applied well will lead to a more efficient form of written communication. In written communication the information is exchanged in written form, it is called written communication. It includes letters, magazines, newspapers, bulletins, reports etc. the limitations of oral communication like the presence of both the parties, lack of proof in the context of future can be overcome by the written communication.

### **Points for effective written communication:-**

Most important is **correct use and application of grammar** of a language. Many a time people make small mistakes in grammar usage in the form of wrong capitalization or incorrect punctuation. This reflects poorly on the writer's skills and diligence. This sort of mistake can be easily reduced by constant practice and using the principles of grammar correctly.

**Structuring your message in parts** can go a long way to make it more intelligible. A well structured message is more easily understood and a response is more easily prepared. It is always a good thing to write the main points to be communicated on a rough draft and then writing the main draft.

**Having a large vocabulary** helps as the writer can convey his message in an exact manner without having to do a lot of explaining. Developing a vocabulary is a process which can take years of hard work. It is advisable to students to start reading good newspapers and magazines from an early stage. As students of professional course we have access to a large variety of reading material which should be used to the maximum extent.

**Using good reference material and letter** can be a good step to beginners as these will help the students understand issues such as formatting of a written message and expansion of ideas.

Another important area is **typographical errors**. It is always advisable to check your final message for any spelling mistakes.

One very basic yet important technique in effective written communication is **using of draft messages** before transmission of the final message.

**Using good stationery** will also go a long way in creating a lasting impression.

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# Successful Management of Libraries: The Role of Marketing

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The papers explain the Concept of Marketing and Defines Marketing. Explain the marketing strategy as Marketing planning, Marketing research and analysis, Marketing Orientation, Marketing Mix. Discuss the need of marketing for library and information Services in detail. Describes various promotional methods and factors influencing marketing promotion and library promotion*

## **Introduction**

The recent technological developments have opened the new path for information acquirement to information dissemination; thus, have created new forms of unprecedented change and challenges before the world of library professionals and librarianship. There has been an increasing pressure on libraries to mobilize resources and become self-reliant. Library users are transforming into customers with rising expectations, diverse needs and wants, and choices. Thus, the real challenge before the library and information professionals is not only to manage the library resources but to turn these resources into services. It is also established fact that the notion of services has also changed, from basic to value added services, from staff assisted to self-service, from in-house to outreach, from free to priced, from reactive to pro-active, and from mass customization to individualized service. As in such an environment librarians are finding new ways of serving users or customers effectively and efficiently. Similarly, under this change phenomenon the principles of marketing have gradually been accepted by majority of libraries and library professionals for both as relevant and beneficial to the library environment.

## **Definition of Marketing**

Marketing is a societal process which discerns consumers' wants, focusing on a product or service to fulfill those wants, attempting to move the consumers toward the products or services offered. Marketing is fundamental to any businesses growth.

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Marketing tends to be seen as a creative industry, which includes advertising, distribution and selling. It is also concerned with anticipating the customers' future needs and wants, which are often discovered through market research. Essentially, marketing is the process of creating or directing an organization to be successful in selling a product or service that people not only desire, but are willing to buy. Therefore good marketing must be able to create a "proposition" or set of benefits for the end customer that delivers value through products or services. Marketing is managing profitable customer relationships. The twofold goal of marketing is to attract new customers by promising superior value and to keep and grow current customers by delivering satisfaction. According to Philip Kotler[1]“Marketing is the analysis, planning, implementation and control of the carefully formulated programs designed to bring about voluntary exchanges of values with target markets for the purpose of achieving organizational objectives. It relies heavily on designing the organization's offering in terms of the target market's needs and desires and a using effective pricing, communication, and distribution to inform, motivate and service he markets”. The American Marketing Association [2] defines Marketing as "the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, services, organizations, and events to create and maintain relationships that will satisfy individual and organizational objectives". Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large. According to Leerburger,[3] “Marketing is to know and understand the customer so well that the products or services fits him and sells it. Ideally, marketing should result in a customer who is ready to buy. All that should be needed then is to make the products and services available”.

According to Chartered Institute of Marketing [4], Marketing is defined as “the management process which identifies, anticipates and supplies customer requirements efficiently and profitably”. According to Schmidt [5], “Marketing is a continuous process which enables an organization to meet the current needs of its clients and to assess and create new services to meet their future needs as well”. Thus, marketing is a process in which customer's needs for information and knowledge are met through matching these against appropriate information resources and services. This involves: (i) Researching and understanding customer's needs and other factors in the marketplace; (ii) Selecting and defining the customer or client groups that the information service will serve; (iii) Defining the offering, in terms of products and associated elements of the marketing mix and doing this with reference to the potential value that offerings can deliver to the customer; (iv) Ensuring communication and engagement with the user community; (v) Establishing strategic direction and making plans that support this continuing engagement.

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Concept of Marketing The concept of marketing are: (i) Marketing as a Set of Techniques; (ii) Marketing as a Philosophy; (iii) Marketing as an Approach; and (iv) Customer-driven Marketing. In fact in marketing the process may begin with defining the objectives of the library; devise the overall strategy which fits with the objectives of the library; devise an overall strategy to achieve those objectives with targets and milestones; draw up practical short-term plans and then the most importantly take actions. Thus, an organization that embraces the marketing concept tries to provide products and satisfy customer needs through coordinated set of activities and that also allows the organizations to achieve its goals in such approach marketing, planning work together. Likewise, Marketing is a philosophy that should be adopted by an organization seeking to achieve the objectives for which it was established and against which it is currently operating. Marketing as an approach, involves assembling and delivery of the mix of physical resources, the system and mental exercises. The service trinity as pronounced by Ranganathan has great relevance with such approach in case of libraries. He considers users, employees and information resources and systems have greater relationship with each other in library and information services. In other words, marketing approach necessitate that the library draws upon and integrates its human and physical resources effectively and adapts them to meet user needs. Since, the library focuses on distinctive competencies; value delivery; customer-defined quality; relationship management and a customer focus organizational culture, it encourages the professionals to adopt customer-driven marketing. Thus, a library has to have sufficient understanding of the existing and potential users that allows it to create superior value to them. This comes through increasing the benefits to users in relation to the efforts and cost. A customer-driven approach requires that the library understands the value of the customer not only as it is today, but also, as it will evolve over time.

### Marketing Functions

Marketing functions such as management marketing research, product planning and development, busying and assembling, packaging and repackaging, standardization and grading, branding, pricing and creating a customer functions for business success, forces the marketers for adopting (i) technological changes, (ii) welcome the competition from the competitors, (iii) observes very minutely the changing of information needs, wants and demands of the customers and read their tastes and preferences which changes very easterly, and (iv) organize production in such a manner that the ultimate goals of users/customers satisfaction is achieved.

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## Marketing Strategy

Marketing strategy is the complete and unbeatable plan designed specifically for attaining the marketing objectives of the firm. The marketing objectives indicate what the firm wants to achieve and the marketing strategy provides the design for achieving them. It is the marketing strategy that decides the success at the business unit level which in turn decides the total corporation's success. Marketing Strategies are formulated by organizations with the objective of improving their competitive position, usually through developing a competitive advantage. The global objective of the marketing strategy for any organization is that it moves as far as possible from the conditions that underpin perfect competition; in other words, the organization must seek to differentiate itself from its competitors, either in reality or in perception of its customers. In order to achieve this it needs to be aware of the nature of the marketplace, and specifically its competitors. Marketing strategy includes: (i) Marketing planning, (ii) Marketing research and analysis, (iii) Marketing Orientation, (iv) Marketing Mix. Marketing planning is a dynamic process as the process deals with changing marketing environment, competitors and their products, changing needs of the customer. Marketing planning, along with other functional areas of planning within an organization are part of the planning that needs to take place both at an organization level and within library and information departments. The aim of marketing planning is to ensure that marketing activities are appropriate to the achievement of corporate and unit objectives which can be implemented within resource limits and are capable of creating and sustaining competitive position. Therefore, SWOT analysis is imperative in the process of marketing planning. Similarly, marketing research and analysis is another important area of marketing strategy. Marketing research is a wider term, used to refer to the systematic collection of data, which includes market research, pricing research, and the effectiveness of advertisement and whole of marketing communication. Anderson [6], defines marketing Research as “the activity concerned with collecting, recording and systematically analyzing market data for assessing consumer reaction, in respect of specific goods and services, as a means of determining needs”. In library and information terms, this means finding out what the potential users need from the library and information service and then attempting to meet these needs. Libraries have two fold advantages –first, librarians by profession are trained to gather and organize data for customers for use in the most effective and efficient way possible. Secondly, the library is by definition, a treasure trove of data and information. Thus, librarians can use their expertise to gather the environmental data, because their own best customers by utilizing the data for the libraries own best management practices.[ibid] Market analysis is an intensive investigation of identifying the market of actual and potential users. It also includes an evaluation of existing products and services. Each of the services offered by the library should have a separate market evaluation. The user survey and studies should be conducted with a marketing perspective, as it is always the need



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satisfaction of users, which determines the success of marketing programme. Marketing orientation the organization that develops and uses its understanding of customer requirements to shape its activities and strategy has a marketing orientation. Marketing orientation should sit comfortably with the traditional public service ethos in which there was concern for user needs.[7], Marketing mix is the combination of four major tools of marketing – product, price, promotion and place – known widely as the 4Ps. Due to the special characteristics of services, their management also extends the scope of marketing mix to go beyond the 4Ps to 7Ps, namely, product, place, promotion, price, people, physical evidence and process of service delivery.

Product is anything that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition user or consumption. It includes physical objects, services, personalities, place, organization and ideas. The decisions concerning the product may relate to (i) Product attribute, (ii) Branding, (iii) Packaging and labeling, (iv) Product support service, (v) Product mix. Similarly, product can be classified on the basis of (i) Use, (ii) Durability, (iii) Tangibility. Goods and services are produced to be sold to the consumers. They must be made available to the consumers at a place where they can conveniently make purchase. In majority of the cases, the companies/firms decide, in advance, 'the place' where its products are to be made available to the consumer. Libraries should also not be the exception of this kind of strategy.

Promotion is another important mix as it refers to a process of informing, persuading and influencing a consumer to make choice of the product of the company in question. Promotion is done through means of personal selling advertising, publicity and sales promotion. Price is the amount charged for a product or service. Price is the only element in the marketing mix of a firm that generates revenue. Rest of them generate only cost. Price and volume of sales together decide the revenue of any business. Pricing decisions of a company/firm are influenced by both internal as well as external factors. Factors that affect the pricing decision are divided into internal and external factors. The internal factors include (i) Cost of the product, (ii) Marketing objectives, (iii) Stage of the product in the life cycle, (iv) Price elasticity. The external factors include (i) Buyer's behaviour, (ii) Competitor's pricing policy, (iii) Government controls, (iv) Other relevant legal aspects. Pricing models are (i) cost based pricing, (ii) Demand Based Pricing, (iii) Competition Based Pricing. Out of these four vital and important marketing mix elements promotion as marketing mix element has much more applicability as compared to other marketing mix elements due to library being a social institution and also they do face the problems of underutilization of their resources on which they have spent crores of rupees over the years. It is therefore, imperative to study this particular marketing mix element a bit elaborately.



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Promotion should be viewed as communication between the library and its community. This includes advertising, sales promotion, publicity, and personal selling, and refers to the various methods of promoting the product, brand, or company. Promotion represents all of the communications that a marketer may use in the marketplace. Promotion has four distinct elements - advertising, public relations, word of mouth and point of sale. Promotion decisions are those related to communicating and selling to potential consumers. Since these costs can be large in proportion to the product price, a break-even analysis should be performed when making promotion decisions. It is useful to know the value of a customer in order to determine whether additional customers are worth the cost of acquiring them. Promotion decisions involve advertising, public relations, media types, etc. Promotion consists of activities used to inform people about library/information centre and its products and services. All the methods of communication are to be used to reach the customers to make/keep them aware. As stated above, the scope of the marketing mix widened due to the changes that have taken place in the domain of marketing management. One among them is People that means that any person coming into contact with customers can have an impact on overall satisfaction, whether as part of a supporting service to a product or involved in a total service, people are particularly important because, in the customer's eyes, they are generally inseparable from the total service. As a result of this, they must be appropriately trained, well motivated and the right type of person. Fellow customers are also sometimes referred to under 'people', as they too can affect the customer's service experience, (e.g., at a sporting event). Most services use people in service delivery, often creating and delivering the product in interaction with the customer. The quality of the interaction between the service agent and the customer has a major influence on satisfaction. Process refers to the way in which the user gets hold of the service. This is the process(s) involved in providing a service and the behavior of people, which can be crucial to customer satisfaction. Physical Evidence means unlike a product, a service cannot be experienced before it is delivered, which makes it intangible. This, therefore, means that potential customers could perceive greater risk when deciding whether to use a service. To reduce the feeling of risk, thus improving the chance for success, it is often vital to offer potential customers the chance to see what a service would be like. This is done by providing physical evidence, such as case studies, testimonials or demonstration. Personalization means customization of products and services through the use of the Internet. This concept is further extended with emerging social media and advanced algorithms. Emerging technologies will continue to push this idea forward. Participation means allowing customer to participate in what the brand should stand for; what should be the product directions and even which ads to run. This concept is laying the foundation for disruptive change through democratization of information. Peer-to-Peer refers to customer networks and communities where advocacy happens. The historical problem with marketing is that it is "interruptive" in nature, trying to impose a brand on the customer. Predictive modeling's refers to predictive algorithms, such as neural network, that are being successfully applied in marketing problems.

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## Need of Marketing for Library and Information Services

Information is the power and libraries are the reservoir of this information. Libraries are non-profit service industries and information is their key product. Marketing of information means transference of information to potential inevitable due to limited budget in all libraries irrespective of size and region. Marketing of information offers a great potential to survive and grow their services. The core of marketing concept is user oriented. Therefore, marketing and its techniques if applied to library and information service can help in vital to fulfill the expected needs of information seekers. By applying marketing concept, the libraries try to disseminate their services to satisfy users' needs through Pre-determined and well defined coordinated plan and activities. Marketing helps in increasing users' satisfaction. Since, libraries are part of highly competitive service industries especially in the present ICT environment; they have to compete with many competitors who are also in the field of information industry. For example, they have to compete with mega booksellers, online book dealers, information consultants, internet community and individual customers. It is therefore, necessary that the libraries must provide correct and timely information to sustain oneself in the competitive environment. Libraries of all types have also to compete with other departments within the organization for funds. Libraries need to market themselves to remain connected with their communities and create goodwill, sustain their existence and improve the image in the society. Libraries need to convey what is unique about the access and services they provide. The people need to be made aware of the services and products that are provided and their comparative value. This will solve the problem of underutilization of library resources. Library users expect recognition, attention, and appreciation for their individual information needs. Customers also have ever-changing needs and wants, which makes the library market as dynamic as retail market. Marketing helps to create an environment in libraries that fosters customer consciousness among employees. Libraries depend on the support of others for their existence. A Library must communicate and work with its customers and governing funding entities to provide information about what the library is doing and to enable the library to learn about the community it saves. Effective marketing can among other things, increase library fund, increase usage of services and resources, educate customers and non-customers, change perceptions, and enhance the clout and reputation of the library and its staff.[8] In addition, substantial hike in cost of publications, hike in the foreign exchange rates and devaluation of rupee, information explosion and increasing demands of users for information and availability of modern information access facilities etc. also necessitate the adoption of marketing approach for the promotion and use of library products and services.

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## Promotional Methods

In marketing parlance, promotion is a means of communicating information about products and services produced by any organization to meet the needs and wants of the users. It is the activity which many people think of as marketing. Apart from developing and designing good products and services, pricing them attractively and making them accessible to the targeted audience, modern marketing approaches call for promotion and communicating with present as well as potential users [9]. Information products and services are time-sensitive and intangible. They should be used fast and be targeted to the end users, particularly for quick assimilation. Therefore, products and services have to be promoted continuously through advertisements. The purpose of such advertisements is to promote the sale of information products and services and thus reach the products to the end users. It should also help to attract intermediaries of information services to act as conduits for promoting these services. Carolyn Johnson, an Australian Librarian [10], has suggested many methods of promoting the library and information service, which includes: (i) The image of the library service, including building, furniture and fittings, notice-boards, guiding and signposting, stationary, staff recruitment and other advertisements, job descriptions and staff attitudes; (ii) Talks to local groups and visiting parties by library and information staff; (iii) Liaison with other departments of the council, academic institution, firms or other parent body; (iv) Good public relations-always being positive, polite and credible; always returning telephone calls promptly; (v) Displays within the library and information service and outside (e.g. shows, fairs and exhibitions); (vi) The media (articles in newspapers and periodicals; use of radio, television and videotext systems); (vii) Sale of plastic bags, badges, balloons, pens, etc.; (viii) Business cards; (ix) Publications.

## Factors Influencing Promotion

Libraries by their nature vary in terms of collection, users and type of products and services organizational settings etc. For instance, the marketing objectives of academic libraries may be to broaden user base of internal users only. Whereas in case of public libraries it could be the user base across geographical borders. Hence, the tools and techniques in promotional mix may vary considerably.

Type and nature of product and services intended to be covered in promotional strategy also influences the tools and techniques to be followed. An online literature search may warrant a promotional mix of demonstration, lecture etc. and for promoting products like CAS bulletin, SDI service traditional tools such as leaflets, samples, brochures can be administered.

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™ The classical product life cycle stage comprises four stages, namely, introduction, growth, maturity and decline. Each stage of this life cycle determines the degree of pursuing a promotional programme. For instance, for a product or service in declining stage, promotion could be strong as compared to the growth stage where active promotion can be toned in accordance with the growing demand.

™ The most significant factor which influences promotion is resources like finance, infrastructure and manpower. Most libraries and information centres often bank on conventional methods like personal contact, office circulars, leaflets, brochures, etc. owing to these constraints.

™ The cultural, educational and social backgrounds are needed to be studied properly as it also plays a significant role in the decision of choosing the right promotional mix.

™ The personnel assigned the task of implementing the promotional programme should not only have the knowledge about promotional programme but also the cooperation and support of his subordinates and superiors. Proper academic qualifications and training in public relations and journalism will be added advantage.

™ A survey preceding the planning of the promotional campaign helps in ascertaining information regarding the opportunities and competitors for the products and services offered. Libraries facing acute competition for their products and services may not be averse to the idea of ignoring the cost consideration in adopting new promotional tools in order to capture the market. [11]

## Library Promotion

Broadly, promotion activities covers all aids to sales. Promotion stimulates demand and increase sales. Usually promotion moves the product towards the customers. It involves mechanisms that inform the target groups about the resources available, services and products offered by the libraries and information centres. The motivations for promoting library products and services are: (i) User awareness otherwise people would hardly know what services the library offers, (ii) For targeting passive library users not visiting library often, (iii) Promoting library services and collections, (iv) Building stronger relationship with staff in the organization. Therefore, the libraries and information centres must develop a dynamic strategy for library promotion. For the purpose of developing a suitable marketing strategy which should include:

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- ™ Ensuring full support from the top management for funds;
  - ™ Clearly outlining promotional plan and its purpose;
  - ™ What is to be communicated or offered?;
  - ™ Who are the recipients of services and products?
  - ™ Media and channels that are going to be used for this purpose;
  - ™ Who is responsible for promotional activity?

The main tools for promoting library products and services includes:

- ™ Brochures;
- ™ Flyers and mail shots
- ™ Company-wide e-mails
- ™ Display of readings and bibliographies
- ™ Newsletters,
- ™ Annual reports;
- ™ Bookmarks;
- ™ Posters;
- ™ Videos;
- ™ Calendars and directories
- ™ Web pages
- ™ Use of social networking tools like YouTube, Face Book, Twitter, LinkedIn etc.

In addition, another strategy to promote library is to make presentations to selected groups, guests in the library, organizing open house or information fairs that exhibit services to all interested users, library orientation for new employees/users, organizing special training for employees, and organizing seminars that educate customers on the products and services. The word of mouth is the cheapest and most effective means of promoting any kind of library service. The satisfied user will always have a positive attitude towards the library. However, following aspects need to be taken into consideration while using exhibits as a promotional tool for promoting the library.

- ™ Always communicate important factual information
- ™ Emphasize the significance of the task
- ™ Give accurate facts
- ™ Use best possible visual markets
- ™ Cost factor.

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## Conclusion

Marketing is a management process, consisting of identifying, anticipating and satisfying the needs of the customers, leading to profit. There are three main reasons for marketing of information, namely, to increase usage, to generate income-obtaining profit and to get recognition from the parent body for achieving greater support and more resources. The marketing process will show where services or products need to be enhanced to provide value for money to the customers. The concept of marketing is taking too long to gain acceptance in libraries as they have always been recognized as the social and service-oriented non-profit making institutions. But things are changing, particularly when information technology has made it possible to introduce various products and services according to the needs of its users. Information is a commodity, which is saleable. Information marketing has added new dimensions in this high-tech phase of librarianship. Library managers need to leave no stone unturned to rebuild the image of the library by utilizing their own potential and the potential of information technology. Today's libraries need to re-invent themselves and adopt new ways to market the information or knowledge as marketing is becoming essential for our very survival. Marketing is applicable to both commercial and non-commercial organizations, that is, we can utilize the techniques both in profit-making as well as in non-profit institutions.[12] Of late, library and information centres, though basically non-profit organizations by their nature, have started devoting attention to the marketing of information services provided by them. In the present day market-driven economies, liberalization and globalization, the library and information professionals are also expected to have a fair understanding of the concept of marketing and apply various marketing principles so as to make the library and information centres capable of meeting the challenges of information explosion and achieve self sufficiency. In the context of university libraries, marketing involves such activities as user studies, examination of economic aspects and constraints on offering various library and information services and products and testing of alternate products and services.

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# Toward Effective Teaching Practices in Our Classrooms: Insights and Recommendations in the Context of Faculty Training

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The idea of a space and time reserved for higher education (HE) teachers to come together, exchange ideas, debate, discuss and indulge in academic deliberations was first raised by Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan in the Radhakrishnan Commission Report in the year 1949. However, it took another 40 years to implement that idea in the form of Academic Staff Colleges after 1987 as a plan scheme of the UGC after specific recommendations of the National Policy on Education in 1986. Established initially in 45 universities, the scheme was completely funded by the UGC. Since then the number of ASCs has increased to 66 and these are still funded by the UGC under the 'plan' budget head. In these 30 years all the ASCs in the nation have trained thousands of teachers. We can have an idea of the numbers through the statistics that in one decade from 2003-04 to 2012-13, the total number of teachers trained was 2,69,710 and the number of in-service training programmes conducted in the country was 10,293. The primary objectives of these programmes is cognition of the academic foundations of pedagogy, teaching skill enhancement and more inclination towards teaching with passion-leading to improved teaching practices in the classrooms.*

**Key Words: Teaching Skills, Programming, etc.**

## **Introduction**

Yet while the basic and initial hurdle of establishing the training colleges was removed, down the years not much was done on the quality front and in several places the training programmes have gradually turned into ritual routines of extraneous lectures with hardly any focus on the outcomes. It has to be acknowledged that allegations raised by the funders, academicians as well as different stakeholders about the in-service training programmes of the HRDCs being unproductive, irrelevant and reduced to a formality to collect the mandatory certificates of attendance are all too frequent and not always false. There is a pressing need and urgency to bring new thoughts, methods and innovations in the traditional training schedules geared towards a single goal of improved teaching practices. Based on the experience gathered during twenty years of working in the higher education faculty training I have reached the following understanding.

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Analyzing the challenges of the present education system and keeping in mind the existing constraints, it can be deduced that out of the myriad issues which impact our classroom teaching, one aspect that stands out is the quality of teaching-learning. Stakeholders like parents, students and the government are quick to point out that it is the lack of teacher quality which is the one and only reason for degradation of the higher education system. In the present scenario, teaching is seen as an individual pursuit and it is thought that in case the quality of teacher is enhanced all will be well with our education system. Since we are viewing the problem as a linear one- lack of teacher quality; the solution too is sketchy and shallow, that is to enhance the quality of the teacher. The training programmes are all focused on this single pursuit, without looking beyond, these have been designed keeping in mind the deficiency model, that the classroom teaching can improve only if the deficiencies of the faculty can somehow be removed. It is no surprise that the desired results of improved teaching practices are hardly coming by.

This becomes all the more evident by the fact that the TTs who are highly motivated and show a range of positive change immediately after the programmes, hardly implement their learning in their respective classrooms. If the assumption of 'individual teacher can improve teaching' were true, this would not have been the case.

A preliminary survey in this area indicates that all the efforts, investments on the training programmes are wasted because though the TT is sensitized and equipped with knowledge and skills yet the atmosphere in the workplace is not conducive enough for the practice of the learned strategies, such as strategies for effective classroom delivery, scientific pedagogic methods, sensitizations to different issues, research orientation etc. The enthusiasm and zeal to practice whatever an individual is empowered to practice in his/her own teaching arena, wanes gradually to the point of vanishing altogether. It cannot be sustained for longer periods. This scenario is further augmented by the apathy of the college leadership and indifference of the colleagues. It is well documented that student quality, peer support, departmental ambience, workplace infrastructure, promotion criteria and several other factors add together to create excellence in the classroom. Teaching, though practiced individually, is greatly influenced and impacted by the setting in which it is done, by the eco system of the workplace and by the opinion/acts of the peers and colleagues. However, the faculty training does not take these factors into consideration and continues to be based on faulty assumption. While to improve the teaching of a single teacher, what we need is not only to focus on that individual but to have interventions to improve the system as a whole, creating 'ease of teaching' in our higher education institutes.



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How colleagues/peers influence effective teaching?

Colleagues are a big influence on the careers of teachers as they impact what we do, how we behave, what we think and what are the things that we attach weight to. They decide whether we become competitive in a cut throat way or in a team spirited way, whether we discuss pedagogy or fashion trends in the staff room. Teachers not only need guidance and support regarding teaching practices in their initial years but they also need validation, exchange of information and sharing of experiences in later years in order to sustain the zeal for good teaching.

As academic leaders, senior colleagues or administrators no emphasis is being given to the professional socialization of a new entrant in the teaching profession. Rather, a young teacher is instantaneously sucked into the vortex of departmental conflicts, and vicious lobbying for petty positions and objects. The situation gets aggravated by the unsupportive colleagues and an overall negative atmosphere. What to speak of striving to teach better, the new faculty becomes extremely insecure about their jobs. These sequences in many of our academic institutions have led to the total breakdown of the encouraging net of collegueship which can prove to be a great resource for handholding and mentorship of teachers new to the profession.

Also among the peers, teaching is not seen as a core activity of the higher education institutes. Recognition, praise and awards are reserved for those who indulge in extensive research but teachers who are into deep and thorough teaching are considered to be wasting time and their image is represented as a nagative and non-productive member. These realities impact the quality of teaching and leads to depletion of the sustainability of quality teaching.

Though these issues are subtle and nobody speaks about them does not mean that these are insignificant. However, the issue of nurturing collegueship can be exploited to bring excellence in teaching learning process of the institute. This is possible if in an institution groups of colleagues could be formed who would work as mutual critics and motivators for the each other's efforts towards improvement in teaching learning practices in individual classrooms. There is a need to develop mechanisms for creation of such clusters. These core groups will have a ripple effect in spreading the academic culture, enquiring ambience and a teaching-conducive atmosphere throughout the institution.

How institutes influence effective teaching?

It is quite obvious that the significance attached to the core aspect of enhancing quality of teaching-

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learning by the institution will automatically be reflected by the teaching practices of the faculty of that institute. It has been observed that the principals of colleges or heads of university departments view the professional development training programmes of the faculty as a liability rather than as an opportunity through which the faculty will be academically enriched. Most of them fail to see that the enhancement in the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the faculty through training will ultimately percolate down to the students of their institute. In one of the studies conducted by the author, it was found that 83% of these academic leaders were oblivious of the rigorous academic schedule of the in-service training programmes and about 67% of them saw these courses as easy time spent in leisure activity. The institute should rethink its own role as manager, leader, facilitator and administrator in order to improve the pedagogical practices. A major shift in perspectives is needed in this domain.

In our higher education institutes no platforms are available for discussion on pedagogy, no support is extended by the authorities to improve teaching quality and no trends are in vogue for issues of classroom delivery aspects of the teaching profession. It is left to the teacher's own motivation and whims to either improve their teaching learning process or go on as usual. It is in this arena that the institute can support the teachers by facilitating effective classroom teaching and making it lucrative. The strategies can be development of infrastructure, providing technological support, removing the hurdles in good teaching, recognizing and appreciating good teaching, creating a table, both physically and metaphorically where faculty can discuss their own teaching strategies, challenges they are facing and the inadequacy they are feeling to handle effective teaching in a threat free, open and constructive way.

How policies influence effective teaching?

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) rates an institute on the basis of seven criteria. Out of which the criteria of teaching learning process is considered to be an individual mission of teachers while the institution focuses on the rest of the criteria such as student enrolment and profile, student diversity, curricular aspects, research, consultancy and extension, infrastructure and learning resources, student support and progression, governance, leadership and management, and innovations. Since NAAC grants only 100 credits out of a total of 1000 credits to the teaching-learning process it is natural for the institute to gear its resources towards strengthening of other parameters than the aspect of quality teaching. Higher education institution in turn is pressurized to see the most significant aspect of teaching through the lopsided prism of evaluation parameters. Thus there develops a gap between the individual goal and the institutional goal which is damaging for effective classroom teaching.

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The policies of teacher evaluation for recruitment, promotion and calculation of performance index prescribed from time to time by the regulatory authorities put heavy stakes on the research aspect of a teacher's career and teaching activity is rated as a routine part of the job where one gets a credit whether or not they have done effective teaching. The Academic Performance index is highly lopsided in favour of research and against teaching.

#### Suggested Alternative

Higher education faculty training should shift from the individualistic approach to an institutional approach by incorporating institutions in the teacher training plan. Instead of training of individual teachers the goal should be to develop a league of teachers in a specific institution trained towards the achievement of the goal of effective teaching. This change would also take care of the sustainability of enthusiasm and creating structures where practice of effective pedagogy is seen as an institutional and not an individual goal.

The programmes can be scheduled with one week of face to face training of a league of faculty members (optimum number 25) in the higher education institute itself, irrespective of whether the faculty is senior or junior, having multiple years of experience or newly inducted. The league can comprise of faculty of a single discipline, or of allied disciplines. This training would help to bring all faculty members at the same page regarding pedagogical practices and make them aware of the academic and research based foundations of the science of teaching. This active training schedule is then followed by small group league discussions, on mutual support on teaching practice challenges, sharing of successful and effective strategies at predestinated time and space. The objective of these follow up sessions with peers will encourage everybody in the faculty to give a serious thought to their classroom teaching and enrich it with the ideas generated in peer discussions. It will also highlight the significance and acceptability of good teaching vis a vis good research.

This ongoing process can be scheduled as one league discussion per month for the whole academic semester which would be about four times. The last meeting as the semester ends would again be a face to face session for a day or two wherein individual teachers will exchange findings regarding their enhanced understanding of their own teaching processes, the ways through which they have come face to face with own inadequacies of teaching and the strategies they have or they will be implementing in overcoming them.

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This meeting will also be a point in the training where the pedagogic challenges in the following semester are visualized afresh and preparedness is gauged. So that as the semester winds up, the faculty will be equipped with a fresh, novel, specific, need-based and fine-tuned understanding of the pedagogic process as well as self-developed tools of handling the emerging challenges. Since most of the strategies have been developed by the faculty themselves, it did not be necessary to invite an expert for this basic facilitation. In the new semester, the small group league interaction can continue as the faculty keeps on improving their performance with each passing day.

Though this method has been used in employee training in some countries, however, it has not been used in India in academic field. Through the above mentioned method faculty training can be brought to the doorstep of the institution and be fine tuned as per specific needs, which is otherwise not possible in the present scenario in a top-down approach. This method also factors in the active participation of all faculty members as well as the institutional machinery, thus shifting the onus of good teaching equally to all the stakeholders and making effective teaching a shared goal.

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