

SERVICE INNOVATION AND 4E MARKETING STRATEGY: APPLIED FOR LIBRARY SERVICES

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to study service innovation and the 4E marketing strategy and their application in library services. The author reviewed relevant literature on service innovation and the 4E marketing strategy and provided recommendations for practitioners or those interested in applying them to library services. The study found that service innovation includes information and data, processes, technology, and the environment, while the 4E marketing strategy consists of experience creation, value creation, accessibility, and relationship building. The content presented can be useful for library administrators to develop services and create a competitive advantage. It will allow users to have an improved experience and provide valuable insights for those interested in service innovation and the 4E marketing strategy, which can be applied in similar contexts or areas of interest.

Keywords: Service Innovation, 4E Marketing Strategies

INTRODUCTION

In the digital era, where information technology plays a crucial role in daily life and work, academic libraries must adapt to ongoing changes to meet the diverse and dynamic needs of users (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). The application of service innovation and the 4E marketing strategy—Experience, Exchange, Everyplace, and Evangelism—is a compelling approach to enhancing the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of library services (Schmitt, 1999). This is especially relevant in the context of libraries, which serve as key institutions supporting learning and research within universities (Rowley, 2012).

However, modern libraries continue to face several challenges, such as changes in user behavior, with more people turning to online information sources, increased competition from external information providers, and budgetary and resource constraints (Oliver, 2014). Additionally, users now have more complex and diverse needs, including on-demand access to information and services anytime, anywhere, engaging and interactive learning experiences, and personalized guidance and support (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985). Therefore, adopting the 4E marketing strategy is essential for libraries to differentiate themselves and effectively meet user demands (Pine & Gilmore, 1999).

This article aims to present guidelines for applying the 4E marketing strategy to library services. It analyzes the significance of this strategy in enhancing user experience, delivering value and worthwhile returns, ensuring seamless access to services anytime, anywhere, and fostering strong relationships with users (Pralhad & Ramaswamy, 2004).

Additionally, the article provides examples of how the 4E strategy can be implemented in the library context, along with recommendations for its effective application (Rust, Moorman, & Dickson,

2002). These insights serve as a framework for improving library services to better meet user needs in the digital age.

OBJECTIVE

To study service innovation and 4E marketing strategies to be applied for library services.

literature review

Service Innovation

Service innovation refers to the introduction of new ideas and work processes that have been developed through thoughtful consideration and a deep understanding of user needs. It follows a customer-centric approach to create differentiated services. The primary goal is to develop unique service offerings that enhance customer satisfaction.

Schneider (1999) defines service innovation as understanding the impact of changes in process models or the processes themselves. Similarly, Cerfis and Marsili (2005) highlight that service innovation is essential for an organization's survival, especially in the service sector. It enables organizations to differentiate themselves and build a competitive advantage.

Danjum, Rasli, and Amran (2012, p. 350) state that service innovation has created changes in user needs and expectations. As a result of responding to these changes, the innovations have become widely accepted, leading to operational changes and improvements in existing offerings. This, in turn, attracts new customers and fosters the development of new service systems to meet the current and future needs of customers.

Drejer (2004) comments that service innovation should focus on improving the customer experience, beginning with the development of processes and technologies. By implementing various innovations, services can be made more valuable and better aligned with customer needs. Furthermore, service innovation serves as a tool for organizations to differentiate themselves, creating a competitive edge. It emphasizes the integration of production and service, internal organizational adaptation, and sustainable development.

Makato Usui (2012, pp. 26-27) defined and hypothesized the concept of "service innovation" as follows:

Service innovation refers to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of services while creating added value.

1. The importance of service innovation is not only about increasing the diversity or value of services but also about making services more fitting and appropriate.
2. Service innovation should shift from a one-way relationship between service providers and recipients to a co-creation of value, with the lifestyle of individuals at the center.
3. Service innovation does not only occur in customer-facing services but also involves changes in the business infrastructure, industry, or society.

4. Service innovation is a concept that merges manufacturing industries and service businesses to meet people's needs, transitioning from physical goods to experiences or stories.
5. Improving productivity through service innovation is not only the responsibility of producers but also extends to increasing the productivity of individuals and society as a whole.

The Survive Research and Innovation Institute (SRII) Asia Summit (2013) summarized the components of service innovation by stating that the creation of service innovation requires the design of a framework to guide the process of developing service innovation, also known as Building Blocks. The four components of service innovation are as follows:

1. Data
2. Process
3. Technologies
4. Environment

4E marketing strategy

The 4E marketing strategy is a modern concept that not only focuses on developing products and services to meet customer needs but also adapts communication strategies in response to the increasing role of the internet. This shift has led to the emergence of new marketing strategies that can complement traditional principles (Kiatpong Udomthana-Theera, 2019). From the perspective of service providers (Punyavira Kanjanavongwanit, 2017), the 4E's marketing strategy has evolved from the traditional 4P's marketing strategy, which includes Product, Price, Place, and Promotion.

The goal is to create Customer Experiences that are more impressive for consumers, spanning areas such as communication, product design, and service. This approach benefits businesses aiming to build strong brands by focusing on product and service sales. As a result, the elements of the traditional 4P's and 4C's have been adapted into the 4E's for the modern.

The 4E marketing strategy are as follows:

1. Experience
2. Exchange
3. Everywhere
4. Evangelism

Library Services

The library offers a variety of services, spaces, and information resources (Academic Resource Center, Office of Academic Resources and Information Technology, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, 2025) in the following formats:

1. Circulation desk for book borrowing and returning
2. Reference desk for inquiries
3. Current journals and newspapers service
4. Computer access service
5. Research retrieval system service
6. Book services, including textbooks for various subjects, novels, literature, and more

Service Hours:

- Monday – Friday: 08:00 AM – 08:00 PM
- Saturday – Sunday: 09:00 AM – 05:00 PM

(Information as of November 11, 2024, Academic Resource Center, Office of Academic Resources and Information Technology, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University)

Additionally, book borrowing and audiovisual material services are available. Students seeking journal or research database access can conduct searches via the university's online databases. This service is accessible to Thai and international students, faculty members, and staff at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

A variety of online databases are available, including SCOPUS, IEEE Computer Society, Emerald Publishing, and SpringerLink, among others. The collection also includes a vast selection of academic resources, with over 900 non-open access journal titles in specialized fields of education and research.

RESULTS

Service Innovation refers to changes or adaptations in operations, processes, and service procedures to enhance the value of the library for its stakeholders. The evolution of libraries has introduced various new processes aimed at advancing the organization and increasing its competitive edge. Service innovation plays an increasingly vital role in organizations, aligning with their current missions and goals. It shifts the organizational culture from a reactive approach to a more proactive working style, fostering enthusiasm and continuous improvement. The key components of service innovation include:

1. Information and Data
2. Processes
3. Technology
4. Environment

The 4E Marketing Strategy refers to a new marketing concept developed as an extension of the 4P theory (Product, Price, Place, and Promotion). The 4E concept focuses on creating value and experiences, as well as fostering relationships between brands and customers. It adapts to meet the behaviors of consumers in the digital age. The key components of the 4E strategy include:

1. Experience (Experience)
2. Value Creation (Exchange)
3. Accessibility (Everywhere)
4. Relationship Building (Evangelism)

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

Conclusion

Recommendations for Applying Service Innovation and the 4E Marketing Strategy in Library Services. The application of service innovation and the 4E marketing strategy in libraries will enhance service efficiency, improve operational processes, and foster relationships with users. This approach enables libraries to adapt to the changing needs of users in the digital age. Additionally, it increases the value of libraries, positioning them as essential learning hubs in the future. The following are recommendations for implementing service innovation and the 4E marketing strategy in library services:

Service Innovation

1. **Information Data:** The library should have comprehensive, easily accessible, and accurate information that is suitable for use. The library's data should always be updated to remain current, with multiple access channels available for users. These could include the library's website, Cloud Computing for storing important information and documents, ensuring users can access data at any time, or the library's Facebook page, for example. Additionally, the development of a Smart Database that can recommend relevant information sources based on users' interests via AI and Machine Learning is encouraged. The use of intelligent chatbots can provide real-time answers to queries related to information searches and recommend resources. Furthermore, integrating Open Data and external data sources will allow users to access diverse and up-to-date information.
2. **Process:** The library should have streamlined processes that are simple and efficient, ensuring quick service delivery. The service processes should be aligned with the needs of the users. Additionally, the library should have an efficient process for handling complaints from students or users and provide equal services to both Thai and international students.

For example, improving the One-Stop Service system would allow users to borrow and return books, register for membership, request academic services, or receive guidance through a single channel. The implementation of an automated resource booking system, such as booking meeting rooms, learning spaces, and equipment via an application, would enhance service efficiency. Furthermore, developing Workflow Automation to simplify procedures, such as online training registration systems and SMS or email reminders for book return dates, would significantly reduce cumbersome steps and improve the user experience.

3. **Technology:** The library should be modern and incorporate new technologies into its services. For example, implementing an automated book return system, creating rooms or spaces equipped with technology such as computer rooms, movie viewing rooms, and meeting rooms, as well as offering a research database system that aligns with users' needs. The library should also have an easy-to-use online database search system and a reliable Wi-Fi system that covers the entire center's usage areas. Additionally, a VPN system could be utilized for accessing international databases. Modern equipment and tools should be readily available for users. These technologies can streamline workflows, speed up service delivery, and provide greater convenience for users, enhancing their overall experience.
4. **Environment:** The library should provide a beautiful, modern environment that is clean and conducive to promoting learning. The space should be well-organized and designed to enhance the user experience. Clear signage indicating directions, as well as clear labels for book categories, should be present to guide users. The library should also offer various service areas, such as reading rooms and workspaces, to accommodate different types of learning and research activities. These thoughtful environmental arrangements can create a more pleasant and efficient space for library users.

4E Marketing Strategy

1. Experience

The service should enhance the learning experience, inspiring users in their studies or work through their library interactions. Staff should provide services with enthusiasm and expertise, offering guidance and answering inquiries to leave a positive impression on users. Experiential activities should be organized, such as knowledge development training, learning-based events, gamification for book searches, and hands-on workshops.

2. Exchange

The library should offer a diverse range of services that effectively meet users' needs. Resources should be sufficient, modern, and readily available to enhance user convenience. This ensures that users feel a sense of value in utilizing the services while also supporting their academic and professional development.

3. Everywhere

The library should provide multiple communication channels, such as phone, Line, website, and other relevant media, ensuring easy access to information. Users should be able to conveniently search databases through an efficient online system. Additionally, the library's information should be presented across various platforms, including the website, Line, and Facebook. This ensures that users can easily access services both within the library and through online channels.

4. Evangelism

The library should organize engaging activities that encourage user participation, fostering a sense of connection and attracting more visitors. These experiences help enhance users' impressions of the library. Additionally, users should have the opportunity to provide feedback or suggestions through various channels, such as social media, the website, or discussion forums. Offering assistance and support when needed ensures a positive experience, encouraging repeat visits and word-of-mouth recommendations to others.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University for invaluable help throughout this research. And I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor, Assistant Professor Wilailak Rakbumrung, for her valuable guidance and support in the completion of this article.

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