

TOWARDS MAKING GRADUATES OF LIBRARIANSHIP IN NIGERIA EFFICIENT ENTREPRENEURS FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

By

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Abstract

The pursuance of entrepreneurship as a panacea to the pervading problem of massive unemployment among graduates including graduates of librarianship in Nigeria has taken the front burner in recent times. This problem is a fall out of the poor economic climate in Nigeria which recorded as low as 4 percent GDP since 2011 from the contribution of the manufacturing sector to the economic. This scenario has been a huge stagnating factor for the Nigerian economy. This paper discussed several personality traits and professional skills that would assist the graduates of librarianship in setting up library and information related businesses. Several services which they can render in their business are enumerated. The principles and features of marketing and branding including strategies for marketing as applicable to library products and services are discussed in order to make it easy for them to be efficient in their information business. Some recommendations made include encouraging unemployed graduates of librarianship to take the bull by the horns and start their businesses even if it is on a small scale.

Introduction

It is generally acknowledged that a nation cannot develop without the development of her human resources; hence the pace of development of any nation is highly dependant upon the calibre of her human resources. Development can be conceptualized in the broad sense advocated by Todaro (1979) and Onokerhoraye and Okafor (1994), as a multi-dimensional process involving changes in structures, attitudes and institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and the eradication of absolute poverty and a high birth rate. This definition is applicable to any nation of the world. It is in recognition of the central place of the human resources of a nation and

human capital development that the advanced countries of the world such as USA, UK, Japan, China, Russia, etc, place a very high premium on human capital development through functional and sustainable education" at all levels. Nigeria has great potentials for economic growth and development given her vast natural resources in agricultural lands and minerals as well as abundant manpower (Oyelola, et al, 2013). However, these resources are not being tapped for national development as expected, While writing on 'Nigeria and the bogey of a weak economy', Ekpo (2013) averred among others that:

How can an economy be strong when contribution of manufacturing to GDP is 4 percent and it is projected to remain the same by the year 2015? How can an economy be strong when it is heavily dependant on revenue from exports of crude petroleum to finance development while the price and quantity of crude petroleum are exogenously determined by OPEC?.... If we add the rising poverty incidence to this scenario, it becomes clear that though the Nigerian economy has the potential to leapfrog into sustained growth and development, the facts now show an economy that is performing well below full employment output.

In the light of the weak Nigerian economy, it is no wonder that there is a very high rate of unemployment which has been lamented by various stakeholders including the President of Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan (2011) who highlighted this in his budget speech that, "unemployment among our youth is one of our biggest challenges". In the words of Ekpo (2013), "the unemployment situation has reached national crisis. It is a time bomb waiting to explode if the situation is not addressed". It is in view of the foregoing scenario, that entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education are being advocated in recent times by government and other stakeholders as panacea to this national problem. In 2004, President Olusegun Obasanjo gave a presidential directive for the introduction of Entrepreneurship Studies in the Nigerian University System. In line with this directive, the National Universities Commission (NUC), reviewed its Benchmark and Minimum Academic Standards. (BMAS) for Nigerian Universities and included GST 311: Introduction to Entrepreneurial Skills as a two credit units General Studies compulsory

course for all undergraduate students in all disciplines. The BMAS document for undergraduate courses in Nigerian Universities was released in 2007(NUC,2007). The main aim of this presidential directive is to work towards stemming the disturbing spiral rise in graduate unemployment with a view to equipping Nigerian graduates to be self-employed and self-reliant. This is also aimed at making the graduates' instruments for the attainment of the vision 20:2020 when Nigeria is expected to become one of the major economies of the world. In pursuance of this goal entrepreneurship centers are being established in all public universities through funds from the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund). Osalor (2013), stressed the importance of entrepreneurship towards enhancing sustainable development in Nigeria. Entrepreneurship is a key driver of the world's economy. A recent World Bank research quoted by Obisesan (2010) indicates that 80% of Nigerian graduates do not have the required skills to take up jobs. Yet, Olanrewaju (2013) citing Okonjo-Iweala averred that "According to the National Bureau of Statistics, each year, about 1.8 million young Nigerians enter into our labour market". In the face of this, entrepreneurship skills will equip the graduates to be self-reliant. It is pertinent to note that graduates of librarianship are among those already described as not having the requisite functional education for entrepreneurship or white collar jobs; they are also among those being turned out from higher institutions in large numbers yearly without jobs. Since librarianship is a versatile profession with information services that feed other professions and businesses, it makes economic sense for the graduates of librarianship to be encouraged to set up businesses as entrepreneurs in librarianship so as to generate money through these services. In the light of the foregoing, it is necessary that graduates of librarianship be extricated from this problem of unemployment through the provision of adequate information that would equip them with the requisite entrepreneurial skills to be efficient entrepreneurs who will be assets to themselves and hence contribute meaningfully to national development.

Literature Review

Alii (2013), citing Rufai, noted the need for Nigeria to promote the culture of entrepreneurship among students in order to reduce unemployment and achieve sustainable economic growth and development. This is because all over the world, entrepreneurship has been identified as a major driver of economic growth and development. It has become imperative that a workable solution be provided for the high level of unemployment in Nigeria hence the focus is on entrepreneurship. It is generally believed that embracing entrepreneurship will lead to job provision and stem unemployment. There is no gainsaying the fact that entrepreneurship is the solution to unemployment and poverty among Nigerian youths and graduates (Osolor, 2013).

Entrepreneurship is also seen as the process of planning, operating and assuming the risk of a business. It has also been seen as the process of creating a unique value. Entrepreneurs notice the gaps, grasp the opportunity and change the service or product to fit. (Dharijal, nd). In the opinion of Lumpkin and Dess, (1996), entrepreneurship is the act of pursuing new ways of doing things in a real context. It is the process of exploiting opportunities that exist in the environment or that are created through innovation in an attempt to create value (Brown & Ulijn, 2004)

In order to entrench the culture of efficient and successful entrepreneurship among graduates in Nigeria, the Nigerian economy should be able to give adequate support to entrepreneurship activities. The current picture as given by Ekpo (2013), that the "contribution of manufacturing to GDP is 4 percent and it is projected to remain the same by the year 2015" and a similar lamentation on the same issue by Oyelola, et al (2013), citing Economy Watch (2010), that petroleum products account for almost 80% of the GDP share and 90% of the total exports in Nigeria is rather discouraging for entrepreneurial activities. This is compounded by the result of a recent survey by the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) that a total of 834 manufacturing companies closed down their operations in 2009. This was due to their inability to cope with the challenges of high overhead cost and unfriendly business environment.

This poor picture of the Nigerian economy is a drag to national development. Lawal and Oluwatoyin (2011) citing Gboyega (2003),

opined that national development embodies all attempts to improve the conditions of human existence in all ramifications. It implies improvement in material wellbeing of all citizens, not the most powerful or rich alone in a sustainable way such that today's consumption does not imperil the future, it also demands that poverty and inequality of access to the good things of life be removed or drastically reduced.

The Objectives of this Paper are to:

- Discuss qualities required by graduates seeking to take up entrepreneurship in librarianship
- Discuss information services and products that can be provided by entrepreneurs in librarianship
- Discuss marketing and branding and various processes for marketing and branding
- Discuss marketing strategies

Qualities Required of Graduates Taking up Entrepreneurship in Librarianship

According to Lancaster (2009), the stereo typical librarian who is meek and timid is now a rarity. This is due largely to the changing times where information explosion and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and the attendant revolutionary features have changed the landscape of information services and their delivery drastically. Entrepreneurship in librarianship is a fallout of the recognition that knowledge is power, knowledge is business and information is a commodity (Ekere & Ekere, 2012) While writing on the personality required for the work of entrepreneurial librarian as an information broker, Igbeka, (2008), noted the following: intelligence, personality, education, skills, background and training. Still on qualities of an entrepreneur in librarianship/information broker, Kassel (2002) named six personality traits required as follows:

- the ability to define and implement goals
- an inclination to take risks, at least calculated risks.
- an outgoing personality is beneficial
- a mind open to new ideas and potential business relationships
- you must be creative in business development ideas to grow your business, and

- you must have the four Ds - Determination, Discipline, Dedication and Drive.

On their own part, Ossai-Onah, et al (2013) see creativity and innovation as the central plank of the personality traits required to succeed by the information broker/entrepreneur. In the opinion of Etuk (1992), creativity is the conception, proposal and development of original imaginative ideas, products and services while Anyanwu (2010) sees innovation as the ability to apply new ideas that will enable you to undertake activities differently, thus it is about using individual initiative, imagination, intuition and insight to change things around.

Ossai-Onah, et al, (2013), enumerated some creative and innovative skills and traits expected of an entrepreneur in librarianship as follows: insight, curiosity, zeal, analytical mind, adaptability and technological literacy. It is necessary to state that a number of the qualities enumerated here should be combined with the body of knowledge/expertise already acquired as a librarian along with some measure of experience in order that the services as an entrepreneur can be rendered more effectively. In addition to the personality traits that would engender success as an entrepreneur in librarianship other skills are required for success. In the opinion of Igbeka (2008), a solid foundation in small business finance, marketing and accounting are also necessary. Furthermore, Ekere and Ekere (2012), identified skills such as expertise in searching and accessing public and in some cases private information over the internet and through traditional sources such as libraries, archives, etc. There is the need to have a website and update it regularly; therefore, it is important to have basic web publishing as well as communication skills.

Librarians who intend to go into the business of information services without a background in these areas including skills in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) will do well to go the extra mile to acquire such knowledge through some evening or part-time courses in polytechnics or other tertiary institutions.

Information Services and Products That Can Be Provided By Entrepreneurs In Librarianship

The information products and services that can be provided by the entrepreneur in Librarianship or Information Broker are numerous. However, suffice it to say that these services will be better rendered if the librarian has some knowledge and experience in cataloguing and classification, reference and a good knowledge of various services facilitated by information technology, especially in internet searches or online search techniques, (Igbeka, 2008). Some of the services and products suggested are as follows;

- Indexing
- Abstracting
- Retrospective Conversion
- Cataloguing and Classification (Contract cataloguing)
- Literature Reviews
- Online Literature search
- Print searches for users
- Owning a library or bookshop with the cooperation of nearby library in the area for inter-library loan
- Packaging of information
- Editing and publishing
- Electronic publishing
- Developing hyper media-products
- Translation
- Marketing management to libraries
- Organization of seminars, conferences and workshops
- Presentations e.g. Microsoft Power Point
- Creating of databases and Website designs.

The list above is by no means exhaustive. Other services that can be ventured into also include printing, binding and laminating, stationery stores, photocopying, etc.

Additional Requirements for Successful Entrepreneurship in Librarianship

Among the requirements for success in entrepreneurship, several are applicable to entrepreneurs hip in librarianship. They include, marketing, pricing and branding.

Marketing

With increased competition in the world of information, marketing has become a factor for survival. It is more than just buying and selling of goods and services. Making customers aware of products and services and making such products and services indispensable to them are secrets of marketing.

Marketing is an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, delivering and communicating value to customers and managing customer relationships in ways that also benefit the organization and its stakeholders (Wikipedia, 2013). Marketing is planning and managing the organization's exchange relations with its clientele. It consists of studying the target markets needs, designing appropriate products and services and using effective pricing, communication and distribution to inform motivate and sell the market. (Jestin and Parameswari, 2002). Marketing activities required for success as an entrepreneur are identified as follows:

- Market profiling
- Product planning
- Promotion
- Distribution

Market profiling should be done in order to know the scope of the market. In this regard pertinent questions to be answered are:

- Do users make regular use of the products
- Do the users prefer your products to others in the market?
- Are your services relevant to the users? eg publishing, printing, cataloguing and classification, retrospective cataloguing.

Product Planning is a marketing activity which is concerned with how to develop a product which satisfies customers. In this regard the entrepreneur should aim to answer the following questions:

- Who are the targets (market) for your information services/product? eg. Companies, private individuals, libraries, etc
- What are the preferred services/products by your target clientele/customers? eg. Indexing, Abstracting, Retrospective conversion, Cataloguing and Classification, Internet search, etc.

Promotion is the aspect of marketing which is concerned with activities carried out to stimulate demand for the products and hence increase

sales. It is concerned with the ways by which the target clientele are informed about the resources services and products being offered by the entrepreneur, e.g through the use of various advertising means such as handbills, billboards, media adverts in print and electronics, ways of letting customers know about your products and services, etc.

Distribution has to do with movement of the products and services from the entrepreneur to the users/customers, thereby making them available for purchase. The major channels of distribution include: Inter personal delivery

- Group personal delivery
- Strategic placement In-house dissemination
- Local depositories
- Mass media
- Broadcasting Mail
- Telephone Computer network

Further Strategies for Marketing

There are several marketing strategies which will propel marketing activities to reach the target audience. While x-ricing marketing as a vital aspect of entrepreneurship in librarianship, Igbeka (2008), provided a list of strategies that can be used to promote the business of information services as follows:

- aggressive advertising programme in print and electronic media
- user education through speaking engagements;
- handbills
- billboards
- presentations to various groups and civil organizations;
- attractive and informative brochure and mail to potential users, companies and professional groups;
- creation of sense of need in the minds of the target client group;
- identification of potential clients needs;
- identification of repetitive request which can be packaged sold over and over again and re-issued in new or revised editions;
- workshops and promotional opportunities with local business chambers to attract new businesses
- ordering supplies from sources where discount can be obtained;

- development of indicators to measure services and to improve them;
- monitoring and evaluating use made of the services;
- writing articles about fee-based services; and
- forming an advisory board of major clients to solicit feedback.

Pricing

Another very important aspect of marketing activities is pricing of your products and services. Pricing is the process of determining what a company will receive in exchange for its products/services. Pricing factors include: manufacturing cost, market price, competition, market condition and quality of product or service (Wikipedia, 2013). Pricing is done to determine the price of products and services on the basis of costs as well as market factors such as distribution channels, discount structure, competitors' prices, ability or willingness of customers to pay. It is the process of determining what a company will receive in exchange for its products and services.

In order to do proper pricing, items to consider include knowing the various inputs which result in the computation of the cost of the products ie knowing the production cost of the products and services, eg cost of internet search, printing, scanning, photocopying, etc.

Pricing is usually the most effective profit lever. It is one of the four prices in the marketing mix which include: products, promotion and place. Price is the only revenue generating element amongst the Ps in the marketing mix, the rest being cost centers.

Goals of a Well Chosen Price

- achieve the financial goals of the company ie profitability. For example in internet search- air-time, printing and scanning of information; in photocopying services- cost of paper, ink electricity, hardware, etc.
- fit the realities of the market place (will customers buy at that price);
- support a product's positioning and be consistent with the other variables in the marketing mix ie products, promotion and place;
- price is influenced by the type of distribution channel used, the type of promotion used and the quality of the product;

- price will usually need to be relatively high if manufacturing is expensive, distribution is expensive, distribution is exclusive and the product is supported by extensive advertising and promotional campaigns;
- a low-cost price can be a viable substitute for product quality, effective promotions or an energetic selling efforts by distributors. (Wikipedia, 2013)

Having taken the decision to venture into the business of information brokerage/ entrepreneur in librarianship, it is obvious from the foregoing that paying attention to marketing and its constituent parts is essential to success.

What is a Brand?

A Brand is the "name", term, design, symbol or any other feature which identifies one seller's product distinct from those of other sellers. (Wikipedia, 2013). An example of a popular brand is Coca Cola which belongs to the Coca Cola Company. A brand is often the most valuable asset of a company or business. Therefore, when establishing a brand for your company or business takes into consideration the following fundamental aspects:

- What does your brand mean to you;
- What do you want your brand to mean to others/customers, who are in contact with it
- What product or service are you offering?
- Does it fit into the needs of your target clientele?
- Why does your brand stand out in your target market as special?
- Why should customers choose your brand over and above other brands.

Wrappa, Branding and Design, (2013), identified five factors that determine a brand as follows: Brand promise, Brand perception, Brand expectation, Brand persona and Brand elements.

Brand Promise

Brand promise has to do with what will make customers return to you. What is the special benefit that they stand to get by preferring to be one of your customers. For example if you are a Nike fan, the brand might

represent athleticism, performance, strength, good health and fun. If you are in love with Coca Cola brand as against other soft drinks e.g. Seven-Up, to you the special flavour and taste of Coca Cola should be the same always because that is what you enjoy in it. Do you always deliver information services e.g. cataloging or abstracting at the required time without delay and with work properly done to the satisfaction of the Client? eg indexing and abstracting services, internet search, cataloguing and classification, retrospective cataloguing?

Brand Perception

This is vital for the success of your business. What impression do your customers have about your business. Is your brand reliable, strong, and stable? Does your brand care for the customers? This information on perception should be reflected by your logo, slogan, mission statement and your brand promises. It is important for your customers to have the feeling that your products or services are superior to others in the market. For example, what are consumers' perception of Lady Gaga? In order to keep up with the image/perception which she has created in people, she continues to do weird things to keep that perception going. Any behavior/performance contrary to that will be disappointing to her consumers. How do your customers see your abstracting or cataloging services as an entrepreneur? Are they thorough and consistent?

Brand Expectations

Your brand should provide the best of product or service to your customers. They will expect your product and services to remain good, therefore you need to do everything to maintain good service. Every staff in your business must be given regular orientation in order for them to provide service to support this expectation by customers. For example: supposing Limousine or Rolls Royce launches a N1,000,000 worth of car. This will be very confusing and disappointing to their customers who are used to their luxury brands. This is because these brands are known for extremely expensive luxury cars and so attract only the extremely rich who patronize them. In the same way, you must show dependability in offering information services so that expectations of your customers will not be disappointed. For example, are your cataloguing and classification or abstracting services always efficient and without complaints of being inadequate?

Brand Persona

Brands have personality. Your brand persona is your company or business' unique "personality". This is what customers will weigh and judge before doing business with you. What is your brand like? What do people expect to see when they interact with your brand or its personality? For example: Would you rather spend time with Apple or Microsoft? Would you rather attend a musical show to see Psquare or Asa? Will your customers prefer to make use of your services for their various or specific information needs in companies or businesses?

The Brand Elements

The intangible elements described above as well as tangible elements such as your brand logo, messaging, packaging and so on represent your brand. It is essential for all these elements to work together to consistently communicate your brand promise, shape brand perceptions, meet brand expectations and define your brand persona. The entire brand of the business can suffer and perform below expectation in the market if anyone of these elements is not attended to. For example: a new logo for an established and well known brand like Toyota can be confusing to customers and hence reduce sales. Customers may feel that change of logo could affect the quality which Toyota brand stands for. As an entrepreneur in librarianship you need to be accurate and consistent in your service delivery to consumers in order to sustain your business.

Facts About A Brand

Having discussed all the foregoing about a brand, it is essential to note that brands are not built or established overnight. A brand is usually clear, reliable and believable to both consumers and employees. You need to do some research before you can define and live your brand. This is necessary so that you do not waste time and resources to take your brand to a wrong direction which will not allow you to reach your goals. You must understand your competitors and audience so that you can develop a brand that promises the right things to the right people. Research should come first, definition, strategy and execution should follow and with time your brand will grow. Recognition and attachment by customers to your brand is not automatic at the beginning of your business. You must work on all the key elements and factors that make

up a good brand over a period of time and the brand will surely be established.

The various factors which make up a good brand as well as the marketing strategies already discussed in this paper should be applied meticulously by the entrepreneur in librarianship. Nothing good comes easy. After making up your mind to be an entrepreneur in librarianship, there are some basic tools of office required such as computer, printer, scanner, etc in addition to your personality traits and professional skills and competencies which you must acquire. Furthermore, details on how to carry out some of the services listed in this paper such as Abstracting, Cataloguing, (Retrospective conversion or fresh cataloguing and Classification), indexing, etc, are given or analyzed in several sources such as text books or the Internet. These sources should be consulted from time to time in order to update yourself. It is important that more and more graduates of librarianship would take the bold step to embrace entrepreneurship in librarianship. They can start in a small way and gradually their enterprises will gain ground and become a big businesses that can sustain them and even make them employers of labour thereby contributing to national development.

Conclusion

The present malaise of unemployment among graduates in Nigeria including librarianship graduates has reached an alarming level. This scenario has led many stakeholders including government officials to focus on entrepreneurship as the solution. These efforts are yet to yield the desired results. Several personality traits including requisite skills for graduates of librarianship to succeed as entrepreneurs in librarianship discussed in this paper should be embraced by intending entrepreneurs in librarianship. Services that can be undertaken by entrepreneurs in librarianship such as indexing, abstracting, cataloguing, etc, should be properly mastered by the intending entrepreneur in librarianship,

Various marketing principles and strategies, principles and elements of branding of products and services discussed should be applied diligently by entrepreneurs in librarianship for their businesses to grow. The government of Nigeria needs to put more efforts into improving the economy so that businesses can thrive. For example, provision of

regular power and infrastructure. Some schemes unveiled recently by the Federal Government with a view to curtailing unemployment in Nigeria should be properly supervised to ensure that they deliver on their promises. For example, the Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWiN) and the University Entrepreneurship Development Programme (UNEDEP). There is also the Goodluck Jonathan Empowerment scheme (GoJES) which was launched in September, 2013 with the aim of providing entrepreneurial training and funding for young Nigerians within the age bracket of 18-40 years (Oyesina, 2013).

Recommendations

Arising from this paper, the following recommendations are made:

- Graduates of librarianship who have the requisite personality traits as go-getters with enterprising minds should take the bull by the horns and take the leap into information business.
- The government of Nigeria needs to create a favourable climate for small scale businesses to thrive in Nigeria e.g. provision of regular electricity, etc. This will help to stem the unemployment problem in Nigeria. Entrepreneurs in librarianship should key into the YouWiN Programme of the Federal Government of Nigeria in order to adequately fund their businesses to ensure buoyancy.
- Government should intensify the drive for entrepreneurial education in tertiary institutions in Nigeria as a way of equipping the graduates with entrepreneurial skills to enable them set up businesses after graduation, if the need arises.
- The Government of Nigeria needs to encourage graduates who wish to venture into small scale businesses by providing funding support with relaxed conditions of repayment to enable their businesses take off and grow.

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