The International Federation of Library Associations Marketing Award From the Perspective of Library Strategy

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Abstract

The IFLA Marketing Award is one of the most prestigious awards in the global library industry. Since its inception in 2003, the IFLA Marketing Award has been successfully awarded for 18 years. This paper adopts the content analysis method to analyze the strategic objectives, marketing strategies and the values behind the marketing projects from the library strategic by collating all the prize-winning cases of international Library marketing from 2003 to 2021. It is found that the winners have the characteristics of keeping up with international trends in marketing strategies, marketing core to meet mainstream values, diversifying marketing target groups and subverting traditional marketing methods. This paper proposes that every country's libraries should actively respond to IFLA's 'value call', improving services through community participation, lead innovation with open borders, and drive development with information technology, so as to provide reference for the marketing of every country's libraries.

Keywords: library, strategy, IFLA marketing award

1. Introduction

IFLA is the world's most authoritative organization in the library industry. In 2002, on the basis of absorbing commercial marketing theory, according to the mission, value and other conditions of the library and the reality, IFLA established the library marketing award, which provided a platform for the library industry to develop library marketing theory and practice. At present, the research on IFLA library marketing awards by every country's library scholars mostly focuses on the discussion of marketing concepts and marketing factors, and the research on winning projects from a strategic perspective has not been carried out. However, library marketing is a systematic project. A good marketing project should start from the strategic perspective of the library. IFLA has always attached great importance to strategic planning and has since 2010 issued three strategic plans: "IFLA Strategic Plan 2010-2015", "IFLA Strategic Plan 2016-2021" and "IFLA Strategic Plan 2019-2024". With the acceleration of globalization, the communication and cooperation between libraries is becoming closer and closer. IFLA strategic planning has important guiding significance for libraries to carry out marketing work. This paper studies this award from the strategy of the award-winning project, hoping to provide enlightenment for the marketing work of libraries.

2. Method

This paper selects 120 cases of the top 10 of the 18 th International Marketing Awards from 2003 to 2021 as samples, and obtains the detailed information of the project by visiting the official website of the International Federation of Graphics, the official website of the award-winning project and retrieving relevant journal articles. Finally, 97 cases with complete data are determined as the research objects. The content analysis method is used to code and analyze the award-winning projects. The content encoding used in the analysis is shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Content analysis code table

Project name and brief introduction		
Item Name	Item Subject	Subject type

country	The winning number	order
Project Overview		
Marketing foundation	Strategic goals	
	values	
The marketing strategy	The target group	
	The innovation direction	
	New technology application	

3. IFLA Marketing Award

IFLA Library Marketing Award is an international library marketing award, open to all types of libraries and organizations worldwide. Each year, ten institutions are selected to recognize their innovation and creativity in market promotion, and the top three are selected as the final winners. This paper selects 120 cases of the top ten of the 18th International Marketing Awards from 2003 to 2021 as samples. Through screening, 97 cases with complete data are finally determined as the research object, and the content analysis method is used to analyze the winning projects.

3.1 Marketing Strategy Analysis

The starting point of library marketing is to make clear the strategic target of marketing, and the value is the basis of supporting organizational strategy. The purpose of the strategic plan analysis is to provide a basis for the classification of the award-winning projects and to investigate the matching degree between the strategic goals and values of the award-winning libraries and the strategic plan of IFLA. A comparison between the two development strategic planning reports of "IFLA Strategic Framework 2010-2015" and "IFLA Strategic Framework 2016-2021" shows that the expression of the core values of libraries is basically the same, and one of the main changes lies in the description of the strategic direction. Therefore, the values in the 2016 edition of the strategic report are divided into categories. The analysis results are shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Project marketing strategy category system table

Category	Index	Percentage	Matching degree
Strategy (2010 version)	Users obtain information equally	40.0%	88.0%
	IFLA and members' strategic capabilities	0.0%	
	Transformation of image and professional status	20.0%	
	Represents the interests of members and users	28.0%	
Strategy (2016 version)	Library in society	25.9%	80.0%
	Information and knowledge	20.3%	
	Cultural heritage protection	11.1%	
	Capacity building	22.2%	

3.2 Marketing Strategy Analysis

Marketing strategy is the core part of the whole marketing activities. The evaluation criteria of marketing awards stipulate that the projects applying for marketing awards must have clear marketing strategies and outstanding originality and innovation. This paper mainly analyzes the coding of marketing strategies from the perspectives of target population, innovation direction and application of new technologies in the digital age. The results are as follows:

Table 3. Project Marketing Strategy Category System Table

Category	Index	Percentage
Target population	Children	5.0%
	Teenagers	5.0%
	College students	33.8%
	Vulnerable groups	27.5%
	All	28.8%
Innovation direction	Service mode innovation	26.3%
	The Transversion and Reconstruction of Library's Traditional Image	45.0%
	Open borders	15.2%
	Expanding transformation	14.5%
Information technology applications	New media applications (WeChat, Instagram, Facebook, etc.)	29.0%
	Mobile applications	12.2%
	portal website	27.5%
	Data service platform	9.3%
	Other	12.2%
	None	10.8%

4. Characteristics of IFLA Marketing Award Winning Project

4.1 Marketing Strategy Follows International Trends

The analysis results show that the strategic objectives of foreign award-winning libraries are as high as 88.0% matched with the strategic direction in the IFLA strategic report. Among all the award-winning projects from 2010 to 2015, the projects with the strategy of "equal access to user information" account for the largest proportion. From the perspective of the IFLA strategy, the 2010 edition of the strategic plan pointed out that through the implementation of laws and regulations such as "free access to information and freedom of speech plan" and "library planning and development activities", the library strengthened the protection of the right of the public to obtain information on an equal basis. It can be speculated that the public's ability to obtain information was weak and the public information access channels were not smooth. Therefore, the library carried out a series of related services. Speaking textbooks at the University of Tartu Library in Estonia in 2013, for example, helped students with blindness and amblyopia to participate smoothly in the exam, guaranteeing equal access to information for special groups.

Under the implementation of the 2010 edition of the strategic plan, the public information acquisition ability has been improved. Therefore, the 2016 edition of the strategic plan puts forward higher development requirements for the library. Instead of focusing on the library itself, it breaks the limitation of thinking, starts to focus on social needs, and emphasizes the strategic direction of the sociality of the library. Therefore, the award-winning projects focusing on this strategy from 2016 to 2020 account for the largest proportion. For example, the neighborhood library project of Foshan Library, which won the first place in 2020, disperses the library resources to the homes of ordinary residents. Then by each family to their relatives, friends, neighbors and other books or books lending services, through this way to enhance the relationship between residents, highlighting the value of the library in society.

4.2 Marketing Core Caters to Mainstream Values

The core values of the library cause, as the internal stabilizer for its development, are relatively stable and unchanged. Comparing the two development strategic planning reports of the International Federation of Library Associations strategic framework 2010 - 2015 and the International Federation of Library Associations strategic framework 2016 - 2021, it can also be found that the expression of the core values of the library is basically consistent, including four aspects of "free access to information", "freedom of speech", "equal access to

information" and "secure access to information". From Figure 1, it can be seen that although the core values have no obvious trend of continuous change over time, it is not difficult to find that since 2012, the winning libraries with the values of ' equal access to information 'and ' guaranteed access to information ' have increased significantly compared with the past. It can be seen that the International Federation of Graphics and the whole society have increasingly recognized the power of libraries in guaranteeing the free access to information, ideas and knowledge, which is consistent with the vision proposed in the two editions of the strategic report, that is, the vision in the 2010 edition of the strategic report is expressed as "continuously promoting the equal access of knowledge and information in the whole society." The 2016 edition is expressed as "committed to making information, knowledge and culture accessible to all." The core values of the library are essentially the pursuit of "people-oriented" and always adhere to the service of the library. Even with the continuous development of contemporary technology, libraries are facing the pressure of survival and need to seek function and transformation development. The essential requirement of IFLA for libraries is still to ensure their basic public services.
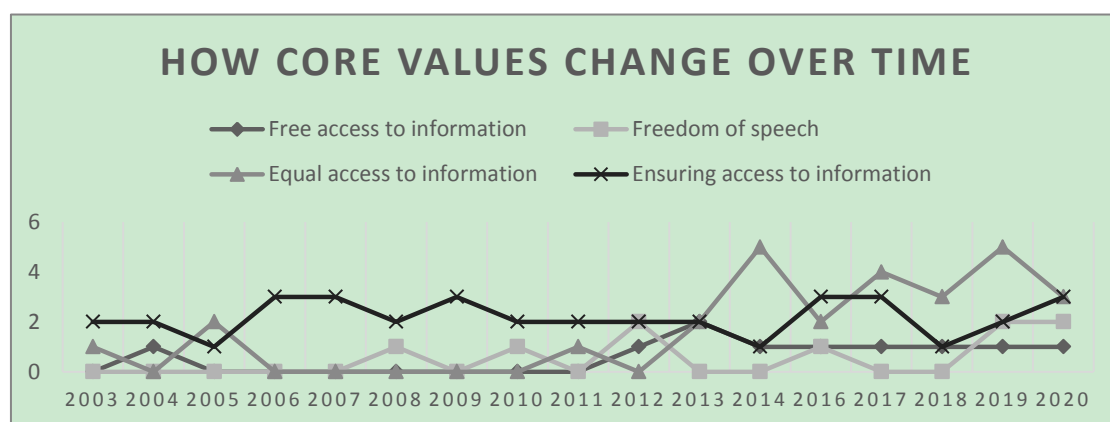

Figure 1. Statistical results of project core values

4.3 Marketing Target Population Diversification

The target groups of library service marketing are mainly divided into three categories: vulnerable groups, student groups and other types of groups. The number of projects with these three groups as the target object is not the same, which also shows that the International Library Federation attaches great importance to the freedom and equality of library members to obtain information, that is, to always pursue library services to cover every social member. The International Library Service Committee for Special Populations defines special populations as "people who cannot use regular library resources", such as refugees, persons with disabilities, farmers, etc. The 10th Rural Library Project of the Russian Republic of Tatarstan held book festivals, reading competitions and other activities for 558 rural residents to attract rural residents to the library. The student group is the mainstream group of using the library. The service of such groups should not only meet their demand for resources, but also enhance their emotional connection with the library. For example, the 'library timelight' project of the 13th Xiamen University Library has created a personal electronic space for each graduate to have his own data used in the library, attracting more readers to return. Other types of groups include potential readers of the library and readers who do not use the library habit. They need to provide special services for such groups. For example, the "Parents and Students" Library Project of the Library of the Fifth University of Tartu, Estonia, opens the night library for parents and students, and organizes various relaxation activities, such as night exercises and coffee.

4.4 The Marketing Method Is Changing the Tradition

The award-winning projects mainly focus on the reversal and reconstruction of the traditional image of the library in the direction of innovation. The International Library Federation strategy points out that the library in the new century is not only a cold building, but also to establish a close relationship with the community and break through the shackles of its traditional positioning. Therefore, there are endless projects aimed at breaking the traditional image of the library. For example, the Seventeenth Victoria Public Library of Canada's "Change Your Ideas" project, through full cooperation with the community and full communication with community residents, affects and convinces people to change their cognition of the library.

The application of new technologies is an important perspective of innovation. From the above table, it can be seen that the application of new technologies in the award-winning projects is mainly the application of new media including Weibo, Facebook, Twitter and so on. For example, the 13th Vancouver Public Library in Canada created the "Inspiration Laboratory Start-up Campaign" project, which seizes the psychology of some people who like to experience new things, and provides opportunities for free learning and making electronic products such as movies and animations, aiming to make the library a place to tap talent and cultivate creativity. This project has aroused many young people's pursuit, but also changed the public's traditional impression of the library: the library is not only a place to read, but also a place to learn new technologies and experience innovation.

5. Enlightenment to National Library Marketing

5.1 Positive Response to IFLA 'Value Call'

The vision of the IFLA Strategic Framework 2019-2024 refers to the establishment of a joint library community to facilitate a participatory society for information exchange. Countries should respond positively to this ' call ', strengthen contacts with international organizations and institutions such as IFLA, promote cooperation and exchanges between domestic library science research and world peers, and participate more actively in IFLA projects. First of all, countries actively declare international awards and exchange experience with global libraries, which is the interpretation of the value of information equality. Therefore, libraries in various countries should actively participate in the attitude of focusing on participation. On the one hand, it is beneficial for libraries in various countries to show their unique international image and cultural soft power on the international stage. On the other hand, the declaration of library marketing is itself a kind of marketing. The process of declaration is a good opportunity to learn marketing theory and improve marketing ability. Secondly, the declaration project should cater to the mainstream values advocated by the international library, actively explore the role of the library in eliminating the digital divide, solving information inequality and paying attention to vulnerable groups, and reflect the main problems to be solved by the current international library in the project.

5.2 Improving Service With Social Participation

The ways of public social participation include voluntary participation, publicity participation, innovation participation, etc. Therefore, the library should actively cooperate with volunteers to provide public welfare services, encourage users to become the proposers of innovative ideas and participants in creative activities, and establish good relations with users, disseminate the value of the library through the personal knowledge value and social circle of users, promote the service of the library, and expand the user base of the library. At the same time, the power of social organizations should not be ignored. It is necessary to strengthen the strategic cooperation between libraries and communities or other social public welfare forces, explore a variety of co-construction modes such as "library + school" and "library + community + school", and give full play to the advantages of both sides to achieve mutual benefit and win-win results. In addition, the award-winning experience of the IFLA marketing award tells us that the scope of social forces' participation should be continuously expanded. In particular, attention should be paid to the right of special people to obtain information on an equal basis, providing targeted services to disabled people and floating population, eliminating information barriers, and ensuring smooth access to user information. This not only provides a major entry point for library social participation research, but also practices the service concept of 'equal access to information ' mentioned repeatedly in the strategic direction of ' 2019-2024 IFLA strategic plan'.

5.3 Leading Innovation With Open Boundary

Innovation is the first essence of library marketing and an important evaluation standard of IFLA marketing awards. The traditional service model based on labor and resource input has gradually changed into an open service model based on knowledge control. The neighborhood library project of the top ten winners in 2020 establishes family micro-library by transferring the resources of public libraries to the families of residents; Wuhan University's "Ambassador Shuxiang" project encourages students to organize reading activities in their hometowns ; with the help of information technology, Ningbo Library 's Day Books Project has launched online book selection and 24-hour book delivery services, which are successful attempts of libraries in exploring service boundaries. The innovative development model of open boundary has been internationally recognized. Therefore, the library should adhere to the open and inclusive attitude, change from passive to active, fully tap resources, keep pace with the times to open the border, and constantly penetrate to shopping malls, subway stations and other places where people gather, so as to make library services available anytime and anywhere, so as to continuously promote the organic integration of library and other fields.

5.4 Information Technology for Change

The " 2019-2024 IFLA Strategic Report " puts forward " Let all kinds of libraries improve their practices to adapt to the changing world, learn and adopt new technologies to meet the expectations of users." With the rapid development of new technologies such as artificial intelligence and cloud computing, human society is facing revolutionary changes, and user needs are also changing. If the library is self-enclosed, the future is worrying. In the past, the impact of building portal websites and opening official microblogs on promoting the development of libraries has become smaller and smaller. How to apply information technology to cope with the reform of the library industry is an urgent problem to be solved. Libraries should actively pilot new technologies to guide libraries to transform into multi-functional services and become information centers and places for leisure exchanges. However, it should be noted that technology itself does not have any values. To ensure the development direction of the library, it is necessary to always adhere to the intervention of technology without affecting the core values of the library, and not blindly pursue the application of emerging technologies.

6. Conclusion

In today's increasingly close contact with global libraries, libraries in various countries should actively pay attention to international library trends and participate in various activities. In addition to reporting IFLA Library Marketing Awards, libraries in various countries can also participate in ALA / IIDA Library Interior Design Awards, German Federal Republic Design Awards, AR New Architecture Awards and other international awards, and seize the opportunity to show wisdom on the international arena.

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