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<https://doi.org/10.20913/2618-7575-2020-4-100-104>LIBRARIES AS CONSULTING CENTERS FOR BUSINESS SECTOR<sup>1</sup>

## БИБЛИОТЕКИ КАК КОНСАЛТИНГОВЫЕ ЦЕНТРЫ ДЛЯ СФЕРЫ БИЗНЕСА

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Information consulting is very important in the effective implementation of business processes. Its emergence provides an opportunity to talk about new trends in the management and development of socio-economic processes in Azerbaijan. Information consulting is a dynamic, interactive process that facilitates teaching and research in which librarians and information professionals have a common language. Librarians need to be effective advisors to stay up to date. Libraries and librarians who are not effective in business processes will, of course, be left out of these processes.

Information consulting is a model that reflects both the classical and experimental period of libraries. The title "Information Consultant" reflects a business approach to information services. The importance of information consulting is that the consultant is very valuable for clients and their businesses by interacting extensively with clients and actively supporting their information needs. Information consulting transforms the business goals of leading companies into innovative solutions.

In the past, information consultants were usually librarians who conducted a full survey for clients and prepared the information. For decades, information consultants were considered to be the ones who conveyed accurate information by examining obscure information. Companies hired them to find information in libraries that was difficult or too expensive for staff. However, as information technology advances, information consultants are required to provide information in a narrower range, i.e. on only a few key topics. During this period the librarian's help is needed in any field of research. Because libraries have more opportunities to conduct research in any field of knowledge. Otherwise, it will take a lot of time to find the relevant area, which can be more useful, by obtaining the necessary information and more detailed information from the innumerable information. The creation of the Internet in libraries has stimulated the development of consulting services for various categories of readers. This requires professional knowledge of

Информационный консалтинг имеет большое значение для эффективного развития бизнеса. Его появление дает возможность рассуждать о новых тенденциях в управлении и развитии социально-экономических процессов в Азербайджане. Информационное консультирование – это динамичный интерактивный процесс, способствующий проведению обучения и исследований, в котором наряду со специалистами в области информации активно участвуют сотрудники Азербайджанской Национальной библиотеки им. М. Ф. Ахундова. Чтобы всегда оставаться востребованными, библиотекари должны давать эффективные советы и представлять актуальную информацию, поистине должны стать информационными консультантами.

Ценность консультанта состоит в активном поддержании информационных потребностей пользователей в процессе непрерывного взаимодействия. Информационный консалтинг превращает бизнес-цели ведущих компаний в инновационные решения.

В прошлом информационные консультанты являлись библиотекарями, которые проводили полный опрос клиентов и готовили информацию. Компании приглашали их для поиска информации, труднодоступной для пользователей. Специалисты, обращающиеся к информационным консультантам в настоящее время, просят их содействия в поиске узкоспециальной информации по ключевым темам. Помощь консультанта-библиотекаря необходима в любой области исследований, поскольку у библиотек больше возможностей для проведения информационного сопровождения исследований во всех отраслях знаний. Развитие интернета в библиотеках стимулировало развитие консультационных услуг для различных категорий читателей, что требует от сотрудников библиотеки профессионального владения современными технологиями.

Цель статьи – проанализировать роль библиотек в формировании бизнес-среды и информационного обеспечения в сфере

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modern technologies from the library staff.

**Purpose.** The purpose of the article is to analyze the role of library activities in the formation of the business environment and information support in the field of management and business, study the features of information consulting in the information support of the business environment and ways to improve the efficiency of libraries in the field of information support for business structures.

**Methods.** Methods of research-complex methods were used in preparing the article. Profiled publications were analyzed and structural analysis, method of analysis and synthesis, method of interpretation were used.

In the course of the research, the experience of National Library of Azerbaijan named M. F. Akhundov was taken as a basis, attention was paid to the results of observations. At the same time, the methods of interviewing, questionnaires and interviews with users of bibliographic information in the relevant field were discussed.

**Results.** In the process of providing information and consulting services, there is a tendency to improve traditional information products and services through the intellectualization of information and library activities, the use of new technological approaches and the perception of more complex consumer requirements by library specialists. Thus, library specialists can determine priority types of services, based on the requests of readers, and, on their basis, forecast and develop information and consulting activities. Determining the specific benefits of these services, that is, their assessment and monitoring allows the library to manage its activities, to determine its strategy depending on the current situation.

**Scientific novelty.** This article is the first article examining the activities of library consulting centers in providing information to the business environment in the Republic of Azerbaijan. On the basis of marketing research, specialists of the National Library of the Republic can determine priority types of services in accordance with the requirements of readers and develop on their basis information and consulting activities through forecasting. Evaluating and monitoring these services allows the library to manage its activities and determine its strategy depending on the current situation.

**Keywords:** consulting service, library, information, management, client, librarian, user, consulting activities

управления и бизнеса, изучить особенности информационного консалтинга в информационном обеспечении специалистов бизнес-среды и определить способы повышения эффективности деятельности библиотек в сфере информационной поддержки бизнес-структур.

**Методы исследования.** Проанализированы профильные публикации, представлены результаты наблюдений Национальной библиотеки Азербайджана имени М. Ф. Ахундова на основе использования методов структурного анализа, синтеза и интерпретации понятий. Автором также использованы материалы, полученные в процессе анкетирования пользователей библиотеки, представляющих разные отрасли науки.

**Результаты.** В процессе предоставления информационно-консалтинговых услуг прослеживается тенденция к совершенствованию традиционных информационных продуктов и услуг за счет интеллектуализации информационно-библиотечной деятельности, использования новых технологических подходов и восприятия специалистами библиотек усложняющихся потребительских требований. В целом информационно-консультационная деятельность позволяет библиотечно-информационным учреждениям определять приоритетные виды услуг, исходя из запросов читателей, и на их основе прогнозировать и развивать это направление. Выявление конкретных преимуществ данных услуг, их оценка и мониторинг позволяют библиотеке управлять своей деятельностью, определять направления развития в зависимости от конкретных обстоятельств.

**Научная новизна.** В статье раскрыта деятельность библиотечных консультационных центров по предоставлению информации учреждениям сферы бизнеса в Азербайджанской Республике. На основе маркетинговых исследований сотрудники Национальной библиотеки Республики могут определить приоритетные виды услуг в соответствии с требованиями читателей и спрогнозировать на их основе направления информационно-консультационной деятельности. Оценка и мониторинг этих услуг позволяет библиотеке управлять своей работой и определять стратегию деятельности в зависимости от текущей ситуации.

**Ключевые слова:** консалтинговые услуги, библиотека, информация, управление, клиент, библиотекарь, пользователь, консалтинговая деятельность

Globalization has also necessitated the emergence of new approaches in the political, social, economic and cultural spheres of our life. For organization and successful operation of management in government and business structures has been formed a new concept such as consulting, i.e. consulting services.

In developed countries, consulting for a long time has developed as an integral part of governance. Consulting, which requires intellectual, scientific, practical, theoretical training, professionalism, innovation, efficiency, the ability to predict and evaluate the traditions and prospects of the world economy, has developed rapidly

in recent years and brought huge profits to its organizers. Useful advice in all sectors of economy—production company, buyer, seller, management, study and assessment of business, competitive environment and risks, investment attraction and management, tax, budget planning, personnel management, establishment of international relations, marketing, improving managerial skills, usage of information technology and on other issues are important conditions for success. However, it is unfortunate that the importance, nature and organization of this type of service in Azerbaijan has not been sufficiently assessed.

The consulting service is based on the successful solution of difficult problems, the prompt provision of the necessary information and their maximum usage, the general analysis of the facts and finding an original solution. The main purpose of consulting is to analyze and justify development paths, taking into account customer problems and any field, as well as to assist the company's management in solving problems and achieving success through the application of scientific, technical and economic innovations. The consulting service provided in the context of business activity shows the level of market relations of the country.

The end of the XX – the beginning of the XXI centuries is characterized by changes in the political, economic and social life of Azerbaijan. The paradigm shift in social development has led to deep transformations in all areas of society, including in the library sphere. From information and library institutions, along with traditional, historically established ways of serving users, were required new, better services that would adequately meet the modern educational and informational needs of society. In this regard, new forms of library activity have emerged, including information-consulting. Information-consulting activity is an intellectual product.

The experience of using information consulting in library and information institutions has its own specifics and is determined by both management consulting and information management. Consulting was developed in connection with the implementation of scientific production management during the industrial revolution and focused on issues of efficiency and labor productivity. Since it belonged to the field of organization of production, the consultants were referred to as "efficiency experts". Among the qualities that the consultants should have possessed were: the ability to analyze in order to substantiate decisions, to manage projects, that is, implement them and build relationships with users to achieve the intended results. These qualities are necessary for specialists in all main types of consulting: expert, process and training [1].

Expert advice is a one-time disclosure of a specific task. Process – this is a thorough deepening in the problems of organization and business, as well as joint work with the client to resolve certain issues. It is important to organize the process, successfully implement it, taking into account the prevailing circumstances and

applying certain methods. Training counseling involves transferring a set of theoretical knowledge to a client in a specific field. The practice of information services in libraries shows that the intellectual basis for information and consulting activities in them is mainly expert and process consulting.

In National Library of Azerbaijan named M. F. Akhundov – largely analytical center, there is important effective interaction between "external" experts and "internal"-library specialists. Today, this process provides mainly information support for legal issues that require professional advice, as well as the solution of certain social problems with the support of specialists from government agencies.

Library and information institutions are designed to satisfy the information needs of users, but their implementation is not always possible without the help of experts. In fact, they are not only users of information and consulting services provided by library specialists, but they themselves are participants in the process of providing these services, but for a different category of citizens.

Information and consulting activities in library and information institutions can be shown in the form of a dialogue "librarian (consultant) – user (client)" [2]. As a result, the first, with the help of professional knowledge and skills, and, if necessary, the help of an "external" expert, offers information and consulting services to determine the final solution (including management) to users. The development of information and consulting activities in libraries allows us to expand traditional ideas about them and respond to services oriented to specific requests.

Today, the most popular information and consulting services in library are:

- prompt provision of factual information for differentiated groups of users;
- information support of commercial projects in the framework of problems solved by individual entrepreneurs and small businesses;
- information support of social projects aimed at solving the problems of the local community, etc.

In fact, information and consulting activity combines the integrated usage of means of factographic and conceptual services. The number of factographic requests in the information services market prevails in the total volume of user requirements and requires the expansion of their content [3]. National Library of Azerbaijan named M. F. Akhundov solves this problem by replenishing products of this nature with address-reference databases of enterprises and organizations, educational institutions, social and household assistance services, travel agencies, leisure organizations, etc.

Between other types of services provided by libraries as part of information and consulting activities, can be distinguished:

- providing information on enterprises, goods and prices;

- address search of business partners;
- posting company data on the business information portal;
- job search in the vacancy bank;
- accommodation of advertisements and business offers;
- formation of packages of documents at the request of users;
- address inquiries by phone;
- thematic exhibitions, seminars on economic issues, fairs, presentations, round tables, specialist and information days, etc. [4].

It is important to note that library and information institutions today must work according to the rules of managing entities. At the same time, it is important to take into account their insufficient funding, resource capabilities and many others. In many respects, the usage of marketing tools allows libraries to predict the situation on the market of information and consulting services, anticipate potential consumer requests, reasonably differentiate user groups, and develop a flexible range of services.

The basis for the development of marketing in information and library activities is the constant interaction of supply and demand as a continuous process of satisfying and reproducing the needs of real and potential users. The forecast of the consumer market is provided, on the one hand, by the study of demand, needs, the range of services rendered, their demand; on the other hand, by the active influence on demand and the formation of prospective requests. It is generally accepted that the greatest result is achieved by applying strategic and tactical marketing [5, 6].

Strategic marketing assumes a potential consumer, a predetermined market segment. In essence, this is a mechanism for coordinating the interests of producers and consumers as a result of their interaction. The consumer is considered by the manufacturer as an active and full-fledged market participant with a program of their own activities.

Tactical marketing describes all the stages of the work necessary for the effective implementation of the activities specified by strategic marketing. This allows to perform certain types of work in a given period of activity, to really assess the situation and adjust tasks. The usage of these types of marketing allows to focus on the study of needs, the range of services rendered, the level of their demand, actively influence demand and the formation of requests, which allows us to forecast the consumer market for services [7].

With regard to information and consulting activities aimed at providing information services to the social sphere, it seems appropriate to use socially responsible marketing. It is influenced by such factors as the needs of potential users, the consideration of public interests, the economic expediency of the production of services.

Application of commercial marketing, suggesting complex methods of studying and stimulating demand with the calculation of profit, is logical for information and consulting activities aimed at meeting the information needs of different target groups in the field of entrepreneurship.

In the library and information activities, two approaches are used depending on the type of the final product proposed to the user. In one case, the library offers all categories of consumers the same range of services. In another, in accordance with the strategy of differentiating real and potential groups, it develops special offers that correspond to their needs. Therefore, the work of libraries is estimated not by the number and range of produced services and products, but primarily by the number of services requested by users [8].

The process of conducting a marketing research of these services involves solving the following tasks:

- study of the main market elements of the type of service under consideration: supply and demand;
- product research;
- search for new ideas;
- study of consumer requirements for services;
- study of competitors' products;
- increasing the possibilities of using the existing and attracting additional resource potential;
- strengthening the economic interest of employees;
- strengthening the material and technical base, social development of the library [9, p. 196–198].

Based on the results of consistently applied marketing methods, libraries can determine priority types of information and consulting services, conduct their forecasting and development. The activities of a non-commercial market entity, such as a library, is significantly affected by the marketing environment, which consists of a combination of factors at the macro and micro levels.

The external environment includes: real and potential users of the library; competing organizations in the information services market; partners from the public sector, government and business.

The macroenvironment of the market of information-consulting services is characterized by social, economic, demographic, geographical, cultural factors that affect the consumer demand of potential users.

Market segmentation of information-consulting services allows to find of its market niches, to identify those areas of activity, in the information support in which the library has advantages compared to other institutions offering information products. It involves the separation of real and potential users into segments-target groups with common needs and requirements in order to implement a differentiated approach to them and achieve a more effective information service [10].

It allows to identify priority groups of services and products, the motivation for their usage and answer



the questions: who are consumers of these services; which consumer groups are most active; what are the similarities and differences in requests and needs; what is the purpose of the services, their quality features (novelty, uniqueness, etc.); what are the specific advantages of services and products provided as a result of information-consulting activities, compared with other types of library products.

In the field of information and library services, consumers are not only individual users, but also state and commercial institutions, enterprises, public organizations, local governments, etc., located in the zone of the library's territorial location. The range of requests is very diverse. They reflect any events that have occurred in the country,

in the world. Basically, their topic is closely related to the life users' problems. In the conditions of the market for information products and services, library workers should identify increasingly subtle nuances in these needs as a basis for differentiating the offered products and services and giving them market standards.

In general, information-consulting activity allows library and information institutions to determine the priority types of services, based on readers' requests, and on their basis to forecast and develop this area. Identification of specific advantages of these services, their evaluation and monitoring allow the library to manage its activities, determine development directions depending on specific circumstances.

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