

## **Information for Industry in Nigeria**

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### **Introduction**

Information is important for industrial development globally. Progress, development, and growth of manufacturing companies largely depend on effective use of information. Self (1984) observed that, information if properly used by industrialists for greater efficiency, it will boost the morale of these industries. King and Palmour (1981) assert that most achievements in medicine, science, technology, education, and industry may be attributed in part to the intensive use of information. Information is used effectively only when the information resources are pertinent to the needs of employees. Information is generated at various levels of the organization or industry. Duke (1981) states that, "companies with better information, better use of information tend to have better decision-making and are also ahead of their rivals and competitors." Musser and Albitz (2001) describe organizational use of standards, patents, technical reports, product catalogues, and audiovisual materials. Manufacturing companies in Nigeria and other developing countries should realize and recognize the importance of information as a raw material for development, progress, and existence. Information use is the bedrock for political, economic, social, and educational development.

### **Role of Libraries**

Libraries and information centers are service points, especially in the industrial sector. Greenman and Little (2008) comment that, "A properly functioning industrial library should include the dispensing of information, both solicited and unsolicited. It should serve as a department where definite questions are answered and where definite lines of thought may be investigated." Similarly, Haygarth (1981) says, "The main objective of the library is to support the business by providing access to all relevant published information and to internally record and report information."

### **Relevant Literature**

Information services in industry means rendering assistance to employees with knowledge that is beneficial to their activities. Information services must be geared to improving production and capacity development of manufacturing companies in the developing countries. Marketing strategies, innovation, and specialized information services are necessary for the survival of any growing industry globally. A report of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) (2001) emphasizes two forms of information services. The first is services concerned with improving production and innovation capabilities, such as

- counseling on production layouts, quality standards and maintenance
- providing relevant information(service) for technology development, and launching co-operative joint operation of large-scale and expensive equipment testing of raw materials
- training of entrepreneurs and workers.

The second is information services concerned with developing commercial/marketing activities in firms, such as

- marketing training
- information gathering
- business linkages
- co-operative sales initiatives.

The ECA (2001) report on infrastructural facilities of thirteen countries shows how infrastructure affects growth of manufacturing companies. Nigeria has problems with roads, water, electricity, and communication. The report details these and similar problems with other African countries.

Indigenous manufacturing companies need current information concerning their own company and others. Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) can be part of the solution. Information services in manufacturing differ from one company to another. Some have libraries and some do not. A large part of industrial library collections is reference material that should be accessible to all workers (Hoskin 1982).

Drake (1982) observes that, "as an economic resource, information must be effectively managed to enhance productivity, creativity and achievement of corporate goals and objectives." Getting information from other companies will help companies be competitive (Fowowe 1986), but employees also seek information from other units of the company. Hirsh and Dinkelacker (2004) say that "information seeking in this environment involves interaction with manual information systems and computer based systems, as well as information gathered through information exchanges with colleagues." Harande (2004) holds the view that "the era when librarians and information managers assumed that they knew the needs of their clientele and could meet such needs adequately without the input of users seems to be over."

Timeliness in the provision and use of information is very important in this environment. Yitzhaki and Hammershlag (2004) observe that, "effective information use is an essential part of scientific and technological progress." McPherson (1994) states that, "strategies that stressed the use of information in a manufacturing industry are a backbone for attainment of success and meeting the objectives of the industry."

## **Methodology**

This is an exploratory study, using the survey research method. The instrument used for data gathering was a questionnaire. Two hundred fifty copies were distributed to twenty randomly-selected indigenous manufacturing companies in both Kaduna and Plateau states of Nigeria. Two hundred ten responses were received. They were all found to be useful for analysis. The data received were analyzed using percentages.

## **Findings and Discussion**

Table 1. Information Services Offered

Company	Display Exhibition	Information from Colleagues	Reference Services	Current Awareness	Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI)	Referral Services	Other Information Services
Chellco Industry Nigeria Ltd	+	+	+	+	+	-	-
Cotton and Agric Comp.	+	+	+	+	+	-	-
Nasco Fibre Products	+	+	-	+	+	-	-
United Nigeria Textile Ltd	+	+	-	+	-	-	-
Zazzau Ginnery Ltd	+	+	-	+	-	-	-
Kaduna Textile Ltd	+	+	-	+	+	+	-
Supertex Nigeria Ltd	+	+	-	+	-	-	-
Nocaco Ltd	+	+	-	-	-	-	-
Makeri Smelting Comp	+	+	-	-	+	+	-
Jos Steel Rolling Mill	+	+	+	+	+	-	-
KRPC	+	+	+	+	-	+	-
Ideal Flour Mills Ltd	+	+	-	+	-	-	-
Nasco Food Nigeria Ltd	+	+	-	+	-	-	-
Jos Cereals	+	+	-	+	-	-	-
Pioneer Milling Comp	+	+	-	+	-	-	-
United Oils Mills	+	+	-	+	-	+	-
Technoplastic Nigeria Ltd	+	+	-	+	+	-	-
Nasco Household Products	+	+	-	+	-	-	-
Nasco Pack Nigeria Ltd.	+	-	-	+	-	-	-
Zaria Pharmaceutical Ltd.	+	+	+	+	-	-	-
Total	20	19	5	18	7	4	-

The findings show that 25 percent of the industrial libraries or information centers offer reference service. A large number (85 percent) offer current awareness service, but only 35 percent offer SDI.

Twenty percent offer referral services. Most of these industrial libraries/information centers take into consideration other forms of information services in communicating useful information to their employees. These include provision of information through displays and exhibits, offered by 100 percent. Nearly all offer information that is beneficial to their colleagues. Services such as reference service and interlibrary loan are not available in these companies.

Table 2. Use of Information Resources by Employees

Company	Company work		Current Affairs		Personnel/career development		Other purposes	Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%		Frequency	%
Chellco Industry Nigeria Ltd	10	50	6	30	4	20	-	20	100
Cotton and Agric Comp.	9	43	5	25	6	35	-	20	100
Nasco Fibre Products	9	45	4	20	2	35	-	20	100
United Nigeria Textile Ltd	11	55	3	15	6	30	-	15	75
Zazzau Ginnery Ltd	12	60	2	10	2	30	-	20	100
Kaduna Textile Ltd	13	65	3	15	4	20	-	16	80
Supertex Nigeria Ltd	12	60	4	20	1	20	-	20	100
Nocaco Ltd	10	50	2	10	8	40	-	17	85
Makeri Smelting Comp	10	15	2	5	0	20	-	20	100
Jos Steel Rolling Mill	14	70	3	15	3	15	-	12	60
KRPC	12	60	5	25	3	15	-	20	100
Ideal Flour Mills Ltd	10	50	0	0	0	25	-	20	100
Nasco Food Nigeria Ltd	11	55	5	25	4	20	-	10	50
Jos Cereals	9	50	0	0	0	15	-	20	100
Pioneer Milling Comp	10	50	0	0	0	35	-	9	45
United Oils Mills	13	65	1	5	6	30	-	10	50
Technoplastic Nigeria Ltd	8	40	5	25	7	35	-	20	100
Nasco Household Products	12	60	3	15	5	25	-	20	100
Nasco Pack Nigeria Ltd.	15	75	2	10	3	15	-	20	100
Zaria Pharmaceutical Ltd.	10	80	1	5	0	15	-	11	55

Nasco Pack Nigeria Company scored 75 percent, which is the highest in use of information for work. The score was Cotton and Agricultural Production Company, which recorded 43 percent. Looking at the findings of the research critically, one can see that these companies, at their individual levels, depend totally on information generated in-house for their daily activities. This is dangerous for a company that wants to survive. It is very difficult for a company to survive without benchmarking with other companies.

This is only possible if a company investigates the activities of another company with the intent of improving its own products and services. Another thing that can solve issues of industrial information is the use of the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). ICT simplifies difficult tasks performed in industry, and enhances productivity.

## Conclusion

Industrial organizations in Nigeria offer library and information services to some extent. A great number of employees use information for their daily activities. Informal ways of seeking and using information are widespread; however, there is need improvement in the formal provision of relevant and current materials for use by employees in daily activities and decision-making. Grieves (1998) is of the view that, "industrial libraries ... should serve as major place of contact for any decision making activity." In the Nigerian industrial sector, information is generally not used effectively, and because of the nonchalant attitudes of industrialists towards information, indigenous manufacturing companies are degenerating instead of progressing. Both internally- and externally-generated information plays a role in making industry activities lively and profit-oriented.

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