

THE MARKETING CONCEPT IN AN ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

*Universities, as subjects of the academic environment, are institutions with the priority of education and research. The task of the marketing concept in the academic field is to communicate with all important target groups to support a stronger position and their perception of the school. The aim of the intervention is to increase the prestige, improve awareness, support positive attitudes, and present successful results in all areas of activity. This means creation and protection of a **positive image**, which enables higher interest of all target groups and secures better awareness about it.*

Key words

marketing management, academic environment, presentation maps

Introduction

A study of the marketing strategies of non-profit organisations highlights the characteristics of this responsibility as a task which is not a priority, but it nevertheless plays a very important role. It is a very difficult task to persuade some people that a programme of development and a strategy for any enterprise represents a legitimate marketing problem. One of the processes is, for example, the promotion of products or services with advertising, publishing or special events to show the key benefits uncovered in research and in other ways (Akchin, D. 2001).

The long-term success of a manufacturing enterprise (as well as enterprises providing services) depends on the quality of its management in one distinctive way. Therefore, it is important to search for particular adequate and efficient systems of management and to improve them consistently (Tréning, 1998). In this context, **enterprises providing service** include also “enterprises” providing the highest education – meaning **universities** (and at a lower level - faculties of a university).

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The marketing concept of an education institution

The **marketing management** of an institution in the area of services is defined as analysis, planning, implementation and control of precisely defined programmes designed to process voluntarily an exchange of values with target markets to reach the institution's tasks. Marketing presents the plans the university offers to fulfil the needs and wishes of target markets, apply efficient communication, and to distribute information, motivate and provide services to these markets. The basis of the implementation of the marketing and the strategic marketing philosophy in a particular institution is the ability to create, keep and develop a required connection between institutional aims defined on the basis of its role to process tasks in connection to reserved sources, also in changing conditions.

A **marketing philosophy** is understood as the way an institution exists on the market, as well as a set of activities focused on the implementation of this philosophy. The form of the university marketing concept presents the most modern method of marketing, entrepreneurial thinking and action in a competitive area.

Outputs for implementation of aims of the marketing philosophy in internal structures of the academic field

- A marketing philosophy related to public relations is a file of clearly defined aims, which task is not in coincidental or repeating activities, but in a systematically planned, managed and organized process.
- A university with marketing management makes a selection of target markets; this means it does not offer everything for all, but it distinguishes market segments in a very professional way and it selects differentiation often completely differently attributed to them.
- Public relations help to profit on the basis of efficient satisfaction of needs by target markets, which requires a clear declaration of the university's aims.
- A marketing philosophy where public relations support processes of decision making.
- Aim of marketing philosophy of the university is the definition of the utility properties which are sufficiently attractive for the target market.
- The marketing philosophy of the university uses a set of marketing tools defined on the basis of the academic filter and analytical processes.

Marketing environment of university

To understand correctly the above-mentioned outputs, it is necessary to define the **marketing environment** of a particular university. An education and research university has to go from knowledge of the marketing environment where it wants to be implemented or where it is already situated by the study of future risks. This environment is formed by all factors and influences which determine the ability of efficient exchange with the target market.

The result and reason of defining and monitoring the marketing environment of an education institution is the processing of a **marketing situation analysis**, or marketing audit.

It is a critical, objective, systematic and detailed study of the internal situation at the university with a focus on the marketing activities and study of its position in a specific environment with market analysis. Situation analysis is a method which can help to define a university's position as a unit but also in comparison with similar education institutions at home and abroad on the basis of an analytical evaluation of past development and the contemporary state on the basis of qualified estimation of future development in a strategic time. Besides this, there will be tools used for strategic planning and strategic management, analysis of customers and customer strategies, and analysis of competitors (competition analysis) in the implementation of the marketing concept of the university.

The content of the marketing concept of a university

The content of the marketing concept of a university is:

- professional compensation of all important relations and processes at university,
- active presentation, implementation and harmonization of all important interests,
- creation of a positive image of university.

Quality and efficient communication with the internal audience of the university, consistent maintenance of mutual real information flow belong to the basic presumptions of the creation of feeling from mutual understanding, fellowship and pride in one's own institution.

A marketing concept should be a **function of the top-management of a university** from the perspective of its main principles. It helps the flow and maintenance of mutual information exchange; it strengthens a positive perception and cooperation between the subject and its recipients, including communication of management with employees. Completion of the marketing concept must be in the centre of the communication field of the organisation, it should reflect all crucial information, events and facts regarding the activity in and around the university.

Opportunities for completing the marketing concept:

- repeating opportunities:
 - ceremonial opening of the academic year
 - graduation ceremonies of graduates
 - meetings of academic employees
 - university anniversaries
 - publication of journals
 - participation in trade fairs and exhibitions
 - day of open house
 - reports on activities of university
 - support of cultural activities of students
 - support and sponsorship of sport activities
- irregularly occurring and random opportunities for marketing:
 - implementing new study programmes at the university
 - presenting achieved success in research – new inventions, patents, awarding special recognitions
 - opening new areas, top technical equipment, initializing new technological processes
 - issuing a significant publication

- awarding a famous person
- visiting foreign institutions
- intentionally designed events for marketing:
 - initiatives and actions for the benefit of the public, health, protection of environment
 - grants as a part of the school (for example to support foreign study programmes of students)
 - participation of the university in important solutions and projects for society
 - work with graduates (the creation of an alumni society,...)

Aims and tools of marketing in the academic environment

The aims of marketing in an academic environment definitely include: to inform about the faculty, to present its unique position and elements which show its uniqueness in comparison to others, to improve relations inside the institution, and to inform about the behaviour of the environment.

Specific tools of university marketing can be partially characterized as:

- media news, press information,
- author contributions, publishing,
- media events,
- meetings with partners and potential partners,
- building of multimedia workplaces with the aim to gain and realize:
- information from information systems and networks
- brilliant presentations of qualification processes
- presentation of results of pedagogical and research activity with the aim to gain :
 - presentation of guaranteed quality with an absolute service
 - transfer and performance of an exact projection
 - possibility of selection and flexibility by projection
 - optimal support for presentation
 - clarity and reliability
- creation of web pages and multimedia promotion and information materials.

Target groups of marketing and presentation aims of the faculty can be divided into:

- domestic – external: general public, professional public, graduates, potential students, potential teachers, sponsors, state and autonomous organs, state enterprises and entrepreneurial subjects, the third sector, community in the closest environment of school and community of other universities, media and journalists;
- domestic – internal: students, employees of the faculty;
- foreign: partners, potential students, trainees, professional organisations, foreign universities and professional communities.

If a faculty has a clearly defined aim, content and tools of the activity of its PR, then it is able to create **presentation maps** (a presentation map is a tool for mapping the environment of influence), creating an interactive connection of the activity at the faculty with the presentation environment, and emphasizing the unique aspect of its activity.

A presentation map can cover various activities of public relations of the faculty, as we can see from the experience of the Faculty of Materials Science and Technology:

PRESENTATION MAP IN ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

Promotion of study	Media space	Monitoring	Publications about subject
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participation in trade fairs and exhibitions • open house • promotion video about study programmes • days of education advisory • summer universities for students of secondary schools • leaflets and advertisement about education at faculty • publications about graduates profile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DVD about faculty • virtual visits • video presentations • Facebook • discussions in media • regional print • administration of webpage of the faculty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monitoring of academic events • monthly overviews about events at the faculty • presentation about events in university journal • daily news • surveys • FAQ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Report • presentation publication about the faculty • anniversaries • leaflets about the faculty • publications about research • publications about faculty workplaces • publications about centres of excellence
Trade Fairs and Exhibitions	Conferences	Cooperation with practice	Visits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participation in professional research exhibitions and trade fairs • workshops • exhibitions of centres of excellence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organising domestic conferences • participation in foreign conferences • conference service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • presentation of companies at the faculty • presentation of the faculty in companies • offer of cooperation with practice • discussions with representatives of practice • monitoring technological processes from practice into teaching at the faculty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • welcoming guests to the faculty • the faculty visited by foreign partners • memoranda about cooperation

Alumni	Expositions	Awards	Service Public relations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • portal of graduates • bank of successful graduates • job opportunities for graduates • benefits from membership in community of graduates • newsletter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • permanent expositions of vision of faculty development • expositions of posters • technological museum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • award of the faculty • awards of faculty employees • awards of students of the faculty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communication tools • uniform design of the faculty • promotional subjects, multimedia equipment • multimedia service
Social events	Galleries	Public	Sport actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new year meeting • meetings with former employees • meetings with children of the faculty employees • balls • theatre performances • concerts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gallery of deans • gallery of professors • gallery of personalities of science and technology • gallery: Doctor honoris causa • gallery of professor emeritus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information for public • organizing events and exhibitions for public • supporting public events • building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tennis tournaments • sport days for employees

Conclusion

Implementation of the marketing concept into the management of an academic institution requires changes connected with the need of modification of the existing processes and also a complex modification of the culture and strategy of the faculty.

Characteristics of possible **contributions** to the marketing concept define:

- **on the level of university management (top-management)**
 - A complex maintenance of data files containing the important activities of university
 - Update and modification of information to perform management activities (preparation of decisions) of university representatives
 - Update and modification of information for communication with university management
 - Integration and rationalization of creating and processing the information for intention concepts of university (strategic planning);

- **on the level of management of professional activities via university workplaces**
 - Securing professionalism, complexity and continuity of collection, processing, distribution, protection and archiving of information file of activity results of university marketing concept,
 - Integration of professional activities, increasing the range, content, quality and speed of provided services,
 - Exclusion of duplications in professional activities and formation of presumptions for their processing (organization, technical, personnel),
 - operative control of content correctness of provided information,
 - removal of the campaign aspect,
 - creation of space for a cooperation offer with industrial practice and university partners.

Measurement of efficiency by securing marketing philosophy implementation and strengthening of public relations as a part of organisational university structure is not a simple issue. However, the financial cost of the operation can be quite exactly estimated, the resulting effects are difficult to measure. While for example marketing information system is measurable with an increased finance profit from sale, these effects of influence and formation of “non-productive-costs” of the university are shown only in an indirect and not immediate way. A university education institution cannot operate with a proportion of cost and profits as one of the main criteria, but on other side, the question of efficiency should not be forgotten (Kimlička, Š. 1995).

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