

STRATEGIES OF EDUCATIONAL MARKETING APPLIED IN AGRONOMIC EDUCATION

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Abstract: At European level, the programs meant for improving the social life are developed in accordance with the socio-economic, historical, political, religious and cultural framework, identifying those segments of society that are vulnerable or exposed to risk factors. In this respect, in order to achieve its purpose and objectives, each social program or service must be promoted among the population through an educational marketing policy supported by the institutions or organizations initiating the services. The marketing of educational services (including educational services in this category) consists in conceiving, implementing and controlling programs aimed at better acceptance of social ideas or practices by one or more target groups (Alois Gherguț, 2006). The starting point for the marketing of educational services for higher agronomic education is the thorough research of the target group (pupils in pre-university education), which takes into account the social and demographic structure, the economic situation, the level of education and training, the psycho-social traits (attitudes, motivations, interests, values, behaviors) and the needs of the members of the analyzed community. Any educational marketing campaign must take these factors into account and be compatible with the cultural and economic traditions of the target group (s) surveyed. The market research is indispensable and must be thoroughly monitored, both in the planning phase and especially in the implementation phase, and those conducting the research must be kept up to date with changes in the needs of target group members in order to adapt to their educational needs.

Keywords: marketing of educational services, higher agronomic education, pupils, pre-university, education

Introduction

The use of marketing in educational services is known as educational marketing. From Kotler's point of view, the educational marketing process is: "analysis, planning, implementation, and control of designed programs, capable of bringing about voluntary changes of values in line with market targets in such a way as to achieve institutional goals".

The main objective pursued by applying the marketing in higher education is to define the service quality, market orientation and provide educational services in line with needs of labor market. The main task of educational marketing is to identify and understand the trends in educational domain and the needs of the labor market.

Programs meant for improving social life in most of Europe's countries are developed in accordance with the social-economic, historical, political, religious and cultural framework and identifying those segments of the society that are vulnerable or exposed to risk factors. Educational marketing is no longer a

novelty for the vast majority of Romanian schools, and it is also applied in Agricultural High Schools and Universities for: promoting the educational offer - attracting pupils and students, as well as identifying new specializations that are in favour for them and for the labor market which is constantly changing.

The orientation towards social marketing means that ***the task of the institution is to determine the needs, wants and interests of education consumers and to adapt in order to provide programs that maintain or improve well-being and satisfaction of the long-term interests of education consumers and society.***

In order to achieve their goal and objectives, each program should be promoted among the population through an educational marketing policy supported by the institutions or organizations that initiate those services in the field of agronomic education and not only. *The educational marketing (we include in this category also the educational services) consists in conceiving, implementing and controlling programs aimed at a better acceptance of social ideas or practices by one or more target groups (Alois Gherguț, 2006).*

To this end, in order to achieve the proposed goal, the marketing strategy uses methods such as: setting measurable objectives, market research, developing services and products that meet real expectations, creating demand for them through promotional actions, building service distribution networks . The differences between economic and social marketing consist not in the methods they use, but in their components and objectives. Thus, *educational marketing* in the field of agronomic education is a more complex concept compared to the economic variant, because it aims to influence the ideas and the human behavior. Educational marketing focuses in particular on intangible ideas and actions, compared to economic marketing that focuses on tangible products and services.

PURPOSE OF PAPER

The marketing orientation in the field of education means market research and supply-demand adaptation, which means not only declaratively developing student-centered education, but also the design of study programs required by the market.

The educational market for agronomic education represents the meeting space of the demand with the educational offer and the specific services in this field, and the educational marketing must take into account the quality of the educational act, the investments that must be made to ensure good conditions for the activity, depending on the quality of the teachers who support the education and the requirements of the educators. We plan to find a strategy to promote agronomic higher education institutions that focus primarily on finding the most effective way to promote, so that the message reaches the target audience in order to be able to communicate as effectively as possible with each category of customers with which market relations maintenance: economic agents, high school pupils and students.

WORKING METHODS

To obtain the information, a research plan was drawn up which covered the concepts, methods and techniques of investigation according to the objectives pursued. These researches were:

– exploratory, when it was intended to identify the dimensions of a phenomenon and to define the concepts of variables and assumptions;

– instrumental - for the testing and validation of research methods and tools. The questionnaire for research on freedom of access to information has been applied to a number of 200 subjects, age, profession and school education;

– Descriptive and explanatory - that is, research that aims to evaluate the coordinates of an educational phenomenon;

– predictive - when they have predicted the evolution of a phenomenon such as the educational market.

They were also analyzed as follows:

- the institutional development plans of some school organizations from the rural and urban areas of Iasi;;

- analyzing the specific organizational goals at the level of the educational units in the territory;

- analyzing the demands of those who are to be educated in accordance with the occupational standards in their pre-university education, taking into account the particular specificity of learning in an Agronomic University.

- complex analysis of the community of origin of the trainees such as: community needs and problems, integration of educational institutions and policies in the community strategy;

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In agronomic education, educational marketing begins with the thorough research of the target group, taking into account the social and demographic structure, the economic situation, the level of education and training, the psychosocial traits (attitudes, motivations, interests, values, behaviors) and the needs of the members of the community concerned. Any marketing campaign should consider these factors and be compatible with the cultural and religious traditions of the target group (s). Market research is very important, both in the planning phase and in the implementation phase, and those conducting the research must be kept up to date with changes in the needs of target group members (economic agents, high school pupils and students).

The information system of educational marketing - emerged as a result of marketing services' requests to be able to perform its tasks related to analysis, planning, implementation, control and to follow the evolution and trends of the target groups. When collecting information, we need to take into account our needs as service providers in the school organization, but also what the beneficiaries want: educators and employers in the field of agriculture. Promoting marketing in the educational field requires managers to have a number of indispensable qualities such as: dedication, perseverance, consistency, honesty, love for pupils / students.

The marketing approach for agronomic education presupposes the possession of information about the social-economic and educational environment, and information support of

decisions is ensured through marketing research, defined as a systematic activity of collecting, analyzing and interpreting the information necessary for conception, elaboration and realization of the marketing policies.

The main functions of the educational marketing are:

- Investigating the market, consumption of education and the environment in which the activity is being carried out;
- adapting marketing policies to environmental requirements;
- the dimensioning of educational services in consensus with the needs, preferences, tastes, expectations, qualitative requirements of the consumers of education, as well as with the educational policies;
- Promoting effective human resource management which, together with the material and informational resources, ensure the achievement of the pre-established educational objectives.

Educational marketing is, in fact, in close correlation with the educational management process that is responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying the demands of the education consumer in a profitable way. Therefore, the marketing concept of educational services is directly related to the concept of management, and the managerial and psychosocial competences, related to the educational management and the organization of the social relations of the agronomic specialist, assume the following activities (Carmen Olguța Brezuleanu, *Didactica specialității disciplinelor agronomice*, 2016):

- Establish variants of the decision and choose the most appropriate one when communicating certain aspects;
- Have the ability to work in a group or team;
- motivate the pupil / student to train him as a leader;
- take responsibility for all the assessments and recommendations made, the actions taken;
- master legislation, in general, and school legislation in particular.
- be able to self-assess regularly and make changes following self-evaluation
- diagnose, predict and design activities for the subject for which he / she is a teacher;
- To manage correctly the time budget of those they communicate with.
- have analytical and synthesis capacities, to build alternatives, to make optimal decisions according to the given context;
- observe the specificity of each type of lesson in agronomic specialties;
- be able to apply the rules of professional deontology;
- show confidence and respect for those they educate;
- communicate openly with pupils / students, showing fairness in their relationships;
- empathize with pupils / students, i.e. to have the ability to translate into the situations they are going through in order to know them better and to improve their communication with them;
- make a good collaboration with pupils / students and other teachers;
- Participate in the recommended training courses for teachers;
- Organize training activities for debutants;

- motivate teachers / students for their own professional development;
- advise specialized teachers to make positive changes in the teaching-learning-evaluation process.

As for the marketing of the entire school, this process first identifies and then meets the needs of educators to be profitable. The term “profitable” means the importance of the objective of attracting pupils / students, of having a good reputation in the area where they are working at national and international level.

For any school institution, *public relations* involves a process of communication and relationship with the target audience that it needs to serve, and a school institution must have good relationships with the public as part of their success. But making success known as much as possible is more important than success in itself, good schools, looking to make pupils / students proud of the fact that they belong to schools, teachers are proud of being employed there and parents as confident as children's needs are fulfilled.

Advertising in the media is essential in promoting a school institution for agronomic education, and discussions with potential future pupils / students, personal contact is essential. For this, there must be a very high involvement of people and resources in the promotion of the agricultural school.

An important role for the school institution for agronomic education is the *strategic management* it addresses. The strategic management refers to the role that the school institution for agronomic education wants to play in the long term in the society according to the requirements of the market economy. A crucial role in strategic management - the school needs to develop structures and systems that keep it up to date with internal and external developments. The study of the market for educational education is based on the bidder's information to base its marketing strategy. The environmental factors are under study, the demographic environment being the most important component for the design and implementation of *educational marketing policies*.

As far as the economic environment is concerned, it must be taken into account because it defines the quality of life, the standard of living that is not negligible in terms of educational marketing. The social status can cause appetite or lack of interest in education. Lack of livelihood leads to moral poverty. Also, the political environment matters a lot, the quality of the options of the dominant political forces also depends on the status of the educational institution for agronomic education.

As bidders, agronomic schools and universities need to keep in close contact with the public, with the exponents of the human community and potential education consumers, public bodies, non-governmental organizations. Mass media is a privileged partner of educational services for agronomic education.

The promotion of educational marketing can also be done during events: cultural-artistic events, anniversaries of higher education institutions, when printing programs, leaflets, guides to explain the educational offer.

Because the purpose of marketing strategy is to influence the relationship between school and community, the promotion of an agronomic education institution can be made through public relations, promotional prints (brochures, films, prospectuses, etc.) and a lot of advertising. Public relations is a way in which the school communicates with the environment not only to provide information on its services and products, but also to make itself known and strengthen its position within the local community. With the help of public relations, the school informs its target audience internally or externally about its objectives, mission, activities and interests, as

public relations essentially means communication. This communication takes different forms, more or less formal, depending on the objectives pursued by the educational institution and the target audience to which it is addressed. In general, the communication objectives pursued by an agronomic institution are:

- Maintaining or improving its image,
- attracting support and loyalty of ALUMNI,
- popularizing the educational offer to attract new pupils / students,
- permanent correction / completion / updating of the information about the agronomic education institution,
- attracting funds from local sources, school fees,
- recruitment of competent teachers.

Following the responses from the 200 people, potential "clients," we have established *the best educational marketing strategy that an agronomic education institution should address:*

Thus, the most numerous ways of communication can be written: leaflets, brochures, magazines, letters, newsletters, presentation sheets, school yearbooks, advertising materials, journals, posters, business cards, reports, school project, Press, articles, badges, stickers and more. In their drafting, the aesthetic criterion, functionality and costs will be considered.

The school prospectus must be made up of the brochure / leaflet / presentation film. The flyer is a selective publication expressing the achievements of the school institution and suggests the option for it. The brochure must include details of the school's philosophy, curriculum, timetable, statistics, regulations, school staff, exam results, contests, etc. Rules to make a brochure / flyer:

- The cover should make future pupils/ students / parents open it. The logo of the educational institution must be very well highlighted and representative. If you opt for the image then faces are placed on the cover, not laboratories, buildings or school parks.
- Begin with a short and warm message from the educational institution's school manager and a natural call to visit.
- The elements of differentiation from other educational institutions are presented to influence the choice of "this school and not the other". This brief presentation is in line with the mission of the Agronomic School / University.
- The language used must be clear, simple and understandable for the target audience, to be easy to read.
- Photos must be chosen with care to impact.
- It is very important to be a professional product (quality paper, professional design).
- Clearly identify the geographic location of the school and the access ways.
- What are the admission steps and the content of the application file.
- Audiovisual materials are an attractive way of presenting the school and offer a "live" image that text or photography can not convey. To this you can add the Agronomic School / University page on the internet or the candidate's kit. In order to create a recognizable visual identity that distinguishes it from other institutions, the Agronomic School / University resorts to a logo and symbols, always the same, to be found on various edited materials, shirts, billboards,

stationery , and news from the press must be a permanent concern for it. Her representatives will provide information of interest to local newspapers, will give interviews, taking advantage of the public's need for information in order to do somehow "free advertising". Keeping good relations with the local press and informing them regularly is a major objective of any agronomic school / university that wants to consolidate its public relations.

The Agronomic School / University will organize cultural or scientific events, exhibitions, vernisements, with the participation of personalities from the respective field. Also, at the Agronomic University of Iasi we organize events such as: Open Doors with a permanent character and Student for one day. The schools, holidays will be reflected in the press, to attract the attention of the public ensuring the prestige of the school. Public appearances, various local, radio and television actions, early talks and school year endings, participation in world events are as many opportunities as we can make public relations. In this way, the school institution gets advantages by formalizing public relations, better anticipates potential problems, better manages them, can better orient its policies to the desired audience and will have a professional communication.

CONCLUSIONS

In order to optimize the offer of educational programs and services of the agronomic education institutions, we propose in the field of educational marketing and public relations:

- Periodically conducting the analysis of training needs of teaching staff in the field of educational marketing through modern and reliable forms of study (questionnaires, needs studies, enquiries, surveys, the use of statistical data at local, regional and national level);
- Developing a network of trainers according to the established training needs;
- Establishing partnerships with school units in order to develop training courses in the field of educational marketing and public relations;
- Promotion of educational marketing during events;
- Advertising in the media is essential in promoting a schooling institution for agronomic education
- Successful education is the best marketing

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