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Educational Marketing – The Role of Strategic Marketing in Adult Education

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ABSTRACT

"Education is essential to change, for education creates both new wants the ability to satisfy them"

The education industry in India is fast evolving. Institutes of higher education are coming up all across the country and it is being said that the country needs 800 additional Universities and 35,000 new colleges by 2012 to cater to the burgeoning demand of higher education in the country. With more and more educational institutes coming up all across the country, there is a strong need for professional education marketing efforts to be made so as to enable the deserving institutes emerge as educational brands of excellence. Nationally, Marketing Education is offered in more than 7,000 high schools and most community/technical colleges. More than a million students with diverse ability levels and marketing interests obtain education in marketing subjects annually. In Missouri, more than 14,000 students are enrolled in marketing in over 200 high schools or area career centers. Marketing education courses are also taught in community colleges. The curricula range from studying marketing for personal use and career exploration to developing advanced management and entrepreneurial skills.

The present study reveals that it makes an attempt to study the various dimensions of marketing education. In this article we go through the various dimensions of education marketing which necessitate a basic change in policy decisions also the strategies which contributes to increasing competitiveness in Indian education system.

KEYWORDS : Education marketing, strategy, ability, standard of education

INTRODUCTION:

Nationally, Marketing Education is offered in more than 7,000 high schools and most community/technical colleges. More than a million students with diverse ability levels and marketing interests obtain education in marketing subjects annually. In Missouri, more than 14,000 students are enrolled in marketing in over 200 high schools or area career centers. Marketing education courses are also taught in community colleges. The curricula range from studying marketing for personal use and career exploration to developing advanced management and entrepreneurial skills. Students enrolled in Marketing Education participate in a co-curricular student organization that provides opportunities for students to demonstrate their mastery of the marketing curriculum in competitive events, to develop leadership skills, and to exhibit awareness of civic responsibilities. At the high school level, students join DECA, while students enrolled in post-secondary Marketing Education courses participate in Delta Epsilon Chi.

The Marketing Education Resource Center (MarkED) develops the curriculum used as the basis for the student organizations' competitive events. MarkED is a nonprofit research and development organization founded for the sole purpose of developing competency-based instructional materials for Marketing Education.

Marketing education curriculum:

The marketing education curriculum is divided into two primary parts:

Foundations and Functions.

The **Foundations** are fundamental to an understanding of marketing and can be viewed as co-requisites and as prerequisites for marketing. The content of the Marketing Foundations must be mastered in order for marketing-specific content to have relevance to student learning. There are four broad-based foundational areas: Business, Management, and Entrepreneurship; Communication and Interpersonal Skills; Economics; and Professional Development.

Broad-based standards that identify what students should know and be able to do as a result of instruction in Marketing Education are:

Business, Management, and Entrepreneurship: Understands fundamental business, management, and entrepreneurial concepts that affect business decision making

Communication and Interpersonal Skills: Understands concepts, strategies, and systems needed to interact effectively with others

Economics: Understands the economic principles and concepts fundamental to marketing

Professional Development: Understands concepts and strategies needed for career exploration

The **Functions** define the discipline of marketing as applied in business operations. They address marketing from the perspective of how it is practiced. Each function is viewed from its relationship to the marketing of a good, service, or idea. The seven functions are Distribution, Financing, Marketing-information Management, Pricing, Product/Service Management, Promotion, and Selling.

Distribution: Understands the concepts and processes needed to move, store, locate, and/or transfer ownership of goods and services.

Financing: Understands the financial concepts used in making business decisions

Marketing-Information Management: Understands the concepts, systems, and tools needed to gather, access, synthesize, evaluate, and disseminate information for use in making business decisions

Pricing: Understands concepts and strategies utilized in determining and adjusting prices to maximize return and meet customers' perceptions of value

Product/Service Management: Understands the concepts and processes needed to obtain, develop, maintain, and improve a product or service mix in response to market opportunities

Promotion: Understands the concepts and strategies needed to communicate information about products, services, images, and/or ideas to achieve a desired outcome

Selling: Understands the concepts and actions needed to determine client needs and wants and respond through planned, personalized communication that influences purchase decisions and enhances future business opportunities

The marketing curriculum can be viewed as a continuum that begins in the primary grades with career awareness and exploration and continues through postsecondary education with emphasis becoming more specialized to the learner's individual interest in marketing.

As a distinct discipline, Marketing Education integrates academic concepts and technology applications throughout the curriculum.

• **Academic Concepts:** The study of marketing incorporates many academic understandings, including mathematics, reading, writing, speaking, sociology, psychology, geography, etc.

• **Technology Applications:** The successful implementation of marketing activities requires the use of technology.

Strategic marketing:
Identification of one or more sustainable competitive advantages a firm has in the markets it serves (or intends to serve), and allocation of resources to exploit them.

According to Drucker Strategic marketing as seen as a process consisting of analyzing environmental, market competitive and business factors affecting the corporation and its business units, identifying market opportunities and threats and forecasting future trends in business areas of interest for the enterprise , and participating in setting objectives and formulating corporate and business unit strategies. Selecting market target strategies for the product markets in each business unit, establishing marketing objectives as well as developing, implementing and managing the marketing program positioning strategies in order to meet market target needs"

"The role of strategic marketing is to lead the firm towards attractive economic opportunities, that is, opportunities that are adapted to its resources and knowhow and offer a potential for growth and profitability".

In the view of the aforesaid facts, we use the term marketing for literacy, education and development of knowledge. Here, it is also to be clarified that by using the term marketing we are not bound to generate profits. Since most of the not for profit making organizations are now found liberal to the generation of profits, it is also significant to mention that whatever they generate as surplus should essentially be re-invested or ploughed back for the development and expansion of world class services. The marketing practices would simplify the processes of qualitative-cum-quantitative transformation in the process of efficiency generation.

Strategic marketing for Adult education:
United Nations Development Reports (UNDR) 1994 reveals that India is categorized in the abysmally "Low human development" bracket. Proper definition defines an adult literacy rates as a percentage of persons aged 15 and over. Of course, we have taken a number of steps to remove illiteracy and the percentage from 1971 to 1991has also shown a positive trend, i.e from 36 in 1971 to 52 in 1991, however, we need more concerted efforts to eradicate this social evil. With changing socio economic conditions, volatile environment and accelerated development process and problems, increasing instrumentality of machines in the socio-economic transformation process, we need a new policy, a new strategy, a new vision and a new approach. In the view of the recent developments in the socio-economic parlance; we need innovation in the marketing of literacy. This is a very natural way draws our attention on strategic marketing which can help us in formulating an action plan keeping in view the means, requirements of segment and target prospects. There are a number of key issues for strategic marketing since the motive is to achieve total literacy by 2020.

1. Active participation and involvement: it is a programme related to the development of society, it is pertinent that at the very outset we talk about participation and involvement of society. Active participation and involvement of society is of vital important not only to increase the sensitivity of our programme but also to identify the loopholes or sore-spots. We need to generate the thirst for education and this is possible when all of us do not treat it as a programme but social mission. It is in this context that we talk about incentives. The whole thing is to sensitize the target prospects. This process sensitization can be engendered through wide spread implementation of information campaigns. Campaign for adult education responsive to the need of particular area is vital.

2. Visual image to be given due weightage in the marketing process: The visual image registers more readily and powerfully on the audience. The impact of the same is found more permanent and lasting. Its reach lends an aura of reality and renders it retentive to an unlettered mind. The reliance and employment of slides, television, video, and street theater are found sensitive techniques, instrumental in informing and creating attractive avenues for facilitation of the learner. Any visual mode which presents matters in new way or innovative approaches like eye-catching, succinct slogans, triggers off a powerful influence resulting in to a creditable and responsive feedback. In addition a massive deployment of posters with popular characters magnifying the benefits of adult education would be successful in influencing the target prospects.

3. Inclusion of more incentives: While formulating promotion strategy, we need to include new incentives both for the users and the front-line-personnel. Realistic incentives are expected to be more effective. A concerted strategy to evolve mid-day meal scheme for users and their dependants, crèche for children and other basic requirements which form the basic stands of the social safety net may be helpful in nurturing the potentialities of users. Not only to the adult illiterates but we need to offer more incentives even to the teachers, personnel engaged in the process.

4. Infrastructural constraints to be removed: In the strategic marketing, we also find infrastructural facilities playing an important role. This makes it essential that existing mechanism is upgraded. It is found that mere creation of school buildings, provision of attendant, paraphernalia like block boars, chalks, books etc, are mere cosmetic exercises throwing a very limited impact. These incentives would only not generate and enrich infrastructural facilities but would also motivate the personnel and users.

5. Committed pool of Volunteers: Even the rich infrastructural facilities fail in generating positive impact, if we do not have a zealous, committed pool of volunteers. In this context, we need active involvement of national youth bodies like the NSS and NSC. The physical presence of young educators would inspire confidence and trust. In addition, they are also found efficacious in activating persistent and sustained efforts. This would change the quality of distribution channel.

6. Undertaking area specific programmes: In this context, we also release the instrumentality of area specific programme. This would help in determining the effectiveness of a learner's participation. We cannot deny the fact that methods applied in a hilly tribal area would not be effective in plains. The vocabulary and contents must be local with a regional bias. We should assign due weightage to the need aspirations of the users, cultural ethnic ethos, their motivations aversions. Factors like values, attitudes, beliefs, customs of the users community and its religious attributes, ethnic symbols and traditions, individual and social properties, morality, rights and obligation should be have a grass-root-touch. Lack of these values can generate social reduction ranging from apathy to hostility which would make our progrmmes ineffective. This in a natural way diverts our attention on the service mix or curriculum that we approve for adult education in general and the adult women education in particular. An important task before the educationists is to frame such a curriculum, syllabi create interest.

7. A careful equilibrium between the carrot and stick policy: The motive is to achieve total literacy by 2020 and this makes it essential that we pave ways for optimizing the carrot and stick policy which can assist us in the achievement of proposed goal. We can borrow successful models employed across the country and make possible suitable amendments in the same in tune with our regional/local conditions. In Tanzania, the parental literacy campaign launched by various educational institutions increased the number of neoliterate parents. In addition, the private agencies can be instrumental in boosting adult education by creating special funds and infrastructure to facilitate the participation of learners in adult illiterates financed by workers welfare trust. This in a true sense paves ways for the development of productive human resources which ultimately contribute a lot to the development of that organization.

8. Special weightage to women literacy: The task force should, of course assign due weightage to women in general and rural women in particular. Educated wives and mothers are an asset to a nation. In villages, the women are yet to realize the importance of education of girls. Here our emphasis is on the promotional strategy for women. The main thing is to create awareness and innovative promotional strategies can make it possible. The professional; have to accept it as a challenge. The industrial organizations are supposed to finance the scheme meant for women illiterate.

Thus we bear the responsibility of achieving total literacy even before 2020. These necessities innovative marketing practices by all the organizations/agencies already involved or planning to involve in the social mission. It is not a progrmme but a mission which requires involvement of all.

CONCLUSION:

Literacy paves the way for education which engineers a sound foundation for the development of knowledge; our success in developing professional excellence cannot be negated. If we succeed in developing professional excellence, the managerial proficiency would help profit or not-for-profit making organizations in sub-serving the organizational interest's vis-à-vis the interests of consumers and society. Active participation and involvement of society is of vital important not only to increase the sensitivity of our programme but also to identify the loopholes or sore-spots. We need to generate the thirst for education and this is possible when all of us do not treat it as a programme but social mission.

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