THE ROLE OF INFORMATION FOR GLOBAL MARKETING
- EDUCATIONAL AND PRACTICAL ASPECTS

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Abstract
The selection of company strategy for international market appearance is an essential part of implementation the global marketing. Given the fact that this process is influenced by a diverse range of factors, it is necessary to research and report frequently about the dynamics. The research of market environment is one of the most essential company activities. Information is the base of the market assessment as an opportunity to company entry, as well as for establishing a balance between the marketing-mix tactics in accordance with specific conditions set out by the local markets.

Some of the huge problems in the transition economies are closely connected with education and practice connected to the global marketing issues. It is very significant to understand that marketing is not only a theory, but also an amount of knowledge created and carried through the experience in the business practice. The low level of theoretical and practical knowledge of this problematic is a serious business practice. The low level of theoretical and practical knowledge in the process of the company’s information needs definition, and then to carry out further implementation of other phases of the process.

The transition of economic and political system in Macedonia created favorable circumstances on education that sought to understand and employ the market system logic. The fundamental goals have been to achieve reflective, practical and analytical skills for those involved in management or marketing and for those who want a better understanding of the nature and process of management and marketing within broader contexts.

Keywords
- Information;
- Management;
- Marketing;
- Education;
- Institution;
- Globalization.

Rezumat
Alegerea strategiei pentru proiecta pe piața internațională este o parte esențială a implementării marketingului global. Dat fiind faptul că acest proces este influențat de o diversitate de factori este necesar ca, în mod frecvent să se cerceteze și să se raporteze dinamica sa. Cercetarea mediului de piață este una dintre cele mai importante activități ale companiei. Informația stă la baza evaluării pieței ca oportunitate de intrare a companiei cât și ca stabilire a balanței între tacticile de marketing și condițiile specifice stabilite de piețele locale.

Unele dintre problemele majore în economiile de tranziție sunt strâns legate de educație și practică, corelată cu problemele de marketing global. Este foarte important să înțelegi că marketingul nu este doar o teorie ci o cantitate de cunoștințe creată și pasă în practică prin experiență. Nivelul scăzut al cunoștințelor teoretice și practice în acest domeniu reprezintă o serioasă fisură în procesul de evaluare globală, mai ales în ceea ce privește piețele locale, încludând funcțiile specifice de marketing ale companiei. Pasul inițial ar trebui să fie implementarea cunoștințelor teoretice și practice în procesul de definire a nevoilor de informație ale companiei, realizarea unor pași superiori în implementarea altor faze ale procesului.

Tranzitia sistemului economic și politic din Macedonia a creat condiții favorabile în educație care a căutat să înțeleagă și să folosească logică sistemului economiei de piață. Scopul fundamental este realizarea unor competențe de reflecție, practice şi analitice pentru cei care doresc să înțeleagă mai bine natura şi procesele de management şi marketing în contexte mai largi.

Cuvinte cheie
- Informația;
- Management;
- Marketing;
- Educație;
- Instituție;
- Globalizare.
1. Introduction

The Central and Eastern European economies are moving step by step closer to the European Union. As a country with EU perspective, Macedonia is conditioned by compliance with numerous obligations, especially those concerning the harmonization of domestic legislature, particularly those connected to the foreign trade liberalization.

Business experts and experienced university professors from East and West, teach up-to-date management as well as the legal, economic and social background of doing business in Central and Eastern Europe. The key management functions - marketing, finance, strategic and information management, organization and human resource management are presented from a scientific point of view. The theoretic knowledge is directly transferred into business practice through higher level of academic education, as well as through other forms as cases or project studies, workshops and guest lectures of experienced managers.

Marketing is the key to open the consumer mind and it helps to create demand. The strategy for international market appearance is an essential part of implementing the global marketing. Given the fact that this process is influenced by numerous factors, it is necessary to research and report permanently about their dynamics. The information as a final result of research is the base of country and market opportunity estimation necessary for defining the company target market, as well as for establishing the balance between the marketing-mix tactics adopted on specific conditions on the local markets.

2. The importance of market and marketing research in creating the strategy

In order to make a position of the competitive product advantages, the market as well as marketing research become a base for optimal marketing strategy definition, implemented in order to develop and discover some market segments as target markets. The companies on global market, despite the level of the economy development, are facing the challenge of identifying the most favorable possibilities and competitive advantage. In that direction, the definition of optimal marketing strategy should start with research and analysis of diverse range of factors in the market environment. Their influence could not be analyzed separately, but in relation to forces of different nature - political, economic, social and technological.

Given the fact that the assessment of factors, regarding their significance in creating marketing strategy is very difficult, their influence should be analyzed from aspect of competition, as well as the complexity of the local market environment conditions. It means that the strategy has to be developed as reflection of global marketing factors: social, political, economic, cultural and others.

Marketing research activities and procedures enable the definition of different market changes, including competition, technology development etc. Rapid technological development influences the necessity of information needs in order to coordinate the process activities of the international management function. In this sense, market and marketing-research become a basic component of the global management-information system.
3. The role of information and the global marketing

In transition economies, the shortage of information is mainly resulted by two types of problems, which are connected to international business practice; the first are the problems of information infrastructure and the second are the problems of theoretical and practical knowledge about global marketing issues.

The information infrastructure is an institutional system of organized information. In transition economies, the information infrastructure is on low level of development. There is a gap of secondary (already collected and published) data: demographic, industrial, company reports, data of consumer living standards etc. as well as primary information (those collected from field research of the target markets).

Some companies are aware of the strategic information advantage, but they also treat the research expenses as cost, instead as investments. Also, in order to provide necessary information, some companies use a system based on inadequate techniques and methods, which contribute to the quality of information necessary for international management decision-making process.

The second group of problems in transition economies is the problems of educational and practical knowledge, as an amount of absolved information during the process of education. Although many books and other publications in marketing were published and marketing lectures and teaching curricula were implemented at the Universities since the early 70-ties, there was not space for their practical implementation and improvement. The 50-year-long self-management system in former Yugoslavia (including Macedonia) contributed to business behavior of abolishing practical marketing problems in business practice, based on traditional opinion about market competition and trade liberalization. In present, it becomes a global problem, especially for those companies in transition economies, which find themselves in the phase of initial market entrance, when the starting problems become unpredictable and affect the development of effective strategy for long-term expansion on the global market.

4. Global marketing perspectives - educational and practical aspects

Concerning the business problems in the practice, as well as the level of practical education of these topics at the universities and colleagues in Macedonia, it should be notified that some efforts and activities have been undertaken in terms of updating of teaching plan and programs, their development and innovation. This is also one of the strategically defined aims of the national development strategy for Macedonia, where in the common sense, there are some directions in establishing the global orientation in education as a factor for economic development. So, according to the strategical priorities, there are some priority needs outlined for staff personnel appropriate to the expected economic and social development, which have to be focused on education for work and the application of knowledge. There are some attitudes that the training for a profession and for future utilization of knowledge in practice is one of the weakest links in the chain of education.

The educational institutions, mainly those of high education need to be equipped with adequate modern laboratories, workshops, practice facilities, information, computer and multi-media centers, as well as being linked to the direct production sector and other appropriate activities. Nonetheless, there is still a necessity for new curriculum as a result of a dynamic process of
implementing the theoretic knowledge to the market requirement. In this sense, the co-operation with foreign universities and institutes, especially from EU countries, is becoming very important.

The different forms of university educational cooperation and communication among universities, especially in Europe, are significant from the aspect of their contribution to higher education system in transition economies. This system should be created in order to help the managers in the transition economies, as well as for all involved in this problematic (university professors of marketing and management, business managers, students of international management on different education level etc.) At the same time, the joint projects of higher academic level studies are very perspective, as well as some other education forms as seminars, trainings etc., used mainly for exchange of practical experiences in this sphere. This form of co-operation will provide the activities connected to the exchange of professors and students, new curriculum etc. This co-operation will contribute to improving the teaching level by implementation of the activities, such as introduction of new teaching methods and materials, new literature and other forms of academic cooperation.

One of the unique features of the cooperation is to treat the students as customers, which is one of the fundamental principles of Marketing. It means that not only the professors could evaluate the students; even the students should evaluate their professors. For achieving the student’s practical experience in marketing, interaction with professionals from the field and general awareness are also required. The unique feature in the education of the field adopted by other forms of education standard performed in EU countries is geared towards those interested in pursuing theoretical and empirical research in these areas. It is very important to mention that the forms of education should be followed by time-to-time interaction with prominent personalities and experts, international conferences, the interaction with international academicians, seminars on contemporary topics and projects work for the students to become well educated and experienced marketers and managers.

The forms of education as well as the teaching curriculum should be created in combination with research practice through different forms of student’s research. The system of interactive teaching should be based on mutual creation of ideas, concepts and discourses. The marketing students should be educated how to implement the research methodology in their practical research. Furthermore, it is necessary to implement the form of discussions about work in progress and share information and ideas with other students and staff, as well as to attend seminars on marketing issues related to seminal works.

There are some contemporary forms of interactive learning, especially when we talk about the international forms of university cooperation. If we accept the opinion that marketing, as a practical issue cannot be learnt in a classroom alone, the distance learning becomes one of the possible forms of education. This is a system of interactive education free of traditional educational concept. In this sphere, Internet becomes a new media interesting for latest management structures. The Internet enhances the global network set up by research, scientific and university centers. From the early 70-ties, Internet was used as network for the USA and later for EU universities, including the research centers and institutes. At the end of 20th century, the Internet turned into worldwide international network. Also, in practice,
the mix of numerous Internet possibilities influences the enlargement of its practical application from the marketing aspect.

Following the example of some foreign universities in countries of the ex-socialist systems (Hungary), the forms of practical assistance in marketing issues could be performed through creation of academic consulting centers about market and marketing research activities. Those centers aim to facilitate the process of marketing application in practice by giving the consulting services to companies or marketing experts. The formation of such centers contributes to better compliance with international educational standards. Its objective is also to bring the theory and practice more closely with the modern marketing requirements. In order to achieve these aims, it supports the scientific initiatives and research that will help to expand and deepen the different areas of marketing teaching. It also promotes the development of new teaching methods in accordance with social and political environment.

5. Conclusion

Attributes of global consumer choices become the impulses of the increasing competition. The coordination of marketing activities in that sphere becomes a basis of the integral market and marketing research for successful internationalization of business. Thus, the market and marketing research become an updating approach in the international business, based on strategies, which represent maximum use of the market possibilities in its global meaning. In this context, the role of global marketing influences the effective implementation of international cooperation on different issues.

The development of international contact has been increased in all spheres of economic and social life. One of the forms is the cooperation being implemented among universities, faculties, institutes and departments. Following the changes in the former centralized model in transition economies, the universities have entrenched the international co-operation. The education and research are of high significance to modern economies where knowledge is becoming the key competitive tool.

As a result of the changes, the great number of marketing managers now understands the concept of marketing and is also able to put their skills into motion. On the one hand, the restructuring, privatization and also the economic recession are not reluctant to marketing way of thinking. On the other hand, the growing number of companies within transition period has increased the demands for educated marketing experts. The increased demand for marketing knowledge cannot be fully met by education system created within the state borders for the time being.

Thus, all efforts should be focused on requirements set out by international teaching standards and to teach as up-to-date range of topics on high academic level. The possibility of gaining expertise is available, although the general economic situation is not favorable for all participants with academic and scientific career. The international contact and university cooperation in education and research should guarantee that efforts would achieve success in the future.
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