




New Trends in Process Control and Production Management

Editors: Lenka Štofová & Petra Szaryszová

 **CRC Press**
Taylor & Francis Group
A BALKEMA BOOK

PROCEEDINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MARKETING MANAGEMENT,
TRADE, FINANCIAL AND SOCIAL ASPECTS OF BUSINESS (MTS 2017), 18–20 MAY 2017,
KOŠICE, SLOVAK REPUBLIC AND TARNOBZEG, POLAND

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CRC Press

Taylor & Francis Group

Boca Raton London New York Leiden

CRC Press is an imprint of the
Taylor & Francis Group, an Informa business

A BALKEMA BOOK

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© 2018 Taylor & Francis Group, London, UK

Typeset by V Publishing Solutions Pvt Ltd., Chennai, India

Printed and bound in Great Britain by CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

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Published by: CRC Press/Balkema

Schipholweg 107C, 2316 XC Leiden, The Netherlands

e-mail: Pub.NL@taylorandfrancis.com

www.crcpress.com – www.taylorandfrancis.com

ISBN: 978-1-138-05885-9 (Hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-315-16396-3 (eBook)

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Higher education of Ukraine and the needs of consumers

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ABSTRACT: The aim of the paper is the development of theoretical approaches and practical recommendations for the formation of a system to respond to the needs of consumers in the company that provides the service. Theoretical and methodological foundation work was to study and rethink works of Ukrainian and foreign scientists on improving marketing activities, services based on the formation of a system to respond to the needs of consumers. Based on systematic methods, structural analysis, causal analysis, synthesis and argumentation proposed system respond to the needs of consumers in higher education (universities). The importance of formation of the system to respond to the needs of consumers for Ukrainian universities and determined its structural components; classified obstacles to implementation in Ukrainian university system to respond to the needs of consumers and the ways to overcome them; Chart systematization process designed event involving consumers and roadmap event (for example, of "Career Day").

1 INTRODUCTION

Modern scholars point out many aspects of higher education marketing in Ukraine and the need for cooperation between higher education institutions and different partners and stakeholders. Company Teletov O.S. in the work "Marketing in Educational Activities" proves that "in the area of administrative reform, it is intended to deepen cooperation between scientific and educational institutions, business entities and governmental agencies at national and regional level" (Teletov 2015). Vasyilkova in her work "Strategic Marketing Planning in Higher Education" presents the directions for optimizing the university management processes by improving the strategic and tactical processes of marketing planning that were identified on the basis of the study on the experience of strategic planning in some foreign universities (Vasyilkova 2015). Ilyashenko in his work "Analysis of Factors Influencing Consumer Choice in the Education Market" shows, on the basis of the analysis, the differentiation of the marketing activities within the educational services of the higher education institutions in order to increase

their effectiveness (Ilyashenko 2015). Drawing the attention of academics to the issues of university marketing points to their importance, and it also presents many aspects that need improvement, one of which is the process of cooperation of educational institutions, similar to the cooperation of the company with its customers. The systematic work in the context of the development of the process of communication with consumers can significantly improve individual processes and university programs, together with the quality of service, and ultimately increase the effectiveness of the higher education system.

Previous publications have already described who are the consumers of educational services presented by universities (Tchaika 2013).

This article attempts to develop a consumer response system in higher education, including students and potential employers. This system should encourage every university employee to take into account all types of occupational activity within the mission and resources of higher education institutions "through the eyes of the consumer", which means taking into account their vision of the educational process.

2 RESEARCH MATERIAL

Introducing a consumer response system requires the development of a number of programs that will allow for understanding why something is preferred by consumers and how to respond timely to their needs. For students and employers, the implementation of this program can mean:

- Continuous improvement of the quality of education, practical training, student internships in companies based on the program created by students and employers,
- Stimulation of the workforce of higher education institutions, students and employers to work together to achieve better curriculum outcomes and expand their "personal horizons",
- Systematic collection and processing of information as well as quantitative and qualitative data on projects involving students and employers, with mandatory analysis of the achieved outcomes and prospects for further improvement,
- Monitoring of students' and employers' complaints about university procedures, quick and flexible response to them,
- Formulating procedure quality standards and database of objective data on their practical planning and implementation in the context of higher education for the purpose of their comparison with the norm and conducting analyzes,
- Business ethics practice.

The leaders of higher education institutions, managers and employees of business units who are directly linked to cooperation with employers (practice units, Deans, Faculties, etc.) should participate in the development of programs. It is very important to eliminate the barriers between these units that duplicate some functions and overemphasize others, which makes it difficult to implement appropriate quality procedures and reduces customer satisfaction. For example, all Faculties have the same purpose, that is the invitation of employers to a Career Day organized by the university. Faculties perform tasks conscientiously, but without prior internal information about the interrelated activities that target the same groups. Such a way of communicating with the external environment is an unfavorable demonstration of the promotion activities of the university. Preparing next events, based on previous experience, the faculty can not invite all popular employers, because there is a possibility that other faculties will invite the same stakeholders.

Program planning is possible in practice by modernizing activities using the cause-and-effect diagram proposed in the early 1950s by K. Ishikawa, often referred to as the fish-bone diagram (Ishikawa 1988). In the field of

"consequences", an "effect" is put and in the place where traditionally "causes" are presented, "means to achieve results" are formulated. The subject of the analysis focuses on standardizing the "fish head" quality concerning the carrying out of the Career Day (Fig. 1).

It describes qualitative and quantitative indicators that can be measured and analyzed. For instance:

- 100% of invited employers participated in this event,
- 100% are students who attended the event and talked with employers,

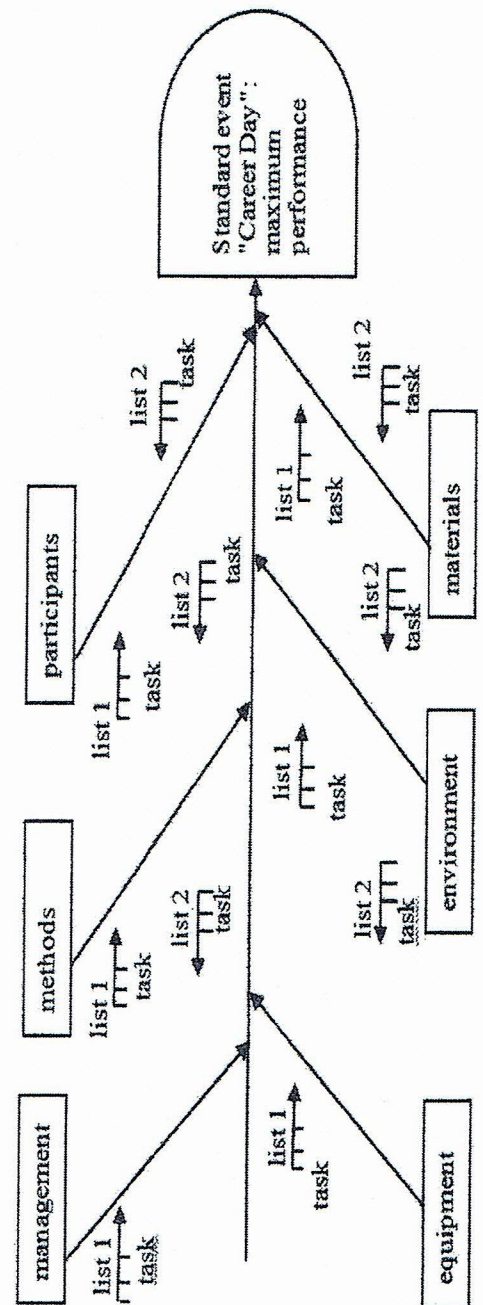


Figure 1. The systematization process diagram of conducting the Career Day.

Table 1. The Career Day roadmap.

Participants	Methods	Management	Environment	Equipment	Materials
<p>list 1</p> <p>Enterprises and students: - list of issues to be agreed with employers, - including student wishes concerning the event</p>	<p>Persons who will cooperate with employers before and after the event: - phone calls, - postal distribution, - creating and updating the employers' information database for the university</p>	<p>Responsible for the analysis of the previous employer and student questionnaire: - developing corrective actions to carry out the Career Day, - informing employers and students of the change</p>	<p>Persons responsible for carrying out the questionnaire: - initial employer questionnaire, - initial student questionnaire, - final results of the employer questionnaire, - final results of the student questionnaire</p>	<p>Agreed with employers: - furniture, - office equipment, - coffeemakers, - dishes (if necessary)</p>	<p>Materials which must be obtained from employers: - list of vacancies and requirements for jobseekers, - information on company, - information about people who are at the event, - employers' wishes concerning the event</p>
<p>list 2</p> <p>Responsible structural units of the University that organized the event: - formation of the team, - defining the purpose of the event, - identifying additional specialists who will be involved, - allocation of duties, - defining time and resource constraints</p>	<p>Persons who develop the questionnaire for students and employers: - development of the previous student questionnaire, - development of the previous employer questionnaire, - development of the final student questionnaire, - development of the final employer questionnaire</p>	<p>Responsible for the analysis of the final results of the employer and student survey: - analysis of problems that occurred during the execution, - development of corrective actions for the future</p>	<p>Room: - for the meeting of the invited, - for direct carrying out the event, - for coffee breaks (if planned)</p>	<p>Persons responsible for the presence and operation of equipment: - a coordinated action plan to ensure timely synchronization</p>	<p>Materials which should be prepared by the higher education institution: - questionnaire (described above), - signposts to direct the invited, - materials for the project of event registration</p>

- The result of the activities and talks is confirmation of the intention to continue to cooperate with the University by 100% of invited employers,
- The result of the activities and talks is confirmation by 100% of students and participants that they have been invited to take up a job or attend an interview,
- Employers and students rated the results of the event at the highest level (based on the results of the study).

In turn, the manager responsible for conducting the event collects feedback from all faculties involved in its organization, makes corrections (side lines) in its key areas: people and contractors (participants), equipment and technology, and methods, among others (from three to six). The first row factors that are the most significant for achieving the target are determined. Then the deepened verification of factors from the first level should be conducted. When analyzing it, it is important to gather information about all possible factors, even meaningless. A potential design variant of the process of event preparation and handling is presented below (Table 1).

As a result of the analyzes, a roadmap of actions is obtained, in which one's actions should be compared. It should be emphasized that every participant is involved in its organization and execution. It is important that such a map with a list of names of people responsible for the process is available to every university representative. This is to avoid duplication of functions and provide flexibility as well as enable meeting the needs reported by participants/customers.

After such a meeting/event, an analysis of bottlenecks should be performed, if such exist, based on one of the classic methods of constructing a cause-and-effect diagram (Fig. 2). In the core box of the

diagram, the so-called "fish head", a problem that occurred in practice during the implementation of the event is defined, and in the so-called "bones" - the causes of the problem.

The diagram should be compiled based on the collected final results of the analysis of the questionnaire conducted among event participants. The reasons for incomplete customer satisfaction may be deeper than it seems during the overall verification of the event. At the same time, event organizers are able to observe the passivity of the students, and the survey will diagnose the true cause of this behavior, for example, their lack of interest in some of the proposed job offers. Any shortcomings that hindered the maximum event effectiveness should be considered and reflected in the new modified roadmap for the next future project called the Career Day.

Consequently, the consumer response system in the scope of higher education consists of four subsystems (Fig. 3), which, according to the principles of holistic marketing, are as important as their objectives, which are as follows: continuous

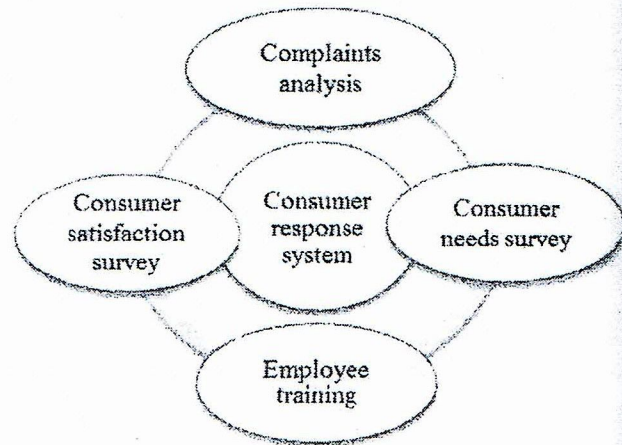


Figure 3. Customer response system in the enterprise.

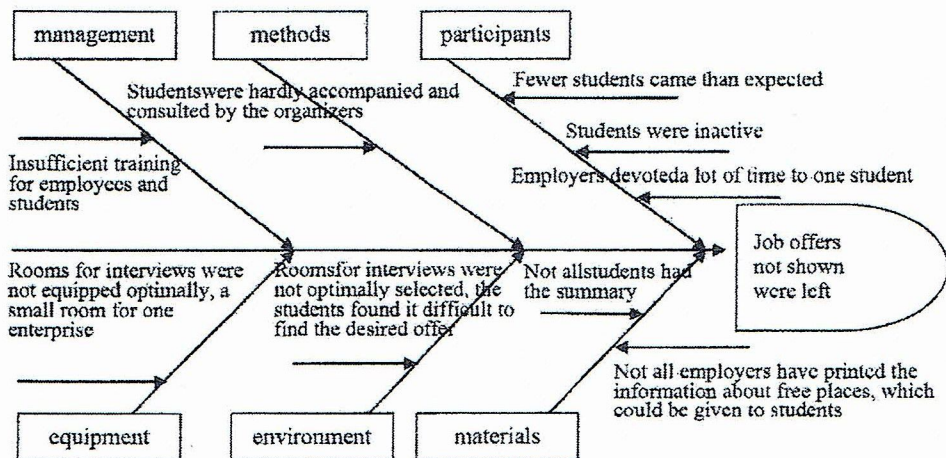


Figure 2. The cause-and-effect diagram of the analysis of the problem of "Unnecessary job offers".

Table 2. Obstacles related to the introduction of a customer response system in the scope of higher education.

Process	Obstacles	Corrective actions aimed at reducing the recognized obstacles
Consumer needs and satisfaction survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of resources in higher education: money, experts, qualifications, - focus on other types of work, - barriers in the flow of information between departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - development of public relations procedures targeted at internal and external audiences, - improvement of procedures for the transfer of information between departments, - appointment of a person responsible for survey, - development of material and moral programs that encourage employees
Employee training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - rigid hierarchy, - impersonal policy, - the scope of responsibilities for every employee, - low salaries, employee burnout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - formation of operational standards for responding to consumer needs, - giving employees wider powers, - encouraging employees to make suggestions, - introduction of a broad employee training program, - transparent procedures for remunerating employees
Complaints analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - routine approach to work, - symptoms of openness, interest, - lack of willingness to respond to specific situations beyond the scope of responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - proposing procedural innovations concerning dealing with complaints, - statistical approach to complaints analysis, - developing and implementing parameters of complaints handling performance, - reduction of time to make a complaint decision

Table 3. Measures to encourage consumers to express various suggestions about the functioning of the institution and the educational services provided and offered.

Condition	Measures of implementation
The variety and convenience of the technology for submitting proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a separate phone number, - mailboxes at the University, - e-mail address, - discussion in specialized groups on social networks
Building consumer confidence in the process of university improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - procedures for quick notification about accepting proposals for consideration, - operational responses to proposals submitted according to needs, - creating an online database in the form of an offer for consumers describing the results achieved by the University, - procedures for consumer access to the online database of results and proposals.

improvement through transparency in decision-making, decentralization of management, establishing and maintaining feedback, and free participation of every participant in this process.

Assumptions regarding possible obstacles to the implementation of the national university system in the context of the response system for all customer groups and prepared corrective actions are presented below (Table 2).

Taking into account the fact that not only the external environment is changing for the university, but also the rapidly changing internal environment (for example, new students every year), consumer response systems cannot be fixed once and for all. "Improving quality and increasing customer satisfaction is a long process, not a single event" (Kotler et al. 2011). The higher education institution which aims to create an effective system for responding to the needs of consumers should encourage the latter to improve its functioning and services.

Dissatisfied customers who made a complaint provide valuable information that should be used to improve the effectiveness of the adopted system and the level of provision of educational services in the future. In order to gain the necessary knowledge about the effectiveness and quality of some of the implemented procedures, universities are verifying them among all categories of their beneficiaries: students, employees, parents, students, employers, etc. Universities should be interested in obtaining such information for further improvement. Many people, consumers, who have valuable suggestions may not express them if the university does not take further steps to simplify the process of submitting such proposals. In order to encourage consumers, proposals should be made to create the right conditions (Table 3).

Universities should focus on developing appropriate procedures aimed at informing consumers about the technology for making proposals and accessing the Internet database to encourage consumers to submit their proposals. Some results of

the complaints analysis can also be submitted to the Internet database, which makes the University's activities more transparent to consumers and helps to improve its image. It is very important that consumers not only have the opportunity to submit a complaint, but, above all, to propose changes to the University or get a reasoned response as to why some proposals are impossible to implement. Universities must be able not only to improve their activities but also inform consumers about it, make changes that are obvious to them, and teach consumers to use innovation.

3 CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, it can be noticed that creating a system in response to the needs of consumers in the scope of higher education requires significant changes in the approach to communication both with customers and between employees. Efforts should be made to improve and enhance the value of educational services provided. The prospect for further research should be the development of

high-quality education concepts: what is quality, and how and who decides to purchase and establish a quality system for higher education.

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ISBN 978-1-138-05885-9



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