

Marketing for Service Quality in Jordanian Construction Project Organisation

Dr. Sultan A. Tarawneh, Associated Professor, Construction Engineering and Management, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Mu'tah University – Karak – Jordan P.O. Box 7 Zip Code 61710, *
dr.sultantarawneh@yahoo.com

Abstract

This paper is based on the findings of in-depth face-to-face semi-structured interviews with owners, directors and senior managers of fifteen contractors organisation in Jordan. The objective of this paper is to explore the marketing concept, cost and activities within the contractors' organisation in the Jordanian construction industry. The results indicated that marketing function has not been accepted as legitimate management activities in the Jordanian construction organisations. Furthermore, the majority of companies (85% of respondents) consider marketing cost as a wasting of money since most projects were awarded to the lowest price offer. More than 85% (13 out of 15) of the interviewed contractors indicated that they do not have marketing departments or divisions in their companies. Only 13% of contracting companies (2 out of 15) have a separate marketing division with a few staff and little budget. The result also indicated that there is much confusion among contractors on the definition of the marketing concepts and its purpose.

Key Words (Marketing, Service Quality, Marketing Orientation, Differentiation, Marketing Mix)

2. Introduction

The construction marketing environment is characterised by fierce competition, uncertain economic conditions, and increasingly more influential, demanding and better informed clients (Preece and Tarawneh 1996). This puts more pressure on contractor organisations to understand the marketing conditions and client requirements and to exceed, rather than simply meet client expectations. In adapting to this pressure contractors have to look to marketing initiatives as a way to create and sustain competitive advantages.

The increased competition with more sophisticated and demanding customers have forced many service companies to compete on quality of products and supporting services. All organisations, whether in manufacturing or service industries, compete to some degree on service (Zeithaml et al 1990). However, it is extremely difficult to find even one industry for which service quality is unimportant. Most manufacturing companies such as Ford Motor, Corning Glass Works and others place a great deal of emphasis on the role of service quality (Zeithaml et al 1990). Manufacturing have found it difficult to establish sustainable competitive advantage only on technology development and they place more attention and resources to value-added activities and services as a prime source of superiority (Hiltor 1992).

Top management needs to be committed to supporting client orientation, and the construction team needs to have the necessary customer communication skills. Firms need to identify and understand what most influence client satisfaction to highlight areas which need further attention and improvement. This needs to be translated into a client satisfaction programme combined with a marketing strategy. Management are advised that to ensure client total satisfaction they adopt a holistic perspective of service quality as a long term differentiation strategy in addition to the quality of the final facility.

3. General Management Core Concepts

3.1. Marketing Applied Across General Industries

3.1.1. The marketing concept

The Chartered Institute of Marketing defines marketing as “the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer needs profitably” (Curtis 1994). A detailed definition of the marketing concept is provided by the Institute of Marketing as the “management function which organises and directs all those business activities involved in assessing and converting purchasing power into effective demand for a specific product or service and in moving the product or service to the final customer so as to achieve the profit target or other objectives” (IOM 1973). Marketing is also defined as “... identifying and satisfying the needs and wants of consumers by providing a market offering to fulfil those needs and wants through exchange processes profitably” (Woodruffe 1995).

The common theme which is emerging from the above definitions is that they all focus on the management process of establishing customers' requirements for the purpose of satisfying them at a profit to the company and its customers. The starting point of this process is the identification of customers' needs, wants and demands.

Those needs, wants and demands should be translated into products and services that fulfil customers' requirements. The guiding concepts for customers to choose between the different offers lie in several factors, which may be regarded as the cost, values provided and their satisfaction with those products and services. The selected products and services need to be delivered via an exchange process for money. This interchange process takes place over a period of time and transactions, during which a kind of relationship may be established. However, the core concepts of marketing are presented in figure 1.

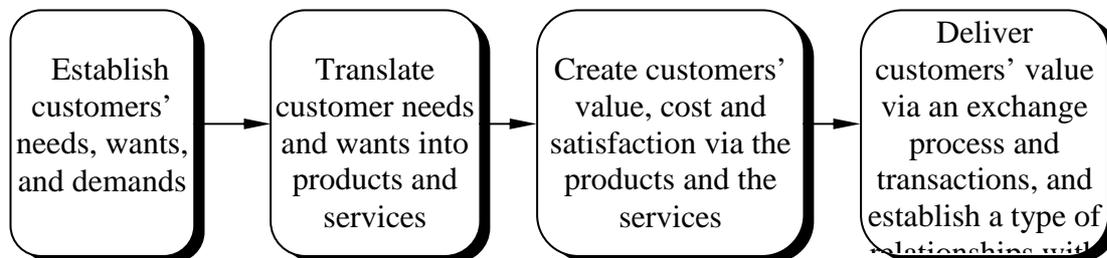


Figure 1 The core concepts of marketing (Adapted from Kotler 1994)

Vassie (1969) has defined the concept of marketing as an essential approach for achieving competitive advantages. Along this line of thought he stated that marketing is “exploitation by an organisation of all the actual and possible differences between its offer and the offers of competing organisations to give it a commercial edge over them”. According to Vassie’s definition an organisation should try all the possible means to gain the superiority over its rivals. However, a company can achieve a commercial edge over its competitors by dedicating more efforts to the marketing concepts presented in figure 1. In this sense marketing has been seen as a competitive tool which enhances the company’s ability to gain and sustain a competitive advantage.

3.1.2. Marketing research

The core of marketing management is that organisations need to identify, anticipate and understand their customers’ needs and wants. Management needs to learn about customer changing needs, competitor actions, marketing environment and so on. The way to monitor the company’s marketing environment is through marketing research, in its different forms.

Traditionally marketing research means the process of identifying the customer needs and wants in a systematic manner and determining the impact of marketing activities on customers (Baron and Harris 1995). Baker (1996) has reported that marketing research can be defined as “the objective gathering, recording and analysing of all facts about problems relating to the transfer and sale of goods and services from producer to consumer or user”.

However, the purposes of conducting marketing research can be summarised as “to reduce the areas of uncertainty surrounding business decisions” (Baker 1996). Woodruffe (1995) has identified two general aims of doing marketing research, namely, to reduce the amount of risk associated with planning, and to monitor performance after the implementation of the plans. Kotler (1994) has supported this by stating that marketing research is conducted to provide managers with a better understanding of the marketing problems. MacCarthy and Perreault (1993) have suggested that the reason for doing marketing research is to collect information that decision makers can trust in making their decisions.

Therefore, competitors and customer information and feedback should be timely, accurate, and available to assist managers in arriving at effective solutions to marketing management problems. Gathering information from many sources, internally and externally, is a valuable decision making tool for managers (Parasuraman et al. 1988). Systematic analysis of customer feedback and the general market information is vital for competitive strategies development. It also helps companies to better understand their customer perceptions and expectations and to take the required corrective actions to close any gaps between their actual performance and customers’ perceptions and expectations.

This requires the company to establish and maintain a suitable business culture that will produce the necessary behaviour. Such culture should enable companies to deliver superior quality to achieve customer satisfaction. Market orientation has been suggested as the business culture which will deliver high levels of quality and customer satisfaction (Narver and Slater, 1990).

3.1.3. Marketing orientation

Market orientation is defined as the organisation wide intelligence generation, dissemination and response to current and future customer needs and preferences (Narver and Slater 1990). This indicates that marketing

oriented concepts focus their efforts on a number of factors. These include market focus, customer focus and co-ordinated marketing.

Comparing marketing and selling concepts indicates that marketing focuses on customers' needs, while selling focuses on the sellers' needs. A selling oriented organisation starts with manufacturing their products, then focuses on the existing products and tries to sell them via hard selling and promotion to generate profits. A marketing oriented organisation defines its target market carefully, concentrates on customer needs, co-ordinates its activities to achieve customer satisfaction which in turn generates the profits. Thus, the selling oriented organisations take the "inside-out" perspective while the marketing oriented organisations take the "outside-in" perspective (Kotler 1994).

Market focus suggests that an organisation needs to focus their efforts to identify their target markets carefully. However, it is very hard for a company to operate effectively in every market and satisfy every customer's need (Kotler 1994). Kotler indicated that companies will do well if they identify their target markets and develop a separate marketing program and strategy for each target market.

Customer orientation requires the organisation to put the customers at the centre of their activities (Woodruffe 1995). A customer oriented organisation would stay close to its customers and track their satisfaction over the time. Customer feedback needs to be communicated to all personnel in order for them to be aware of their contributions to achieve customer satisfaction (Woodruffe 1995). Customer complaint and quality problems need to be discussed at all levels of the organisation to find ways of improving the company's systems or processes.

Co-ordinated marketing indicates first, that all marketing divisions, sales force, advertising, marketing researchers and so on, should be co-ordinated from the customer perspective. Second, marketing departments should be co-ordinated with all the other departments within the organisation. Companies should focus internally, on their internal systems and employees, as well as externally, on their customers. However, there is no point in promising high quality service before the company's employees are ready to deliver the promised service. Company's employees should be able and willing to serve its customers, they must be well selected, well trained and motivated to do their jobs.

Marketing orientation which incorporates market intelligence enables companies to focus their quality programs directly on customers' needs and requirements and assures that market intelligence is the central guidance of the service quality and customer satisfaction strategies. Development of concepts like 'service quality', 'customer service', 'customer focus and orientation', 'customer satisfaction', 'customer retention and loyalty' etc., fit well the basic objectives that marketers hold for the marketing and marketing orientation. Effective implementation of these concepts should lead to a sustainable competitive advantage, increase customer loyalty and in turn enhance the ultimate business performance and profitability of the company.

3.1.4. Marketing mix

Marketing mix has been defined as "the set of marketing tools that the firm uses to pursue its marketing objectives in the target market" (Kotler 1994). McCarthy and Perreault (1993) stated that marketing strategy is to specify a target market and its related marketing mix. Further, they define marketing mix as the "controllable variables that the company puts together to satisfy a target group". Figure 2, presents the general marketing mix "four Ps" and the service industry related "three Ps" with the most important variables under each factor of the four Ps.

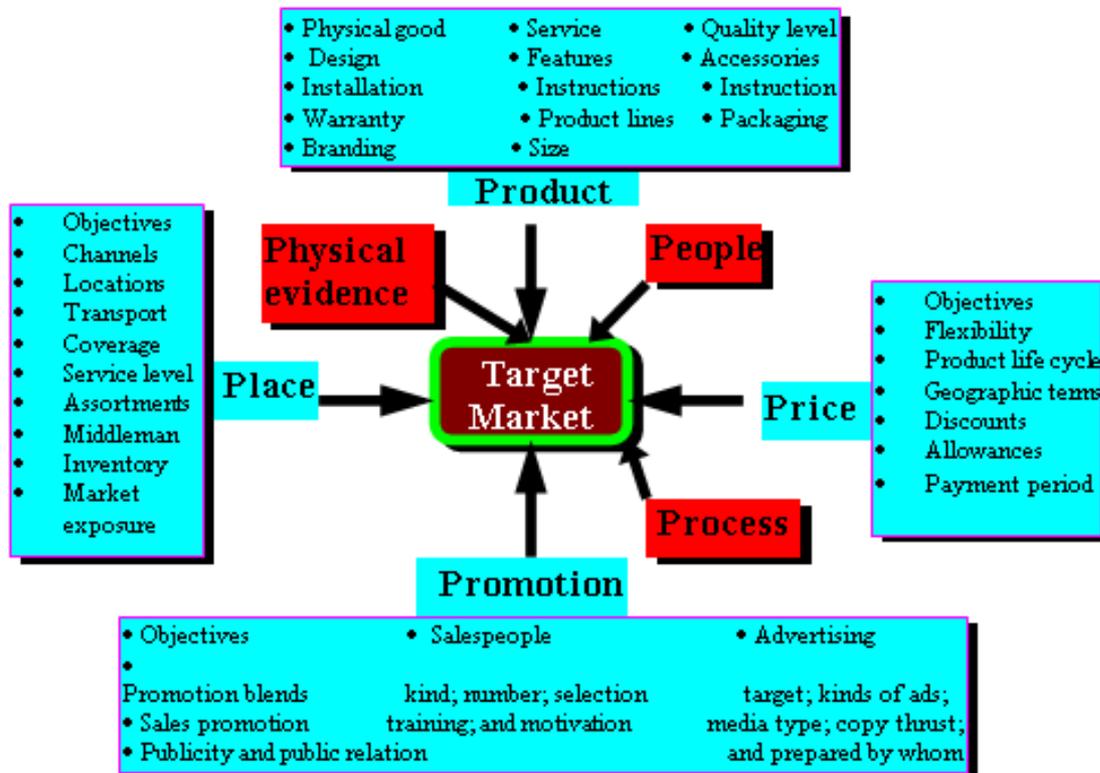


Figure 2 The seven Ps of the marketing mix and their variables (Adapted from McCarthy 1966, Kotler 1994, and Woodruffe 1995)

Those definitions indicate that marketing mix involves all the tools by which marketers can design, produce, communicate, distribute and ultimately sell their offer to the target markets. However, there are many tools that companies can adapt to sell their offers to the selected market segments. Those tools were originally developed around four popular factors called the four P's known as the marketing mix (McCarthy 1966).

The product factor is one of the most basic of the marketing mix. It is concerned with the development of the right product for the right market segment. Companies offer may involve a physical good, a service or a combination of both. The important thing about the product (good or service) is that they should satisfy customers' requirements.

Place is concerned with the decisions to make the product available for the target segments. A product is good if it is available when and where the customer needs it. Thus, place refers to the various decisions the company undertakes to make the product available and accessible when needed by the target segments.

Promotion stands for telling the target customers about the right product. It involves all the activities companies undertake to communicate their product to the selected target markets. Promotion involves personal selling, mass selling, advertising etc. Price is the most critical factor of a company market mix, and represents the money that customers have to pay for the total offering and the costs of getting it to them.

Woodruffe (1995) reported three other factors (three Ps) to be involved in the marketing mix for service marketing, which extend the service marketing mix from four Ps to seven Ps. The additional three Ps are people, physical evidence and process.

People's role in service delivery is widely acknowledged. A company's employees are its prime resource and perhaps as important as its service in the eyes of customers. A high quality service will often require higher levels of employee training and motivations (Woodruffe 1995).

Process and physical evidence are important factors as indicators for what constitutes “value for money” in the service sector. For example, company facilities and offices can be used as indicators of the company’s ability to provide better services.

3.1.5. Marketing strategy

Kotler (1994) has stated that the heart of strategic marketing can be described as STP marketing (Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning). The following examines the components of STP respectively.

3.1.5.1. Market segmentation

Market Segmentation suggested that it is normally difficult for a company to operate and serve all customers in a broad market (Kotler 1994). Customers may be too many, dispersed and have different buying requirements. Companies will be in a strong competitive position to serve particular customer segments of the market. Thus companies need to identify the most attractive market segments that can serve effectively rather than competing everywhere.

Market segmentation can be defined as “the act of dividing a market into distinct groups of buyers who might require separate products and / or marketing mix” (Kotler 1994). McCarthy and Perreault (1993) have come with a similar definition when they said that a market segment is a “homogeneous group of customers who will respond to a marketing mix in a similar way”.

Several variables can be used to segment customer markets. Those variables can be divided into two broad groups, namely, consumer characteristics or non-behavioural variables and consumer responses or behavioural variables (Kotler 1994). Researchers may segment customer markets according to their characteristics or non-behavioural dimensions. Then they examine whether these customer segments have different attitude or response toward a certain product or services. Similarly business or industrial markets segmentation can be undertaken by using many of the variables used to segment customer markets. For, example geographic variables, benefit sought and usage rate can be employed to segment business markets. However, other new variables are required to segment business market due to the differences between customer and business markets. Kotler (1994) has reported a number variable for business markets segmentation such as:

1. Demographic variables such as (industry, company size, and location).
2. Operating variables such as (technology, user/nonuser status and customer capabilities).
3. Purchasing approaches such as (purchasing-function organisation, power structure, nature of existing relationships, general purchase policies and purchase criteria).
4. Situational factors such as (urgency, specific application, size of order).
5. Personal characteristics such as (buyer-seller similarity, attitude toward risk, and loyalty).

3.1.5.2. Positioning and differentiation strategy

Positioning refers to how customers perceive and evaluate companies’ service and products (Woodruffe 1995). Particularly, it refers to the way in which customers rank a service or a product attributes against those of competitors. Kotler (1994) defined positioning as “the act of designing the company’s offer so that it occupies a distinct and valued place in the target customers’ mind”. This is supported by Baker (1996) who stated that positioning is the process of achieving a unique place in a competitive environment for a product or service such that some customer segments perceive the particular services to be different from competitors. Thus, the important step in positioning is to identify the key factors that customers use to evaluate performance and to distinguish between competing alternatives (Baker 1996). However, customer perceptions stem from their beliefs about service’s or product’s value which make up their attitude toward those services and products. Therefore, a company’s positioning must grow out of understanding how the target segment defines value and makes choices among competitors.

Woodruffe (1995) identified the advantages of service and product positioning. First, positioning is essential for the success of marketing strategies because it involves a careful design of the company’s offer to suit the needs of the target segments. It enables the company to better design their marketing mix i.e., the four Ps (price, product, place and promotion). Second, it enables the company to respond positively in competitive environments and recognise market opportunities. Third, it enables a company to satisfy specific markets better than its competitors.

Company’s services and products position in the customer’s mind will be influenced by the way they differentiate them. Differentiation strategy requires that a firm strives to be unique in its industry along certain attributes that are widely valued by customers (Porter 1985). Companies can achieve differentiation based on the

product, the delivery system or process by which it is sold, the marketing approach etc. Differentiation strategy refers to the attributes that make a service or product stand different from those of competitors. Thus companies who want to adopt a differentiation strategy need to select and emphasise the attributes that are different from their competitors.

Differentiation has been defined as “the act of designing a set of meaningful differences to distinguish the company’s offer from competitors’ offers” (Kotler 1994). In this regard a company may be seen as more caring toward its customers, more responsive to the customer needs, more reliable or providing more value for money than its competitors. Porter (1985) indicated that a company can differentiate itself by providing something unique and valuable to customers beyond simply offering a low price.

Service and product attributes have different values for customers. Thus, they have different influence on the customer’s perception of the company’s service and products. Companies need to understand aspects of customer behaviour before developing their positioning and differentiation strategies (Woodruffe 1995). First, a company needs to determine the attributes of its offer that customers rate most highly. Second, it needs to know how customers rank its performance against those of its competitors’ along those attributes. Finally, it needs to know who makes the decisions and try to influence their perceptions. However, proper marketing activities and communication are important to achieve the above goals.

3.1.5.3. Market targeting

After the segmentation process, managers identify the major market segments, focus on or target one or more of these segments and prepare their marketing programs specifically for each selected segment. Therefore, market targeting can be defined as “the act of developing measures of segment attractiveness and selecting one or more market segments to enter” (Kotler 1994). Obviously target marketing may be characterised as “micro-marketing” where marketing programs are designed according to the specific needs and wants of customer groups. However, the ultimate framework of target marketing is “customised marketing” (Kotler 1994). This also means that company’s products, services and marketing programs are adapted to the requirements of a distinct customer or buying organisation.

Target marketing has several advantages. First, it assists companies to identify marketing opportunities better. Second, companies can develop the appropriate offer for each selected market. Third, company’s prices, advertising and distribution channels can be adjusted to reach the selected market efficiently. Also target marketing provide companies with the opportunity to focus their efforts on customers whom they have the highest chance of satisfying.

3.2. How and Why to Apply Marketing to Jordanian Construction?

Despite the acceptance of marketing as a business function there still much confusion on the precise meaning of marketing and how it could be applied to construction (Richard 1981). However, the full benefit of marketing as a management philosophy has come late to construction industry (Fisher 1991).

A study of marketing communication in the UK construction indicated that marketing is still undeveloped and viewed with scepticism (Morgan and Morgan 1990). Shearer (1990) highlighted the problem of what is meant by marketing in construction and found a dominant view that marketing in construction is basically selling promises, since clients are being asked to buy something which has not yet been produced. Male and Stocks (1991) referred the reluctance of using marketing and the confusion over its meaning in construction to the issues of what is meant by “product” in construction.

The lack of understanding and appreciation of marketing roles and marketing research in construction is evident (Morgan and Morgan 1991). Thus, the lack of client information on perception, satisfaction, and requirements and future development leave contractors in dark about what are clients looking for and expecting from them. However, this can help in widening the perception differences between the two groups, clients and contractors, on marketing and service quality. The lack of co-ordination and communication across contractors departments leave the front line employees unaware of the client requirement and therefore clients’ perceptions and satisfaction may suffer. Further, the lack of employees training on interpersonal and communication skills and client education activities undertaken by contractors could adversely affect client’s perceptions and assessment of the contractor’s service.

Male and Stocks (1991) indicated that product in construction is a service which end up with an ownership. Therefore, the total offering of Jordanian contractors is a combination of service and physical product. This

enable construction marketer to benefit from tools and techniques developed for both aspects. Since manufacturing and services are becoming increasingly interrelated, as suggested by Woodruffe (1995) and Zeithaml et al (1990), thus Jordanian contractors need to look at marketing with the concept of the total service offering in their mind. However, Jordanian contractors are encouraged to direct their marketing on the new focus which is recognised as becoming increasingly important: services from non-service providers, as phrased by Woodruffe (1995). This approach includes the service elements of manufacturing and production process. Thus, the role of additional services provided by manufacturing such as supporting services, training, warranties etc., has become a strong source of differentiation. That is the service element of the total service offering of Jordanian contractors is proposed as a key factor in establishing the company competitive advantage.

Despite the obvious differences between marketing of physical goods and service marketing, the underlying concepts and management decisions are much the same (Woodruffe 1995). However, marketing research, planning and the development of marketing mix strategy (the four P's: product, price, promotion and place) are equally important for both services and physical good marketing. However, the marketing mix could be extended for service industries to include another three Ps: people, process and physical evidence. Also marketing-oriented organisation, whether in service or manufacturing sectors, need market intelligence to identify the market needs and fulfil them, thereby satisfying both the client and the firm objectives. The same is applicable to Jordanian contractors who need to have a clear picture of what clients are looking for, what they are evaluating during the service interactions, and how do they rate them compared to a competitors to be able to develop their own strategy and model of service marketing.

4. Research Methods

4.1. The Sampling Frame

A national, cross industry study investigating the concept of marketing in the context of Jordanian construction industry was undertaken. A sampling frame was prepared from the Construction Contractors Directory in Jordan 1999 which provides a detailed list of Jordanian contractors.

The aim was to generate a list of (15) respondents who were involved in marketing, business development and public relation departments. The list included one key or senior manager in marketing or business development functions from each of the top 100 Jordanian contractors.

The exploratory nature of the study obliged the selection of a judgmental sample. This indicated that one key or senior individual was judged to be a reliable source of information on their organisations' activities than lower-ranking managers (Philips (1981). In concord with Philips' conclusion Patterson et al. (1997) reported that one key respondent is appropriate if he/she has a senior or ownership position. They added that such respondents and their direct involvement in their organisations' "boundary-spanning activities" qualify them to respond on behalf of their companies. Conant, Mokwa and Varadarajan (1990), indicated that "in the face of time and resources constraints the single informant approach allows for a large number of organisations to be surveyed". Likewise Patterson et al. (1997) stated that it would be very difficult to hunt multiple respondents over several months and it may decrease the response due to respondents changing functions within the company; leaving the company altogether or becoming too busy to continue participation.

However, a senior respondent approach was selected to obtain data for a number of reasons. First, care was taken to ensure that the respondent has a senior occupation, knowledge and they were suitable and willing to participate in the study. Generally the respondents occupy senior positions in their organisations such as owners, chairman, managing directors, executives, directors, and senior managers.

4.2. Procedures of Data Collection

Giving the exploratory nature of the research, semi-structured, in depth face-to-face interviews as the main data collection technique were conducted with selected experienced personnel from the marketing and business development departments of (15) Jordanian contractors chosen from the top 100 organisation as presented .

A semi-structured interview was selected in order to set a framework and not to deviate from the main research topic due to the lack of understanding and different interpretations of those concepts from the people working within Jordanian construction. It was also appropriate to start with a relaxed discussion of such new topic to Jordanian construction, i.e., marketing. However, at the beginning of each interview respondent was told about the aims of the research. Further all respondents were asked for their permission to record the interviews and assured that their identity and the given information will remain confidential.

The interviews were taped, transcribed and analysed to determine the common themes and key phrases related to respondents' general perceptions and assessments of their marketing activities.

4.3. Design of The interviews

For an interview which required the minimum possible time from each interviewee, taking into consideration the nature of the interviewees, semi-structured in-depth face-to-face interviews were considered appropriate for the exploratory phase of this study as explained earlier.

Given the exploratory nature of the research and the sparse literature on marketing in construction industry, open ended questions were used to identify the most important aspects of the research topic and to seek any relevant suggestions from the participants. Therefore, a national, cross industry study investigating the concepts of marketing was undertaken. A sampling frame was prepared from the Construction Contractors Directory in Jordan (1999).

The research questions, related to the research objectives, were directed toward experienced and senior managers within contractors' organisation who were specifically involved in the marketing and business development activities.

Following the same framework adapted by Parasuraman et al. (1985) and Baker and Lamb (1993), the discussion about marketing centred on contractors' experience and perceptions to this concept. Respondents were asked to give background information for themselves and their companies. They also asked to define marketing and to give their opinion on the differences between marketing and selling in construction. Detailed information was also collected concerning marketing activities for each specific company.

4.4. The Pilot Interviews

Piloting is essential for any research to enhance the reliability and validity of the finding of the main research. Initially (5) firms involved in the provision of contracting services were contacted randomly. The aim was to aid our understanding of how to define and perceive marketing at a time where nothing has been published about marketing in Jordanian construction industry.

Based on the results of the piloting interviews, the main data collection technique was modified to take into account the suggestions made by the respondents. By doing so the authors hoped that the interview questions became face valid, and therefore, ready to be used in the main data collection stage.

5. Data Analysis

The study goal was introducing a further understanding of the concept of marketing in the Jordanian construction industry. In order to incorporate the findings and views of previous researches, (15) interviews were conducted with experienced and senior individual within contractor organisations as stated earlier. The interviews were undertaken at their offices and at their convenient time. The interviews findings were presented in the following sections, while questions asked the interviewees were covered a wide range of issues concerning marketing activities.

5.1. General Information

Table 1, shows the types of personnel interviewed and other information on the types of firms that participated in the interviews. However, the personnel and firms name were remained anonymous.

Table 1. Type of personnel and firms interviewed

Contractors ' Symbol	Respondent position and Experience	Respondent qualification	Firms rank or level	Areas of speciality
A	Head of Purchasing Department (8 years)	BSc Mechanical Eng.	First Class	Water and Water treatment
B	Finance Manager (15 years)	Master in Economic	Second Class	Building
C	General Director (25 years)	BSc Electrical Eng.	Third Class	Electromechanic
D	General Director (15 years)	BSc Civil Eng.	Second Class	Building
E	Vice Director (16 years)	BSc Electrical Eng.	Second C lass	Building
F	Technical Manager (14 years)	MSc Architectural Eng.	First Class	Building
G	Finance Manager (10 years)	MSc Civil Eng.	Second Class	Electromechanic
H	General Director (29 years)	BSc Electrical Eng.	Second Class	Building
I	Technical Manager (30 years)	BSc Civil Eng.	First Class	Building
J	General Director (20 years)	BSc Mechanical Eng.	First Class	Building
K	Project Manager (13 years)	MSc Construction Management	First Class	Building and Management
L	Sales Managers (5 years)	BSc Civil Eng.	First Class	Building
M	Project Manager (8 years)	BSc Civil Eng.	First Class	Building
N	Technical Manager (13 years)	BSc Civil Eng.	First Class	Building
O	Owner (25 years)	Higher Secondary Education	First Class	Building

5.2. Marketing Definition and Activities

The majority of the respondents (8 out of 15 which equal to 53%) suggested that marketing can be defined as presenting the company technical ability with the suitable cost to convince the prospective clients that the contractor can do the job on time within budget and according to the required specification.

A number of respondents (5 out of 15 as a percent 33%) defined marketing as promoting the company services and products in the best possible manner in a minimum cost and maximum profit to convince the client to buy. A small number of contractors (N=2 equivalent to 13%) have no idea about the definition of marketing.

Only two contractors have a separate division of marketing in their companies (only 13%). The number of staff in each division is only three persons with a small budget. The responsibility of the marketing division is limited and only focused on gathering information about the number and type of future projects. Whereas the rest of the interviewed contractors (13 out of 15 equal to 87%) have no division for marketing and they do not see any importance for it.

6. Discussion and Conclusions

The current research may be the only one to indicate the failure of the Jordanian contractors to adopt modern marketing systems on their activities. Based on the questions asked during the interviews, it is evidently clear that marketing function has not been accepted as legitimate management activities in the Jordanian construction organisations. However, only two contractors have a separate marketing division with a few staff and little budget. On the other hand the majority of contractors (85%) they do not see any benefits of marketing and saw marketing as an extra cost and they do not need any marketing activities. The result also indicated that there is much confusion among contractors on the definition of marketing. Jordanian contractors see marketing as gathering information about the type and number of prospective projects and to be qualified for these projects.

It is obvious that marketing in the context of the Jordanian construction industry should be precisely defined, and its boundaries, benefits and activities must be clearly stated and identified. The results also support the need for a specific programme and workshops for educating Jordanian contractors' personnel on the importance and benefits of marketing and its effects on their improvement and success.

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