

The Three Challenges of Marketing for Newborn Universities

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Abstract

University is a service providing organization. It has products as other profit and non-profit organizations' have. And it is to market its products as other organizations do. Especially newborn universities should be more conscious about its marketing, communication, and branding as it is to establish a standard of students' satisfaction, it is to communicate its products, it is to determine its positioning strategy and implement it in the market. Majorly, not only the departments but also the universities have to face the three challenges in its marketing are identified. The first challenge is to attract students through awareness building and through quality communications. The Second challenge is to retain students by making their student-life comfortable and pleasing in the university but not at the cost of its quality. And the third challenge is to defeat the threat of university's competitor by SWOT analysis.

Keywords: marketing, and marketing communication of university, branding of university, marketing communication and branding of service providing organization, factors of satisfaction of university students, SWOT analysis of university

1. Introduction

New and new universities are being opened with different ideology, style, and with different specialized programs based on specialized arena that is required for the country and for the world. And to introduce these different ideologies, style, and the different specialized programs requires at least the adequate number of students to run the university. As a result, newborn universities have to face challenges to get students. Broadly the challenges are to attract, to keep (satisfied), and to defeat (competitors).

2. Literature Review

Marketing Mix the 4Ps (Product, Price, Place, & Promotion) are badly required to be followed in case of planning of universities marketing strategy. In the Marketing Mix, the 'Promotion' is a combination of many promotional tools is called Promotional Mix.

"Product means the goods-and-services combination the company offers to the target market" (Kotler, Armstrong, Agnihotri, Haque 2013). There are three levels of product that is Core Product, Actual Product, and Augmented Product. The three levels of product a university offers are discussed below.

For university, the different courses of the university may be considers its Core Products. For example, BA (Hon's) in Graphic Design and Multimedia, Fashion Design, Interior Architecture, Bachelor of Business Administration, and BSc (Hon's) in Computer Science and Engineering, Electrical and Electronic Engineering etc.

The state of the art curriculum, quality of faculty members, quality tuition, adequate and up-to-date lab facilities, university infrastructure, the brand value of the university and the brand value of the programs can be considered as Actual Product.

The friendly and helpful behavior of different staff, cordialness of teachers, the decoration of the university, class rooms, and labs, quality cafeteria services, resourceful library service, faster Wi-Fi facilities in the campus, organization and activities of different clubs, arrangement of different events by the university may be considered as Augmented Product.

"Price is the amount of money customers must pay to obtain the product" (Kotler, Armstrong, Agnihotri, Haque 2013). The tuition fees and other fees given by the students is the price. The ease of payment, amount of payment, facilities to give payment in installments is the factors of satisfying students.

"Place includes company activities that make the product available to target consumers" (Kotler, Armstrong, Agnihotri, Haque 2013). Universities geographic area is its place. Student favors the university campus in the renowned city or nearby their place or job place, or the place for which they can get easy transport to reach the campus. Providing transport facilities for students may help deciding students to admit favorably in the universities.

"Promotion means activities that communicate the merit of the product and pursued target customers to buy it" (Kotler, Armstrong, Agnihotri, Haque2013). The traditional tools for marketing communication are Advertising, Sales Promotion, Publicity and Public Relation, Direct Marketing, Internet Marketing. Beside the traditional marketing communication tools, there are many communication tools which are appeared as more effective for university marketing communication. Schüller David and Rašticová Martina (2011) have mentioned

in their article a report of a survey on the communication media or tools conducted on the prospective students of the Brno University of Technology by Eva Knebllová.

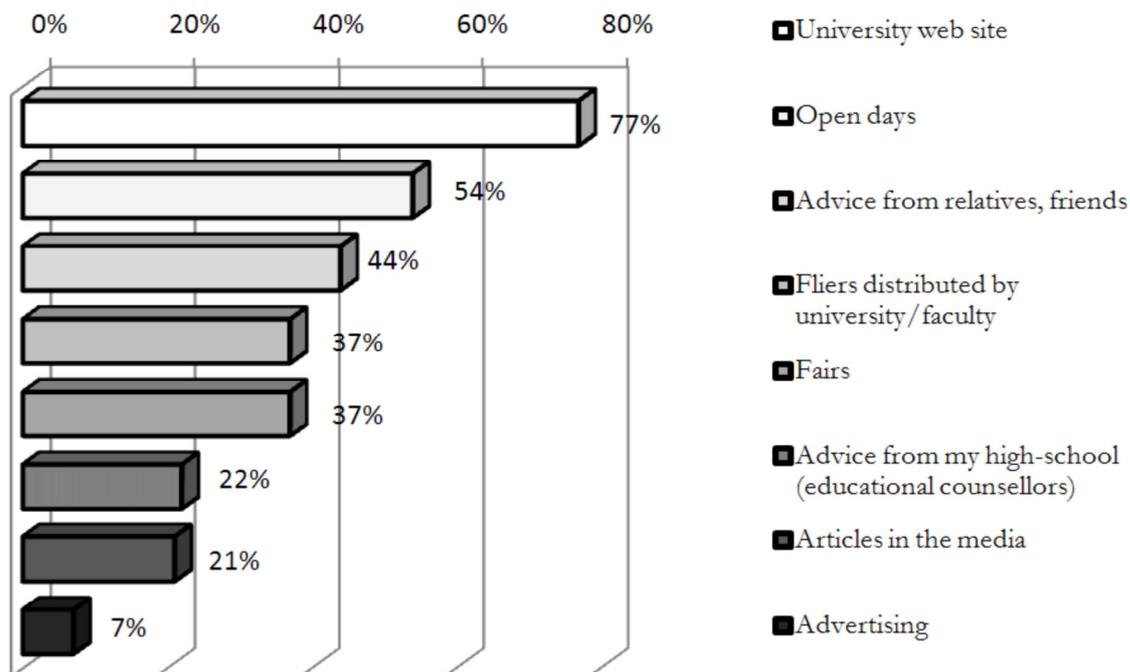


Fig. 1- Sources of information for prospective students. Source: taken from Knebllová, E. Results of an Internet Inquiry of Prospective Students conducted at Brno University of Technology, 2009, p. 14.

3. The three challenges and the suggestions to face the challenges are given below:

3.1 The first challenge is to attract students through awareness building programs and through quality communications:

- Arranging awareness building seminar on the utility of the different programs of the university for prospective students of higher secondary level, parents and college teachers in different colleges throughout the country. At the time of the seminar leaflet and written page on career opportunities of the university can be distributed. Specialty or novelties, like wall clock, calendar, pen, diary etc. may be given them or for their offices and class rooms in which university's web address and major programs' name can be written in visible font and size. A wall clock or calendar hanging on a wall of class rooms, college offices, in home or the use of diary, pen, desk calendar etc. may help prospective to recognise and recall the university name and its different special programs for the long time they use those small gifts or it last in the mind of prospective. The more durable and fashionable is the gift the more long lasting effect in the prospective memory.
- Competitions may be arranged for the students of higher secondary level. This includes knowledge contest, design contest, project dealing etc. Students may join individually, or with a team. Participation may be encouraged by awarding different prizes.
- Open Days – prospective students may visit the faculty premises where they would like to study to meet their future teachers, see the lecture rooms, labs, and learn about other factors influencing the quality of study at a given higher-education institution (Schüller David and Rašticová Martina, 2011).
- Exhibition of students' work may be arranged in the popular places throughout the country.
- Roadshows – this involves building long-term relations with secondary schools as partner schools. Representatives from a university visit secondary schools try to provide them with best information possible on their university and faculty making the secondary students interested in studying at a higher-education institution familiar with all the study benefits (Schüller David and Rašticová Martina, 2011).
- Journalists may be inspired by maintaining liaison through inviting in different events of the university, and by presenting gift in different occasions to write article mentioning university's different departments and its different programs, specialities, and its career opportunities.
- Online social media especially Facebook can be used to communicate through the advertisement of the different departments and its different programs. On the other hand, departmental Facebook ID may be created where university's departmental events, students' quality work, achievements, and their

positions in different renowned organisations may be published.

- h) There may be different departments' corner in the university's website where university's different departmental events, students' quality works, their achievements, and the passed out students' positions in the different renowned organisations may be published. The different and multiple career opportunities of different departments and its different programs should be highlighted in the site.
- i) Stall can be taken in different educational fair a Kiosk may install around the stall so that prospective students may get detail information about different departments of the university.

3.2 The second challenge is to retain students by making their student-life comfortable and pleasing in the university (but not at the cost of quality):

- a) Friendly and Cordial behaviour by teachers, advisors, and by administrative people must be hoped. A Control Cell should be there to look after whether students are getting proper treatment from teachers, advisors, and especially from admission office and accounts. It is also to observe whether the prospective students are coming to get information are they treated cordially with proper information about the university, departments, and programs. Training can be arranged for Career Counsellors on the cordial behaviour with students and prospects, on university's different programs and its career opportunities. A digital presentation of the university containing students' work, alumni's positive opinion, their position in different organisations and career opportunities of different programs can help Career Counsellors to explain information to prospects more effectively and successfully.
- b) There should be Display Gallery in the university premises to display students' best works, and assignments to inspire students.
- c) Well equipped, organised and decorated labs and studios increases students satisfaction not only for its environment but also for students' selfie's background that they can share in social media with their friend and relatives may be they are of other universities.
- d) Friendly and well decorated infrastructure of the university not only attracts prospective students but also helps in increasing students' satisfaction.
- e) Encouraging and supporting students for extra-curricular activities. A magazine can be published where teachers and students' works, articles, and different creative and innovative ideas can be published, a game zone, and different clubs may be establish. Involving students in extra-curricular activities may not only helps in making their student-life pleasing but also it help students to refrain from subversive activities.
- f) Arranging workshops and seminars by the industry experts to introduce the industry and its current practice to the students and the faculty members as well.
- g) University will keep regular contact with its passed out students as they may help to keep in touch with industry. They can better help giving ideas related to current trend and future requirements of the industry by conducting workshop, seminar, or simply by sharing experience and opinion with the existing students and with the authority of the university.

3.3 Third challenge is to defeat the threat of university's competitor by SWOT analysis

- a) The marketing team of the university will have to do SWOT analysis of the university and its different department with respect to competitor universities in terms of university's different programs and its curriculum, qualities of faculty members, logistic facilities, infrastructure and environment, friendliness of academic and administrative procedure, and ease of payment procedures of different fees etc. and then the marketing team will make suggestions for the development of the university with reference to competitors university.
- b) It is also needed determine the Point of Parity (POP) and Point of Difference (POD) with competitor universities to establish the differentiated positioning strategies. The team will take measure to develop three levels of product (Core Product, Actual Product, and Augmented Product) and the media strategies considering all above analysis to establish the positioning statement according the positioning strategy.

4. Conclusion

The task of marketing is not only limited to developing the best product for its customer or effective communication to its customers but also it is an integrated effort. For university, developing effective programs for its prospective students' job market, for the requirement of the country and for the world, the infrastructure and name of the university, and communicating its potential students is not enough for marketing. It is observed that students are not merely attracted by the name and courses of the university or by its media adverting. They see the university, they see the programs, they see the fees, they see the advertising and other communication efforts, they see the events and activities and finally, they listen the satisfaction and dissatisfaction of the

students and guardians of the university, media, University Grand Commission, Government and different publics, and then they decides. It is an integrated effort. Overcoming of the three marketing challenges of the university may fulfill the mentioned integrated effort.

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