

## **MARKETING STRATEGIES OF FUTURE UNIVERSITY: BASIS FOR INTERVENTION SCHEME**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The main purpose of this study is to determine the effectiveness of the current marketing practices of Future University and the degree of seriousness of the marketing problems encounter, in order to design a strategic intervention scheme to improve and develop an appropriate marketing strategy by utilizing the descriptive survey method. Furthermore; it was able to determine the weak and strong areas of the current marketing practices. And designed a program that is suited to the problems, recommendations was also given to intensify itself against competition and maintain a good position in market place In spite of its success in school business.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Improvement Marketing Strategies, Marketing Strategies for Business Success, Market Place Position, Marketing Intervention, Strategic Change*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In today's business either company is establish or not it is very important to strengthen the core capabilities of every business, companies must realize the important of marketing strategy especially in this time of crisis. For school business it is necessary to determine and analyze if their marketing strategies are still aligned base on the market trend in order stay attune in the business, thus existing strategy should scrutinize if it is still applicable to the client demand. Especially needed is the analysis of the four factors such as product, price, place, and promotion.

Marketing is very important especially for school business it helps to determine the different demands of the client and conceptualize the position of the business; therefore the analysis of this so-called 4 P's in marketing is very vital to provide management with relevant, accurate, reliable, valid, and current information. Competitive marketing environment and the ever-increasing costs attributed to poor decision making require that marketing research provide sound information. Sound decisions are not based on gut feeling, intuition, or even pure judgment.

Branding and marketing are syllabus standard in business school, but sometimes school leaders do not apply those principles when marketing their own school. There is actually a great deal that is taught in business schools that should be taught to business school. (Mathew 2009)

Breivick (2006) emphasized that private institution depends on student tuition for the large proportion of their income and seeks to establish a niche in a highly competitive and expanding market place. They exist at all levels of the academic hierarchy, although most of the growth seems to be at the bottom, it is important to understand their realities and complexities.

In this view, an examination of these four factors needs to be undertaken by Future University. In spite of its success in school business. The researcher found out that the competition in the academe and related business is increasing and the researcher found that the current marketing management practice of Future University is not so aggressive in terms of product, price, place, and promotion. As experience some of their programs namely faculty of IT, Faculty of Arts and Design, Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Architecture and Design, Faculty of Computer science, Faculty of Geoinformatics, faculty of Telecommunication and Space Technology, faculty of Post Graduate studies etc. so there is still a need to cushion, improve, enhance, and intensify itself against competition and maintain a good position and image in the market place for a better opportunity.

## **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

This study is anchored on the theory of Kotler who stated that marketing management represents the key factor that propels business and industry to attain accelerated growth and development. Complex organizations such as colleges, universities, businesses, and government agencies are being confronted daily with an unfriendly economic environment, which significantly hinders their ability to remain viable in an effective ever-changing global society. (Kotler 2006)

The marketing concept is a management orientation that holds that the key task of the organization is to determine the needs, wants and value of a target market and to adapt the organization to deliver the desired satisfactions more effectively and efficiently than competitors. Marketing That Works is possibly the best of both the academic and practical approaches to marketing issues—it comes from the intersection of both approaches.

In a downturn, marketing becomes even more important to the company's bottom line, making a profit. A marketing plan is a key to establishing the dimensions of your market, where you fit according to your product and identifying where a company should focus its marketing budget to achieve the best overall results.

Contemporary marketing is about the building. A product, service, brand, or corporation is successful only to the degree that it means something important to the people with whose lives it is linked. Retailers, competitors, neighbors, government leaders, and even members of the press- people we call stakeholders because they have a stake in the success of companies and brand are involved with or affected by marketing programs. (Keegan 2000)

In the consumer-driven approach, consumer wants are the drivers of all strategic marketing decisions. No strategy is pursued until it passes the test of consumer research. Every aspect of a market offering, including the nature of the product itself, is driven by the needs of potential consumers. The starting point is always the consumer. The rationale for this approach is that there is no point spending R&D funds developing products that people will not buy. History attests to many products that were commercial failures in spite of being technological breakthroughs. (Borden 2003)

The greatest challenge for faculty is the impact of the internet on how students relate their learning. Nowadays, both faculty and students are increasingly using electronic resources and know how to judge the inherent quality of information, and their research schedules allow them to wait for print materials to be delivered where appropriate. Many

students disclosed that the web is a time saver when looking for information and has a modest influenced in their academic performance. Information literacy is a survival skill in the information age. Instead of drowning in the abundance of information, literate individuals know how to find, evaluate, and use information effectively to solve the problem. ( Jemielniak 2008)

Marketers today have the responsibility to treat the customer as the guest, suppliers as partners, and employees as team members, earth and its environment as a fragile vessel that can carry us to bountiful future or to ecological calamity. (Duncan 2000).

Truly successful businesses over the long term have achieved greater than markets levels of profit return to their investors because they have been able to somehow insulate themselves from competitive pressures. If a company cannot insulate itself from competitors, it becomes doomed to market level rates of return as competitive forces continually attack its profit margins and revenue sources. (Lodish 2008)

Wing (2008) posited that higher education is commercialized nowadays and increasingly being seen as a good. This idea links higher education to returns on investment. It gives added significance to the issues of quality to maximize such returns. Quality is not just about implementing and running a system. It is an attitude, a strategy, which not only improves an organization but the way people work and live. It grows from within rather than being imposed from outside. Quality assurance becomes the underpinning value that holds together other aspects of higher education institutions. It thus has to span the processes of marketing management practices, adoption of different strategies and institutional linkages.

The marketing function is therefore, an essential ingredient of corporate strategy, and this marketing focus should be communicated through marketing planning into all aspects of business activity. In choosing a marketing strategy a frequent distinction that is made is between undifferentiated marketing and differentiated marketing.

The new concept starts with the firm's existing and potential customer; it seeks profits through the creation of customer satisfaction; and it seeks to achieve this through an integrated, corporate-wide marketing program. These are the three pillars of the new marketing concept. Customer-Oriented Focus... Integrated Marketing... Profit through Creating Customer Satisfaction. (Kotler 2004)

Said that money is scarce today due to the global crisis. What is significantly different today are neither the problems nor issues confronting higher education, but the full-scale arrival of the internet and its inherent age of information. Today, most people have a vague and uncomfortable awareness of information overload set against a shrinking global community. Too often such awareness is slow to result in changes in how learning takes place or business is done on campuses. The widespread failure of the academic community to recognize or take the enormous potential of the internet is lamentable. Despite significant changes in internet resources and information technology, most people view them in simplistic terms. (Breivick 2006)

There are a number of key challenges to any organization that will operate over the next decade. Globalization, corporate consolidation, ecological issues, increasing sensitivity to privacy and data ownership issues, and new governmental regulation must all be considered when designing marketing efforts. Marketing across national boundaries creates challenges that once could only be profitably managed by large companies. Because the Internet immediately puts one's products and service information at the fingertips of the world, it is important to be ready for the global customer

from day one. In addition, one must be prepared for competition from very far away, for on the Internet, no one cares if you're next door or halfway across the world, as long as the goods or services can be delivered in a timely, reliable manner. (Lodish 2008)

There are four elements in the marketing mix. The first is a product. Product is anything tangible or intangible offered to a market by the business to satisfy needs. A tangible product is anything that can be touched and seen such as books, foods, etc. On the other hand, intangible products are those that cannot be touched but can be felt such as services.

It is important for marketers to realize that consumers view a product differently than business people. Business often sees their products as the first part of the definition anything offered to a market. Consumers have a different view of products. They are concerned about their needs. Those two views can result in problems when businesses develop and market products. (Burrow 2006)

A product is anything that can be offered on the marketplace, with the purpose of interest, buying, usage or consumption as long as it can satisfy a need or fulfill a wish. Products can be a physical object, service, person, place, organization or idea. The e-marketing works in many cases with non-physical products and is situated more on the tangible, virtual side. As we already have guessed, the e-marketing opens a new dimension, a new modality to perceive and utilize virtual instrument in order to achieve real goals. (Hubert 2001)

In higher education institutions, the course offering and school facilities are their main products. Distance education nowadays is very popular and common in the top ranking universities and colleges in the world. Chances are good if students work with someone who has taken online classes or completed online training. In this day and age, accredited online degrees are fast becoming mainstream credentials. Some are calling online schools the next major internet application. Futurist and education experts cite society's increasing acceptance of this medium and its enhanced delivery mechanism as two of the reasons why more and more students are logging on to virtual campuses. ( Birnbaum 2000)

## **THE PROBLEM**

### **Statement of the Problem**

The study was to determine the marketing strategies of Future University in Khartoum, Sudan as evaluated by administrators and faculty in order to design improvement of the existing marketing strategies. Specifically, it answers the following questions:

As assessed by the administrators and faculty, what is the effectiveness to which marketing strategies are adopted by Future University in terms of the following parameters:

- Products;
- Price;
- Place; and
- Promotion?

What are the problems encountered and their degree of seriousness in terms of the above-mentioned parameters?

Based on the findings, what improvement can be proposed?

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to examine directly the marketing practices, the researcher adopted the 4 P's in the marketing mixes such as product, price, place, and promotion. For a proper evaluation using the questionnaire there were two groups of respondents namely; administrators and full-time faculty, with a total of 84 and were equally divided into different departments and offices. Using the two sets of the questionnaire, the respondents were assigned to assess the degree of effectiveness of the current marketing practices, and the degree seriousness of the problem encounter of Future University. The respondents of the study were the school administrators and comprise of (school President, VP - Finance, VP – Academic, VP – Students Welfare, Deans and chairpersons of different colleges and directors of different departments of Future University.

The second group comprised of full-time faculty members of different colleges of the university. They were chosen by the researcher as respondents because they spend most of their time in the university and the researcher believed that since they been staying for so many years in Future University and they know already the problems existed furthermore they know some areas that need to improve, in which the researcher believes they can give exact insights about the study. The outside part-time teachers are not included since they spend their time in university after 5:00 o'clock in the afternoon and even on Saturdays. The new faculty is also not included because they are just new in the organization and their knowledge about the school operation is insufficient.

Table 1 shows the total number of school administrators and full-time permanent faculty members of the University who are the respondents of the study.

**Table 1: Respondents of the Study**

**n = 84**

Departments / Offices	ADMINISTRATOR		Full-Time Faculty	Total
			Faculty	
President office	1			1
VP-Academic	1			1
VP- Business & Finance	1			1
VP- Student Welfare	1			1
Faculty of IT	4		10	14
Faculty of Arts and Design	3		5	8
Faculty of Computer Science	2		11	13
Faculty Engineering	3		9	12
Faculty of Telecommunication and Space Technology	2		7	9
Faculty of Geoinformatics	1		4	5
Faculty of Architecture and Design	1		6	7
Faculty of Basic Studies	1		4	5
Faculty of Graduate Studies	1		6	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>		<b>62</b>	<b>84</b>

### Research Instrument

The researcher made questionnaires that were used in this study as the main instrument of data collection. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. Part I contains a question to elicit responses regarding the respondent's perception on the effectiveness of an adaptation of the marketing strategies with regards the four parameters such as Products, Price, Place, and Promotion. Each statement is followed by a number of indicators corresponding to each scale indicator is the numerical scales with the following qualitative interpretation.

Scale	Effectiveness	Interpretation
4	Very Effective	When the strategy contributes attainment to the marketing objectives in all cases.
3	Effective	When the strategy contribute the attainment to the marketing objectives in the majority of the cases
2	Less Effective	When the strategy contributes the attainment to the marketing objectives in some cases.
1	Not Effective	When the strategy does not contribute to the attainment of the marketing objectives
<b>Legend:</b>		
<b>Scale Range</b>		
3.26 – 4.00 Very Effective (VE)		
2.51 – 3.25 Effective (E)		
1.76 – 2.50 Less Effective (LE)		
1.0 – 1.75 Not Effective (NE)		

Part II dealt with the degree of seriousness of the problems encountered with regards the four parameters such as Products, Price, Place, and Promotion. Each statement is followed by a number of indicators corresponding to each scale indicator is the numerical scales with the following qualitative interpretation.

Scale	Effectiveness	Interpretation
4	Very Serious	Means that the problem hinders the attainment to the marketing objective in all cases.
3	Serious	Means that the problem hinders the attainment to the marketing objective in most cases.
2	Less Serious	Means that the problem hinders the attainment to the marketing objective in all cases.
1	Not Serious	Means that the problem does not affect the attainment to the marketing objective in all cases
<b>Legend:</b>		
<b>Scale Range</b>		
3.26 – 4.00 Very Serious (VS)		
2.51 – 3.25 Serious (S)		
1.76 – 2.50 Less Serious (LS)		
1.0 – 1.75 Not Serious (NS)		

### Data Analysis

For accuracy and precise interpretation and analysis of the findings, the following statistical tools will be used:

Numerical rating scales were assigned to the descriptive rating scales pertaining to the effectiveness of the marketing strategy of Future University. The researcher used the percentage and weighted mean methods.

The formula used in setting the percentage is:

$$P = \frac{f}{n}$$

n

Where: P = percentage

f = number of respondents under scale

n = number of respondents

### Mean

This was used to determine the extent of marketing strategies of Future University as assessed by the administrators and full-time faculty. The formula is presented below:

The weighted mean was computed using the following formula:

$$\mu = \frac{\sum f x}{N}$$

N

Where:  $\mu$  = weighted mean

$\Sigma$  = summation

f = the no. of responses under each scale

x = the weight assigned to each scale

N = number of respondents

### Summarized Interpretation and Analysis of Data

#### Summarized Data on the Effectiveness of the Marketing Strategies

Table 2 contains the summarized data on the effectiveness of the marketing strategies adopted by Future University based on the four P's of the marketing mix – product, price, place, and promotion. The grand mean of 3.04 taken from the group mean of 3.11 for the administrator and 3.03 for the faculty from the various faculty or colleges shows that the strategy was generally rated to be effective. Specifically, in the area of the product, the programs offered by the university were viewed to be effective ( $\mu=3.23$ ) in the meeting industry, trade both local and global as well as a government institution. The factor mean of 2.55 likewise, this factor were assessed to be effective. it can be gathered from this finding that the price levels of the services and products offered by the were at par with its competitors. In the area place, the location of the school was considered effective ( $\mu=3.30$ ). Considering it's nearest to business establishment and dormitories as well as its accessibility to various mode of transportation.

Lastly, for promotion strategies used by the school were deemed to be effective in communicating and increasing awareness of the program offerings, achievements, and activities of the school.

**Table 2: Summarized Data on the Effectiveness of the Marketing Strategies of Future University n = 84**

	Administrator		Faculty		Item Average	
INDICATORS	$\mu$	Int.	$\mu$	Int.	$\mu$	Int.
1. Product	3.18	E	3.2	E	3.23	E
2. Price	2.82	E	2.42	LE	2.55	E
3. Place	3.3	VE	3.3	VE	3.3	VE
4. Promotion	3.16	E	3.22	E	3.09	E
<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.11</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>3.03</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>3.04</b>	<b>E</b>

#### Summarized Data on the Seriousness of the Marketing Strategies Problems

Table 3 contains the summarized data on the degree of seriousness of the problems encountered in marketing strategies adopted by Future University based on the four P's of the marketing mix – product, price, place, and promotion. The grand mean of 2.43 taken from the group mean of 2.34 for the administrator and 2.52 for the faculty from the various faculty or colleges shows that the strategy was generally rated to be less serious. Specifically, in the area of the product, the programs offered by the university were viewed to be serious ( $\mu=2.74$ ) in the meeting industry, trade both local and global as well as a government institution. The factor mean of 2.14, indicated this factor was assessed to be less serious. It can be gathered from this finding that the price levels of the services and products offered by the school were at par with its

competitors. In the area place, the location of the school was considered effective ( $\mu=2.32$ ). Considering the fact that the school location is with the capital city and yet it is conducive to learning and free from any disturbance

Lastly, the seriousness of problems encounters in terms of promotion were also evaluated as to be serious ( $\mu=2.52$ ) which means that even though the school has widened their scope in promotion there still a need to improve on their strategies.

**Table 3: Summarized Data on the Seriousness of The Marketing Strategies Problem of Future University N = 84**

INDICATORS	ADMINISTRATOR		FACULTY		ITEM AVERAGE	
	$\mu$	Int.	$\mu$	Int.	$\mu$	Int.
1. Product	2.58	S	2.90	S	2.74	S
2. Price	2.08	LS	2.22	LS	2.14	LS
3. Place	2.29	LS	2.35	LS	2.32	LS
4. Promotion	2.41	LS	2.64	S	2.52	S
<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>2.34</b>	<b>LS</b>	<b>2.52</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>2.43</b>	<b>LS</b>

## SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### SUMMARY

Marketing in education is an idea whose time has come; Strategies and marketing tools development primarily for the private sector in most areas are applicable to the to the education sectors. Educational marketing involves developing or refining specific school programs in response to the needs and desire of specific target markets using effective means of communication to understand those needs, inform an motivate those enables an educational system to envision its future and communicating this to link the realities of the present to the expectations of the future.

### FINDINGS

The following are the findings of the study:

The effectiveness of the marketing strategies adopted by Future University based on the P's of marketing mix was assessed as follows:

- In terms of product, the marketing strategies were rated to be generally effective.
- In the area of price, the marketing strategies viewed to be generally effective.
- In the fact pertaining to place, the marketing strategies were rated to be very effective.
- With regards to promotion, the marketing strategies were evaluated to be effective.
- The seriousness of the problems pertaining to the marketing strategies anchored on the four P's was viewed as follows:
- The problems pertaining to the product were regarded to be generally serious.
- The problems relating to promotion were rated to be less serious.
- The problems regarding place were also assessed to be less serious.



- The problems concerning promotion were also evaluated to be serious.
- Based on the findings of the study, the researcher presents a program entitled “DECIDE MARKETING STYLE which comprises a series of strategic change schemes designed to improve the marketing strategies of Future University.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that although the marketing strategies utilized by the Future University were generally assessed to be effective based on the four P’s marketing, yet there is a serious problem associated with such practices that need to be corrected or addressed.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Primary Recommendation

That the administrator of the FU considers for implementation of the strategic schemes of the program DECIDE” MARKETING STYLE.

### Secondary Recommendation

That the administrator together with the other stakeholders will draw up individual department marketing plans to be consolidated into an institutionalized market plan on an annual basis anchored on the findings of the market research done, further that the annual market research must be done per college to determine the market trends, threats, and opportunities, this scheme shall be conducted by a core group of people in each department, the data of which will be consolidated and submitted to the school board for perusal and deliberation.

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