

MARKETING IN THE ELT WORLD

Nizhneva N.
Nizhneva-Ksenafontava N.

Belarusian State University

Now we live in the era of marketisation and enhanced marketisation in high schools, in particular. In this connection, it is necessary to consider:

- the subjective and objective meanings attached to educational marketing by teachers,
- the ways they interpret their involvement and contribution to school marketing,
- their attitudes towards competition, marketing and education,
- their awareness of the marketing activities of their schools,
- the teachers' role in marketing the school and the impact of the market upon teachers' well being,
- their perception of marketing as part of school life[1].

Nowadays we should look at marketing, and marketing in ELT world in particular, alongside with other disciplines, not just as a word for selling or advertising, but as a separate approach according to which schools have to market themselves and to do it professionally. Only in this case customers will choose one school's services in preference to another's. It means that marketing needs to work to a strategic plan. First of all, it is necessary to emphasize the fundamental importance of a clear definition of business and a clear set of business objectives. There are different definitions of marketing.

Dr. Philip Kotler defines marketing as “the science and art of exploring, creating, and delivering value to satisfy the needs of a target market at a profit. Marketing identifies unfulfilled needs and desires. It defines, measures and quantifies the size of the identified market and the profit potential. It pinpoints which

segment the company is capable of serving best and it designs and promotes the appropriate products and services” [8, p.42].

Jay Baer defines marketing as the messages and/or actions that cause messages and/or actions [2].

Peter Drucker defines marketing in the following way: “Marketing is not only much broader than selling; it is not a specialized activity at all. It encompasses the entire business. It is the whole business seen from the point of view of the final result, that is, from the customer’s point of view. Concern and responsibility for marketing must therefore permeate all areas of the enterprise” [3].

Marketing is the social process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging products and value with others [4].

American Marketing Association Definition: “Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large”. The process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives.

American Heritage Dictionary's Definition of Marketing: The commercial functions involved in transferring goods from a producer to a consumer.

Merriam Webster's Marketing Definition: The process or technique of promoting, selling, and distributing a product or a service; an aggregate of functions involved in moving goods from a producer to a consumer [5].

The basic marketing definition has not changed. Superior marketing is and always has been analysis, then action. It is strategy development, then logical and thought-out tactical implementation. It is the way to customer satisfaction and increasing profit [5].

The steps of successful marketing and implementation include:

- 1) analysis of your customers and business environment;

2) identification of key opportunities to meet customer needs better and more profitably;

3) figuring out how to act on those opportunities;

4) implementation of your plan[5].

If to discuss marketing of professional services, it is necessary to state that it tends to be more difficult than that of tangible goods. It is caused by the fact that most professional people like to think that their services do not need marketing and they themselves do not want to be marketed. In this case, it is important to outline a framework for consideration of marketing issues and to give a definition of business that should encapsulate a specific area of work for which there is a profitable market [6].

Successful marketing is impossible without successful strategies. Julie Chance analyses eight keys to a strong marketing strategy. She develops a strong marketing foundation by:

1. Defining the product or service: How is your product or service packaged? What do your customers really buy? If you offer several services which ones are the most viable to promote?

2. Identifying the target market: Everyone might be a potential client for your service. Who is your ideal customer?

3. Knowing your competitors: Even if there are no direct competitors for your service, there is always competition of some kind. What is your competitive advantage or unique selling proposition?

4. Finding a niche: Is there a market segment that is not currently being served or is not being served well? A niche strategy allows you to focus your marketing efforts and dominate your market.

5. Developing awareness: It is difficult for a potential client to buy your service if they do not even know or remember that it exists. Generally, a potential customer will have to be exposed to your product from 5 to 15 times before they are likely to think of your product when the need arises.

6. Building credibility: Not only must clients be aware of your product or service, they also must have a positive disposition towards it. Potential customers must trust. For example, a trainer might gain credibility and allow potential customers to “sample” their product by offering free, presentations on topics related to their area of specialty.

7. Being Consistent: Be consistent in every way and in everything you do. Being consistent is more important than having the “best” product. This in part is the reason for the success of chains.

8. Maintaining Focus: Focus allows more effective utilization of scarce resources of time and money [7].

It is stated that there are four activities, or components, of marketing:

- “Creating. The process of collaborating with suppliers and customers to create offerings that have value.
- Communicating. Broadly, describing those offerings, as well as learning from customers.
- Delivering. Getting those offerings to the consumer in a way that optimizes value.
- Exchanging. Trading value for those offerings” [8].

To be successful in marketing it is necessary to understand what the customer wants. Once marketers understand these basic drives, they try to satisfy the customers' needs, wants, and demands:

- Needs are fundamental requirements.
- Wants are needs that are directed at specific objects that might satisfy those needs.
- Demands arise when people both want a specific product and are willing and able to pay for it [9].

Marketing focuses primarily on customers' needs: stated needs; real needs (what customers actually require); unstated needs (requirements that customers do not happen to mention); delight needs; secret needs (needs that customers feel reluctant to admit) [9].

Customers' needs can be fulfilled in various ways. In order to adapt offerings to match their customers' needs, institutions can offer: goods; services; experiences; events; persons; places; properties; organizations; information; ideas [9].

Marketers recognize customers' demand and then try to manage it. Customers should take into account that demand is exhibited in many ways, marketers need to recognize the forms of demand and adapt marketing strategies to them. Demand itself comes in a variety of forms, and it is rarely stable. The following types of demand are distinguished:

- latent demand—when customers have a strong need that can't be satisfied by existing offerings;
- increasing demand—when customers become aware of a product, begin to like it, and start asking for it;
- irregular demand—when demand varies by season, day, or hour;
- full demand—when customers want everything a company has to offer [9].

It is impossible to determine objectives of marketing in ELT world and to meet these objectives without taking into account all these requirements.

The following example may be a good illustration.

We are in the business of providing:

a wide range of ELT services;

a top-quality range of ELT services;

a wide and top-quality range of ELT and other language learning services;

only profitable ELT services of top quality to our clients;

mainly profitable services in ELT and other related areas to clients either in our premises, elsewhere in the country or abroad [6].

According to Ron White, Mervyn Martin, Mike Stimson, Robert Hodge business objectives should:

- relate closely to the definition of business;
- be achievable;
- be specific;
- be measurable [6].

Market research is described as “the systematic gathering, recording and analysis of data on marketing and marketing-related issues for the purposes of improved decision-making and control in the marketing function. Its aims are:

to reduce uncertainty and minimize risk when plans are being made;
to monitor performance when and after plans have been implemented” [6, p. 202].

Ron White, Mervyn Martin, Mike Stimson, Robert Hodge suggest the following activities:

1. Draw up a list of business objectives for the school and put them in order of priority. What are the key factors for success? Are the objectives specific, achievable and measurable?

2. Put your definition of the business alongside with your list of objectives. Do they match? Are some objectives incompatible with your definition?

3. How do clients evaluate your service and services of your competitors?

Teaching

Class size

Location

Prices

Course duration

Staff

Image

Administration

Premises

Course materials [6, p.208].

Thus, marketing is central to marketing in ELT world. It aims at satisfying customers' requirements profitably. In order to do this, an institution must define precisely the business it sees itself in and must set achievable, specific and measurable objectives.

References

1. Izhar Oplatka, Jane Hemsley-Brown & Nick H Foskett The Voice of Teachers in Marketing their School: Personal perspectives in competitive environments/School Leadership & Management: Formerly School Organization.

Volume 22, Issue 2, 2002. - pages 177-196.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1363243022000007746> (date of access 2.12.2015)

2. <http://heidicohen.com/marketing-definition/> (date of access 2.12.2015)

3. <http://www.skylinetradeshows.com/what-is-marketing-how-10-experts-define-it/> (date of access 2.12.2015)

4. <http://www.pearsonhighered.com/educator/product/Marketing-Management-12E/9780131457577>. (date of access 2.12.2015)

5. Today's Definition of Marketing. Has It Changed? By Bobette Kyle
<http://www.synergeticresources.com/documents/Marketing/today.pdf> (date of access 2.12.2015)

6. Ron White, Mervyn Martin, Mike Stimson, Robert Hodge Management in English language teaching. - Cambridge University Press. - 1994.

7. Julie Chance 8 Keys to a Strong Marketing Strategy
<http://www.businessknowhow.com/marketing/blocks.htm> (date of access 10.12.2015)

8. Philip Kotler, Gary Armstrong Principles of marketing. Prentice Hall, 2011. (14th Edition). ISBN-10: 013216712 <http://www.saylor.org/books>

9. Harvard ManageMentor | Marketing Essentials | Printable Version
<http://www.harvardmanagementor.com/demo/demo/market/print.htm> (date of access 11.12.2015)

