

# Application of marketing to education

Doc.dr Ivan Tasic\*, Msc Jelena Tasić\*\* and Dipl.ecc Dajana Tubić\*

\*Novi Sad University, Technical Faculty "Mihajlo Pupin", Zrenjanin \*

\*\*Informatics teacher, Primary School "Mihajlo Pupin", Veternik \*\*

\*Economic – Business School, Odžaci

e-mail: tasici@tfzr.uns.ac.rs, jeca25000@gmail.com, epsodzaci@gmail.com\*

## Abstract

The aim of this paper is familiarizing with the basic conceptions of e – marketing and promotion and their significance, role and possible application in the education field. In the paper is presented the application of the elementary principles and techniques of the Internet marketing and the web presentation use for the on – line promotion of secondary schools. The basis of the modern business and marketing is the development of the information and communication technologies. These contemporary (digital) technologies set transforming of the industrially based economy to the information based economy, simultaneously creating global market, the international production system and the information economy with the global marketing.

The Internet is the catalyst of the changes in the traditional approach to the marketing, bringing a new way of consideration, a new mass medium, and a new culture of behaviour and access, something that has never earlier been seen in marketing. As for every organisation so as well as for the educational organization, the Internet has very great importance in launching and representing a school to potential user of the educational services.

**Key words:** Internet, marketing, promotion, education

## I. ROLE, SIGNIFICANCE AND FORMS OF PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

Promotion is a communication process between an offerer and a consumer. Its aim is to create a favourable attitude towards products or services and their acceptance in the purchase process (*The group of authors, 1999: 375.*)

The elementary forms of the promotion activities are:

1) *Commercial advertising* – it covers all the forms of the paid non – personal presentation and promotion of ideas, products or services that performs a company through the mass media communicating;

2) *Sales promotion* – includes the activities that directly stimulate the products or services purchase and spur the market to faster and more decisive reaction;

3) *Public relations* – are a promotion form aiming to create good relations between its internal and external public;

4) *Direct marketing* – are launching activities which enable direct communicating with potential buyers for the sake of getting direct answer or transaction and

5) *Personal sale* – is an oral presentation of a message through talking of the sale representative with one or more potential consumers to the effect of sale generation or establishing longterm business relations (*Kotler, 2006:791*).

In order to perform the organization promotion successful, the launching objectives have to be clearly defined – the organization has to know what it wants to

achieve. The promotion aims must be in direct connection with the wanted answer. There are three basic objectives of every organisation:

- 1) informing
- 2) convincing
- 3) reminding (*Kesić, 1997:243*)

The steps in the strategies of promotion planning are:

1. Identifying targeted audience, establishing promotion strategy and the elements of promotional mix (when at stake is middle school launching, the targeted audience are pupils of the final class in elementary schools and indirectly their parents);

2. Establishing the impacts on behavior e.g. the character of decision about the purchase influenced by family ( in our case the parents' impact on the pupil who wants to enter a certain school);

3. Defining the information need with targeted audience (on the example of school promotion it would be determining the matter which attracts the potential school attendants at the most, beginning with educational profiles, school fees and other conditions provided by the school);

4. Determining the objectives and tasks of the promotion (the objective and task of every school is to realize the planned number of pupils as well as classes at the beginning of every school year);

5. Defining the total budget anticipated for the promotion (to establish how much money the school can appropriate for some promotion forms and, according to it, adapt further steps);

6. Defining the schedule of tasks in the launching mix;

7. The application (the school access at the educational institutions' market);

8. Measuring and control (efficiency measuring in regard to the beforehand fixed objectives and standards set as the imperatives by the school management) (*Lanster, Massingham, 1997:223*)

## II. THE BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INTERNET

Forces forming the Internet age can be divided in *for basic groups*:

1. *Digitization and connexion* – The great part of modern business operations runs through the nets that connect people and companies. Intranet – is the net which connects the employees within a company. Extranet – is the net connecting a company with its suppliers, distributors and other business partners, while Internet is a large public net that comprises computer nets that connect mutually users all over the world with inconceivably great quantities of information.

2. *The sudden Internet development* – The creation of the world net World Wide Web (WWW) during the ninetieth years of the past century turned the Internet out of ordinary communication tool into a revolutionary technology. During the last years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the number of the Internet users in the world has increased onto nearly 400 million. Abrupt growth of the Internet use worldwide is in the heart of the new system of business operations. The Internet enables to users and companies approach to immense quantities of information with only several clicks by mice. Some recent studies have shown that before making important life decisions, byers search through the Internet information. The quantity of the technical information doubles every two years. For the students of the technical studies it practically means that the half of their knowledge they have got till the third year of studies, is not nowadays up – to – date ([www.socialnomics.net](http://www.socialnomics.net)).

3. *New kinds of go - between* – New technologies have made thousands of entrepreneurs to found the Internet companies, so – called dotcoms, expecting off – hand enrichment. The incredible success of the first companies which have done business only through the Internet as AOL, Amazon.com, Yahoo!, eBay and many others, has presented many known producers and tradesmen.

4. *Adapting to clients and their wishes*– The new way of business operations turns round the information companies. Information have advantage so much in as much as they can be easier differentiated, individually adapted, personalized and sent through nets by unbelievable speed. On account of the quickly spreading advantages of the Internet and other communication technologies, companies became more skillful at collecting information about individual byers and business partners.

### III. INTERNET MARKETING

The use of the informatics technologies has caused the emergence of a new type of electronic business operations. The internet as one of the greatest creations of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, changes the world of business operations, as well as it varies the world through internalisation and creation of new views on science, education, economy etc. The Internet has during ten years had the immense growth of the number of users. It has succeeded in short time at some developed markets, to become a medium with proportionally the most spent money on advertising. At the time of recession appeared a different distribution of the advertising media. The quicker and measurable results, more inexpensive investments are being expected, and the possibility of narrow targetting of the users' groups, all that what the Internet as a medium can give. To these modern tendencies have not resisted not even educational institutions. In accordance with the type of ownership, schools can be in personal or state property, and in this way they access onto the market. State schools and generally all educational institutions can be classified in the category of non – profit organisations. These organizations endeavour to realize some social / public interest, but their essential purpose of existence is not profit gaining. The school fees in private schools is in

average from 1.200 to 12.000 euros per year, so that their access onto the market has to persuade potential attendants to commit themselves, i.e. opt just for their institution and to pay a substantial money amount.

Marketing can be presented through a four steps process that begins with an analysis and defining of the "macrocosm" of potential users or buyers. After the first phase of the marketing process follows the process of calling the attention of the users open to buy from the "universe" of the targeted population. In the third phase it is necessary to influence systematically on potential buyers to take an interest in the existing concepts or offers and accept them. They have been created on the basis of the marketing activities of the organization. At last, the sucess of the three previous phases should lead potential buyers among the "real" ones during the implementing activities in order to agree to perform the wanted action – purchase, invitation, release of documents, subscription, membership, sale, etc.

While defining e – marketing conception, one should begin with the fact that that idea can be considered on the various expanse of extension. Facts speak that the analysts point de facto existence of a world wide specific global market structure, classifying it under the concept of a new economy or net economy (Network Economy) where the Internet Economy appears at the same time as well as a cause and as a consequence. So in a special meaning e – marketing can be considered as the process of offer creation, price determining, distribution and promotion with the aim of the remunerative satisfying buyers' needs exclusively at the electronic market. This kind of marketing, as a conception and technique, perform proprietary subjects which produce products and process services exclusively assigned to e – market. Into this spread it is possible to include the software solutions whose marketing – mix almost in full is being realized through the Internet. ([www.vps.ns.ac.rs](http://www.vps.ns.ac.rs))

### IV. SETTING UP PRESENCE IN THE INTERNET MARKETING

It is clear that all organizations as well as the educational ones, have to consider how to realize transition to e - marketing. They should conduct e – marketing in one of four ways, although there is recommended a kind of the synthesis of the above mentioned tactics:

1. The Internet station;
2. The Internet promotion;
3. E-mail and network transmission;
4. The Internet associations (Kotler, 2007:144)

#### 1) *Web page creating*

A good web site can be used in many purposes, interesting from the marketing attitudes, as: commerical advertising, developing the organisation recognizability, promotion of services, PR, giving information for media, sponsor activities, supporting users of services and the like (Salai, Hegediš, Grubor, 2007:294 str.)

For the most of organisations the first step in applying the Internet marketing is designing web page. But it is not

adequately plain to open a web page at the Internet. It must be attractive, and one has to find a way how to win over potential consumers of services to visit the web page and remain exactly to it. The web pages promoted by schools, mostly give the next information: school history, its program, training conditions, registration periods, kinds of education, education profiles, teaching staff, school management, various actualities, interesting things, news, polls, galleries, contacts. Schools as well often announce competition results of their pupils and various interesting articles in order to attract and retain their site visitors. At the end of the page, they can offer possibilities to the visitors so that they can ask questions, give remarks, recommend the page to their friends, visit the school profile at various social networks (Facebook, Twitter) and the like.

During several last years the expectations from the Internet have grown very much. Nowadays Internet users quickly leave the pages which do not satisfy their expectations. Two thirds of them will not probably return to that page ([www.internet.com](http://www.internet.com))

It means that schools have to create pages plain to be read, use and they constantly have to be updated so to be actual, recent and exciting. It demands, of course, time and money, but that expense is indispensable if they want to hold out among their competitive schools. It especially regards the schools in private property. Apart from it, many Internet specialists consider that they can not make names for themselves only on the Internet, but that they have to spend much on the good, old traditional advertising and other offline marketing means, so to attract visitors to their pages (broadcasting institutional advertising on TV, radio, in newspapers, outdoor poster advertising, placing advertising tables).

If the Internet pages creators want to attract new visitors and spur repeated visits, they should pay special attention to the following "laws" of successful designing of web pages:

1. Context: appearance and arrangement of web sites should be attractive and plain for use. They have to be interesting, useful and provocative;

2. Contents: text, pictures, sound and video context – that what will attract, keep and bring back visitors is the value of page contents. Good web pages contain detailed and useful information, interactive tools, the links that address to the other connected pages (e.g. great number of schools on their web page has the link that addresses to the site of the Ministry of Education, The Institution for textbooks and the like), amusing programs (e.g. photos shot at excursions, school – leaving parties, surveys, wise thoughts and other);

3. Association: The way in which web enables communication among its users (majority of schools have their webs on the Facebook);

4. Adjustment: Page capability to adjust to various users or to enable to users to personalize it;

5. Communication: The way in which is enabled the communication among web page (school respectively) and users;

6. Cohesiveness – How is web connected with the other sites.

7. Commerce – Web capability to enable commercial transactions (for school it would mean that prospective attendants commit themselves for registration in their

school) (Jeffrey, Rayport and Bernard, Jaworski, 2001:116)

Sometimes it would be necessary to access again the attractiveness and usefulness of web page. It would be also necessary to get opinion of a specialist for web design. Although it is much better to ask users' opinions what they like on web site and what they dislike (usually schools put the questions on web and ask visitors to express their attitude on a scale with the marks from one to five).

In the school management of Novi Sad we have observed specialized secondary (vocational) schools in state property (there are totally 31) and we have got these knowledges:

- one half of the watched schools (exactly 15 of them) have a web page;

- all schools have their profiles on the Facebook, two schools on the Myspace, too;

- nearly all schools appear on one more popular social network YouTube.

All private schools (21 specialized secondary vocational schools), have web page and profile on the Facebook.

## 2) *Promotion on the Internet*

The Internet promotion has a useful purpose, especially as addition marketing actions. Meanwhile, in spite of all first successes, the Internet will not so fast become a main competitor to the electronic and printed media. Many marketing specialists still reexamine the value of advertising on the Internet as a successful tool. However, in order to use the Internet to the best as a communication means, the marketing specialists as well as advertisers, have to think up the ways, how to use fully the Internet interactivity and its potential for more successful targeting, because they are its most powerful characteristics.

## 3) *The creation of web associations and how to participate in their work*

The popularity of forums and interest groups has led to the creation of numerous commercial, sponsored web pages, that are named web associations. Such pages enable the members to bring together on the Internet and exchange opinions about the themes they are interested in. Web associations are recently multiplied, after the Facebook, Twitter and other social networks have appeared. People, irrespective of their age sex, interests can engage themselves into web associations dealing with education, health, sport, music etc. The visitors of these web pages develop a strong sense of community. They are attractive to the organizations that advertise because they attract users with common taste. For example, if one keys in on Google browser (device) the key words as forum schools, he will get 11.600.000 pages that he can visit and take part in the forums in the education field.

## 4) *Using e – mail and web transmission*

Electronic mail (e-mail) has forced itself as an important e – marketing tool. An organisation can induce potential service users to send it questions, proposals and complaints through e – mail. Sending e – mail has become

the most inexpensive and the most successful means for representation to wouldbe users of service. With the wish that competition in constantly “jammed“ environment would be more successful, marketing specialists develop “enriched“ e – mail messages, animated, interactive, personalized messages with video and audio contents. Such messages are being directed towards the ones wanting them, so it is considered that they will positively react on them. For example schools offer to visitors their web page e – mail address, on which they can ask questions and so be informed of school work, and they can also leave their proposals and suggestions.

#### V. SOCIAL NETWORKS IN THE FUNCTION OF SCHOOL PROMOTING

Social networks are individuals and groups connected by common status, similar functions, cultural and other similarities or common interest. They can be founded and be put out depending on needs. The investigation in academic environment indicated that the social networks function at many levels, beginning from the family level to the nation level. They have the key role in defining the ways in which they will function and the level where an individual will succeed reaching individual objectives

The most popular social network in Serbia and region is Facebook. It is the Internet web serving as a service for the social network. It began to function on February the fourth 2004. This web page on which everybody can bacome a member, is in the propriety of the company having the same name which manages it. Facebook users can enter the networks organized in towns, at working posts, schools, regions in order to connect and communicate the other people. People can also broaden their circle of friends, send them messages and can put new data into their personal (or business) profiles. In the beginning the membership on this web had been allowed only Harvard students, but later it was enabled to all students and secondary school pupils, and at the end it was enabled to all persons aged over 13 years. Facebook had in the year 2009 more than 250.000.000 users all over the world. If Facebook was a state, it would be the fourth in the world according to the number of inhabitants, somewhere between Indonesia and the U.S.A. The number of visitors of this social network, aged over 35 increases for 116% per year. Nowadays Facebook has more than 400.000.000 users.

All 25 private schools in Serbia possesses Facebook station on which are put various information connected to school: which educational profiles school offers, photos of scool itself as well as its premises, contact telephones, e – mail address for visitors’ questions, address and the like. Most primary school pupils count on Facebook when they search for information of school which they want to enter.

Except Facebook, another social network according to popularity is Twitter. It began to work officially in the year 2006. Twitter enables to its users to follow the others and the others to follow them, and all this with the help of many methods of “twitting“. This social network numbers 220.000 members in Serbia. In comparison with Facebook, this one has 2,7 million of users from Serbia. The most Facebook users are the ones old between 18

and 35 years, although their percentage is decreased for about 6% in relation to the previous period, so that there are about 60% of them now, in relation to all users. The users between 35 and 54 years amount about 40% of all users in Serbia.

#### VI. COMPARISON OF ONLINE AND OFFLINE PROMOTION

Online marketing is in contrast to traditional marketing (offline) directed to individuals. Its essence is in its directing onto the mass of individuals instead of onto the mass of the market. In the online approach consumer becomes value. The online user of services is more sophisticated and he possesses prominent discrete income. He does not symphatize traditional promotions and traditional promotional messages where communication is one – way. Through online communication user of services searches information from many organizations, and he quickly gets answer to his questions (Salai, Hegediš, Grubor, 2007:294).

Traditional marketing as the modality of off – line marketing practive has very long and rich history – beginning with personal sale (face – to – face selling), the sale through mail (direct – male marketing) and catalogue sale to telemarketing, TV sale (direct- response television marketing) or the sale by special machine – apparatus (kiosk marketing). On the other side, these traditional (off – line) modalities of direct marketing are mostly directed to so – called transaction marketing concept, and because of that, they have only a part of characteristics that distinguish online marketing praxis within the Internet marketing.

The Internet capability is manifested in speed, adaptiveness, interactivity and capabilities to approach to the targeted consumers at global level directly and immediately. The comparison between online and offline promotion one can present in this way:

1. *The relation of online promotion and television* – Television is directed to present day and potential consumers who are generally, at a guess known to the masses, because the communicator is not sufficiently known to the target auditorium. It is not directed to individuals, but it can be directed on interests, wishes, needs, emotions. Online advertising is less aggressive than television one. Virtual advertising should offer wider and further information and to be directed onto individual requests;

2. *The relation of online promotion and radio* – Radio is being used as an additional activity, where is not necessary special, strong powers of consumers concentration. When consumer searches on the Internet, reads e – mail or offers (bids) on the Internet pages, he is concentrated on contents that should interest and motivate him;

3. *The relation of online promotion and press* – Press, i.e. news media, is non – interactive, medium flexible and a little more target directed. In the case of line promotion every form of briefing is actually advertising. There is non – limit for advertising on the Internet;

4. *The relation of online promotion and direct mail* – Directing, capability of sending messages and flexibility, when direct mail is at stake, are excellent, but

interactivity is poor. The assessment of goodwill on online advertisements is not possible, but it is even basic;

5. *The relation of online promotion and posters (bills)* – for the establishing of audience rating or perception and watching bills (posters) there is not a precise method. The Internet users can react on online advertisements and one can get accurate data (Salai, Hegediš, Grubor, 2007:299)

Number of years necessary to different media in order to get the market group of 50.000.000 users:

- Radio – 38 years;
- TV – 13 years;
- Internet – 4. years;
- I-pod – 3. years;
- Facebook – 2. years (www.consult.rs)

When the Internet promotion is at stake, one can't help mention some challenges appearing in accordance with such way of business operations. Namely, one of problems is that the Internet always provides restricted display and distorted, lop – sided demographic cross – section of consumers. Then, if web page does not attract visitor's attention within 8 seconds, he will go to another page. Privacy on the Internet is perhaps the greatest cause for concern on the occasion of the Internet commerce. The most of the Internet marketing specialists has become nimble at collecting detailed data of consumers and their analysis. It could subject consumers to information abuse if organization use those information in inadmissible ways. They are afraid that, for example the numbers of their credit cards will be misused. In spite of these challenges, both little and big organizations quickly include the Internet marketing into their marketing mix. The Internet marketing will show itself as a strong tool for establishing relations with user of services, providing information about organization and more successful, faster realization of service.

## VII. CONCLUDING CONSIDERATIONS

The consequences of the appearance and massive use of the Internet in business purposes on modern business operations and marketing are enormous and almost incomprehensible. Traditionally marketing is the cluster of activities used in order to direct flows of products and services from producer to consumer (user, buyer, client).

The essential forms of promotive activities are: commercial advertising, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing and private (personal) sale. The Internet marketing comprises the web use, parallel with traditional marketing channels, in order to develop positive and long – term relations with consumer. The use of contemporary ICT, creates substantial prerequisite for improvement of the quality of business decisions and the speed of their making. Nowadays it is impossible to imagine good business operations without marketing, because the essential marketing function is communication with market, and that comprises the process of gathering and analysis of data, and their transformation into information that can be used further. The Internet is an ideal setting for marketing on account of its own nature. The social networks on the Internet today represent contents very popular among the Internet users, especially among the youth. They present also a kind of trend, and it contributes to their popularity. As well as they bring new possibilities in communication, but also easier contacts and the use and exchange of different contents, and it makes them more attractive. The Internet has certainly achieved a revolution (in many aspects), and social networks caused their revolution within the Internet. Facebook, according to the last data, has about 400 million of users and now it is one of the most visiting sites worldwide. According to the study written by Adria Talk, Serbia is the region leader with more than 2 million Facebook users. E-mail marketing is an efficient and very inexpensive means for winning and withholding of users, so it is at the same time also personification of the marketing „1to1”, fully apt for personalized and targeted relation with users.

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