



THE AREA OF RESEARCH IN THE VISION OF MODERN MARKETING

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Abstract As already known, the 20th century economic theory and practice has acquired a new, multidimensional and extremely dynamic concept – the concept of marketing. This concept, rich in significance, integrated nowadays in the system of categories of economic thought, represents the result of prolonged efforts of generalization and reflection at the level of economic theory of the practical marketing activity, activity which appeared and was developed as a consequence of the economic and social contemporary dynamics and is attested by a large recognition and application in the economies of developed countries.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of marketing is now an integral part of economic thought, being the fruit of a long period of generalization and reflection, both at the level of economic theory and of the practical marketing activity. It was born and further developed following the economic and social contemporary dynamics and currently enjoys a wide recognition and practical usage, especially in the economies of developed countries. We should add that the turning to practice of the marketing concept is made by using numerous and varied methods and techniques – which overall make up the tools used in marketing – necessary for conducting marketing activities, of the permanent flow of information between the company and the economic and social environment, and indispensable for the scientific grounding of economic decisions.

II. THE RESEARCH AREA IN MODERN MARKETING

Marketing is, under the circumstances, inconceivable without a continuous, systematic flow of information regarding the external and internal environment of the economic unit, and the dynamics of the rapport with the company's exterior environment. The marketing information represents a 'sine qua non'

condition, one of the primary resources for conducting marketing activities on scientific grounds and to integrate them organically in the system of the other activities of the enterprise so as to ensure a high degree of adaptability to the conditions in which it operates, with a view to satisfying at a superior level the market demands and to increasing efficiency.

So as to meet such demands, along with the development of the theory and practice of marketing, a first-hand component of the latter took shape, known as marketing research.

Just as in the case of the marketing concept, the attempts at defining marketing research were numerous and of a wide variety. Basically, we can say that marketing research is none other than the research into any aspect referring to the marketing activity.

Marketing research has an extremely wide range. It involves at the same time the evaluation of the marketing potential of the enterprise and of the influence of external factors, identifying processes and facts, finding reasons and motivations, recording past phenomena and anticipating future evolutions. A reference study conducted at the request of the American Marketing Association, on a sample of 630 specialists in marketing research from 587 American companies has identified 36 categories of activities belonging to the area of marketing research, and which were part of their preoccupations, of course in varying

shares, function of the specific of the company and other features (Twedt, 1983).

A grouping of the activities allows for the shaping of several domains entering the area of marketing research.

A first domain of marketing research is comprised by the enterprise itself. The resources of the enterprise (the volume, the structure, the quality and the availability), the capacity of mobilization and adapting to the objectives of the enterprise, the quality of the leadership activity – all these must be correctly appraised, thus they form a significant share of the program of marketing research, in setting the bases for the company's decisions.

The most important domain of marketing research is made up, undoubtedly, of market research. The phenomena and processes in the market are very numerous, extremely complex and dynamic. Thus, one can subject to investigation, on the one hand, the general aspects of the market, among which: the general features of the market, the market shares, the capacity of the market, current or potential, at a given moment or over a period of time, the dynamics of market phenomena, the market conjuncture, the spatial dimensions of the market, the structure of the market, etc.; on the other hand, the object of research can be demand and supply (considered both separately and in mutual relations), the prices, tariffs, profile of visitors to an area, the duration of the visit, the goal and motivation of the visit, the amounts spent, the testing of acceptability, etc.

Marketing research is not limited to the sphere of the market, but aims at highlighting as well the influences of other components of the environment on market activity, such as: the technological environment, the demographic environment, the social and political environment, the cultural environment, the institutional and legal environment, the general evolution of the economy, the situation of the competition and of its marketing policy, trends in the domain of information systems in marketing etc.

An important domain of marketing research is represented also by the investigating of consumer needs, both from the point of view of the way they are born but, especially, of the way they manifest and materialize in consumption, through demand on the market. A special interest is given to the need for relaxation, accommodation, food and services, as well as to the degree to which they are met.

So as to understand the complex mechanism of transformation of the need in demand for goods and services, a special place in marketing research is held by the study of the buying and consumption behaviour of goods and services consumers.

Marketing research implies at the same time the investigation of all the activities conducted to satisfy the needs of consumers on the market. To this end, it needs to lie at the basis of the market strategy, and of the entire marketing policy of the enterprise. Therefore, in the area of marketing research we should include the investigations meant to direct the entire marketing-mix policy (product, price, distribution, promotion), as well as short, average or long-term analyses and forecasts, necessary for the elaboration of marketing programmes and for assessing the performances in this domain.

For a long time, marketing research was limited to the role of initiator and conductor of ad hoc projects, through which the meeting of the informational demands of decision-makers in certain situations was targeted, trying to find an answer to one or several questions they formulated.

Even now, to a large extent, marketing research is still done under the form of such discrete projects, conceived and implemented in a traditional manner.

In the last two decades, however, as marketing management moved towards new, superior stages, the role of marketing research grew tremendously, recording a permanent progress from year to year.

Under the influence of the unprecedented evolution of computer technology, marketing research switches from orientation towards projects to orientation towards systems capable of offering marketing information integrated into networks, from which the decision-makers select what they need to elaborate decisions.

Thus, we can notice the gradual change towards three other types of systems:

- informational marketing systems (they provide decision-makers, in a systematic manner, based on a well-established routine, with the relevant informational marketing inputs);
- support systems for marketing decisions (they provide decision-makers, on demand, special data analyses or reports elaborated function of needs);
- expert systems (in this case the system not only responds to the demands for information of managers, but also has the capacity to focus on reasoning and deduction, mimicking the human thought processes and recommending alternatives for action translated into a set of decision-making rules, which can be programmed with the help of the computer).

Out of the eight domains of marketing research which must be comprised in its area, we presented so far the first four, namely:

- 1) The research of the internal environment of the firm;

2) The research of the external environment of the firm;

3) Market research;

4) The research of consumer needs and of the buying and consumption behaviour of the consumer;

5) Research for grounding the marketing strategies and the marketing policies overall and on each component of the marketing mix - product, price, distribution, promotion, marketing services).

The marketing research regarding the product considers:

- the attributes of the product;
- the make-up of the product line;
- the change of the product;
- the degree of acceptance and the potential of the new product;
- competitors' products;
- testing existing products;
- the analysis of value;
- the brand;
- the packaging;
- the instructions for use etc.;

In the domain of price, marketing research offers information meant to ground:

- the level of the price for new products;
- the price differentiation on product lines;
- pricing strategies;
- seasonal or special discounts;
- discounts granted etc.

The research of the distribution process targets:

- the typology of distribution channels and their features;
- the structure of logistic systems;
- distribution strategies and their costs;
- services offered to buyers etc.

The promotional activity benefits fully of the help of marketing research for making decisions in domains such as:

- elaborating promotional budgets;
- the structure on forms of this activity;
- the selection of media and publicity support;
- elaborating publicity messages;
- programming promotional campaigns;
- evaluating the efficiency of promotional activity and so on.

6) Not lastly, marketing research involves an ample activity of analyses so as to elaborate short, average or long-term forecasts. In this domain, specialists need impressive tools which allowed for the making of a true scientific revolution;

7) A laborious activity of marketing research needs to be developed for grounding the numerous marketing programs and plans;

8) It is also necessary to evaluate performances and the efficiency in this domain, through a systematic

marketing research, with the most advanced methods and techniques of investigation.

CONCLUSIONS

In closing, we can state that there is no area of marketing which cannot benefit from the valuable contribution of marketing research. It has to be organized in such a manner as to ensure, at a reasonable cost, and with a maximum of speed, information of the highest accuracy, available, relevant and sufficient for making the right decisions.

REFERENCES

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