



**Universitatea**  
**BABEȘ-BOLYAI**



**THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

**MARKETING – FROM  
INFORMATION TO DECISION**

**OCTOBER 30-31, 2008**

**CLUJ-NAPOCA  
ROMANIA**

**Editors:**  
Marius D. POP  
Ovidiu I. MOISESCU

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ZAIT LUMINITA

# Romanian Modern Retail Market Before and after the European Integration

**Mónika-Anetta Alt**

Babes-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca Faculty of Economics and Business Administration  
monika.alt@econ.ubbcluj.ro

**ABSTRACT** The commercial sector had an important role in the Romanian economic transition period. The retail is an essential part of the commercial sector. Its maturity level is a good indicator of the national economic development. In this article, we present the Romanian retail sector development based mainly on statistical data. First of all, we have outlined the significant difference between the commercial sector in the centralist and the transition economy. After that, we present the market entrance strategies of the modern retail formats. We continue the article with the analysis of the Romanian European integration from a retail point of view. Finally, we formulate some future tendencies in the Romanian retail sector.

## 1. Introduction

The objective of this study is to analyze the commercial sector's structural changes since the central economist period up until now. We try to observe the modern retail form development and the territorial difference in the development level. The subject of study is very current in Romanian market because of the big expansion of the super- and the hypermarket.

Methodologically, this article is based on secondary information available from newspapers, periodicals, magazines and the publications of the Romanian National Statistical Institutions.

The author's personal contribution is to organize the available information and to present it from a personal point of view.

## 2. Short review of the Romanian commercial sector before 1990

In Romanian literature, Mariana Drăgușin has presented the most important characteristics of the Romanian commercial sector before 1990.

According to her work (Drăgușin 1999), the national commercial sector was characterized with an excessive centralism, which had formed a closed system, composed of big commercial companies. Each company had a pre-established domain of activity and a pre-established distribution channel.

The wholesale companies were directly controlled by the Ministry of Trade and were specialized in different domains: there were 41 wholesale companies specialized in food for each district, 18 wholesale companies specialized in non-food (wear and footwear), and 17 wholesale specialized in metal and chemicals goods. Each company had a distribution territory from one to three districts.

# Consumer Dialogue – A Two-Way Approach to Building Relationships with Customers

**Ioana Barin**

University of Bacau  
ioana\_barin@yahoo.com

**ABSTRACT:** Consumer Dialogue ensures that the marketing approach is consistent across the various marketing activities – disciplined, transparent, responsible, and validated at each stage. Individual needs to break through a massive volume of market information and re-establish a personal communication identity. Products and services become more tailored; communication becomes more personal and transforms from broadcast to dialogue. The core principles of Consumer Dialogue are: Consumer Centric, Effectiveness and Profitability, Responsibility. Average decision making process for a consumer takes between 15 seconds - 4 minutes depending on level of interest. There are 2 processing modes: conscious and subconscious. 80% of shopping decisions, orientation, interaction, etc, are subconsciously controlled. Changes in the regulatory environment and consumer expectations have demanded new, creative and responsible marketing strategies and approaches. Consumer Dialogue is at the heart of these strategies, it comprises a flexible set of tools and measures which can be adapted and tailored to the different touch points in specific markets. Consumers Dialogue is a logical, open and two-way approach to communicating and building relationships with customers.

## 1. Introduction

Creating a dialogue with customers is an important part of building an effective relationship. With customers, the importance of good communication it has to be two-way communication.

In this paper I focus on that portion of business marketing that involves dialogue with the customer through marketing communications. Customer relationship management, or CRM, though, is more than just talking, it is interacting. It involves how the customer chooses to interact and buy from the organization, and it involves listening to and learning from the customer. Listening to customers and involving them in the design and development of products is one important way to increase value. **Customer relationship management (CRM)** process provides us the strategic framework for understanding how to create customer dialogue. The CRM process involves four steps. These steps are to segment and profile the market, design communication strategy, implement, and evaluate.

The first is to segment and profile the market. We create segments by grouping similar customers together, and segments are created by marketers for many different reasons. Then we design a product to meet that segments needs. But even in that segment, there are subsegments, buyers who respond and want to interact with us in different ways. When a company segments for CRM purposes, the segmentation is based on how the customer wants to interact, rather than on what needs the product should meet.

In the second step, a communication strategy is designed. Typically, the strategy involves multiple channels of communication, channels such as direct mail, e-mail, print advertising, trade shows, and even field sales efforts. Strategy also involves what offers are made.

# Foreign Direct Investment Before and After Romania's Accession to the European Union

**Petru Bintintan**

Babes-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration  
petre.bintintan@econ.ubbcluj.ro

**Raluca Ciornea**

Babes-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration  
ralu\_ciornea@yahoo.com

**Anca Bintintan-Socaciu**

anca.bintintan@yahoo.com

**ABSTRACT** The present article investigates a problem of actuality, the place of FDI in the process of accession of Central and Eastern Europe countries to the European Union. Also we analysed the Romanian FDI' volume and the structure in 2006, the year before the accession to the European Union, and their tendency in 2007 and the first decade of 2008, after the accession. In the same time, this article underlines some of the most relevant aspects related to relation FDI - EU, such as: the role of FDI in the attracting EU potential countries or sustaining the actual members, FDI Promotion Agencies activity, FDI advantages, determinant factors when choosing where to invest, FDI role in achieving post-accession objectives, most attractive Romanian activity domains for investors, Romania's strength in supporting higher FDI, factors that induce a negative perception about Romania, and others.

## 1.Introduction

Lately, foreign direct investment is of increasing importance in European Union in general, and in Romania too, as a transitory country and a newly member of EU. It is widely believed that the advantages that FDI brings to the standard of living and prospects for economic growth of the host nation largely outweigh its disadvantages. Their importance lies in its difference from other forms of capital investment: the nature and duration of the commitment it involves (Barrell and Holland, 2000).

For Romania, a country with a gross profit level lower than the medium value of EU members, the FDI is a salvation, because they offer a solution to cover the lack of the capital and also, offers the access to modern technology, management methods and markets that would be otherwise inaccessible to this country.

The accession to the European Union, with its all institutional and legislative harmonisation should take Romania to a common denominator with its main competitors for foreign investment. We can say that this is not necessary an advantage for Romania, but it will stop being a handicap.

From that point on, being at the same level with the competitor countries, Romania should have the capacity to affirm itself only if it will manage to adopt innovative marketing strategies to attract the foreign direct investment.



# Romanian Consumers Attitudes towards Different Types of Endorsers Used in Advertising

**Raluca Comiati**

Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration  
raluca.comiati@econ.ubbcluj.ro

**Nicoleta Olimpia Negrea**

E-Martech Euroline  
nnegrea@mtandt.it

**ABSTRACT** Everyday, consumers all over the world are overwhelmed with advertisements aiming at changing their attitudes. These persuasive efforts could be from logical arguments to expressive images, from regular consumers’ advice to celebrities’ recommendation. Traditionally, the specialists in marketing and advertising have examined the mechanisms by means of which ads succeed in changing consumers’ attitudes by means of the communication model. The literature and the research on this subject indicates the benefits of using the right type of endorser as consumers respond in a different manner to the same advertisement conveyed by various endorsers (experts, actors, singers, TV stars, sportsmen, regular consumers, animated or imaginary characters). In this paper we examine the consumers’ attitudes towards different endorsers, the relation between these attitudes and the socio-demographics segments. Furthermore we argue that the opinion on the endorsement is also affected by the attitude towards advertising and its consequences (purchasing versus. not purchasing products).

## 1. Introduction

Everyday, consumers all over the world are overwhelmed with advertisements and other communication instruments aiming at changing their attitudes about products, services, brands, producers or suppliers, events etc. These persuasive efforts could be from logical arguments to expressive images, from critics from the part of acquaintances to advice from celebrities. Traditionally, the specialists in marketing and advertising used the classical communication model in order to examine and understand the mechanisms by means of which advertisements succeed in changing consumers’ attitudes. The source is often assimilated to the endorser, who conveys the information within the advertisement, and could be an easily recognizable individual, a regular consumer, an organization/company or a character in the cartoons.

According to the studies made (Batra, Meyers, Aaker, 1996: 401), the benefits of a well chosen endorsers aim at:

- increasing the audience to which ads are addressed;
- inducing a change of positive attitude towards the company and towards its products;
- forming the personality of the promoted brand by the transfer of endorser’s image of that respective brand.

# La stratégie des produits cosmétiques roumains exportés vers l'Union Européenne

Anca Constantinescu-Dobra  
L'Université Technique de Cluj-Napoca  
anca.constantinescu@mae.utcluj.ro

**ABSTRACT** L'industrie cosmétique est vitale au niveau mondial, et non pas spécifiquement pour sa contribution au produit mondial brut, mais à cause de son influence sur le plan social, pour 'teinter' de la vie du monde entier. L'objectif principal de cet ouvrage est celle de souligner le rôle de la politique du produit, comme un des plus importants éléments du mix de mercatique d'une entreprise, sur l'exportation des produits cosmétiques roumains vers l'Union Européenne. Pour répondre à cette provocation, dans le présent article, nous avons recherché, quelques aspects de la politique de produit des principaux fabricants roumains qui exportent leurs produits vers l'Union Européenne. En Roumanie, les fabricants de cosmétiques ne donnent pas une grande importance à la planification stratégique et n'appliquent des techniques de marketing adaptées à la spécificité nationale ou internationale. Les informations sont obtenues par une enquête à base d'un questionnaire, parmi les fabricants roumains des cosmétiques. Nous avons conclu que la planification stratégique de mercatique des entreprises roumaines est occasionnelle et superficielle. Nous avons évalué aussi la mesure dans laquelle les sociétés roumaines suivent le rythme de l'évolution manifeste dans le monde entier. Finalement, nous avons fait, aussi, une analyse des avantages compétitifs des producteurs roumains, dans leur approche pour réussir sur les marchés de l'Union Européenne.

## 1. L'Introduction

La politique des produits, comme une partie de la politique de marketing d'une entreprise, *représente une conduite internationale adoptée d'une entreprise qui vend ses produits sur les marchés étrangers, concernant la taille, la structure et l'évolution de la gamme de produits et de services, attitude nécessaire pour s'adapter aux exigences d'un différent environnement de marché, autres que domestiques.* (Pop, Dumitru, 2008) À la différence de la politique nationale de produit, un entreprise qui produit des cosmétiques et se décide d'agir au niveau international, est soumise aux contraintes internes (financier, concernant la production, l'emplacement, la logistique) et externes (les particularités locales des micro et macro - environnement). (Danciu, 2001)

Les problèmes de management, rencontrés par l'entreprise des cosmétiques, sont réglés, comme d'autres industries, par une analyse diagnostic du produit exporté. Pour assurer le succès du lancement des produits à l'étranger, il faut que l'entreprise réalise les activités suivantes:

*Analyse du cycle de la vie concernant le développement de produits* et les perspectives de son évolution sur le marché-cible externe, l'analyse de positionnement du produit, l'analyse d'assortiment des produits. La différenciation d'un produit faite dans le but de prolonger le

# Perception of Communication Policy in Retail

**Dan Cristian Dabija**

Babes-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration  
cristian.dabija@econ.ubbcluj.ro

**Ioana N. Abrudan**

Babes-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration  
ioana.abrudan@econ.ubbcluj.ro

**ABSTRACT** Beside assortment, price, service, location, store layout and loyalty, the communication policy may be regarded as one of the most important marketing mix elements in retailing. All these variables are perceived differently by consumers and have therefore a major impact on customers' selection process of retailers. The present article studies only the influence of retailers' communication policy on consumers. Through different printed advertising items – leaflets, catalogues, banners etc, but also through their presence in the print and audio-visual media, Romanian Retail Firms try both to distinguish themselves from competitors and to attract consumers. An empirical investigation conducted in a major Romanian City highlights the most frequently used communication instruments of such retailers and also the consumers' perception over them. Furthermore the paper tries to point out different groups of consumers based on their demographic characteristics, but also according to their preference toward a certain retailer.

## Introduction

In the past, along the distribution channel, the power belonged to manufacturers. As retailers gained control of information through their store scanners, the power shifted from the producers to them. In most categories, retailers have reached to know better consumer behaviour due to technology. However, nowadays, as consumers have increasing access to information through modern and traditional means, channel power is being transferred away from retailers to them. This situation has led to the recognition of the necessity to develop an integrated brand communication plan for all retailers (Barnes, 2001).

While in general communication policy comprises the totality of instruments and measures used by a company for its own “presentation” and that of its services towards all target groups (Bruhn, 2007: 199), in retail this “presentation” is oriented both towards “inside” (employees), and “outside” (market) (Liebmann et al, 2008: 574). Components of promotional policy include mass-media and direct advertising, sales promotion, personal sales, public relations, publicity. “Retailers most often use the following advertising media: the Internet, newspapers, radio, television, and printed circulars. Retailers can also advertise using other media, such as yellow pages, outdoor advertising, transit advertising on buses, cabs, subways), electronic information terminals, specialty firms such as the welcome wagon, shopping guides” (Dunne et al., 2002: 404, 426).

Communication policy has gained even more significant importance lately, along with increased media presence of retailers and budgets for this. While in the first trimester of 2007 investments in traditional media (radio, television, prints) reached approximately 1.2 million EUR, in the same period of 2008 they reached almost 6 million EUR (Anton, 2008). What it

# Opportunities and Strategic Segmentation Criteria of the Tourist Market: An Approach if Romania

**Simona Duhalm**  
University of Bacău  
simonaduhalm@yahoo.com

**ABSTRACT** Component basic tertiary sector, the tourist market, while presenting a series of features compared with other economic sectors, requires that any market, a strategic approach, which consists in attending the following stages: segmentation, targeting and positioning. While addressing the particulars in the tourist market are numerous, involving the specific characteristics of services such as intangibility, inseparability, variability and perishability, how to approach this market must take account of clearly defined categories of consumers affected. Thus, a business travel must know in depth who are customers, who are their needs and desires, how they are formed, how it manifests itself and what factors emotional or rational expectations affect them. Demographic characteristics (age, sex, family size, income, occupation, education, religion, race and nationality of those who constitute potential consumers of a tourist destination) significantly influence the purchase behavior of tourists and their correct assessment may lead to a more accurate estimate of market potential. For the case of Romania, the application of these criteria are a number of features, and the paper's going to try to show and to clear the way in which they operate.

## 1. Introduction

The attractiveness of tourist destinations are mainly: climate, relief and natural resources of the region, history and famous characters, commercial areas, cultural attractions, the possibility of participation in festivals, concerts or sports games, buildings, monuments. These factors, which may be classified in the rational and emotional, leading to a differentiation of tourism, resulting in the creation of uniqueness and, finally, the formation of an identity destinations.

The tourism sector has now become an economic area with major implications on the social and economic development in many countries of the world, reflected mainly by increasing the contribution of tourism to the formation of gross domestic product and increasing population employed in such services.

Tourist market segmentation on a process of subdivision of the tourist market in homogeneous groups of buyers of tourism products, which has similar characteristics.

Segmentation variables differs depending on the field analyzed and most of the time, a list of them is almost impossible to achieve, therefore, will focus on specific criteria derived from tourism market, namely: geographical location, the attraction and the benefits sought by tourists and demographic characteristics, psychographics, socials and behavioural.

# **Comparative Study Considering the Impact of Globalization and Climate Changes Upon the Agricultural and Touristic Sector in Romania and the European Union**

**Marinela Gheres**

Babes-Bolyai University Cluj Napoca, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration  
marinela.gheres@econ.ubbcluj.ro

**ABSTRACT** Globalization is a key factor of economic development that causes challenges to different areas of national economies. One of the most important parts of national economies is retailing that has changed dynamically due to globalization at international level. The key factors of globalization such as interconnection of the world, force to grow, economic and cultural homogeneity, polarization and concentration, overpopulation, and the development of information and communication technology can be adapted to the retailing sector. Globalization sets up new challenges to retailers. New forms of retailing, fierce competition and polarization, dominance of giant retailers, expansion and modern technology belong to the main trends due to globalization. Knowing the economic process of external environment is a key for success for retailers. It is extremely important to be aware of trends in retailing in order to obtain competitive advantage both in national and international markets. In this article I will highlight those challenges that Romanian retailers have to face in the 21st century due to globalization. Tourism's increasing contribution to climate change, especially through the use of air travel, is now acknowledged. This study seeks to explore tourists' knowledge and awareness of the aviation impact on the climate, their sense of personal responsibility and their reactions to specific climate change policies.

## **1. Introduction**

Today, changes in climate have become the greatest challenge of all. They represent a threat not only to welfare, but also for survival. European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) underlined the need for sustained efforts of filling regarding the communication and consultation with citizens and communities at the local level and strongly recommended that the Lisbon strategy for competitiveness and jobs to include sustained efforts for combating climate changes. Lisbon Strategy already has a commitment to the sustainable development.

Using the Lisbon Strategy as a tool and the ecology "it means that the EU might serve the existence of a structure with a well-established methodology and a functional system of coordination. The EU maximizes the efficient use of existing synergies whenever possible.

## **2. Methodology and objectives**

Comparative studies between the situation in Romania and EU are made, conclusions are drawn and viable actions are suggested in order to achieve the planned objectives regarding the reduction of negative climate changes in agriculture and methods of soil preservation.

# A Study on the Impact of Internet on Buying Books Online

**Anamaria Humelnicu-Severin**

Transilvania University of Braşov, Faculty of Economic Sciences  
anamaria.humelnicu@unitbv.ro

**ABSTRACT** This paper presents a research among foreign students, studying at the Universities in Munich. The survey identified the people shopping online and their habits and expectations regarding online shopping, especially the attitudes towards buying books on the Internet. This research was realised in august 2008, in Germany, in Munich, the capital of Bavaria. Respondents came from countries like Albania, Bulgaria, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Latvia, Romania, Russia and others. The popularity of the World Wide Web has been growing at a very rapid pace. The Internet became an important part of students' lives, not only for their studies and daily routines, but also as a tool for getting information, to know other people and to do online shopping. Shopping on the Internet is an activity that most Internet users are interested in. It is rapidly developing. More and more people buy goods and services over the Internet. Also, an increasing range of goods and services are available to consumers shopping in this way. Books are in generally one of the products bought most online, although it is hard to believe that one would buy in the future books only over the Internet.

## 1. Introduction

This study investigates the online purchase behaviour of a key segment of the population- the university-aged students. The objective of the research is to know the opinions and the attitudes of the students regarding online shopping, especially regarding buying books over Internet. This research was realised in august 2008, in Germany, in Munich, the capital of Bavaria. Respondents were students of Universities in Munich, whether they study there for a long period or just for a month on a summer academy. The questioned students came from twenty different countries like Albania, Brazil, Bulgaria, Bosnia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Russia, Spain, Sweden and Turkey.

All students responded to the questionnaire in the German language.

Respondents were aged between 18-32 years as follows: 46.8% were persons between 18-22 years, 44.7% were persons between 23-27 years and finally, 8.5% were persons between 28-32 years.

The data of this study was analyzed using SPSS statistical tool.

Internet is changing the way consumers shop and buy goods and services, and has rapidly evolved into a global phenomenon. Many companies have started using the Internet with the aim of cutting marketing costs, thereby reducing the price of their products and services in order to stay ahead in highly competitive markets. Companies also use the Internet to convey, communicate and disseminate information, to sell the product, to take feedback and also to conduct satisfaction surveys with customers. Customers use the Internet not only to buy the

# Consumers' Attitude Towards Mobile Phone Advertising

**Emilia Iordache**

University „Constantin Brancoveanu” Pitesti,  
Faculty Management Marketing in Bussiness, Ramnicu Valcea  
emi66vl@yahoo.fr

**Maria Carmen Iordache**

University „Constantin Brancoveanu” Pitesti,  
Faculty Management Marketing in Bussiness, Ramnicu Valcea  
iordache72@yahoo.com

**Alina Vasilica Voiculet**

University „Constantin Brancoveanu” Pitesti,  
Faculty Management Marketing in Bussiness, Ramnicu Valcea  
alinav06@yahoo.com

**ABSTRACT.** Mobile phones have long ceased to be solely a means of communication for users to speak among one another. The progress of mobile phones' status from a technology component to a highly popular device has made it easier for marketers to access consumers' private environment: by means of the advertisements on mobile phones. A survey of several students shows that their perception to mobile phones advertisements is rather negative. Since a student associates the negative reactions of their group several times when receiving ads, they will likely take over the respective negative attitude. Mobile phones are firstly a challenge to marketing and advertising specialists as they are not similar to any traditional communication channels, yet have something of each and, therefore, they are a favourable way of testing new marketing and communication approaches and concepts.

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of the paper is to highlight consumers' attitude towards mobile phone advertising, showing mobile phones' development from a mere communication means to a "sophisticated" marketing instrument. Mobile advertising has clear advantages as compared to traditional modalities and it is influenced by several factors rendering certain attitudes towards this type of advertising.

## 2. Consumers' Attitude towards Mobile Phone Advertising

Mobile phones have long ceased to be merely a communication means for users. The progress of mobile phones' status from a technological component to a highly popular accessory has made it easier for marketers to access consumers private environment: by means of advertisements on their mobile phones. Another favourable element to marketers is also the fact that individuals lack free time. In this context, companies are trying to grab their attention as often as possible within their limited free time. Though having been introduced for its basic function to make communication among people easier, the phone has increasingly become a

# The Relational Paradigm of Marketing Thought

Andrei Maxim

“Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași

andrei.maxim@feaa.uaic.ro

**ABSTRACT** Both the business and the academic environments acknowledge the shortcomings of the popular transactional approach to marketing and the potential of the relational approach. There is still much debate as to where the place of relationship marketing (RM) in general marketing theory is, its domain, the way it should be defined and so on. This paper addresses two problems concerning the status of RM, with reference to previous research and the commercial practices of Romanian companies. The first part of the analysis refers to the paradigm status of relationship marketing. Established authors advocate for a new paradigm in marketing thinking. However, there are also opinions according to which relationship marketing represents only a new dimension that can be added to the existing transactional paradigm. The second part of our analysis focuses on the possibility of a paradigm shift occurring. A survey targeting Romanian companies was conducted in order to support the ideas presented here. The study is based on the methodology developed in the international research project Contemporary Marketing Practices (CMP) and is designed to evaluate the degree in which different types of marketing, characteristic for either the transactional or the relational approaches, are used.

## 1. The development of the transactional and relational approaches in marketing

The marketing definition that the American Marketing Association elaborated in 1985 captures the essence of the transactional perspective as it is centered on the concept of marketing mix: „...*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*” (Keefe, 2004: 17). Basically, a company should attain an optimal combination of goods and services offering, price, promotion and distribution in order to attract and satisfy customers. The consumers are viewed as passive; they are limited to accepting or not this combination of the 4 Ps and to buying or refusing the offer.

This approach proved very efficient in the context of the post-War World II economic boom of the United States. The demographic rise, the emergence of a substantive middle class, the revenues increase, the development of numerous innovative products and of new means of mass communication such as television, lead to an increase in the demand for standardized consumer goods (Lindgreen *et al.*, 2004). The marketing theoreticians of that period were mainly preoccupied with the creation of lists of variables deduced from econometric equations for profit optimization (Harker & Egan, 2006). In 1954 Neil Borden introduced the concept of marketing mix, a list which comprised 12 variables: product, price, branding, distribution, personal selling, advertising, promotions, packaging, display, servicing, physical handling, fact finding and analysis. He believed that marketers “would blend the various ingredients or variables of the mix into an integrated marketing program” (Grönroos, 1994: 349). McCarthy was the one who, in 1960, took Borden’s list and simplified it to the form of the 4 Ps we know today. Although this wasn’t the only list that emerged in that period, the favorable socio-economic context and the simplicity of the model ensured the development of



# Creating the Offer for Consultancy Services. A Study of Romanian Consultancies Web Presentations

**Daniela Roxana Mihai**

“Transilvania” University of Brasov  
mdaniela\_roxana@yahoo.com

**ABSTRACT** Consultancy services have a fairly recent history in Romania, with an ascending trend in the last few years. In the context of this development trend, the number of management consultancy companies is continuously growing, the competitive environment becoming increasingly stronger and more selective.

This paper aims to analyse the arguments used by Romanian management consulting companies on their web pages in order to construct their offer and to generate interest among their target groups. In this study I included 46 management consultancy companies, member of the Association of Romanian Management Consulting Organizations (AMCOR), which have been recognized and certified by this organization in the session which took place in May 2008.

Among the issues studied in this paper can be mentioned: the main target groups and the fields of expertise defined by management consultancies on their web pages, the methods used to build and define the need for consultancy or the arguments used in generating competitive advantage.

## 1. Introduction

The International Council of Management Consulting Institutes defines management consulting as: „...the provision of independent advice and assistance to clients with management responsibilities. This advice can take several shapes, as consultants can be external, internal and may take on one or more of a whole array of roles, including being an outsourced function for the client organization.”

Management consultancy represents a category of services focused on meeting the specific needs of organizational customers and the extent to which these needs or requirements have been met is the true indicator of the quality and value the service provided.

In 2005, the European Federation of Management Consultancies Associations (FEACO) introduced a new classification of management consultancy services, based on the existing services provided by European consulting companies. According to FEACO, the management consulting market can be split into the following four segments, whereby Consulting concerns two sub sections:

1a. Business Consulting, which includes:

- Strategy consulting, regarding the improvement of the long term and strategic position of the company: strategic panning development, financial, sales and marketing advisory, mergers & acquisitions etc.

# Innovativeness of Romanian enterprises in EU

**Andreea-Clara Munteanu**

Institute of National Economy, Bucharest  
acmunteanu@gmail.com

**Adina Pop**

Technical University Cluj - Napoca  
adina\_romtelecom@yahoo.com

**ABSTRACT** In the opinion of Peter Drucker, the business competitive enterprises has two basic functions: marketing and innovation. As a new member of EU, Romania has to accomplish several tasks, one of the major ones is enterprise innovativeness, targeting 3% of GDP for R&D activities as the main objective for 2015. Comparing with other EU countries, Romania is facing a serious gap in innovativeness and, as a consequence, in competitiveness of its enterprises. The aim of our paper is not only to reveal the reality, but also to outline the main sources of this gap, different requirements and to provide an objective view on national and European specific strategies.

## 1. Introduction

After more than a decade of severe economic recession, Romania is in its seventh year of economic growth, based, mainly, on the increase of the foreign direct investments (FDI) and on the intensification of foreign trade. The statistical data (table 1) highlight the strong correlation between these variables in relation to the growth pace of the gross domestic product.

*Table 1 Evolution of macroeconomic indexes in Romania*

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
FDI (%GDP)	2.9	2.5	3.6	8.4	7.1
EXP (%)	12.9	15.3	6.4	21.3	17.5
IMP (%)	41.1	41.1	42.2	45.0	43.4
GDP (%)	5.7	5.1	5.2	8.4	4.1

*Source:* Candidate and Pre-accession Countries Economies Quarterly 2006-I, p.6

Even though the macro-stabilization tendency seems to be consolidated, with respect to the competitiveness of its economy, Romania is still far away from the EU member states: according to the estimations made by Global Competitiveness Report<sup>1</sup> (GCR), during the year 2003 our country was on place 75, 30 positions below Poland, which was the lowest in the EU states hierarchy; at the level of year 2005, Romania has registered a higher position (place 67), but was still situated much after the EU countries. Innovativeness represents one of the key factors of obtaining competitiveness and, therefore, of sustainable economic growth. The statistical data for Romania reflect the consolidation of a lower position of our country, compared to the EU member states (table 2).

<sup>1</sup> GCR 2003-2004, pag.11; GCR 2005-2006, pag. xvii

# Local Rules or Decision Coherence – The Ever Old or the Ever New Question?

**Bogdan Nichifor**  
University of Bacău  
bogdan.nichifor@ub.ro

**Gheorghe Epuran**  
University of Bacău  
gheorghe\_epuran@yahoo.fr

**ABSTRACT:** Marketing communication is one of most important strategic instrument used in international activity and its specific factors increase the complexity of communication decisions. Economic regional development, intense competition, media availability, media services, legislatives rules are some aspects which influence communication decisions. International practices responded to these realities with two forms of strategies: adaptation and standardization, meaning that, on the one hand, the organization considers in its decisions the local market characteristics and, on the other hand, the same organization tries to achieve a high level of uniformity in its decisions. These strategies are based on achieving marketing performances in two separates way, one, specific to adaptation, focuses on increasing decision empathy to local market condition, and other, specific to standardization, focuses on economic rationality of marketing decisions. Advertising is maybe the most discussed subject of adaptation-standardization strategic alternatives and its history is not so new. This article focuses on the evaluation of the modernity of the subject of adaptation-standardization advertising strategies, in a context in which this area of interest has being approached in a consistent manner by more than 50 years in marketing literature.

## 1. Introduction

Under the new conditions that characterize the business environment, work at the international level must respond to specific challenges that concern every aspect of marketing activity. Marketing communications is one of the strategic tools used in this sphere, and specific factors which increase the complexity of decisions are many and, in general, refer to conditions that characterize different world markets: the level of economic development, competition more or less intense, the existence of certain media presence, the existence of certain providers of communications services, the existence of linguistic and cultural characteristics with direct impact on communication, the presence of different regulatory rules on advertising. Their impact is significant and is exercised on how this dimension of marketing mix is involved in achieving the objectives of the organization.

Economic opportunity and organizational and environmental restrictions are fundamental criteria underlying any marketing decisions. In the field of international business, these operating criteria differentiate possible strategies to follow. Considering the international economic similarities, on the one hand, and considering the organizational and environmental restrictions, on the other hand, are work hypothesis in setting targets, selecting strategies, implementation of marketing programs. International practice has established specific strategies as a result of awareness of these realities; it is about standardization strategy and

# Choosing Healthy Foods

Zsuzsa PÁL

Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj Napoca, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration  
zsuzsa.pal@econ.ubbcluj.ro

**ABSTRACT** The purpose of this paper is to build a theoretical framework for studying health awareness consumer behavior regarding food consumption. We tried to identify theoretical models which could describe some aspects of the healthy food consumption behavior. Generally, the food consumption has a series of paradoxes (ex. the paradox of omnivore) influencing the consumer’s perception, attitude and behavior toward these products and their influence over one’s health. A wide range of studies, designed to explain the behavior of a healthy food consumer, were carried out in the last decade. These studies proposed patterns of behavior and attitude describing the consumer’s food choice regarding a health-enhancing food category, such as functional foods. This scientific research tries to build a theoretical background for an empirical study which will focus on a food consumer’s attitude and manner of decision, as well as on the influencing factor concerning the health-enhancing food product. Following this formula, we are trying to identify the major food categories that have a positive effect on the human organism in comparison to the foods produced in a conventional way. Respectively, on a larger scale, we are trying to provide diversified ways for the food producing or processing organizations in their marketing strategy.

## 1. Introduction

While in the third-world countries the only risk factor is the lack of the necessary quantity of food and the problems rose from that, in the developed world the risk concept has had new dimensions, rather psychological, behavioral and sociological than pure physiological (Lehota, 2001). The Occident confronts with a new concept of the physiological dimension of the problem. The two main problems that lead to the so-called ‘civilization diseases’ are represented by the food abundance and the modern society’s modified life style.

Nowadays, the term ‘healthy’, in one form or another, seems to be the magic word in the food product’s communication. The *bifidus esensis* or *the fatty acid omega3* are the main characters in the promotion strategies. The companies try to differentiate their food products using all kind of methods, such as promoting the benefits of the products over one’s health. They are also doing their best to gain competitive advantages by improving the health dimensions of the products. Not only mass-media has a strong impact on consumer’s choices but also the new nutrition waves promotes healthy diets, of which some are scientifically proved and some are not. This short enumeration of the information sources, without any classification or evaluation, tries to suggest the abundance of sources and types of information for the consumers’ decision making. The consumer’s choice of food and, generally speaking, the choice of diet, is more and more confusing. We are facing new-born diet trends every day, but more of them are often contradictory. For example, while a movement promotes the butter consumption rather than margarine, the other just banishes it from the alimentation because of its cholesterol content. This controversial aspect appears also in the food products marketing communication.

# Examining Customer Desired Value in the Romanian Mobile Phone Market: An Explorative Analysis

**Ioan Plăiaș**

Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration  
plaias@econ.ubbcluj.ro

**Paul Cornel Duță**

Astra-Uniqa Insurance  
paul.duta@gmail.com

**ABSTRACT.** Facing the challenges of limited resources and the introduction of tougher credit rules, Romanian consumers are showing increased exigency regarding the products and services they want to purchase. The domestic mobile phone market has seen steady growth over the last years but the year 2008 found companies face to face with a stagnating market. The authors of this paper reviewed relevant literature regarding customers' desired value in order to develop an effective research framework that will identify relevant values desired by Romanian mobile phone users. This paper presents findings from an explorative study of customers' desired value meant to provide companies with a realistic view of the domestic mobile phone market.

## 1. Introduction

A close look at the market reveals an intense competition between companies to draw consumers' resources. In order to make an impact, competitors are constantly increasing their marketing budgets. Romanian specialists forecasted that the domestic advertising market will reach the all time high in 2008 with a total of 600 million euros spent by companies on various marketing tools. For a company to reach the desired objectives it is vital to identify the values that the customers desire and consider worthy of allocating their resources on.

The concept of *value* has always been the core of all marketing activities (P. Kotler 1998). Voluntary exchange between market participants is a basic marketing principle. This voluntary exchange will take place only if the buyer will identify desired values in seller's offer. It is vital for a company to be perceived as offering the means to satisfy objectives attached by the consumers to a specific use situation (D. Flint, R. Woodruff, 2001).

There are many reasons why marketers need to focus on customer desired value. First of all, desired customer value anticipates the product-user interaction and takes into account various use situations and second, on a short term it is a stable characteristic of the personal system of values (A. Graf, P. Maas, 2007: 7). Furthermore, desired customer value is not influenced by previous interactions with the product or service.

Professor Ioan Plăiaș from the Babes-Bolyai University developed a framework that pinpoints the three possible roles a consumer can play in the marketplace: one can be a user, a payer or

# Teaching Marketing Interdisciplinarity

**Ioan Plăiaș**

Babes-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration  
plaias@econ.ubbcluj.ro

**Mónika Anetta Alt**

Babes-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration  
monika.alt@econ.ubbcluj.ro

**Zsuzsa Pál**

Babes-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration  
zsuzsa.pal@econ.ubbcluj.ro

**ABSTRACT** In this study we highlight the role of marketing teachers to emphasise the marketing interdisciplinary features. First of all, we present the concept of interdisciplinarity. Then we analyze the interdisciplinarity in marketing education by trying to answer four questions: What kind of knowledge do students need to realize the marketing interdisciplinary features? What pedagogical vehicles should instructors use to highlight the marketing interdisciplinary features? What specific kinds of knowledge content are now commonly being disseminated at marketing courses? How do the specific kinds of knowledge currently being disseminated compare with what students need? Do students perceive the marketing interdisciplinary features? We will try to answer the first question by using the experience of three important Romanian universities whereas the answer to the last three questions will only be based on the know-how of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration from Babeș-Bolyai University.

## 1. Introduction

The Romanian educational system is being aligned to the European system through the implementation of the Bologna process. This reform also presupposes some changes in the marketing education. The interdisciplinary feature of marketing is a result of a complex nature of marketing. This topic could be presented from a marketing standpoint, on the one hand, and on the other hand how marketing adds value to the non-economic field of activity. Marketing teachers have the important role to promote the marketing interdisciplinarity. From this point of view, the academic curriculum for BSC and MS levels are essential. At the same time, it is recommended that harmony exists between curricula of different economic specializations. It is well known that teachers' and students' opinions vary. Thus, in our study regarding the marketing teaching program, both sides shall be considered.

## 2. The interdisciplinary feature of marketing

The concept of interdisciplinarity emerged during the 1930's. At present it is strongly disseminated in the specialist literature.

During this period was modified the concept of interdisciplinarity. Chettiparamb A. (Chettiparamb A., 2007) presents a very good literature review of this topic, based mainly on the work of Heckhausen (Heckhausen, 1972) and Boisot (Boisot, 1972).

# Opportunities to Penetrate the Real Estate Market in Cluj-Napoca - Analyzing the Profile of the Residential Real Estate Customer

**Marcel C. Pop**

Babes-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration  
marcel.pop@econ.ubbcluj.ro

**Dan Cristian Dabija**

Babes-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration  
cristian.dabija@econ.ubbcluj.ro

**ABSTRACT.** All the real estate developers must pass through a very profound restructuring process, mainly because of the hyper competition and the apparently exceeding offer. Customers are scarce, but not products. Demand, not supply, is the problem. And most offers have lack differentiation. Thus, marketing must be redefined. In the real estate field, the new marketing orientation - right value for each customer - provides guidance for reconfiguring a company's current organizational structure. The process starts with assessing the customer's characteristics, then progresses with identifying customer benefits and ends with building the relationship with the customer.

## 1. Introduction

To exploit the nowadays economy's business opportunities, real estate developers need to renew themselves by reinventing their products, their offers. Reinventing the company encourages the sharing of knowledge and skills across all divisions. This redesigning decision requires visionary, risk-taking leadership and will result as a stronger organization. To renew itself, the company needs to move into an intreprenurial stage, in which the marketers go back into the marketplace. They should start working with their customers and start visualizing ways to improve their customers' satisfaction. They need to set their sights on market opportunities, and to become dynamic enterprises that are alert, adaptable and responsive.

## 2. Business particularities in real estate sector

Companies must now review and revise many of their basic strategies, channels, policies, procedures and organizations to take advantage of the opportunities that the real estate field presents. New business strategies call for new marketing practices. We believe that the marketer's job is not anymore limited to managing the Four Ps or to determining segmentation, targeting and positioning. If they are to deliver value, marketers must conduct four activities in the new economy:

1. identify new market opportunities
2. evaluate the opportunities and recommend the best ones
3. formulate the value proposition and market offering that best address the target market's need
4. propose the value chain that will best deliver the promised value

# Precision Marketing

**Ciprian Marcel Pop**

Babes-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration  
marcel.pop@econ.ubbcluj.ro

**Andreea Ioana Maniu**

andreea\_maniu@yahoo.com

**Monica Maria Zaharie**

monica\_zaharie@yahoo.com

**ABSTRACT** We decided to treat the topic – Precision Marketing due to the crucial influence of companies’ marketing strategies. Firstly, we explained the concept that represents our theme and the importance of understanding and applying the precision marketing techniques and characteristics. On the other hand, we emphasized the rise of customer relationship management and at the same time the main goal of precision marketing which is represented by the brand loyalty. Next, we underline the importance of the segmentation, which represent a useful tool in precision marketing. In addition, we understood that we must appreciate what means a personalized co-experience to co-create unique value with customers. Last, but not the least, we tried to find a significant illustration of precision marketing choosing the Sensiblu pharmaceutical chain.

## 1. Introduction

“Put more money into gaining a better understanding of your customers and prospects, and then market to them in a targeted way!” (Jeff Zabin & Gresh Brebach, 2004)

These words come to emphasize the importance of marketing thinking that tend to be reflected in more and more companies’ strategies.

## 2. Precision marketing concept

Nowadays, the pressure to demonstrate marketing return on investment has never been greater, and many companies are taking a more scientific approach to marketing, and treating it as a true business discipline. This describes a technology-enabled process for capturing customer data, analyzing that data to derive strategic insights, and using those insights to drive more efficient and profitable customer interactions. Thus, such a narrowly-defined message designed to resonate with customers’ specific wants and needs. This process is called precision marketing.

Therefore, we can say that precision marketing refers to drive continuous performance improvement through the use of personalization, segmentation, analytics, rules-based interactions, customer profitability level, decision-trees and/or closed-loop marketing planning and execution processes. This means that effective precision marketing techniques lead to improved customer retention rates, higher revenues during each campaign and higher levels of customer satisfaction.



# Managing the Change of Marketing Information Systems in Higher Education Institutions

**Marius D. Pop**

Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj Napoca, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration  
marius.pop@econ.ubbcluj.ro

**Ovidiu I. Moisescu**

Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj Napoca, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration  
ovidiu.moisescu@econ.ubbcluj.ro

**Mihai F. Băcilă**

Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj Napoca, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration  
mihai.bacila@econ.ubbcluj.ro

**Alexandra M. Țîrca**

Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj Napoca, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration  
alexandra.tirca@econ.ubbcluj.ro

**ABSTRACT.** Nowadays higher education institutions environment is characterized by downsizes in public funding, increasing competition and greater expectation from students as they are seeking value for money paid. More and more universities try to enter world wide official rankings, thus external quality audits becoming more necessary than ever. Higher education is also expected to play a central role in social and economic transformation, even as a source of export income. To remain viable, universities must be able to respond promptly and wisely to this combination of change forces, through a consistent thinking and action towards change, both radical and gradual. This paper tries to conceptually approach the key issues regarding change management in higher education institutions and implementing changes in their marketing information systems, with focus on a case study of a higher education institution (Babeş Bolyai University’s Faculty of Economics and Business Administration) in order to identify the need for change from the point of view of students and teaching staff, as well as to predict the potential resistance sources in the case of needed changes be put into practice.

## 1. Managing organizational change: theoretical background

Private and public organizations are facing a future of constant change due to change drivers such as globalization, economic orientation and information technology (Rantz, 2002). Organizations of all types need to change because of several reasons basically related to organization–environment relationship, to organizational life cycle, and, respectively, to the political nature of organizations (Kanter, Stein and Jick, 1993). The change motivations related to *organization–environment relationship* are concerned with mergers, alliances, divestitures, as organizations attempt to redefine their relationships with challenging social and political environments. The *organizational life cycle* related reasons imply changes in culture and structure in order for organizations to adapt as they evolve from birth through

# Sales Promotion Abuse

**Diana Prihoanca**

University of Bacău  
dianaprihoanca@yahoo.com

**Ioana Barin**

University of Bacău  
ioana\_barin@yahoo.com

**ABSTRACT:** The article is about the increasing use of sales promotion in marketing programs. It is a fundamental change in strategic decisions about how companies market their products and services. Trade promotions can be a very effective tool for generating short-term increases in sales, and many brand managers would rather use a promotion to produce immediate sales than invest in advertising and build the brand's image over an extended time. Overuse of sales promotion can be detrimental to a brand in several ways. A brand that is constantly promoted may lose perceived value. Consumers often end up purchasing a brand because it is on sale, they get a premium, or they have a coupon, rather than basing their decision on a favorable attitude they have developed. When the extra promotional incentive is not available, they switch to another brand. Consumers who consistently purchase a brand because of a coupon or price-off deal may attribute their behavior to the external promotional incentive rather than to a favorable attitude towards the brand. By contrast, when no external incentive is available, consumers are more likely to attribute their purchase behavior to favorable underlying feelings about the brand.

## 1. Introduction

For many years, advertising was the major promotional mix element for most consumer-product companies. Over the past decade, marketers have been allocating more of their promotional dollars to sales promotion. There has been a steady increase in the use of sales promotion techniques to influence consumers' purchase behavior. The growing power of retailers, erosion of brand loyalty, increase in consumers' sensitivity to promotions, increase in new product introductions, fragmentation of the consumer market, short-term focus of marketing and brand managers, and increase in advertising clutter are some of the reasons for this increase. Sales promotions can be characterized as either franchise building or nonfranchise building. The former contribute to the long-term development and reinforcement of brand identity and image; the latter are designed to accelerate the purchase process and generate immediate increases in sales.

Sales promotion techniques can be classified as either trade- or consumer-oriented. A number of consumer-oriented sales promotion techniques are including sampling, couponing, premiums, contests and sweepstakes, rebates and refunds, bonus packs, price-off deals, frequency programs, and event marketing. Trade-oriented promotions are including trade contests and incentives, trade allowances, displays and point-of-purchase materials, sales training programs, trade shows, and cooperative advertising. Advertising and sales promotion should be viewed not as separate activities but rather as complementary tools. When planned and executed properly, advertising and sales promotion can produce a synergistic effect that is greater than the response generated from either promotional mix element alone.

# Some Considerations regarding Business-to-Business Marketing Strategies. The Case of Company X

**Nicoleta Dorina Racolța-Paina**

Faculty of European Studies, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania  
Email: npana@euro.ubbuj.ro

**Alice Schobel**

Faculty of European Studies, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania  
Email: alice\_schobel@yahoo.com

**ABSTRACT:** In this paper we intend to point out the main features of business to business marketing, starting with a theoretical part, namely the general framework, in which we deal with the specific aspects of industrial markets, the industrial consumer and its behavior, relationship marketing as opposed to transactional marketing etc. The case study comes to enrich the theoretical part of the article. Company X is a clear example of the industrial sector, active for more than eighty years in the production and selling of industrial goods, both on the national and international markets. After a brief presentation and an intern analysis, our aim is to focus on the way marketing decisions are being taken in this enterprise, in order to develop appropriate strategies, presented in three main sections, as it follows: market strategies, strategies regarding the marketing mix and strategies specific to the four phases of the product lifetime cycle. Methodology: observation, analysis, structured interviews.

## 1. Introduction

In these days, one of the common interests of the companies is to adopt the right strategies in order to achieve the desired objectives (profit and/or market share). The marketing strategies play an important role within the effort of contemporary companies to win new customers respectively to keep their best customers, the final objective being to make profit. Often business-to-business marketing/industrial marketing is presented by contrast with marketing that addressed to finally consumers. It is like this because “in the usual situation, marketing involves serving a market of end users in the face of competitors” (Kotler & Armstrong, 2001: 13). Also, we consider that because of the contractual dimension of business markets, the concept of industrial marketing it might be seen as a limited one, not so complex and challenging as consumers marketing. In fact, is not like this, the industrial marketing having many tactical and strategically instruments that can be used by the companies in their efforts to make profit. Related to all of these, our question is if there are some specific dimensions of business-to-business marketing strategies. In fact, we move on from the transactional marketing approach to the relationship one, that has gained ground within industrial marketing. To present all of these, we have proposed a case study, a company from Romania. It is a peculiar situation from business-to-business market, because the seller is a manufacturing company (active for more than eighty years in the production and selling of industrial goods, both on the national and international markets) and the buyers are its resellers (retailers, distributors, and wholesalers from both national and international

# The Importance of Contact Personnel in the Banking Sector

**Lăcrămioara Radomir**

Babes-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration  
lacramioara.radomir@econ.ubbcluj.ro

**Cosmin Voicu Nistor**

Babes-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration  
voicu.nistor@econ.ubbcluj.ro

**Alina Căta Simona**

S.C. „Roads and Bridges Constructions” S.A. Deva  
simonacata2005@yahoo.com

**ABSTRACT** This paper aims to highlight the role that human resources, in general, and contact personnel, in particular, have within a financial institution and their contribution to building relationships with customers. The importance of contact personnel in the banking and financial services sector is given, on the one hand by the aspects that differentiate services from products (the characteristics of financial services), and on the other hand by the need to consider employees as part of the provided service. Employees that come into contact with the bank’s client (contact personnel) can be seen as a tangible element added to services which increase customers’ confidence in the bank; in other words, contact personnel helps the bank in “creating” the services and therefore should be considered as that resource that contributes to the bank’s performance and offers a base for the future growth. Given these issues, one may assume that bank employees contribute to the perceived value of the service, positively or negatively affecting the quality of the services and having a major role in satisfying the customer.

## 1. Introduction

Human resources and their management play an increasingly important role in a bank, determining its success or failure. The various segments of staff may have different roles and contributions to the success of bank, and since the success of a bank depends on the satisfaction of customers, the bank management must realize the importance of this resource. Michael Baker believes that the staff of a company is divided into contact and support personnel. Contact staff (eg. in the case of banks, the front-office staff) is represented by those employees of a company that are coming into direct contact with customers - those who determine the relationship between the company and the buyers of the services that it provides, those that consumers can see. Contact staff behavior determines, mostly, the way customers evaluate and appraise the quality of company products and services. The support Staff (the back-office staff of the bank), doesn’t usually come in direct contact with customers, but it ensures a stable firm hired-and-client business relation.

Contact staff, and in a more limited sense, the sales force, is represented by the “group of people who represent the company and have the explicit and primary task to sell or make it possible to sell the company’s products or services through direct contact with potential

# Viral Marketing – An Efficient Alternative To Classic Marketing

**Maria-Luiza Souza**  
smluiza@yahoo.com

**ABSTRACT** The economic crises from the last years, the consumers being more and more knowledgeable and cautions regarding their purchases and the new technologies are only a few of the elements that are responsible for the continuous evolution of marketing in the past decades. Social customs like “rumors” and “gossip” are no longer just a consequence of promotional campaigns but advertising tools known as „word-of-mouth” marketing and the rapid development of the internet and communication has introduced new essential terms for the vocabulary of any marketing specialist: viral marketing, buzz marketing, pod cast, blog marketing and many more. Among them, this article focuses on the notion of viral marketing and its impact on the advertising strategies.

## 1. What is viral marketing?

Putting together the terms “viral” and “marketing” creates a rather strange combination, especially when one considers what “viral” means – related to a virus. Yet the notion of viral marketing represents an innovative marketing technique that has more and more adepts with each passing day. Therefore it is important to find out what really is viral marketing and what type of innovations it brings to the practice compared with classic marketing. And more important, how and where it can be applied?

Viral marketing is best defined as any marketing strategy that encourages individuals to pass on marketing messages to others, using the recipient’s social network and creating the potential for exponential growth in the message’s exposure and influence (Wilson, 2005). Therefore the main characteristic that the concepts takes from either the organic or the computer type of virus is its ability to multiply exponentially “infecting” as many hosts as possible, something that can be a real advantage for advertising. The types of viral marketing messages include, but are not limited to: viral videos, interactive Flash games, e-books, viral text messages, images and software download, most of them being used mainly within the World Wide Web.

In fact, even the term creation is related to the on-line medium, having been first mentioned in the book “Media virus” (1994) by media critique Douglas Rushkoff. Yet its popularity has grown only after being used by Tim Draper and Steve Jurvetson in 1997 to describe the way Hotmail promoted their new free email service: at the end of each email sent a message saying „**Get Your Private, Free Email from MSN Hotmail at <http://www.hotmail.com>**” was inserted automatically, making the initial users Hotmail’s unofficial agents. The method paid off and Hotmail had an explosive growth: 12 millions users in only 18 months. This simple method was so successful that it was adopted by the majority of online services providers, today “Subscribe now!” or “Email this to a friend” being a mandatory part of any website.

# Modal Transport Alternatives in Freight Distribution

**Mihaela Şteţ**

West University "Vasile Goldis" of Arad, subsidiary Baia Mare  
miha9s@yahoo.com

**ABSTRACT:** Regarding the freight distribution, as part of marketing mix of a production company, decisions related to modal transportation solutions are some of the most important decisions, given the fact that these decisions are determinant in insurance the time and place utility. The design of network for physical distribution of goods has to be suited to different type of products, differences between them involving both physical adjustments of distribution vehicles and logistics adjustments of the physical distribution service. For these reasons, the present paper treats the problems and results of transportation mode selection in freight distribution. Between the most important criteria in selecting the best transport strategy related to freight distribution it can be considered: speed, reliability, flexibility, cost, quality/damage, documentation, environmental issues. The presented study case analyses, also, the advantages and drawbacks of each transportation mode regarding the requirements of different supply chains for some type of products taken in consideration.

## 1. Introduction

Logistics, as component of the place function is considered by some authors "the other half of marketing" (Coyle et al., 1988). Good logistics contributes strongly to customer service through delivering goods to the right place, at the right time, and in good condition.

Logistics of freight distribution is influenced, at large extent, by the decisions taken in marketing department of producers, starting from the product design, with a direct effect on the type of transport and warehousing, to the strategies of customer service. In marketing strategy, freight distribution strategy represents an important element, not only due to the distribution costs, but especially due its complexity and the variety of problems associated to physical distribution of goods.

In freight distribution process, the most important component is the transport, which offers to the sold products the additional space and time utilities and which facilitates the achievement of possession utility.

## 2. Transport solutions in freight distribution

The establishment of distribution strategy supposes a series of decisions related to transport. Choosing the transport mode, the type of vehicles, the transportation routes, the allocation of goods to delivery drives, are determinant elements relating to freight distribution.

In this direction, reliability and dependability of service has emerged as the number one factor in post-deregulation studies of carrier choice (McGinnis, 1990). The importance of choice the right transportation system is subordinated to the need to realise a high customer service level,

# Categorization of Cartels based on Market Factors using Fuzzy Information Matrix

**Attila Szőcs**

Sapientia University, Miercurea Ciuc, România  
attata27@gmail.com

**Hunor Burian**

Sapientia University, Csíkszereda, România  
hunorbur@yahoo.com

**Zoltán Makó**

Sapientia University, Csíkszereda, România  
makozoltan@yahoo.com

**ABSTRACT.** The introduction (1996) of the leniency program into the competition law of the European Union and its subsequent development (2002 and 2006) can be regarded as an effective measure in the fight against cartels. In spite of the fact that the leniency program proved to be a successful weapon against cartels, the European Commission needs additional means of facilitating the process of decision-making. We develop a matrix type instrument which operates with two market factors: price elasticity and market concentration. Since the quantities of these factors are uncertain, they can be characterized by fuzzy numbers. Our work sets as target to develop a frame that makes possible the characterization of the cartels basing on this two factors of the markets on which the cartels act now, or are likely to act in the future. Firstly, the matrix will provide us with nine raw categories, which will be refined in probability categories using a fuzzy information matrix. These categories could provide the Commission with a useful means for prediction.

## 1. Introduction

The introduction (1996) of the leniency program into the competition law of the European Union and its subsequent development (2002 and 2006) can be regarded as an effective measure in the fight against cartels. However, the economic power of the firms that are engaged in cartels or cartel-type relationships and the substantial raise in profit due to price fixing transforms the implementation of the program into a really complicated task. Moreover, clauses that usually prove to be effective may cause problems in some particular cases. For example one of the most powerful clauses of the program is the one that stipulates the whistleblower's right to immunity. However, the fact that no one from the cartel will know if there are any investigations against the cartel, can be a serious problem, because raises the uncertainty between the firms participating in the cartel. This leads to the conclusion that in spite of the fact that the leniency program proved to be a successful weapon against cartels, the European Commission needs additional means of facilitating the process of decision-making.

The leniency programs were firstly introduced in the US in 1978, and later in 1996 in the UE. The main idea of the program is that it offers in certain circumstances full immunity to the whistleblower, which offers the commission useful information about the cartel, and offers

# **An Exploratory Approach of Tourism as Information Based Business and the Role of ICT as a Driving Force for Changes within the Tourism Industry**

**Alexandra M. Țirca**

Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj Napoca, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration  
alexandra.tirca@econ.ubbcluj.ro

**Alexandru Chiș**

Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj Napoca, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration  
alexandru.chis@econ.ubbcluj.ro

**Ramona Lacurezeanu**

Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj Napoca, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration  
ramona.lacurezeanu@econ.ubbcluj.ro

**ABSTRACT:** More and more businesses, and entire global industries, are based on the production and exchange of information and ideas. Tourism as a global extremely competitive industry requires a diverse range of information and lends itself well to the support offered by information and communication technologies (ICTs). The aim of this paper is to describe and analyze the tourism industry from an ICT perspective and to examine the way tourism incorporates many of the features of the information society such as globalization, mobility and information richness. Tourism links a worldwide supplier community with consumers, equally distributed worldwide. Aspects like the relationship between ICT and tourism, the impact of technologies and communication systems on tourism production and tourists purchase behavior, the role of information for tourist perception and decisional process will be presented and discussed. The last part of the paper will illustrate some European trends in Internet distribution of Travel and Tourism Services and some aspects regarding the Romanian online tourism market.

## **1. Introduction**

Travel and tourism comprise the leading application field in business-to-consumer (B2C) e-commerce, representing approximately half of the total worldwide B2C turnover. On-line transactions are rapidly increasing in the travel and tourism industry, even if initial business and stock market expectations have not been fulfilled. New technologies have been changing the way in which tourism companies conduct their business and how the entire system operates (O'Connor, 1999; Werthner and Klein, 1999; Connell and Reynolds, 1999). Changes are particularly obvious in the way that tourism organizations communicate with their individual and institutional clients and how they manage their distribution function. These developments present a major opportunity for innovative tourism organizations and destinations to improve their relative position in the international market. Hence, e-Tourism will increasingly determine the competitiveness of the organization (Buhalis, 2003).

Tourism as a global extremely competitive industry requires a diverse range of information and lends itself well to the support offered by developing multimedia, communication



# Brand Due Diligence Checklist in Mergers and Acquisitions: A Review and Future Research Recommendations

**Dũng Anh Vũ**

Institute for Manufacturing, Department of Engineering, University of Cambridge  
adv22@cam.ac.uk

**Andrej Bertonec**

Institute for Manufacturing, Department of Engineering, University: University of Cambridge  
ab788@cam.ac.uk

**ABSTRACT:** Mergers and acquisitions (M&As) have become a common strategy for firms seeking rapid growth and thereby enhanced value. However, the majority of M&As actually result in a decrease in shareholder value. By exploring two preliminary case studies this paper highlights that brand plays a crucial role to the success of many M&As. Firms very often misunderstand the role of brand, under-estimate the importance of brand assessment in the pre-transaction stage (before integration), and consequently put their deals at a great risk and cost. In order to assess brand effectively and efficiently, firms need a comprehensive brand due diligence checklist. This paper reviews existing literature on M&A due diligence and brand due diligence in order to identify if the established theory has already solved the issue identified in the exploratory case studies. However, the review reveals this gap. The paper, therefore, raises an urgent need for future research on brand due diligence checklist in M&As. The paper also provides a theoretical foundation for brand due diligence checklist in M&As, so that researchers can use for developing a conceptual framework for the area before conducting fieldwork.

## 1. Research Background

It becomes more and more popular that companies use mergers and acquisitions (M&As) as a shortcut to seek rapid growth and to enhance value. Despite of this increasing popularity, M&As do not lead to the desired increase in value and return on investments whereas actually result in a decrease in shareholder value (Brewis, 2000; Habeck et al., 2000; A.T. Kearney, 1998; KPMG, 1999). Companies very often misunderstand the role of brands, under-estimate the importance of brand assessment in the pre-transaction stage (before integration), and consequently put their deals at a great risk and cost. There is sufficient evidence demonstrating the significance of brand due diligence to this consequence.

### *Ford's expensive lesson in the acquisition of Jaguar*

In December 1989 Ford Motor Company announced its acquisition of British premium auto maker Jaguar plc in an US\$2.5 billion deal. The reason Ford bought Jaguar was to extend to the premium car segment. Before the acquisition one of the things that had worried the company's senior management was Ford was a non-premium brand. As consumers were becoming more affluent that resulted in more spend on premium cars, companies like BMW, Mercedes and Audi (a premium brand of Volkswagen) were growing very fast during 1980s. Ford realised

# Marketing relationnel – Management du Marketing: la conceptualisation des interférences

**Zaiț Luminița**

Universitatea din Bacău  
zait.luminita@yahoo.com

**Abstract** Le concept de marketing relationnel peut représenter une conséquence logique de la manière dont la vision sur le marketing a évolué, de la conception de fonction de l’affaire à celle, plus réaliste, portant sur l’attitude, l’éthique et la culture organisationnelle. Le marketing relationnel se retrouve, par les composants d’attitude et de contenu, au niveau du marketing stratégique. Ayant comme point de départ la prémisse que le marketing relationnel sollicite l’investissement à long terme dans la base de clients, avec le but d’obtenir de bons résultats dans le même horizon temporel, il est évident qu’une telle démarche est intégrée dans la vision stratégique de l’organisation. Le cadre temporel spécifique pour chaque démarche mentionnée plus haut entraîne une différence dans l’analyse. La relation profitable à long terme, développée par des efforts courants (présents) et futurs, différencie le marketing relationnel par rapport au management du marketing. Cette dernière démarche favorise l’exploitation courante des opportunités du marché, en comptant plutôt sur les objectifs à court terme. Le marketing relationnel, d’autre part, peut signifier sacrifier des résultats à court terme pour consolider la relation à long terme.

## Introduction

Un point très important de la pensée du marketing des dernières quinze années a été le concept de loyauté et la relation à long terme, économiquement efficace, qui pourrait être développée avec le consommateur. Le concept de marketing relationnel peut être identifié comme une conséquence logique de la manière dont la vision sur le marketing a évolué de la conception de fonction de l’affaire à celle, plus réaliste, d’attitude, éthos et culture organisationnelle

A partir de cette constatation, on peut dire, en outre, que la nature de toute relation entre l’organisation et ses marchés devrait être fondé sur la reconnaissance profonde des interdépendances des structures mentionnées, fait qui a une importance capitale sur la manière dont l’organisation interagit avec sa clientèle.

## Le marketing relationnel à travers le management du marketing et le marketing stratégique

L’un des plus puissants arguments de l’imposition du marketing relationnel est du à la reconnaissance du fait que le coût de nouveaux clients est le plus souvent élevé, en particulier dans le cas des marchés matures ou en déclin. Dans ce contexte, les planificateurs de marketing doivent veiller à ce que les clients de l’organisation soient gérés d’une façon plus efficace. Une manière concrète, de développer cette mesure est de quitter la vision