

Importance of Marketing Functions in a Company

Sigitas Urbonavičius, Vytautas Dikčius, Gindra Kasnauskienė

Vilniaus universitetas
Saulėtekio al. 9, LT-01513, Vilnius

The article analyzes how top managers of companies see importance of marketing function as well as certain types of marketing activities. These types include typical areas of 4 P's as well as marketing planning and marketing research activities. The research is based on survey of 144 top level managers of companies that operate in Lithuania.

Managers evaluated marketing planning and price management as the most important marketing functions, while product management, marketing research and communications management appeared to be less important. The analysis based on characteristics of companies and their markets disclosed more differences in opinions. Managers of subsidiaries evaluated communication, planning and research activities as being more important. Managers of small companies (below 50 employees) rated almost all marketing activities as less important to them than managers of medium-size or large companies. A lot of differences in evaluations were observed between manufacturing, trade and service companies.

Data also showed that managers of growing companies typically higher evaluated marketing planning, product management, and communication activities. The authors summarize that higher evaluations of some marketing activities (others remaining equal) may be responsible for growth of companies. Since this cannot be related with whatever single characteristic of a company, authors assume that higher evaluations and growth is triggered by a more general characteristic of management – overall management sophistication.

Keywords: *marketing functions, management sophistication, determinants of sales growth.*

Introduction and literature review

Results of activities of companies depend on numerous interrelated internal and external influences. Their analysis is a constant concern of both academicians and practitioners. However, very complex nature of the subject requires dividing the issue into more narrow aspects of research. One of possibilities is looking through the prism of marketing activities in a company, assuming that they predetermine contact between a company and its markets, and through this significantly influencing overall success of a company.

Nevertheless, the scope of marketing activities and their influences is still extremely broad and hardly can be analysed as a whole. One of the ways to cover logical part of this broad picture lays through analysis of marketing function importance from the standpoint of top man-

agers of companies. Evaluation of marketing function importance as a whole, as well as separately by its more narrowly defined activities, seems to be relevant methodology for understanding the most typical managerial stereotypes and relating them with general results (outputs) of companies' activities.

There are numerous studies that analyze specific marketing activities and their relationship with certain aspect of other functions within a company. Many of them discuss relationship between marketing and finance functions, or model financial outcomes of marketing activities (Sheth, Sharma 2001; Uzelac, Sudarevic 2006; Rust, Ambler, Carpenter, Kumar, Srivastava, 2004; Weinzimmer, Bond III, Houston, Nystrom 2003). In other cases marketing function is related with functions that are 'closer' to it, typically – with sales (Rouziès, Anderson, Kohli, Michaels, Weitz, Zoltners 2005), Dewsnap, Jobber 2000), with public relations (Grunig, J.A, Grunig, L.A 1998) new product development (Song, Montoya-Weiss, Schmidt 1997) or with the function of operations (Piercy, Rich, 2004) and purchasing (Hawes, Baker, d'Amico, 2006).

Other authors the link between a specific marketing activity and some either internal or external factors: pricing and revenue (Garrow, Ferguson, Keskinocak, Swann, 2006); cooperation in product innovation (De Luca, Atuahene-Gima, 2007), human resources aspect of marketing (Chimhanzi, 2004), etc.

Some studies cover the strategic and managerial aspects of marketing activities, thus integrating managerial perspective into the picture. Frederick E. Webster Jr. draws conclusion about strengthening the managerial view of marketing (Webster, 2005). Companies achieve significantly greater pay-offs in business performance terms when critical marketing input in all areas of the strategy formation process (from goal setting to strategy selection) is harnessed in comparison with those firms where marketing does not make such a meaningful contribution to strategy formation (Morgan, McGuinness, Thorpe, 2000). In other words, results of the company are better, when top level management realizes importance and role of marketing within a company. It is even more significant in the context of changes, when the role of marketing is rapidly transforming (Moorman, Rust, 1999; Fox, 2003; Shipley, 1994)

However, studies that would directly measure management evaluations of importance of marketing activities are very rare and typically touch this aspect just indirectly (Spillard, Moriarty, 1994; Homburg, Workman, Krohmer, 1999; Valentin, 1992). No doubts that research

on the issue in transforming economies and specifically in Eastern European countries also is minimal, and probably the closest examples are studies in Check Republic (Pribova, Savitt, 1995) and Ukraine (Skliarenko, Bartel, 2006).

This article is attempting to partially fill this gap, and to broaden knowledge about managerial evaluations of marketing activities. Therefore the main objective of this article is to analyze what factors predetermine importance of various marketing decisions and activities in companies. Also, the link between these evaluations and

growth of company sales is explored. In addition to this, authors tried to develop broader considerations about the issue, thus outlining possible directions for further research.

Research methodology

In order to analyze managers' opinions about importance of various marketing activities, we developed research model that includes the main factors and outcomes (Figure).

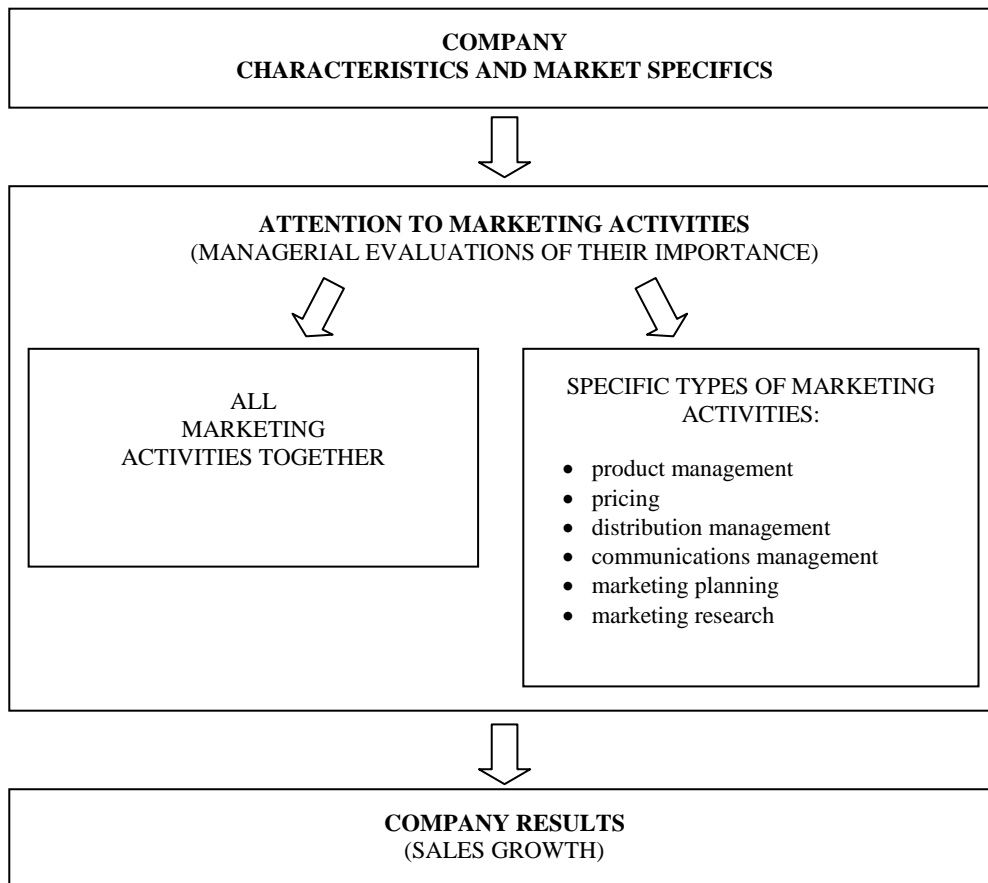


Figure. Research model

It is understood that characteristics of a company play an important role in setting priorities for all types of activities, including activities that are related with certain types of marketing functions. The most important determinants here are associated either with characteristics of a company or specifics of its markets (Couto, Vieira, Borges-Tiago, 2005).

In our model we used included three demographic characteristics of a company: type of the company, its size (number of employees), and type of activities (primarily manufacturing, trade or services). In addition to this, presence of marketing department in a company was used as a characteristic that to some degree reflects level of formalization of marketing activities in a company (Homburg, Workman Jr., Krohmer, 1999).

Marketing specifics was measured by indicating the major type of clients (individuals or organizations), and served geographical markets (mainly analyzing whether

the company is primarily oriented towards the domestic market or towards exports).

Quantitative survey was performed by interviewing 144 top level managers of companies that operate in Lithuania (see Table 1).

Almost two-thirds of the sample companies were independent enterprises, about one third – subsidiaries (branches or daughter companies of larger international corporations). Over 48% were primarily involved in providing services, others mainly concentrated on manufacturing or trade (wholesale and retail). A half of the sample companies were defined as small companies (had less than 50 employees), others being medium sized or large companies. The proportion between companies that see themselves as targeting consumer markets and those that target business markets was approximately equal. Over 80% of sample companies indicated Lithuania as their main geographical market.

Table 1

Sample profile

Company status	Frequency	%	Number of employees	Frequency	%	Area of activity	Frequency	%
Independent company	83	57.6	Less than 50	73	50.7	Manufacturing	18	12.5
Subsidiary	48	33.3	50-249	40	27.8	Services	70	48.6
Other	13	9.0	250 and more	31	21.5	Trade	56	38.9
The main market			Type of clients			Sales last year		
Lithuania (domestic)	120	83.3	Consumers	60	41.7	Grew	119	82.6
Other countries	24	16.7	Organizations	70	48.6	Didn't grow	20	17.4
			Other	14	9.7			
Marketing department								
Exists	71	49.3						
Does not exist	73	50.7						

Based on academic literature review (Naik, Raman, Winer, 2005; Dibb, 2002), we defined 46 types of marketing activities that can be important to various companies. All of them were categorized into 6 groups – four of them representing elements of a typical marketing mix, others covering marketing planning and marketing research activities. The questionnaire included four statements about product management, four about price management, nine about distribution management, fourteen about communications and promotion management, six about marketing research and nine about marketing planning. Answers were presented using five-point scale.

The model assumes that higher evaluation of marketing activities means bigger managerial attention to marketing activities in general. This can be reflected in either high evaluation of all types of marketing activities or just some of them – only those that are directly corresponding to the company characteristics and its market specifics. In both cases, bigger attention to marketing activities is influencing the final results. In this model, the integrated indicator of results (outputs) is growth of company sales.

Cronbach alpha coefficient was used to evaluate reliability of the questionnaire. Malhotra and Birks (Malhotra, Birks, 2003) interpret that Cronbach alpha coefficient value less than 0,60 show low reliability of a questionnaire. In case of the current research, all Cronbach's alphas were well above this number (0,86 for price management, 0,89 for distribution, 0,76 for communications, 0,80 for marketing research and 0,93 for marketing planning). The lowest alpha coefficient value was for product management (0,64), but it was still higher than necessary 0,60. Therefore authors concluded that the questionnaire was suitable for measurement an importance of marketing functions, just the part of it about product management has to be modified in future research.

Statistical analysis showed that the designed model is relevant, and adequately measures identified types of activities. Analysis showed some relationships between six measured areas, what corresponds to the theoretical statement about overall interdependence of marketing

activities. More specifically, it was observed that marketing planning had the strongest correlation with communications ($r=0.557, p < .001$) and marketing research ($r=0.549, p < .001$). An importance of price management positively correlated with importance of all other marketing functions, but correlation was rather weak, while the strongest of them was with distribution ($r=0.483, p < .001$). Marketing research had the strongest correlation with communications ($r=0.491, p < .001$). In addition to this, product management had the strongest correlation with marketing planning ($r=0.412, p < .001$), price management ($r=0.398, p < .001$) and distribution ($r=0.365, p < .001$).

Findings and discussion

Managers evaluated two marketing functions as more important for companies than others. These were marketing planning and price management. Respondents stated that three activities (product management, marketing research and communications' management) were less important than the first two. These three activities were evaluated significantly lower, for example, difference between product and price management is $t = -7.090, p < .001$ (Table 2). Distribution was mentioned as the least important activity (difference from communications $t = -4,351, p < .001$), but this can be explained by the presence of trading and service companies in the sample.

Analysis by characteristics of companies and their markets disclosed more differences. Managers of independent companies considered three of researched marketing areas (communications, planning, research) being less important than managers of subsidiaries of large international corporations (communications $m_{\text{subsid}}=3.5702, m_{\text{indep}}=3.1824, t = -3.584, p < .001$; planning $m_{\text{subsid}}=4.4240, m_{\text{indep}}=3.8233, t = -5.502, p < .001$; research ($m_{\text{subsid}}=3.6671, m_{\text{indep}}=3.2634, t = -3.011, p < .001$). In other words, managers of independent companies consider decisions about product, price and distribution being the main tools of their marketing activities. This might be very correct (depending on other characteristics of these companies), but also

allows guessing that these companies are somehow concentrating just on the three very basic of marketing tools. Is it possible that overall level of management in them is

somehow lower than in international ones? Then we can assume observing the first reflection of different overall management sophistication.

Table 2

Importance of marketing functions in companies

	Importance	Mean	Std. Deviation
Marketing planning	1-2	4.0758	.7447
Price management	1-2	3.9653	.8633
Product management	3-4-5	3.4340	.7693
Marketing research	3-4-5	3.4193	.7740
Communications	3-4-5	3.3315	.6082
Distribution	6	2.9339	1.0588

Evaluations of importance of various marketing activities also varied depending on a company size (Table 3). Managers of small companies (below 50 employees) rated almost all marketing activities as less important to them than managers of medium-size or large companies. One of possible interpretations is related with scarce resources of

these companies, which does not allow paying more managerial attention to marketing activities (Siu, Kirby, 1999). More specifically, managers of medium-size and large companies evaluated marketing planning and marketing research as significantly more important than managers of small companies (significance level $p < .01$).

Table 3

Importance of marketing functions depending on size of companies

	Number of employees	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Differences	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Marketing planning	Less than 50 SM	73	3.7292	.8001	SM-M	-4.993	.000
	50-249 M	40	4.4003	.3831	M-L	-.647	.520
	250 and more L	31	4.4732	.5658	L-SM	-4.697	.000
Price management	Less than 50 SM	73	3.8322	.8681	SM-M	-1.594	.114
	50-249 M	40	4.1000	.8278	M-L	-.024	.981
	250 and more L	31	4.1048	.8751	L-SM	-1.462	.147
Product management	Less than 50 SM	73	3.2500	.7626	SM-M	-2.242	.027
	50-249 M	40	3.5750	.6869	M-L	-.626	.533
	250 and more L	31	3.6855	.7984	L-SM	-2.627	.010
Marketing research	Less than 50 SM	73	3.2170	.8134	SM-M	-2.701	.008
	50-249 M	40	3.5798	.5993	M-L	-.671	.504
	250 and more L	31	3.6887	.7693	L-SM	-2.748	.007
Communications	Less than 50 SM	73	3.1255	.5500	SM-M	-3.727	.000
	50-249 M	40	3.5443	.6081	M-L	.016	.987
	250 and more L	31	3.5419	.5889	L-SM	-3.458	.001
Distribution	Less than 50 SM	73	2.7621	1.0563	SM-M	-3.208	.002
	50-249 M	40	3.4135	.9867	M-L	2.938	.004
	250 and more L	31	2.7197	.9869	L-SM	.191	.849

A lot of differences in evaluations were observed between manufacturing, trade and service companies. It is absolutely relevant that services companies were less

concerned about product-related activities, since they did not deal with tangible goods ($m_{serv}=3.2786$, $m_{trade}=3.5179$, $t= 2.495$, $p < .05$). The same difference

occurred between services and trade companies regarding distribution activities ($m_{serv}=2.1940$, $m_{trade}=3.6293$, $t= -9.862$, $p< .001$), as well as between service and manufacturing companies ($m_{serv}=2.1940$, $m_{manuf}=3.6478$, $t=9.443$, $p< .001$). Also, there was significant difference in judgements about importance of pricing and communications. Price-related marketing activities were significantly more important to manufacturing companies than to service companies ($m_{serv}=3.2786$, $m_{manuf}=3.7778$, $t=.6353$, $p< .05$), whereas communication activities were less important to manufacturing companies than to service companies ($m_{manuf}=2.9089$, $m_{serv}=3.3810$, $t= -2.861$, $p< .001$) and than to trade companies ($m_{manuf}=2.9089$, $m_{trade}=3.4054$, $t= -3.235$, $p< .001$).

Managers of business-to-business sector companies significantly lower evaluated importance of product management decisions ($m_{b2b}=3.3107$, $m_c=3.5792$, $t= 1.977$,

$p< .05$) and pricing management ($m_{b2b}=3.8179$, $m_c=4.1750$, $t= 2.454$, $p< .05$).

Differences between exporting/not exporting companies occurred just in opinions about communication activities, which were considered as less important by managers of exporting companies ($m_{exp}=3.0475$, $m_{not exp}=3.3882$, $t=2.077$, $p< .05$). This is relevant, since majority of these companies are involved in rather passive forms of exporting, and do not communicate with their final customers in foreign markets.

Evaluation of importance of marketing activities also varied depending on existence of marketing department in a company. Managers of companies that had a marketing department evaluated marketing planning, marketing research, communications and product management higher, than managers of companies that have no separate marketing department (Table 4).

Table 4

Importance of marketing functions depending on the presence of marketing department

	Marketing department	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Product management	Yes	71	3.6268	.6266	3.062	.003
	No	73	3.2466	.8493		
Price management	Yes	71	4.1056	.7822	1.943	.054
	No	73	3.8288	.9203		
Distribution	Yes	71	3.0389	1.0358	1.175	.242
	No	73	2.8318	1.0779		
Communication	Yes	71	3.6155	.4919	6.211	.000
	No	73	3.0552	.5852		
Marketing research	Yes	71	3.6744	.6744	4.111	.000
	No	73	3.1712	.7881		
Marketing planning	Yes	71	4.4807	.4041	7.671	.000
	No	73	3.6819	.7897		

Presence of marketing department can be related with the size of companies, but it also reflects formalization of management structure in a company. Therefore authors assume that companies that have more developed management structure, evaluate marketing activities higher. Is it another example showing that marketing activities are evaluated higher when overall management sophistication in a company is higher?

All above discussed factors (characteristics of companies and their markets) influence managers' evaluations about marketing. However, higher evaluations of marketing activities can be positively related with growth of companies. Data showed that managers of growing companies typically evaluated marketing planning ($m_{grow}=4.1403$, $m_{stable}=3.7105$, $t= 2.422$, $p< .05$), product management ($m_{grow}=3.4895$, $m_{stable}=3.0750$, $t= 2.245$, $p< .05$) and communication activities ($m_{grow}=3.3745$, $m_{stable}=2.9860$, $t= 2.700$, $p< .01$) as being more important than managers of companies, which sales were stable. Authors assume that higher evaluations of some market-

ing activities (others remaining equal) may be responsible for growth of companies.

Conclusions and directions for future research

The objective of the research was to analyze importance of various marketing activities through opinions of top managers of various companies. The results are based on rather small sample, thus conclusions are just preliminary and rather outline directions for future research.

First of all, research model was tested and proved its relevance, and only the set of questions about product management in the questionnaire might be modified. Future research may have the same background, and just include more characteristics of companies and more output criteria. Certainly, larger sample would allow better statistical significance.

Second, a number of rather concrete differences in evaluation of importance of marketing activities were

observed on the basis of characteristics of companies and their markets.

Third, there is positive relationship between evaluations of importance of marketing activities and growth of companies.

And finally, investigation of rather general characteristic of overall management sophistication in a company and its relationship with marketing activities may be a good direction for future research.

References

1. Chimhanzi, J. The impact of integration mechanisms on marketing/HR dynamics // *Journal of Marketing Management*, 2004, No 20, p. 713-740.
2. Couto, J. P. Determinants of the establishment of marketing activities by subsidiaries of MNCs / J. P. Couto, J. C. Vieira, M. T. Borges-Tiago // *The Journal of American Academy of Business*, 2005, No. 2, p. 305-313.
3. De Luca, L. M. Market knowledge dimensions and cross-functional collaboration: examining the different routes to product innovation performance / L. M. De Luca, K. Atuahene-Gima // *Journal of Marketing*, 2007, Vol. 71, p. 95-112.
4. Dewsnap, B. The Sales-Marketing Interface in Consumer Packaged-Goods Companies: A Conceptual Framework / B. Dewsnap, D. Jobber // *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 2000, Vol. 36c, No 2, p. 109-119.
5. Dibb, S. Marketing planning best practice // *The Marketing Review*, 2002, No 2, p. 441-459.
6. Fox, K. A. The Renaissance of Marketing // *Business & Economic Review*, 2003, April-June, p. 25-26.
7. Garrow, L. Expert opinions: Current pricing and revenue management practice across U.S. industries / L. Garrow, M. Ferguson, P. Keskinocak, J. Swann // *Journal of Revenue and Pricing Management*, 2006, Vol. 5, No 3, p. 237-247.
8. Grunig, J. E. The relationship between public relations and marketing in excellent organizations: evidence from the IABC study / J. E. Grunig, L. A. Grunig // *Journal of marketing communications*, 1998, No 4, p. 141-162.
9. Hawes, J. M. A purchasing perspective of the universal marketing functions / J. M. Hawes, T. L. Baker, M. F. D'Amico // *Marketing Management Journal*, 2006, Vol. 16, issue 2, p. 107 - 115.
10. Homburg, Ch. Marketing's influence within the firm / Ch. Homburg, J. P. Workman, H. Jr. Krohmer // *Journal of Marketing*, 1999, Vol. 63, p.1-17.
11. Homburg, Ch. Marketing's influence within the firm / Ch. Homburg, J. P. Workman, H. Jr. Krohmer // *Journal of Marketing*, 1999, Vol. 63, 1-17.
12. Malhotra, N. K. Marketing research: An applied approach / N. K. Malhotra, D. F. Birks. Second European ed., Pearson Education Limited, 2003, p. 313-314.
13. Moorman, Ch. The Role of Marketing / Ch. Moorman, R. T. Rust // *Journal of Marketing*, 1999, Vol. 63, p. 180-197.
14. Morgan, R. E. The contribution of marketing to business strategy formation: a perspective on business performance gains / R. E. Morgan, T. McGuinness, E. R. Thorpe // *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 2000, No 8, p. 341-362.
15. Naik, P. A. Planning marketing-mix strategies in the presence of interaction effects / P. A. Naik, K. Raman, R. S. Winer // *Marketing Science*, 2005, Vol. 24(1), p. 25-34.
16. Piercy, N. C. Strategic marketing and operations relationships: the case of the lean enterprise / N. C. Piercy, N. Rich // *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 2004, No 12, p. 145-161.
17. Pribova, M. Attitudes of Czech managers towards markets and marketing / M. Pribova, R. Savitt // *International Marketing Review*, 1995, Vol. 12, No. 5, p. 60-71.
18. Rouziès, D. Sales and marketing integration: a proposed framework / D. Rouziès, E. Anderson, E. A. Kohli, R. E. Michaels, B. A. Weitz, A. A. Zoltners // *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 2005, Vol. XXV, No 2, p. 113-122.
19. Rust, R. T. Measuring Marketing Productivity: Current Knowledge and Future Directions / R.T. Rust, T. Ambler, G.S. Carpenter, V. Kumar, R. K. Srivastava // *Journal of Marketing*, 2004, Vol. 68 (October), p. 76-89.
20. Sheth, J. N. Efficacy of financial measures of marketing: It depends on markets and marketing strategies / J. N. Sheth, A. Sharma // *Journal of Targeting, Measurement and Analysis for Marketing*, 2001, Vol. 9, No 4, p. 341-356.
21. Shipley, D. Achieving crossfunctional co-ordination for marketing implementation // *Management Decision*, 1994, Vol. 32, No 8, p. 17-20.
22. Siu, W.-S. Small firm marketing: a comparison of Eastern and Western marketing practices / W.-S. Siu, D. Kirby // *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 1999, Vol. 16, p. 259-274.
23. Skliarenko, E. Evaluating the relative efficacy of the marketing function in the construction complex of Ukraine / E. Skliarenko, H. Bartel // *International Advances in Economic Research*, 2006, No 12, p. 17-32.
24. Song, X. M. The Role of Marketing in Developing Successful New Products in South Korea and Taiwan / X. M. Song, M. M. Montoya-Weiss, J. B. Schmidt // *Journal of International Marketing*, 1997, Vol. 5, No 3, p. 47-69.
25. Spillard, P. The role matrix: a diagnostic test of marketing health / P. Spillard, M. Moriarty // *European Journal of Marketing*, 1994, Vol. 28, No 7, p. 55-76.
26. Uzelac, N. Strengthening the link between marketing strategy and financial performance / N. Uzelac, T. Sudarevic // *Journal of Financial Services Marketing*, 2006, Vol. 11, No 2, p. 142-156.
27. Valentin, E. K. How behavioral viruses afflict market strategy. *The Journal of Services Marketing*, 1992, Vol. 6, No 1 Winter, p. 65-75.
28. Webster, F. E., Jr. A perspective on the evolution of marketing management // *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 2005, Vol. 24 (1), p. 121-126.
29. Weinzimmer, L.G. Relating marketing expertise on the top management team and strategic market aggressiveness to financial performance and shareholder value / L.G. Weinzimmer, E. U. Bond III, M. B. Houston, P. C. Nystrom // *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 2003, No 11, p. 133-159.

Sigitas Urbonavičius, Vytautas Dikčius, Gindra Kasnauskienė

Marketingo funkcijų svarba įmonėje

Santrauka

Akivaizdu, kad atskirų marketingo funkcijų svarba įmonėje priklauso nuo įvairių vidinių ir išorinių tarpusavyje susijusių veiksnių. Dauguma jų neatsiejami nuo verslo specifikos: įmonės bendrųjų tikslų, veiklos pobūdžio, gaminamos produkcijos ar siūlomų paslaugų, rinkų geografijos. Šis tradicinis požiūris, be jokios abejonės, yra teisingas, tačiau esama ir kitų aspektų, leidžiančių atskleisti kiek kitokį požiūrį į marketingo veiksnių svarbą. Autorių nuomone, kai kurie bendrieji veiksniai, kaip antai, geras vadybos išmanymas įmonėje plačiąja prasme, iš esmės nulemia įvairių marketingo veiksnių svarbą.

Straipsnio tikslas – remiantis įmonių vadovų nuomonėmis, įvertinti marketingo veiksnių svarbą įmonėje ir nustatyti, ar šie vertinimai susiję su tam tikra įmonės specifika. Straipsnyje analizuojama įmonių vadovų nuomonė tiek apie marketingo veiksnių visumą, tiek ir apie atskirų marketingo veiksnių grupių svarbą. Mokslinės literatūros apžvalga įgalino išskirti net 46 įmonėms svarbius marketingo veiksmus, kurie buvo sugrupuoti į šešias grupes. Keturios iš šių nagrinėjamų veiksnių grupių atitinka klasikinius marketingo komplekso elementus, kitos dvi – marketingo tyrimų ir marketingo planavimo bei kontrolės sritis. Anketos klausimyne buvo pateikti keturi teiginiai apie prekės valdymą, keturi – apie kainos valdymą, devyni – apie paskirstymo valdymą, keturiolika – apie komunikacijos ir rėmimo valdymą, šeši – apie marketingo tyrimą ir devyni – apie marketingo planavimą. Atsakymai pateikti 5 balų vertinimo skalėje. Klausimyno patikimumui įvertinti panaudotas Cronbach alfa koeficientas. Šiame tyrime visi Cronbach alfa koeficientai buvo didesni nei reikalaujama literatūroje (0,86 kainos valdymui, 0,89 paskirstymo atveju, 0,76 komunikacijos, 0,80 marketingo tyrimo atveju ir 0,93 marketingo planavimui). Mažiausias Cronbach alfa koeficientas gautas prekės

valdymo atveju (0,64). Šešių veiklų variacijos analizė patvirtino teorinį teiginį, kad marketingo veiklos yra tarpusavyje susijusios.

Įmonių vadovų nuomonės apie įvairių marketingo veiksmų svarbą analizei atlikti panaudotas autorių pasiūlytas modelis. Į modelį įtrauktos trys įmonių demografinės charakteristikos: įmonės rūšis (atskira savarankiška įmonė, tarptautinės įmonės antrinė įmonė, kita), jos dydis (darbuotojų skaičius) ir veiklos pobūdis (gamybinė, paslaugų teikimo, prekybinė). Marketingo skyriaus buvimas (nebuvimas) įmonėje modelyje leido atspindėti marketingo veiksmų įforminimo laipsnį joje. Marketingo specifika modelyje buvo išaiškinta pagal pagrindinių klientų rūšį (individai ar organizacijos) bei rinkos geografiją (vietinė ar užsienio). Šiame modelyje daroma prielaida, kad aukštesnis marketingo veiksmų vertinimas (tiek visų veiksmų, tiek kai kurių iš jų) reiškia didesnę vadybinę dėmesį marketingo veiksmams apskritai. Be to, didesnis dėmesys marketingo veiksmams turi įtakos įmonės veiklos rezultatams, modelyje išmatuojamiems įmonių pardavimų apimties augimu.

Duomenys surinkti kiekybinės apklausos būdu, išdalijus anketas 144 Lietuvoje dirbančių įmonių aukščiausios valdymo grandies vadovams. Tyrimo rezultatai leido išaiškinti labiausiai paplitusius vadybinius stereotipus, susiejant juos su pagrindiniais įmonių veiklos rezultatais.

Beveik du trečdaliai į imtį patekusių įmonių buvo atskiros savarankiškos, o apie trečdalis – tarptautinių įmonių padalinių, antrinių įmonių. Pusės įmonių veiklos kryptis – paslaugų teikimas; likusiųjų – didmeninė bei mažmeninė prekyba (39%) ir gamyba (12,5%). Pusė tyrimo įmonių – mažos, kuriose dirba iki 50 darbuotojų, kita pusė – vidutinės ar didelės įmonės. 80% imties įmonių kaip pagrindinę geografinę rinką nurodė Lietuvą.

Įmonių vadovų nuomone, jų įmonėms svarbiausios marketingo planavimo bei kainos valdymo veiksmų sritys. Ne tokiomis svarbiomis laikomos prekių valdymo bei komunikacijos valdymo bei marketingo tyrimų sritys. Mažiausiai svarbi pasirodė paskirstymo valdymo veiksmų grupė.

Analizuojant vadovų vertinimus įmonės bei jų rinkas atspindinčiais pjūviais, nustatyta daug kitų nuomonių skirtumų. Tarptautinėms įmonėms priklausantiems padaliniams bei antrinių įmonių vadovai laiko

svarbesnėmis komunikacijos valdymo, marketingo planavimo ir marketingo tyrimų sritis, tuo tarpu nepriklausomų įmonių vadovai jas traktuoja kaip mažiau reikšmingas. Mažų įmonių (iki 50 darbuotojų) vadovai beveik visus marketingo veiksmus vertina kaip mažiau svarbius negu vidutinių ir didelių įmonių darbuotojai. Galima spėti, kad greta kitų veiksmų čia pasireiškia ir žemesnis mažų įmonių bendras valdymo lygis. Ryškių skirtumų pastebėta tarp gamybinių, paslaugas teikiančių ir prekybinių įmonių vadovų nuomonių. Į užsienio rinkas orientuotų įmonių vadovai mažiau svarbiais laiko komunikavimo veiksmus, o tai tikriausiai galima paaiškinti pasyvaus eksporto, neturintio ryšio su galutiniais vartotojais, naudojimu.

Pažymėtina, kad atskirą marketingo padalinį turinčių įmonių vadovai net keturias marketingo veiksmų grupes laiko svarbesnėmis nei tokio padalinio neturinčių įmonių vadovai. Nors marketingo padalinio buvimą galima sieti su įvairiomis įmonės savybėmis (pvz., jos dydžiu), jis tam tikra prasme atspindi ir bendrą vadovavimo įmonei lygį. Siūlosi išvada, kad įmonėse, kurių valdymo lygis aukštesnis, vadovai svarbesniais laiko daugumą marketingo veiksmų.

Marketingo veiksmų vertinimas gana artimai sietinas su tokiu įmonių veiklos rodikliu kaip pardavimo apimties augimas. Nustatyta, kad augančių įmonių vadovai svarbesniais laiko prekių bei komunikacijos valdymo ir marketingo planavimo veiksmus. Nors kitų marketingo veiksmų grupių svarbos vertinimas sutampa su neaugančių įmonių vadovų nuomone, galima spėti, kad didesnis dėmesys bent kelioms marketingo veiksmų sritims daro teigiamą įtaką įmonėms augti.

Nors tyrimas nebuvo itin didelės apimties, jis leidžia padaryti keletą išvadų. Visų pirma, buvo patvirtintas tyrimo modelio tinkamumas. Antra, kaip įmonių vadovai vertina įvairių marketingo veiksmų svarbą priklausomai nuo jų įmonių ir aptarnaujamų rinkų specifikos. Trečia, parodytas ryšys tarp marketingo veiksmų svarbos vertinimo ir įmonių augimo. Ir pagaliau – pasiūlyta apibendrinta įmonių valdymo lygio samprata, kurios ryšys su marketingo veiksmų svarbos vertinimu gali būti tolimesnių tyrimų kryptimi.

Raktažodžiai: *marketingo veiksmų svarba, bendras valdymo lygis, augimo prielaidos.*

The article has been reviewed.

Received in May, 2007; accepted in June, 2007.