



BENCHMARKING AND MARKETING RESEARCH IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MARKETING STRATEGIES

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ANNOTATION:

Marketing activity is a key function of entrepreneurship that ensures the sustainable and competitive development of a business by aligning its operations with the internal and external environment. Central to effective marketing activity is marketing research, which provides the informational foundation for developing strategies and programs aimed at improving company performance and customer satisfaction. Marketing research encompasses both the study of market characteristics and the company's internal capabilities, enabling management to make informed decisions under conditions of uncertainty and risk. Identifying and analyzing problem situations in the market helps reduce risk and improve strategic adaptability.

KEYWORDS: marketing research, benchmarking, entrepreneur, logistics, marketing, personnel management, financial management.

Marketing activity as the most important function in the field of entrepreneurship should ensure the sustainable, competitive functioning and development of a subject of the marketing system in the market of goods and services, taking into account the state of the internal and external environment. In this view, marketing activity involves marketing research and on their basis, the development of a strategy and a program of marketing activities that are used to improve the productivity of the company and the effectiveness of meeting the needs of the end user or client. Marketing research structurally includes two main areas - a study of the characteristics of the market and the study of internal actual and potential production or intermediary activities of the company. However, all the results of marketing research are intended for management to make business decisions in General, and marketing decisions in particular, which are associated with the uncertainty of the



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behavior of the subjects of the marketing system, and their adoption is usually accompanied by risk. There is almost no way to avoid the risk, it is necessary to foresee and find ways to reduce it to a minimum. In order to reduce the risk, it is necessary to identify the problem situation that has arisen or may arise in the process of marketing activities. Under the problem situation in this case, we understand some market contradiction that requires a certain impact for its resolution or alternatives to the marketing strategy. The variety of marketing activities, and causes a variety of all kinds of marketing research. Along with this, the problem situation may not exist at all (from the firm's point of view), but even in this case, marketing research is necessary, for example, to implement controlling. The definition of the problem of marketing research is closely related to the choice of the object of research. The object of marketing research can be any element of the marketing mix, including the company's environment, as well as various elements of business communications. Thus, the object of marketing research in the most General form is the study and analysis of all the factors associated with reducing risk and uncertainty in the field of marketing. The subject of marketing research can be specific marketing problems to be directly studied and related to the object of study. Marketing research is conducted by the company in order to solve a particular problem or their combination and develop a marketing strategy on this basis. The need for marketing research, as the history of their development shows, is associated with the active process of expanding production and the emergence of new technologies in all areas of production and circulation of goods and services, informatization of production and distribution of products, the growth of social and cultural needs of consumers, with the evolution of marketing as a philosophy and tools of entrepreneurship. Currently, the relationship with the buyer, communication with all stakeholders in a particular transaction, the role of information technology in the development and acceleration of decision-making is important for the entrepreneur. The competitiveness of products is of paramount importance, it is necessary to constantly update technologies, the range of products, create new markets, expand production, change organizational management structures, providing them with the property of adaptability to the main changes in the characteristics of the market and consumer behavior. The above shows that it is no longer enough at the enterprise or firm to



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have information only about the internal state of the company, its production and economic activities, do not meet the requirements of the time and sales departments, which have long been responsible for communication with consumers, advertising and distribution of products. It requires constant, both strategic and operational planning of all production, marketing and commercial activities of the company, based on reliable, representative marketing information. Practice has shown the need to separate the functions of individual departments and services in order to allocate a specialized service for the organization of marketing activities, which primarily assigned the task of marketing research and development of marketing programs.

What is meant by market research? In the scientific literature, as well as in practice used a variety of concepts related to varying degrees to the content of marketing research: market research, sales research, motive research, potential research, marketing research, social research, research on best practices of production and ways to improve productivity in the enterprises of its partners and competitors, including related industries (benchmarking/Benchmarking) and others. In domestic and foreign literature is still not developed a common point of view on the conceptual problem. Marketing research in the Anglo-American literature is often associated with the concept of "Information or information, intelligence system" (Intelligence system). The concepts of marketing research and sales research in the Anglo-American and German marketing terminology are considered as synonyms, and the concept of market research has an independent meaning. At the same time, they are based on the Anglo-American concepts of "Marketing Research" - sales research, marketing research and "Market Research" - market research.

The American marketing Association defines "Marketing Research", that is, sales, and accordingly marketing research as: systematic search, collection, development and integration of information that is related to or relates to all problems of marketing of goods and services. Market Research is regarded as a systematic production study of markets (a meeting place of supply and demand), especially the analysis of the ability of these markets to reproduce the turnover of goods or services . Meffert believes that sales research or marketing research on the one hand is wider, and on the other hand the concepts of market research. He established a distinction between these concepts (Fig. 6.). As you can see, marketing research includes both

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obtaining external information, data using sales research tools, and collecting and processing production information. The concept of sales research or marketing research is broader than the concept of market research, as it explores the sales system of the enterprise, and also takes into account the results of the research of marketing (for example, the study of advertising, prices, distribution systems) and intra-production (for example, sales costs, warehousing, production capacity) activities.

Marketing research (sales research) Marketing activity example: distribution research system pricing research advertising research intraproductive activity: sales cost analysis warehousing problems	Market sale	MARKETS:
	example: market potential	Work force
	sales potential of the enterprise	Capital
	market volume	Raw materials
		market research

The concept of sales research or marketing research is narrower than market research because they are concerned only about the sales markets of the enterprise. While market research also concerns the market of productive forces, that is, the markets of labor, raw materials and energy, materials, plants and units, money and capital. However, introducing a distinction in the concept of marketing research, sales research and market research Meffert considers them identical. And for the importance of marketing research interprets their content as a kind of information (intelligence) amplifier (Intelligenzverstärker), which supports the management of the enterprise, and especially marketing management, marketing management, in solving various problems of decision-making. Other scientists and specialists (W. Hill, F. Boeker, H. Weis, J. Pesch, H. Lender and others) hold this point of view

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about identity and identity of these concepts. There are other approaches to the definition of the concept and content of marketing research. Thus, the Swiss scientist, marketing specialist H. P. Wehrli introduced the concept of social research, which includes marketing research (sales research), market research and environmental research. He uses social research as a synonym of the terms marketing research and market research (Fig.5.2.). He considers marketing research as an extensive scientific discussion with marketing activities, the market (market partners, competitors) and the environment (economy, ecology, politics, technology, culture) [H. P. Wehrli, 1992] .

Traditionally, marketing research is carried out in the following main areas:





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As can be seen, the classical marketing research includes regular research of markets for its own products and includes the process of developing a package of documents on the potential of the enterprise, its relationship with the external environment, the nature of competition, competitors in the market, the characteristics of their production, the state of marketing, Commerce and work with consumers. Modern marketing research is the process of searching, collecting, processing data and preparing information for making operational and strategic decisions in the business system. In foreign literature the opinion is expressed about the need to expand the internal content of the concept of marketing research. So, Bergsma made a rough sketch of the "four phase scheme". The stages "Market Research" and "Marketing Research" alternate with the stages "competition research" and "business research". The disadvantage of this concept, in our opinion, is the following:

- it is not advisable to resume the distinction between the terms "Market Research", "Marketing Research";
- competition research - the term due to the transition of research from "where to compete" (where to compete?) to "how to compete" (how to compete?) related to porter's theory. Competition research itself is nothing new . Even Schaefer (1940) singled out this direction in market research along with the study of needs. Its importance in the context of strategic entrepreneurship is new;
- the theory of strategic management should be fully manifested in the fourth stage. The question of how successful the term "business Research" is remains debatable. There are also, for a long time, books with similar titles. The use of the term "strategically oriented marketing research" should be considered more successful. The classical definition of marketing research is now supplemented by the need to use external factors that affect or may have an impact on the behavior of the company and its products in the market, its interaction with partners and competitors. As new tasks of competition research require depending on the circumstances and new methods. There was a need not only to conduct classical marketing research, but it took a philosophy and function associated with the identification, identification, search for practice results in partner firms, competitors and related industries, in order to use them in their own firms to improve productivity. This function in the business system has long been successfully used in the practice of Japanese,



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American, Western European and Scandinavian businessmen and scientists. It is known among specialists as benchmarking. Benchmarking is close to the concept of marketing intelligence (marketing Intelligence), which means constant activity to collect current information about the change in the external marketing environment, necessary for both the development and adjustment of marketing plans. However, marketing intelligence aims to collect confidential or semi-confidential information about changes in the external marketing environment. Benchmarking can be seen as a process, activity for long-term thinking about the strategy of entrepreneurship, based on the best practices of partners and competitors in the industry, inter-industry, national and international levels. Thus, strategically oriented marketing research is a broader concept, which includes market research, research of the internal environment of the company, research of marketing tools, its development and efficiency of use, market research of productive forces (labor, raw materials, money market and capital market), research of the external environment, organization of research on the basis of benchmarking and marketing intelligence (Fig.8.). This concept focuses the attention of the marketer and the entrepreneur on the most important elements of the sphere of marketing research and obviously facilitates the formation of the tasks of marketing research, the search for "bottlenecks", "burning points" that can accompany the process of functioning of the enterprise in market conditions, as well as assist in monitoring the organization of the collection and preparation of marketing information.

Benchmarking is a process of measuring the performance of a company's products, services, or processes against those of another business considered to be the best in the industry, aka "best in class." The point of benchmarking is to identify internal opportunities for improvement. By studying companies with superior performance, breaking down what makes such superior performance possible, and then comparing those processes to how your business operates, you can implement changes that will yield significant improvements. That might mean tweaking a product's features to more closely match a competitor's offering, or changing the scope of services you offer, or installing a new customer relationship management (CRM) system to enable more personalized communications with customers.

There are two basic kinds of improvement opportunities: continuous and dramatic:

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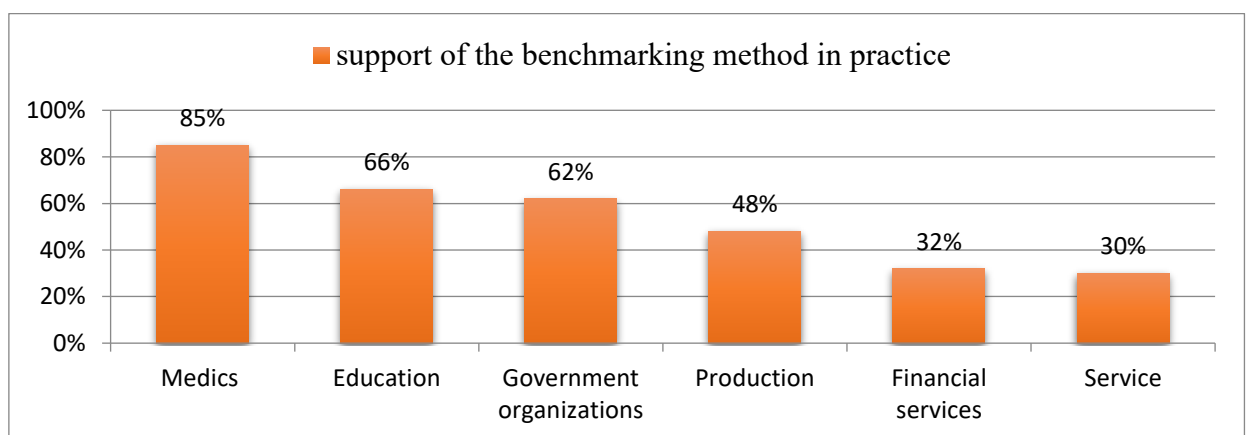
Continuous improvement is incremental, involving only small adjustments to reap sizeable advances.

Dramatic improvement can only come about through reengineering the whole internal work process.

History of the benchmarking

In the summer of 1896, Henry Haines, an entrepreneur who went out for a walk along the streets of New York, went through the store before the shoes, his eyes fell on the inscription on the counter. It was written in it that "21 style of shoes". Inspired by it, Henry Haines himself wrote "57 options" on the label of the manufacturer ketchup and sauces. That is, even if it was not in fact, the note 57 of ketchup and sauces on the label served an increase in interest and demand for its products. Simply put, benchmarking is the style of work of leading companies, having meticulously studied the products they produce, means applying their experience in their activities. Today, large companies around the world are also using this method. More precisely, one of the three most basic methods used in marketing is benchmarking. One of its most preferred aspects is that using benchmarking can achieve success in a short period of time, at a low cost. Through the benchmarking method, it is possible not only to reach the level of copied companies, but also to surpass them in profit and efficiency. For this, the activities of competing companies are carefully studied, in addition to their achievements, the necessary conclusions are drawn from their shortcomings. In this way, a specific model of development is developed.

A study conducted by researchers from the Open University Business School in Britain found that today medical institutions most often use the benchmarking method.





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Benchmarking was developed in 1972 year by the research and consulting company PMIS in the United States as a new way to evaluate the effectiveness of entrepreneurship. According to The Specialists of the company, in order to achieve a high result, it is necessary to first study the experience of other enterprises that have achieved a positive result. In 1979, the American company Xerox, based on the same concept, launched the "competitive benchmark" project in order to compare the quality of Japanese products and their production costs. As a result, this project has once again found its confirmation that it is truly reliable and effective. The number of sales of the company's products stood at high figures until 1990 year. However, in the nineties of the last century, after the change in the infrastructure of the enterprise, sales volumes again began to decline. This is due to the fact that at a time when managers are changing the structure of the enterprise, attention to the quality of the product is slowed down. From this situation, it can be concluded that on the basis of benchmarking, not all problems that exist in the company can be solved. It is known that competition between American and Japanese companies, which began in the second half of the XX century, aimed at improving the quality of products and gaining consumer confidence, is still continuing. Specialists of many American enterprises discovered another "unopened edge" of benchmarking technology, after confronting this issue. They believe that supporting the benchmarking project to the enterprise system only once is not advisable to think about making a profit. Perhaps, the continuous improvement of the activity on the basis of that experience not only guarantees an effective result.

Competitive benchmarking - Ford

Prior to the reference comparison, Ford Corporation was significantly inferior to its competitors in terms of design parameters and functional properties of the products. It has lost a large share of the market, which could return only through the creation of a new, advanced family of cars. The bet was made on Taurus. To the new car was not worse than its competitors and even surpassed them, during its development conducted benchmarking study. First, we found out what properties of existing cars on the market are most attractive to consumers. Then, for each of these properties,



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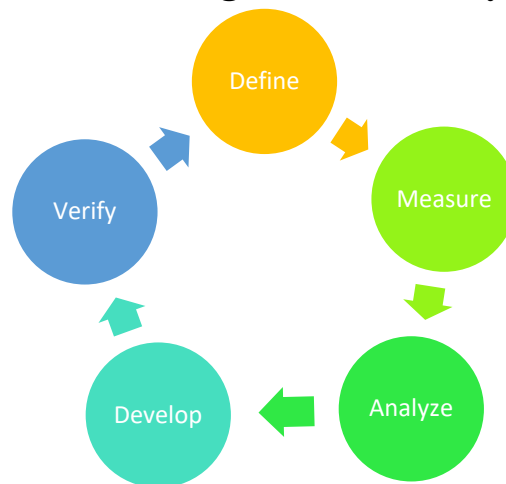
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the best cars in its class were determined, the level of which Taurus had to reach and surpass.

The study covered the entire global automotive industry from BMW to Opel Senator. They have never been considered direct rivals Ford Taurus, but had attractive properties for consumers. More than 50 car models were analyzed for about 400 design parameters. The company laid the foundations for the implementation of the principles of development of new products using the DMADV cycle (Define — Measure — Analyze — Develop — Verify), aimed at ensuring a six-digit level of quality. As a result, the new Ford car was named the car of the year and became the undisputed leader in sales.

In subsequent years, the design flaws revealed in the transmission Taurus, greatly undermined the reputation of the car and led to a series of improvements, each of which increasingly deviated from the original concept. By the end of the 1990s, sales of Taurus fell from 400,000 to 60,000, and in August 2006 the last batch of cars of this family will be released. Ford has learned the main lesson: competitive benchmarking can not be a one-time event. For the results to remain relevant, they must be regularly updated and adjusted. This approach is in good harmony with the system of views adopted in the methodology of "Six Sigma", where the search for sources of variation and the knowledge obtained at the same time give not just a snapshot of the level of competitiveness of the enterprise, but allow us to trace the entire history of its changes. Company managers are able to take into account all the consequences of decisions, not only the short-term effects associated with the change of models of products.

Development of new cars using the DMADV cycle¹



Competitive benchmarking - Xerox



The Department of "Commercial logistics and distribution" to Xerox until the early 1980 could improve their performance every year only 3-5 %. This was not enough to remain competitive in terms of prices in the market of copiers. Heads of sales centers found out that the weakest link in the logistics chain is the stage from the receipt of goods to the warehouse of finished products before they are sent. In order to eliminate this bottleneck at the beginning of 1981, one of the employees was assigned to find a suitable partner for comparison, but not from competitors. This employee used in his search for specialized magazines, as well as industry unions and consulting companies, until he came across the company "L. L. Bean", a supplier of sporting goods. This company was known for its inventory management system, developed with the help of quality circles. At the same time, there was a great similarity with Xerox, as "L. L. Bean" also needed a system of inventory management and marketing for very heterogeneous in terms of shape, weight and size of goods. A visit to the Xerox delegation, consisting of three people from L. L. Bean and a comparison of such performance indicators as "the number of orders per

¹ Benchmarking model Ford-DMADV cycle

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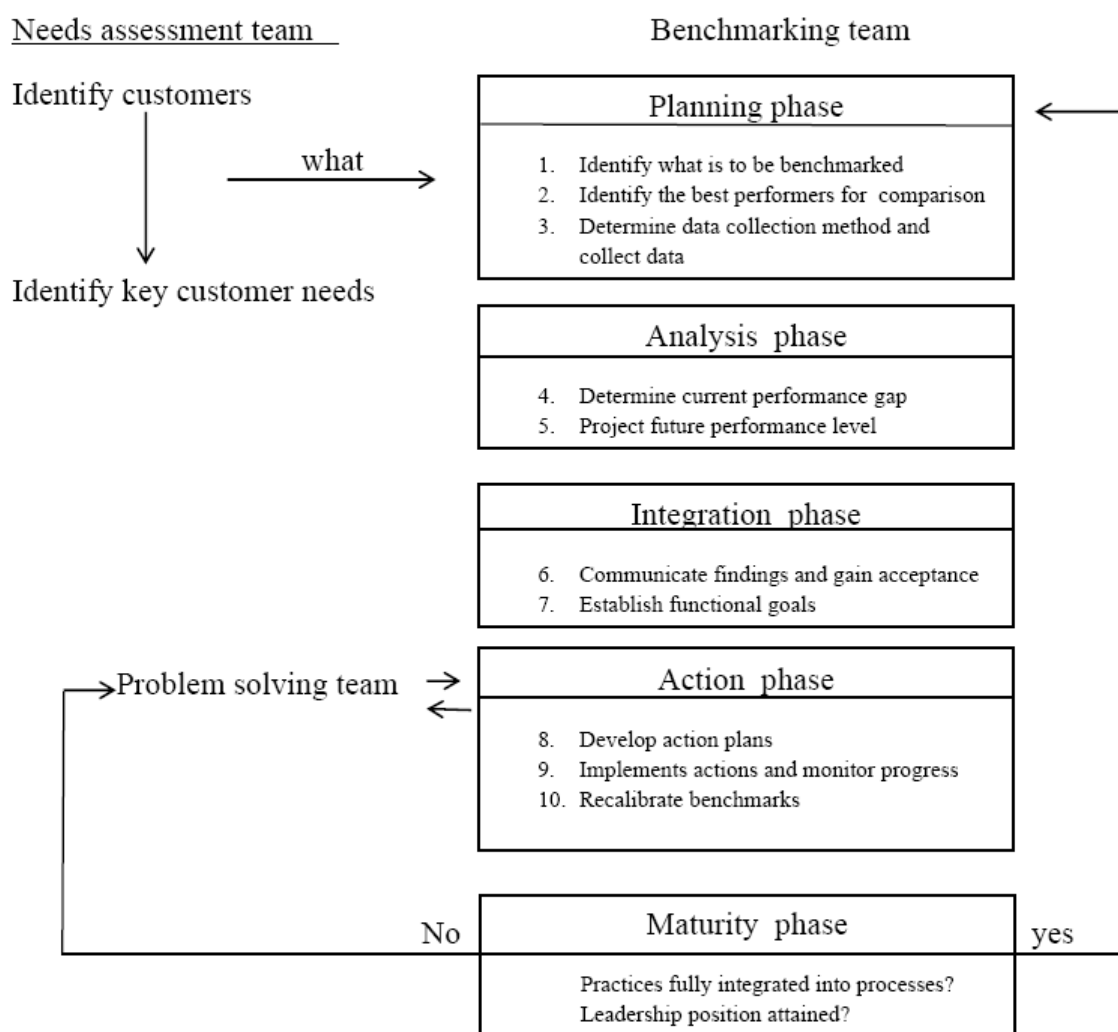
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person dress", "the number of items in pieces per person day" and, first of all, "the number of walkers per person dress" revealed a striking difference (the trip describes the way to the container): "L. Bean" surpassed the firm Xerox three times in terms of "the number of walkers per person dress".

The Xerox's way²



As the main reason it was possible to allocate much bigger number of types of the works operated by the computer at the L. L. Bean enterprise. Thus, for example, the placement of goods, and, accordingly, the current sorting and release of goods on orders, were carried out depending on the speed of turnover to reduce the path of movement of products. Positive experience has led to further projects in the field of



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commercial logistics and sales, where the partners compared, among others, became a pharmaceutical wholesale company and a manufacturer of household appliances. The great success of the Xerox superiority analysis was reflected in the 10% annual productivity increase in the following years. Of these, 3-5 % is explained by the analysis of superiority. The benchmarking approach leads to a significant change in the decision-making procedure in marketing. Traditionally, marketing decisions were made based on the results of marketing research and managers' intuition about the marketing mix. On the basis of it the marketing strategy of firm was developed. It is necessary to study the experience and behavior of business leaders in the market to improve the validity of marketing strategy.

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