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Management of Educational Services Promotion in the Field of Higher Education (the Example of "Russian State Social University")

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Abstract

The present article describes the main tools for promoting the educational services in the Russian State Social University, such as advertising in the media, outdoor advertising, exhibitions and fairs, open days, master classes, round tables, conferences and seminars, internet advertising, social networks, communities in social networks, and university website.

The main difficulties faced by the experts in the field of marketing of educational services of "Russian State Social University" were studied. The peculiarities of attracting applicants to certain higher educational institutions in Russia are the most interesting, in connection with changes in the structure of the recruitment of applicants to educational institutions of higher professional education of the Russian Federation.

In recent years, quite a lot of measures have been taken in the development of marketing communications of educational institutions. But usually these measures do not work, because every year there is a reduction in budget places for the most popular training areas among the applicants. In this regard, a well-developed analysis of existing approaches in the field of promoting educational services, and identifying the most effective educational marketing directions necessary for the formation of a positive image of universities is indispensable.

Keywords: applicants, promotion of educational services, educational marketing, marketing communications, advertising, open days, conferences, workshops, website, higher education, educational programs, media reputation.

1. Introduction

In the modern world, education is not just a service, but a product that is actively promoted for profit; this is because education is an integral part of our life, which shapes our future and our

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professional skills, and therefore, demands the labor market. Education is responsible for the sustainable development of society, its culture, and the development of society as a whole (Kabanova, Vetrova, 2018).

Currently, in a market economy, any product or service needs to be promoted. Promotion is one of the main factors for the effectiveness of a company or organization since the success of selling a product or service to an end depends on the customers. Thus, it is very important to understand such a thing as the promotion of a product or service; therefore, D.A. Shevchenko defines promotion as a set of various marketing measures, efforts, actions through advertising, PR, personal sales, sales promotion and the use of other marketing communications undertaken by manufacturers, sellers of goods or services, intermediaries in order to increase (Shevchenko, 2001).

In Moscow, school graduates face the question of choosing a higher educational institution every year. The interest of applicants is directed mainly to the most popular educational institutions in the media and the Internet. At the same time, sometimes when choosing an educational service, random factors play a role, which are often considered irrational in marketing theory (imitation, suggestion, etc.) (Silaeva, 2012). As a result, the lack of objective information about higher education institutions often leads to the fact that the choice of an applicant is not based on the real situation, but rather on the image that is created about it. Accordingly, one of the most important activities of modern universities should be educational marketing. With the help of educational marketing technologies, more effective implementation of the mission of the institution occurs: the greatest resources absorb, both financial and non-financial and the effectiveness of marketing activities increases in general (Stachowski, 2011). According to many foreign researchers, the use of marketing is necessary for analyzing, planning and controlling social change issues (Cihovska, 2013; Donovan, Henley, 2010).

Considering the opinion of experts on the account of the promotion, and promotion of educational services in universities, Kosyakov M.A. believes that “it is literate marketing of services, implemented in the educational sphere and taking into account all the specifics of this institution, that not only convey to the general public information about the strengths and opportunities of an educational institution but also serve as a motivator and an additional source of its development. In fact, marketing is exactly the tool that connects the consumer and the manufacturer, allowing the first to find the most suitable option, and the latter to understand what the consumer needs, and what direction to work in order to improve their product or service in order to make it better, and therefore, more fully satisfy the demands of those very consumers” (Kosyakov, 2015).

The popularity of an institution of higher education depends on its corporate culture, the reputation of the institution in the media, and the brand of the institution. According to I. Groshev, V. Yuryev “when choosing a higher educational institution, the consumer of educational services is forced to focus on the authority of the leadership, the established reputation and brand, which are formed under the influence of the university’s corporate culture” (Groshev, Yuryev, 2010).

Prokhorov A.M. believes that “the most effective way to promote educational services is the use of statistics, which is supported by the Internet service provider (ISP), i.e. the use of log files. The log files contain all the available information for each user request: domain, date and time of the visit, the user’s actions in the educational site as a whole, the request file, which link he reached to the server, which browser he uses and on which platform (the contents of the log -file is determined by its format).

Now the most promising method that helps to track user actions on an educational site is considered a method using cookies. Cookies are files located on the user’s computer and allow the web server to identify the user’s browser” (Prokhorova, 2015).

According to the authors, the main factors for promoting educational services are the competent development of marketing services and focus on consumer demand, as well as the creation of a brand, a positive reputation and image of an educational institution.

The consolidation of efforts that the state and society create and gives direction and content for the educational policy has recently become increasingly important (Rogach, 2017).

2. Analysis of recent publications on the problem. Questions of theoretical and methodological nature, as well as the conceptual apparatus for managing the promotion of educational services in the field of higher professional education are reviewed in the works of Russian authors such as Bykharova G.D., Starikova L.D. (2010), Novatorov V.E. (2015),

Groshev I.V., Yuryev V.M. (2010), Polyakova O.V. (2013), Shevchenko D.A. (2001), Prokhorova A.M. (2015).

A significant amount of work by Russian and foreign scientists is devoted to the system of higher education in the Russian Federation and the development of educational services, such as E.V. Andryushina, N.O. Lutsenko (2014), S.V. Vikhareva (2010), N.R. Kamynina, A.O. Grudzinsky (2017), R.V. Kupriyanov (2014), S.I. Plaksy (2014), A.A. Plisova (2017), O.V. Rogach (2017), A.A. Solovov (2016), N.V. Bagrova (2017), M.E. Pankratova, N.Y. Rasheva (2014), M.V. Maksimenko, N.N. Kryzhevskaya (2018), A.A. Ilyashenko (2017).

However, in spite of a large number of scientific and practical developments in the field of analysis of the promotion of educational services, current issues that reveal the limitations that impede the promotion of educational services in higher educational institutions are not fully investigated. The opinion of applicants in the context of the choice of a future educational institution has not been studied enough.

2. Materials and methods

The empirical basis of the study was the results of a sociological study conducted by the authors in the summer of 2018 on the basis of the Admissions Committee of the Russian State Social University (RSSU). The respondents were applicants of the faculty of management of the RSSU (N = 60). A systematic probabilistic sampling was used. The basis of selection is a list of applicants entering the Faculty of Management, in alphabetical order. Respondents were used based on the list of the total population at intervals (K = 14). Alphabetical lists are displayed equally as reliable hit in the sample of all units of the total population. Research tools – questionnaire. The purpose of this study was to assess the applicant's awareness of the RSSU, as well as to identify factors hindering the promotion of the university and the promotion of its educational services and products.

The results of the survey of applicants showed that in the modern conditions for successful promotion of the university, it is necessary to create a competent marketing service that will take into account the full range of advantages of the university in the educational services market, study all the interests of applicants, analyze their requests on the Internet and social networks, and conduct a competent advertising campaign.

The results of the study allowed to identify the relationship between the advertising company, marketing communications of the university, master classes of the faculty of management, open doors and the demand for educational services of the university.

The authors used the counting method for the Pearson χ^2 test. The number of degrees of freedom is 6. The value of the χ^2 criterion is 64.126. The critical value of χ^2 at a significance level of $p = 0.01$ is 16.812. The relationship between the factor and the performance features is statistically significant at a significance level of $p < 0.01$.

When conducting research, in addition to the survey, general scientific research methods were used, based on general principles, in order to apply general laws to specific factors related to educational activities of higher educational institutions, special and in-depth study of aspects of analyzing statistical data, the method of analogy, synthesis and extrapolations.

When writing an article, such theoretical level methods as modeling, systematization, classification, formalization and other methods were widely used, on the basis of which the level of demand for methods of promoting educational services among applicants of the RSSU management faculty was investigated, factors affecting the choice of a higher educational institution were ordered, spheres of application of acquired knowledge, skills and competencies in further professional activities.

In addition, the information base served as the results of studies of the All-Russian Center for the Study of Public Opinion (VTsIOM) on the topic “Teenager in a social network: standard of life - or a danger signal?” (March 2019), the Public Opinion Foundation (FOM) on the topic “Source news and media confidence” (January 2019) ([All-Russian Center for the...; Public Opinion Foundation \(FOM\)...](#)).

3. Results

In today's market conditions, marketing communications include advertising, sales promotion, personal sales, PR, exhibition and fair activities, direct mail, and so on. All marketing

communications can be divided into advertising services or goods through the media and sales promotion.

The most frequently used marketing communications tools used by Moscow universities include: advertising in the press, advertising on television and radio, outdoor advertising, printed and souvenir products, exhibitions and fairs related to education, open days, master classes, scientific conferences and seminars, internet advertising and other forms of communication over the Internet, the creation and maintenance of a university website, pages and communities on social networks, etc. In addition, the location of a university in the city, its infrastructure, the degree of equipment of its audiences, the presence of branded audiences, and availability of free Internet in the university are important.

An important place is occupied by PR, contributing to the expansion of the educational space of an educational institution, its integration into a single global educational space. It is necessary to build your own image, which should not be formed due to unplanned news about the university.

"Russian State Social University" uses various channels to promote educational services: publications and advertising in the media, visiting schools and directly informing schoolchildren – future applicants, having a competently built university website, creating and distributing advertising booklets, calendars, souvenirs, participating in educational exhibitions, and open days. As a result, studies were conducted between the advertising campaign, marketing communication, open doors and Eastern-educated services (Table 1).

Table 1. Analysis of contingency tables using the chi-square test

Factor sign	Productive attribute		Amount
	Yes	No	
Information about the choice of university for admission received from relatives and friends	16	44	60
Information about choosing a university for admission is obtained from Internet sources	36	24	60
Information on the directions of preparation of the RSSU obtained at the open days	20	40	60
Open days are a significant source of information for admission	20	40	60
Master Classes held at the open days are important and useful.	56	4	60
Have you visited the RSSU sites at various educational exhibitions and forums?	37	23	60
Is the RSSU website convenient and informative?	48	12	60
Is the RSSU location convenient?	43	17	60
Total	220	200	420

According to the results of the study, the main way of obtaining information from applicants when choosing the RSSU was the Internet, including various social networks and online communities (36 respondents). This is largely due to the fact that the Internet space is now becoming the most popular source of information, especially among young people. This thesis is confirmed by the results of the polls conducted by the VTSIOM and the Public Opinion Foundation. The most popular source of information among young audiences, according to the FOM survey, are news sites on the Internet (57 %). Forums, blogs, social networking sites are of interest to 38 % of respondents, which indicates the great potential of this information channel for

young people. Moreover, the majority of adolescents (98 %), according to VTSIOM data, use the Internet daily, 89 % go to social networks almost every day.

However, in the process of choosing a future educational institution, an applicant is interested in the opinion of not only the media, but also family members, friends, neighbors, future colleagues, and specialists in the field of higher education. The personal opinion of the authoritative interlocutor for the applicant is very important when choosing a university. Most often, future students rely on the opinion of parents and acquaintances and the so-called "rumors" about a particular educational institution. In particular, 16 respondents said they know about the university and its areas of training from friends and relatives.

One of the most important tools for promoting the university is the open door days, which are held throughout the year in order to interest and attract future students. At the Russian State Social University, these events are held once a month at the main sites of the Russian State Social University, besides, there are also open days of open doors. Open days are designed to increase the demand for educational services and strengthen the position of the university in the educational market. However, as the survey of applicants showed, only 20 respondents answered that they had learned about the directions of the preparation of the university on open days. Accordingly, only a third of the polled open door days represent a significant source of information for admission. It is obvious that in modern conditions, the traditional forms of attracting applicants are not in demand since information exchange mainly takes place in the Internet space. Consequently, in order to increase the demand for educational services and strengthen the positions of the university in the educational market, it is necessary to interact with applicants mainly using information and communication technologies (Eroshkin et al., 2017).

In addition, the RSSU organizes competitions for schoolchildren, various conferences and round tables that are open to future applicants. On the basis of the RSSU, preparatory courses are held for all comers.

The RSSU also actively participates in ongoing educational exhibitions and showrooms, which contributes to the promotion of educational services. This is confirmed by the results of the survey: more than half of respondents (62 %) visited and went to the sites of the RSSU in various educational forums.

Special attention should be paid to the site of the RSSU, as it is the main link in the promotion of the product – an educational service. The RSSU website has a separate tab for "applicants", where you can get detailed information about educational programs, the order of admission, events held. Applicants positively evaluate the RSSU website: for 48 respondents, the site turned out to be convenient in finding important information. They also mark the speed of searching for the necessary information and the availability of its presentation.

The location of the university also plays a very important role, because depending on the distance from the center, the presence of metro stations and social infrastructure facilities, the applicant chooses whether he can get to school, and whether it will be convenient for him or not. The RSSU has an excellent location, which in itself is another tool for attracting future students. Thus, according to the survey, almost all respondents when choosing a future place of study care about the location of the educational institution. The convenience of the RSSU location was positively evaluated by 43 applicants.

4. Discussion

Analysis of the research results indicates that at present, universities should carry out a competitive struggle for future applicants in the field of higher education due to competent and thoughtful marketing. Recently, the prevailing view is that image and marketing is needed only by large corporations, and it is not available to institutions in the field of higher education. But this does not at all mean that marketing is not attainable for them. On the contrary, it is extremely important and necessary.

Institutions in the field of higher education with a long history of development and vast experience, have strong and effective brands that almost do not need to be promoted, but at the same time it is necessary to use new marketing tools to attract the most highly trained applicants to maintain a leading position in the higher education market.

Special attention should be paid to improving the Media Index of the university, which is an indicator of the qualitative state of the information field formed by the media around the person,

company, and brand. Accordingly, the increase in the value of Media Index indicates the creation in the media of a positive image from universities. Currently, the top lines of media ranking of Russian higher educational institutions, compiled by Medialogia in June 2018, are expected to be occupied by universities with a long history, such as Moscow State University, Lomonosov, RANEPa, SPSU, and MGIMO. The exception is the National Research University Higher School of Economics, whose leading positions are primarily due to its extensive research activities, extensive expert work and active international cooperation. In particular, the media reputation of the university in June 2018 was influenced by expert publications on raising the retirement age, the results of research presented in the report of the National Research University Higher School of Economics and the World Bank, and the theses of the report of the National Research University Higher School of Economics on life expectancy of Russians.

Thus, the experience of the National Research University Higher School of Economics demonstrates that the formation of a positive image of a university can take shape not only thanks to a historically developed brand, but also an active information and communication policy. Permanent brand management should be one of the key areas of such a policy since brand awareness and quality of service have a significant impact on brand loyalty to educational institutions (Syed Ali Abbas, 2019).

The main factors for the formation of a positive image of universities can be:

- formation of long-term profitable contacts with foreign educational institutions;
 - formation of the mobility of university teachers;
 - practical training with the further employment of graduates;
 - positive feedback from students;
 - development of the university site;
 - Large selection of faculties;
 - the creation of basic departments in the university leading companies in the labor market;
- High-quality educational process.

For decent competition and prospective development of a university, it is necessary to create a high-quality educational service, and not strive to attract the consumer of the service just to get paid and increase funding. It is necessary to properly allocate funds for improving the quality of the educational process, improving the infrastructure of the university.

5. Conclusion

"Russian State Social University" actively works to promote its educational services and use all possible tools. Less effective tools today are publications and advertising in the media, as today's young people increasingly prefer to receive information about the university either through "live" communication with relatives and friends at the Open Days and master classes or via the Internet using the website of the university and social networks.

An important place is occupied by the corporate website of the university. Because, depending on its convenience, brightness, and relevance, future students are impressed. With the help of the site, the applicant should receive all the necessary information about the university, namely the description and availability of all educational programs, terms, and conditions of admission. A modern educational website is a communication structure that unites all levels of external and internal interactions, presenting them on the Internet. In addition, advertising on the Internet is important; such as posting information about the RSSU services on industry portals; blogging RSSU.

One of the important factors for attracting applicants is the formation of a positive image of the university, which, as research has shown, is now largely dependent on media reputation. Accordingly, in order to improve the media ranking of universities, it is necessary not only to actively develop the Internet space by promoting official websites but also to expand areas of research and development, increase publication activity, respond to social order. Thus, the entire educational policy of the university, which should be aimed at all stakeholders, largely depends on a properly designed and implemented educational marketing initiative. Only in this case will trust be established between all interested parties, which directly leads to an increase in the retention of customers and the income of the organization (Manea, Purcaru, 2017).

But, despite the wide range of marketing tools, not all higher education institutions use the full range of means of promoting educational services. This is mainly due to the limited funding available in this area. Marketing of educational services is not yet fully developed. PR-events are not always targeted and often – this is a common advertisement. Educational marketing of universities should provide not only the study of the educational market, but also promote effective human resources management, which together with material and information resources stimulate the synergistic effect of educational services and ensure the achievement of the mission of the educational organization (Gorghiu et al., 2019).

Thus, in modern conditions of active development of information technologies, higher education institutions need to create information and communication strategies using educational marketing technologies aimed at enhancing media reputation and creating a positive image of the organization, which will contribute to the promotion of educational services and attraction of new entrants.

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