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THE ROLE OF MARKETING STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTATION IN POSITIONING OF A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION: CASE OF THE UNIVERSITY «HIGHER SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS»

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The marketing strategy campaigns have been discussed in a variety of business and non-business spheres. The main goal of the article is to investigate the nature of marketing policy in the university field, to explore the influencers of promoting activity, directions for awareness development, to understand the impact of marketing strategies implementation process on the positioning of a particular university.

Keywords: marketing tools; influential factors, universities, education, SWOT.

The principles of brand promotion have become a very popular and significant instrument for a variety of organizations (Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006). The process of evolving awareness is a core of the Higher Education sphere today. The sphere of education produces an enormous number of services and products all over the world, which are trying to maintain the leading positions in different competitions and focusing on personal efficiency (Yang, 2016).

One of the top priorities of National Research University's "Higher School of Economics" (further – HSE) for future development is a transition to a digital university model (HSE Strategic Development Programme, 2019).

E-learning is HSE service for promoting educational products; collaborating with national project teams to support the development of entrepreneurship culture and innovation environment. In addition, HSE implements new educational technologies, making online-courses, allowing a faster adaptation of the learning process. Marketing innovations help to get the top places in the rankings.

For instance, one of such innovations is an online-spinner, twisting which customers can learn interesting sentences about the university (Spinner.hse.ru). From the marketing channels overview, based on HSE website analysis from SimilarWeb for the last three months, 3.960 million (further – M) of HSE website visitors are using organic search and on the second place in traffic share of HSE website is Direct with 2.253M. It means that the future customers usually "google" HSE and its educational programs, read what the others are saying about it in social media, and only after that make a decision.

VK, Facebook, Instagram lead the pack as the most commonly used social media platforms by HSE.

According to HSE SimilarWeb social media information, 56% of HSE customers prefer checking HSE page on VK, the third part on Facebook and just 12 % on Youtube. Interesting fact, that the biggest percentage of site visitors – 36.94% are visitors 25-34 years old, 20.93% – 18-24 and 17.61% – 35-44; moreover, 56% of HSE website visitors are female, 43 – male (SimilarWeb.com).

SWOT analysis of running HSE activity was conceptualized in order to estimate the key elements, mentioned above.

Strengths:

1. Studying format. As an example of an outstanding learning environment inside HSE, the English language environment could be a fascinating confirmation;

2. Career-oriented events organization. This approach is a very useful tactic for better students' orientation in the changing business and working environment. It helps to create an understanding of their own strengths and what do the leading companies need from young professionals;

3. The base with online courses for everyone who wants to get the experience from HSE academy staff;

4. The system of educational discounts for students with outstanding achievements and recent performance;

5. HSE as a national research university provides a broad range of international exchange opportunities with other educational institutions across the world;

6. In comparison with other leading universities in Moscow and Saint-Petersburg, HSE has a higher level of organic search for the last three months. According to SimilarWeb, HSE website information, Hse.ru had the biggest amount of visitors – 4M, bmstu.ru – 707.1 thousand, mgimo.ru-738.6 thousand, msu.ru-3.5M and spbu.ru-1.8 M. The same about Search and traffic engagement, the traffic share of Hse.ru is a leader with 36.84%, bmstu.ru – 6.58%, mgimo.ru- 6.87%, msu.ru- 32.92%, spbu.ru-16.79%. The highest average visit duration among them is hse.ru – 3:28.

7. HSE events. For now, the Top Search terms are “ВШЭ” 2.54%, “Высшая проба” 1.45%, “Высшая Школа Экономики” 1.39%. “Высшая проба” is a name of Olympiad for schoolchildren.

Weaknesses:

1. HSE academic members' work overload. Professors may have more than enough teaching responsibilities;

2. Annual indexation of tuition prices. Each year the prices are higher than it was in the previous. Prospective students may be interested more in other competitive institutions where the costs are cheaper (Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006);

3. There are not enough international professors from Europe and the USA. The international experience is the most valuable especially for Russian students.

Opportunities:

1. Further Social Media awareness development by means of the general university activities expansion inside the social networking. Instagram, VK, Facebook; Word of Mouth marketing strategy.

3. Self-positioning on TV through the academics' participation in scientific programs.

4. HSE students can be a part of a community of higher education brand ambassadors.

Threats:

1. Nowadays institutions need to maintain the competitive standards at the highest level. HSE makes efforts to get the leading positions according to the quality of the services provided;

2. There is a difference in possible factors, which could influence the Higher Education market, such as politics, culture and economy. International students may face, for example, travel restrictions.

In general, the universities have to concentrate their attention on developing the following aspects: Environment, Economics, Resources, Social impacts. This way it is possible to maintain the sustainable development. The following recommendation may be useful for HSE marketing strategy (Ultimate List of Marketing Statistics, 2020):

1. Video is the best form of media used in content strategy. HSE should make more brand promotional videos.

2. 74% of global marketers invest in social media marketing. HSE should be in this list. It is also necessary to understand the psychology of users.

3. A business website is the most used distribution channel for marketers. 63% of marketers invest in a website upgrade this year and HSE should do it as well.

4. 45% of marketers are currently using bots on their website. LiveChat, HubSpot and Intercom are the most common chat tools. HSE could use it as well.

5. 72% of marketers conduct market research, and 70% of marketers plan to increase research spend over the next 12 months. Surveys are the best tactic that marketers use to conduct market research.

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