

Role of Marketing in Education Sector : A Study on Professional Education Institutes

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Abstract

In present time, marketing acts, as an integral part of each industry, even education industry cannot keep itself away from it. The term marketing can be considered as a subpart of the word cosmopolitan, which means those who can survive/adapt in any type of environmental conditions. Marketing as a tool or technique can make organization cosmopolitan. By adapting innovative or improved ways of marketing, one can survive in ever-changing environment. The objective of the study is to find and analyze the improved and innovative ways of marketing employed by various educational institutes of the state of Punjab. This study used both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data was collected through personal/telephonic interview from various marketing department or college heads. Secondary data was collected from newspapers, published materials and official websites of various education institutes. The sample area was various education institutes located in state of Punjab and sample size was 25 education institutes. Various strategies which were identified are talent hunt test, Management fest, Scholarship test, Tech. fest, Student clubs, book bank, integrated courses, covering entrance exam, school visits, temporary admission offices, corporate offices, door to door bus facility, LBL, foundation classes, admission agents etc. This study will help the education institutes to understand which method will have significant impact on students and their parents and help in craft the marketing strategies accordingly.

Key Words

Strategies adopted in education marketing, Government initiative to promote professional education.

INTRODUCTION

Education is considered as a noble business. In the past, when education institutes were few in number and the only body imparting education was government but with the passage of time and with the rise in concept of globalization, demand for engineers and managers rises. To meet this demand need for new education institutes arises, and with the entrance of private entities in education service, gives rise to competition among the education institutes (How to attract potential students).

The Question arises here How to survive this competition?

Answer to this Question is marketing

The early stages of marketing in education industry is advertisement in newspaper and word of mouth publicity. But with the rise in number of education institutes, which leads to rise in competition, marketing is considered/ undertaken at extensive rate. Besides employing traditional methods of marketing, new and innovative ideas are generated and employed to attract potential students. To archive this objective, colleges recruit both specialized and multi-specialty faculty. Some colleges have specialized marketing department, on the other hand, some colleges prefer to recruit those faculty members who serve both the purpose i.e. teaching and marketing. Former method is adopted by well-established colleges, who bear the cost of specialized department while later method is adopted by new colleges, who are working on cost cutting objective.

OBJECTIVE

1. To identify various strategies followed by professional education institutes for marketing.
2. And for what purpose these methods are employed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Marketing is defined by the AMA as "the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large.

Marketing is used to identify the customer, satisfy the customer, and keep the customer as the focus of its activities. It generates the strategy that underlies sale techniques, business communication, and business developments.[3] It is an integrated process through which companies build strong customer relationships and create value for their customers and for themselves.

Marketing strategy is a process that can allow an organization to

concentrate its limited resources on the greatest opportunities to increase sales and achieve a sustainable competitive advantage. Marketing strategies serve as the fundamental underpinning of marketing plans designed to fill market needs and reach marketing objectives. Plans and objectives are generally tested for measurable results. Commonly, marketing strategies are developed as multi-year plans, with a tactical plan detailing specific actions to be accomplished in the current year.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used interviewing method. Data was collected from various institutes located in state of Punjab. The period of study covered from March to August 2011. The project was carried out to identify the various strategies adopted for marketing and for what purpose these strategies are used.

Sampling

The sampling design adopted for study is convenient sampling. The sample size for the study is 25 colleges, which were distributed in various locations in state of Punjab.

Data Collection

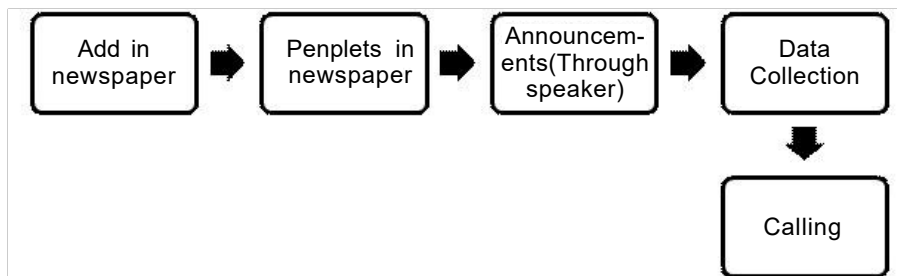
This research used both primary and secondary data. The primary data has been collected through personal and telephonic interview. The secondary data has been obtained from various newspapers, published and official sites of various education institutes.

Sequence of Activities Followed in Education Marketing

The starting of marketing activity commenced with advertisement in newspapers published in local language, as penetration level of local language news is higher and deeper in remote villages. Newspaper ads are followed by pamphlets in news paper published in each and every language. This step ensures the reach to each and every household of the potential area. Third step is announcements, the primary vehicles/vectors used for announcement are college buses installed with speakers; other factor used is announcement from gurdawara's speaker systems. College teaching or non-teaching staff is also sent along with the college bus, in case any person requires more information regarding course or college. Fourth step includes activities like school visits, interaction with school students and data collection of potential students. Last step in marketing activity is calling the data which is collected in previous steps are contacted through phone and information regarding college and course is given if required. SMS

containing information regarding college and courses are also sent on all the contact numbers collected in the previous step.

Diagram 1 : Sequence of Marketing Activities



Marketing Strategies or Methods

1. **Talent Hunt Test** : It is a open test and students who are appearing in X, XII or graduation recently passed are invited to undertake this test. Test covers 3-4 sections normally of reasoning, mental ability, general knowledge and data interpretation. To ensure maximum participation or to stimulate more and more students to participate, prizes in the form of money, certificate or tuition fee waiver is given.
2. **Mock Test** : It is a preparatory test, students who are undertaking management, engineering or medical entrance exams are given a chance to check the extent of their preparation for final entrance exam by undertaking the mock test. Registration is entirely free of cost and paper is set on the original paper format.
3. **Management Fest** : A kind of festival, organized especially by management department. In this festival various management games are organized and winners are given prizes. Food stalls add frolic to this fest. New and innovative ideas are encouraged and are displayed in the form of projects.
4. **Covering Various Entrance Exams** : Marketing teams of every education institute distribute their college published materials to the students who came at various exam centers for entrance exam. Published materials can be in the form of brochure, leaflet, and copies with college feature on cover pages.
5. **Industrial Visits / Tours** : Although industrial visits are part of curriculum of coerces like engineering, management etc. But its credibility depends upon the type of industry visit organized by education institute. If education institute is capable of organizing visits to MNC it will enhance the image of education institute. On the other hand, tours are organized fun and frolic. The purpose is to provide few day off from studies to students.

Table 1
List of Various Methods Employed for Marketing

1. Talent hunt test
2. Mock tests
3. Management fest
4. Covering various entrance tests
5. Industrial visits/Tours
6. Posters & banners
7. Admission agents
8. LBL
9. School visits
10. Book bank
11. Door to door bus facility
12. Tech/Science fest
13. Scholarship test
14. Integrated courses
15. Digital displays
16. Foundation classes
17. Placements
18. Student clubs
19. Electronic media
20. Students involvement
21. Coupon system
22. Announcements
23. Wall paintings
24. Advertisements in newspaper/ local T.V
25. Permanent/ Temporary admission offices
26. Collaboration with overseas universities
27. Fee waiver

6. **Advertisement in Newspaper / T.V. :** To remind about the education institute and its features, advertisement in the form of print and broadcast form are used on regular basis.
7. **Posters / Banners :** Prime locations like bus stand, tuition centers, crowded markets are identified and are flooded with posters and banners depicting features and courses offered by education institute.

8. **Admission Agents** : Persons like private teachers providing tuitions, government teachers, village heads like sarpanch act as admission agents. These influential personalities by their words help in motivating and driving persons for admissions, in return these persons get predefined amount for every admission.
9. **LBL** : Leave behind literature includes leaf lets, brochures etc. The innovative idea is use of calendars with pictures of god, goddesses or gurus. The reason behind is to avoid the situation like throw. Gifts like table clock are also given the important persons.
10. **School Visits** : 3-4 months before starting new sessions, marketing team of education institute pay visits to every potential school of the area to communicate with the students by direct interaction or by giving power point presentations covering every feature of their education institute. These visits are on the name of providing carrier counseling to the students but the actual purpose is to market the college.
12. **Book Bank** : After completion of the course students can donate their books to their education institute and these books was kept in book bank from where forthcoming students can issue and study.
13. **Tech Fest** : The festival is for engineering students. The purpose behind is to encourage new ideas regarding technology. It is college oriented but now day's schools are invited to visits as well as participate in the form of projects.
14. **Scholarship Tests** : Students who are in X, XII or graduation or recent pass outs are given the chance to sponsor their education by scoring position in scholarship test. In this test a common test is conducted covering questions in the field of reasoning, general knowledge, mathematical ability. Students securing first three positions are given scholarships in the form of tuition fee rebate.

Another form of scholarship is in the form of pre decided slabs regarding tuition fee waiver E.g.

Table 2
Tuition Fee Waiver

Slabs	Tuition Fee Waiver
Students securing more than 90% in X, XII, Graduation	100%
Students securing between 70-90% in X, XII, Graduation	75%
Students securing between 60-70% in X, XII, Graduation	50%

- 15. Admission Offices :** Admission offices are opened in prime location, where students gathering are large. These offices are by college staff itself. These offices can be of two types :
- (1) Permanent- Open 365 days a year
 - (2) Temporary- Opened at the time of admissions i.e. March-July
- 16. Integrated Courses :** Two individual courses in the same field are merged together but the time of completion of integrated course is less than individual sum total of two courses. e.g.

Table 3

Integrated Courses

BBA	3 years
MBA	2 years
Integrated Course (BBA+MBA)	5 years

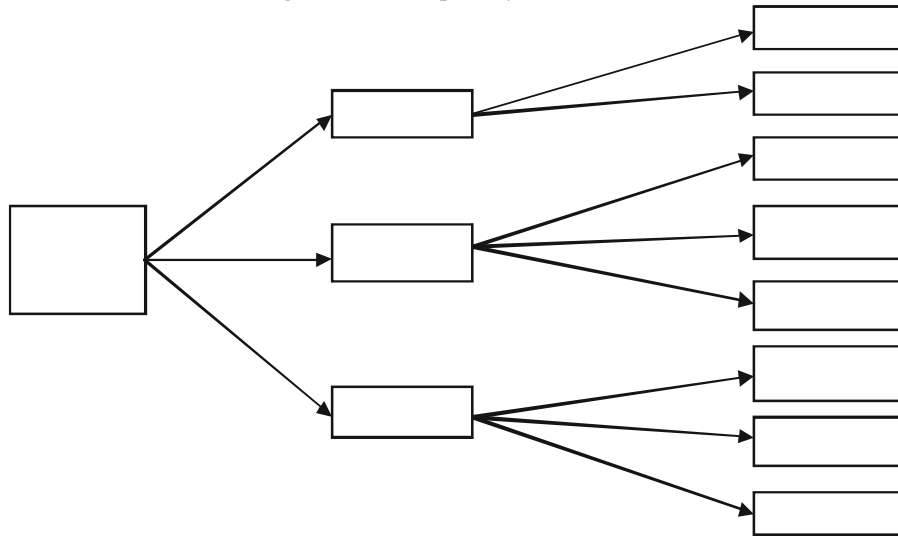
- 17. Collaboration with Overseas Universities :** In this method students complete their half of the course duration in parent country education institute and half of course duration in a foreign country education institute. Pricing of these courses are higher than the actual course input. This method is used to target higher income class.
- 18. Digital Displays :** Use of digital displays at the cross roads or chowks are seen. In this method education institute gets the contract to maintain the chowk. Along with sign boards, digital displays are used depicting institutes name and courses offered. The theory behind is to target daily travelling passengers and make them aware about education institute and its courses offered. e.g. Bhai Gurdas Group of Colleges use digital displays on Barnala chowk in Sangrur city.
- 19. Foundation Classes :** Students who are weak in a particular subject are provided with foundation/ extra classes before starting the actual course classes. It provides an extra assistance to weak students.
- 20. Placements :** Going to be passed out batches are provided with job offer with in their college campus. In this method companies are invited in the college campus to recruit potential human resource. Students are recruited on probation period and their contract will be renewed after analyzing their performance in probation period.

The innovative idea in placements is assessment centers; these are external independent entity that has the authority to recruit human resource on the behalf of company. Students can approach these

assessment centers personally or college can invite. To undertake this test students have pay certain amount in the form of fee. To enhance the goodwill among students, college can contribute half of fee amount by itself and rest half by students.

21. **Student Clubs :** These organizations can be formal or informal types. Formal clubs are recognized by education institute and activities are organized on the regular basis with the consent of institute authority. Authority and responsibility is formally identified. Each formal group is headed by teaching staff along with student representative. On the other hand informal groups are those that are not recognized by education institute e.g. clubs formed in hostel. These clubs organize their activities on their own basis.
22. **Electronic Media :** Electronic media like SMS and E-mail are sent to those students whose data was being collected through various marketing activities. The content of message consists of courses offered by the college with admission helpline number at the end of message.
23. **Students Involvement :** Students from every village are selected and are given the task to gather potential youths from their own village at a single place, Where representatives of college provide them career guidance. This method is easy to employ and effectiveness is high, as students already have the knowledge about the potential youth of their village and can gather them easily making the job of marketing staff easier.
24. **Coupon System :** It is an innovative idea in the education industry, but it is already in existence and are successfully employed by marketing organizations. The idea is taken from AMWAY. In this method a coupon is given to every existing student of education institute. Coupon is divided into three parts with identical coupon number on every part. First part of coupon contains detail of the referee student, rest of the three parts are for the refereed candidate. One referee student can nominate only three refereed candidates. The purpose behind this method is use of existing students to attract more candidates for admission. For every one admission referee and referred students get s benefit of Rs 1000 in the form of fee waiver in the semester fee. Every referred candidate is given a coupon at the time of admission and the cycle goes on. It is like a chain reaction, in which one student can refer three candidates for admission purpose and each three refereed candidate can further refer three candidates individually and so on.

Diagram 2 : Coupon System Channel



□ = Referee student → = Referred Student

25. **Announcements :** This method is a kind of facility to people, which is provided by college. Announcement contains information regarding admission n opening, kind of courses offered by college. The primary vehicles/vectors used for announcement are college buses installed with speakers; other vector used is announcement from gurdawara's speaker systems. College teaching or non teaching staff is also sent along with the college bus, in case any person requires more information regarding course or college.
26. **Wall Paintings :** Wall painting is an effective and economical medium for communication, as it stays for longer time depending on weather conditions. Walls of farm houses, shops, schools are ideal places for wall paintings. The walls have to paint 1-2 feet from the ground. It is better to take permission of the owner. Very often the owner takes the responsibility for taking care of the wall paintings. The matter should be in the form of pictures, alphabets for catching the attention of people.
27. **Fee Waiver :** In this form if there are two students from safe father, then one student is provided with concession in tuition fee ,in every semester. The amount of concession is decided by the college authorities. It can be in the form of some part percentage of tuition fee e.g. 10/15/20 percentage of tuition fee or some particular amount e.g. Rs 1000/1500/ 2000.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE TO PROMOTE PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

1. **Neighborhood Campus Program** : To promote technical education Punjab state government has taken initiative through Neighborhood campus program. In this program every college offering technical education is associated with 8-10 government senior secondary schools. Visits are organized for school students to their associated college to show workshops or technical labs. The objective is to provide practical knowledge to school students, as infrastructural facilities are not available in adequate quantity in school campus.
2. **JET Entrance Coaching** : Free JET entrance coaching is provided to the students pursuing secondary class. Responsibility regarding coaching is given to concerned subject teacher. JET entrance forms availability is also ensured in the schools so that maximum participation of students can be ensured.
3. **Fee Waiver to Category Students** : Students of scheduled caste category are provided with free education from university or from any affiliated college to university. Under this scheme certain percentage of seats are reserved in every college for scheduled caste candidates. The objective is to uplift lower category section both in terms of standard of living and education in society.

FINDINGS

1. The various marketing methods employed by education institutes serve four purposes. These purposes are listed below:-
 - (1) To keep reminding local crowd about college.
 - (2) For direct admissions.
 - (3) For data collection.
 - (4) To satisfy present customers (students) this spread positive word of mouth publicity.
2. To keep local crowd reminding and to feel the presence of education institutes in the local crowd, methods like advertisements in newspaper, local T.V channel, posters banners, SMS, E-mail, digital displays are used.
3. Admission agents, temporary admission offices, permanent corporate offices serve the purpose of direct admissions for education institute.
4. Methods like talent hunt test, mock test, management and tech. fest, scholarship test, science fair, covering entrance tests, school visits, served as marketing cum data collection methods. Students are required to register

first, through well-designed registration form consist of student & fathers name followed by address, contact number, and choice of course. This data base is later on used at the time of admissions.

5. Industrial visits, tours organized, student clubs, foundation classes methods are adopted to satisfy the present customers (Students) who help in spreading positive word of mouth publicity.
6. Integrated courses help in developing attractive product mix besides offering individual traditional courses.
7. Methods like foundation/extra classes can work both ways. It can help in stopping or retreating students who are weak in particular subjects by giving extra assistance to students but sometimes students attend these classes to check the course difficulty and later they switch to some other easier course.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to find out the various marketing strategies adopted and what purpose these methods fulfill. Study identifies 26 methods adopted by various education institutes for marketing purpose. These methods are talent hunt test, Management fest, Scholarship test, Tech. fest, Student clubs, book bank, integrated courses, covering entrance exam, school visits, temporary admission offices, corporate offices, door to door bus facility, LBL, foundation classes, admission agents. The purpose these methods fulfill are categorized under four headings, these are reminding, direct admission, data collection and satisfying. Every method needs to be carefully administered in order to get desired results. Time plays crucial role in deciding the effectiveness of these methods. Every method needs to be executed at the time when needed, not before or not after that appropriate time.

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