

DARIUSZ SOBOTKIEWICZ

## Development or decline of marketing - systematic considerations

### 1. Introduction

Domestic and foreign literature has been discussing the role and importance of marketing in the practice of business operations for more than 20 years. On one hand there are ambiguous statements that discuss the loss of its position, rank and influence in favour of other functions or concepts. On the other hand the increase in its role, importance and strength of influence is risen. Marketing is treated as a new discipline, comprehensively shaped in the twentieth century, although some of the rationale for marketing activities can be found much earlier. Numerous works have been created and continue to be created by the authors who focus their research and publication efforts in different areas of marketing. Here you can list the work discussing the different marketing instruments (Sojkin, 2003; Waniowski, 2003; Czubała, 2001; Wiktor 2001, 2013), buyer behaviour (Mazurek - Łopacinska, 2003; Światowy, 2006), international marketing (Duliniec, 2004), strategic marketing (Styś, 1999), effectiveness and effectiveness of marketing (Garbarski, 2008, Kłeczek, 2012), marketing strategies (Wrzosek, 2012), marketing management (Niestrój,

Prof. Dariusz Sobotkiewicz,  
 University of Zielona Gora,  
 Faculty of Economics and Management,  
 Poland,  
 ORCID: 0000-0002-8570-5303.

1996; Żórawik and Żórawik, 1996), marketing management (Karwowski and Karwowski and Frąckiewicz and Rudawska, 2013), marketing w Internet, e-marketing (Mazurek, 2012), paradigms of modern marketing (Żabiński, 2001,2004), marketing and values (Kłeczek, 2012). The above mentioned are not the only areas of marketing explored by research, but are important for its evolution in Polish literature. Marketing issues very strongly were and are developed by foreign research (Kotler, 1999, 2001,2006,2019; Kotabe, 2017; Homburg 2016)<sup>1</sup> and includes more and more newer research areas on non-profit marketing, public marketing, culture marketing and non-governmental organization marketing (Matschke, Moskaliuk, Cress, 2012). Marketing is seen as one of the many functions of the company and as a philosophy (a concept) of management. The literature on marketing is rich in numerous works discussing different areas of marketing as mentioned earlier but the issue of marketing and marketing concept (philosophy) of management is not so often the subject of scientific discourse. This matter is not chosen to be a matter of studies as often as other marketing issues. There is a gap in the marketing literature in this area. Although over the last twenty years marketing was treated as a function and a concept, now perceiving it has undergone a kind of revolution. As a result its role and importance in functioning of business entities has changed. On such an outlined background the aim of the research was to identify the changes that have taken place in terms of the marketing function and marketing concept of management over the last twenty years as well as to define their contemporary role. Having the designated aim there is an important research probl as is the answer to the question: is the significance of marketing in an organization increasing or decreasing? The validity of this question arises in a sense from the original essence of marketing, which does not pass over time and stating that the customer is in the centre of attention as well as his current and future needs and that any business action must be targeted at target market. This problem will be discussed in terms of the marketing function and marketing concept of management. †The application of the method of analysis of the content of domestic and foreign literature of the subject will be undertaken to get the answer. The aim of the article is to define the prospects for marketing development. The reflections in this area have been inspired by the changes taking place within the last twenty years in perceiving marketing by companies.

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1 Selected works of abovementioned authors.

## 2. Treatment of marketing in the literature of the subject

Marketing is treated as an enterprise function and a management concept in the literature of the subject. Marketing as a function is presented in two ways - narrower and wider. The marketing function boils down to the issue of marketing placement in the organizational structure in a narrower sense (Homburg, Grimm 2015, p.2). In the wider sense, the marketing function is a set of operational, tactical and strategic tasks and decisions including marketing research, building relations with customers and customer service, product shaping, pricing, distribution and promotion. Marketing, on the other hand, as a concept of management is described through the prism of its characteristics. The following characteristics are indicated here (Kaczmarczyk 2004, p. 39; 2015, pp. 2011-2012):

- direct involvement of the board of executives,
- establishing marketing orientation across the enterprise,
- coordination of the main functions of the company,
- integration of the company's activities around strategic objectives,
- continuity of marketing strategic planning,
- using the strategic plan as the main instrument of managing the enterprise,
- ability of adaptable management of the company.

The position of marketing in the company is influenced by the approach to its implementation within the enterprise. In many companies, marketing has evolved from a simple function located in an independent unit with a narrow range of tasks toward a unit with extensive tasks and competences, up to taking its idea and philosophy to the whole of the enterprise. In others, however, its development was limited to a marketing unit. In the economic space, therefore, there are companies with varying degrees of marketing development. These include companies that have gone through all stages of evolution in a short or long time, as well as companies that narrow marketing to one of the many functions of the enterprise. It is not the intention of the author of the article to evaluate the choices made in terms of the development of marketing in the company but merely to show that there are various organizational solutions in the field of marketing in business realities. They affect the approach in its implementation in the company, the quality of marketing decisions made, the perception of marketing by managers and indicate the degree of awareness of companies about the role and importance of marketing in the modern economy.

### 3. Marketing as a modern management concept

Many definitions of marketing highlights its conceptual aspect. Marketing is then presented as a concept of thinking and working on the market. Marketing as a management concept (philosophy, approach, orientation...) <sup>2</sup> has been and is the subject of many scientific discussions, with numerous publications in this field to serve as a proof (Penc,1995, p. 16; Mruk 1999, p. 16; Prymon, 1999, p. 21; Lichtarski, 1999, p. 15; Gwiazda, 2000, pp. 35-36; Niestrój, 2002, p. 31; Kaczmarczyk, 2004, p.39; Schmitt, 2011, pp. 55-112, Baran, 2014; Kaczmarczyk 2015, pp. 2011-2012).

Considering marketing in the category of management concept means, first of all:(1) a change in the way of thinking and acting rather than a structural and organizational change (Niestrój 2002, p.80), (2) the importance of marketing is not narrowed down to the classic function of the company, but is a broader way of thinking and operating in the market (cf. Rutkowski, 2001, p. 80), (3) the company's philosophy in broader meaning (Kotler, 1999, p. XXVI). The characteristics presented here for the marketing management concept have not been 'time-barred' over time and are also currently also applicable in economic practice. According to J. Lichtarski (2003, p. 3), such a concept should apply to all or almost all of the functions of the enterprise. As a result, marketing has become a betwixt function and perhaps super functional management concept that integrates the objectives, scope and methods of achieving many and even all of the company's functions (Lichtarski 2003, p. 3). Treating marketing in the management concept category, it is assumed that it is no longer the domain of a single department in the company, but is a company-wide venture that drives the company's strategy (cf. Kotler and Keller, 2012, p. 23). However, it is worth noting here that a strong marketing department, highly placed in the organizational structure of the company, with a strong influence on important decisions made in the company, can play an important role in implementing the assumptions of marketing management concept and "infect" the remaining organizational units of the company with the idea of marketing.

The first decade of the 21st century is the depiction of marketing role in the context of the creation of business value, including especially value for the client (Garbarski, 2011, pp. 37-39) and the dynamic development of marketing

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2 The concept's definitions were taken from the elaboration by J. Lichtarski (Lichtarski, 1999, p. 13).

knowledge (Pluta-Olearnik, 2015, p.5). According to I. Rutkowski (2014, p. 65), the slower pace of marketing acceptance could be observed at first, and later even a reversal of the trend of interest and the rise of increasingly harsh criticism towards it in the first decade of the 21st century (2000s). In addition, the Author points out that in Polish economic reality we are still stuck in the area of significant simplifications in the perception of the placement and functions of marketing in the company. This perception depreciates the marketing concept and continues to petrify the very critical reckoning of marketing in society and the media (Rutkowski, 2014, p. 65). It is worth adding that companies are changing their approach to marketing and see the need to appreciate its conceptual side. This is confirmed by research carried out by K. Andruszkiewicz on a sample of 350 economic entities. Studies showed that (Andruszkiewicz, 2015, pp. 182-189):

- companies put great attention to the implementation of marketing management and thus want to adapt to market changes,
- grant this concept a leading role in the development of companies,
- building and developing relations with customers within the framework of the marketing concept of business management, and in particular the creation of sustainable supply chains/networks is seen as a key direction in reaching the success and development of current enterprises as well as an essential factor in increasing the ability to adapt to market changes.

In addition to the research outcomes presented above it is worth mentioning that there is no Marketing Department in a number of modern large companies, while the actions of all or almost all board members of these companies are permeated by the marketing mindset (Rutkowski, 2014, p. 68). On the other hand, according to Z. Waśkowski, the result of changes in the perception of the role of marketing is its strong link in recent years with sales and market communication. The result is also the loss of strategic importance by marketing in the process of managing the whole enterprise (Waśkowski, 2014, pp. 94-95). However, the strong link between marketing and sales in the context of building relationships with customers is the basis for *marketing*. among the others, partnership marketing, which as a result can strengthen the marketing position of the company.

According to M. Sławinska treating marketing as a management concept which is intended to contribute to the creation of a competitive advantage, it can be considered that information technologies and hiring knowledge workers have the greatest impact on the search for new marketing solutions. Skills that will gain in importance involve the use of (Sławinska, 2014, p.185):

- databases and datamining,
- customer relationship management (CRM),
- partner relationship management (PRM),
- telemarketing and customer service centre management,
- integrated marketing communications (IMC),
- customer experience management,
- customer profitability, market segments and distribution channels analysis.

The skills presented here are worth expanding with skills to work in interfunctional teams of a task-based or design nature, and in the case of international corporations with skills to work in inter-organizational (interbranch) teams. On the other hand, the use of modern IT technology in the process of searching for new marketing solutions (new forms of marketing activities) enables a completely new qualitative phenomenon to be observed. As a result, the degree of satisfaction of the needs of the modern "mobile" client depends on the degree of IT solutions application in the marketing activity. J. Hernik believes that the current problems of marketing management philosophy are related to innovation and knowledge creation. It is emphasised that the success of the company not only depends on the market-tailored offer but also depends on the creativity of its employees and their involvement in management processes, for example in the development of new products (Hernik, 2014, p. 88).

According to M. Sławinska, the necessity for creating and implementing new marketing solutions as a management concept is also due to changes in buyer behaviour patterns and their growing requirements. From this point of view, the author's main marketing trends include: increasing differentiation of offered products and ways of customer service, taking into account individual preferences in the creation of the offer, introduction of integrated marketing communication, a desire to build long-term relationships with customers, the use of multi-channel distribution taking into account the needs and expectations of customers, incorporating all employees of the company into the use of marketing orientation, treating intermediaries as partners in providing value to end customers (Sławinska, p.185). It is important to properly organize marketing activities beyond traditional marketing departments. Today, the role and importance of the Internet, especially social networks, in acquiring, exchanging information about companies, products and services, is increasing. Therefore, new organizational solutions are proposed to meet these challenges in the field of marketing activities, going beyond schematic solutions. Here you can mention: marketing project teams (task forces), virtual marketing teams, virtual



marketing teams, marketing solutions in network organizations (Mazurek, 2014, pp. 545-549) as well as telecommuting.

To sum up the considerations in this part of the study, several general characteristics for marketing can be formulated as a management concept:

- marketing is widely identified in management terms,
- marketing „permeates” through functional areas in the enterprise and seeks to integrate the objectives of many (or all) functions of the company,
- is a way of thinking and operating of a company in a market „directing” every manifestation of activity on the final buyer,
- is a philosophy of conduct of the business entity in the market,
- is the basic strategic orientation of the company,
- integrates employees of different organizational units, regardless of the presence of a specialized marketing unit in the enterprise,
- its implementation in the company may weaken the position of the marketing function.
- the marketing concept is facing challenges resulting from increasing buyer requirements, changes in their behaviour patterns,
- according to C. Homburg one of the most promising marketing approaches (conducive to the evolution of the marketing concept) is customer experience management in the consumer industries (Homburg, 2017, p. 377).

It is the management of customer experience that rests with the whole organization because the customer perceives the company as a whole and not through the prism of a specific department (marketing, sales, customer service). Therefore, the CEM should be regarded as an important element of the marketing concept of management and at the same time strengthening its ideological side. However, it should be added that without developing internal procedures to involve employees of different departments of the organization in the process of managing customers’ experience and leaving the CEM only to marketing staff will not allow the core function of CEM to be met.

#### 4. Marketing as a corporate function

Marketing is the function of an enterprise that is responsible for market observation, identification of those target markets for which social values are important, the development of products to meet the ethical and social needs of purchasers, delivery and promotion of goods (Czubala, 2013, p.27). In the 1990s, marketing was widely accepted as a corporate function and its strengthening in the overall organisational structure of the company was due to the identification

of companies with customer orientation. Many publications highlight these aspects. B. Haus (1998, p. 23) pointed out that sometimes the approximate validity of all functions is violated and one of them is prioritised, which results in a certain management orientation, while indicating that due to the increase in the importance of the market, the wealth of customers, their requirements, competitiveness of products and suppliers, etc. marketing function stays ahead of others. Convergent views presented by R. Niestrój (2002, p. 14) claiming that in companies that adopt customer orientation marketing has become a leading function and dominated the remaining corporate functions in the company. In turn, A. Styś (1998, pp. 44 - 46), expressed the opinion that marketing is a unique feature covering the whole business from the point of view of the final result, that is, from the point of view of the customer. Other researchers highlighted the importance of function in the context of industries. T. Domański and P. Kowalski (2000, p. 21) demonstrated that the marketing function in some industries (e.g. mass products) is considered a leading one and then takes a leading position in the company's organisational structure, while in other sectors it plays a supporting role. Similar conclusions were drawn by K. Łobos (2003, p. 113) who stressed that the implementation of the marketing function is completely different in companies serving mass consumption markets than in segments of investment, industrial or individualized products. Also foreign literature stresses that the marketing function plays an important role in the practice of the functioning of companies. This view was supported by (Homburg and Workman and Krohmer, 1999; Moorman and Rust, 1999). C. Moorman and R. Rust (1999, pp. 195-196) additionally emphasised that the strength and impact of marketing is demonstrated by its responsibility for customer relationships and financial results. However, even then, marketing was criticised as a separate function in the company (Kramer J. and Kramer T. 2001, p. 27). Research conducted in the UK and Poland on "Marketing performance in business entities assessment" showed that the marketing function, mainly carried out by the marketing department, achieves only sufficient marks (2.8 on a 5-point scale) (Kramer J. and Kramer T., 2001, p. 28). It was also pointed out that isolating marketing activities will become increasingly difficult despite its increase in importance, as marketing objectives will be accepted and pursued through all corporate functions (see Dietl, 2001, p. 35). This thesis was backed by the changes in the structure of the companies. Organisational structures were flattened, horizontal IT links between functional areas were developed, the importance of staff, task and design teams grew, tasks were concentrated around processes. Experimentation in many organizations with a process orientation changed the



existing organizational order in terms of functional solutions with great success. To some extent, moving away from the functional secretion of the company's core organizational units and concentrating tasks around processes strengthened the marketing concept of management at the expense of marketing function. In M. Pluta - Olearnik's opinion the decline in the importance of marketing function in organisations at the turn of the 20th and 21st century was influenced by intra-organisational factors, e.g. acquisition of marketing activities by such functions in the company as: Research and Development, logistics and sales, as well as by external factors, such as pressure to generate short-term profit and development of sales forces (Pluta-Olearnik, 2010, p.15). Similar conclusions have been drawn by F. And. Webster, A. J. Malter and S. Ganesan while carrying out research among the chief executives and marketing managers of corporations about changes in marketing. Results have shown that marketing function is losing its significance, in particular (Webster, Malter, Ganesan, 2005, pp. 34-44):

- the role of marketing in organizations is being limited, the marketing function is losing its importance as well as its impact on other functions of the organization,
- there is a central tendency to disintegrate marketing and move its components to different parts of the organisation,
- marketing is permanently perceived as a cost,
- there are problems measuring marketing efficiency in the context of marketing expenses,
- the influence of marketing and the scope of competences, marketing skills for managing customer relationships<sup>3</sup>(individual, companies) as part of the sales function is limited.

However, the results of the studies presented here, although selective and limited in the number of corporations participating in the study, lead to a conclusion that there is a tendency to weaken the marketing function as a separate organizational function towards locating its various components within the various functions of the organization. Peter C. Verhoef and Peter S.H. Leeflang also came to similar conclusions. According to the researchers the impact of marketing in companies is low, its budget and employment status is limited, confidence in marketing activities decreases, and the most important factor determining the success of the company is market orientation rather than the marketing department (Verhoef and Leeflang, 2009, pp. 26-27). This is where the important question

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3 The results of the studies presented here are in line with the results of studies conducted by other researchers during this period, as well as in later periods (Cassidy, Freeling, Kiewell, 2005; Homburg, Grimm 2015).

arises whether limiting the scope of this feature to other functions of the organization is dictated by the structural solutions used in the industry (e.g. strengthening and expanding other functions at the expense of marketing), the prevailing fashion (trend) worldwide, not obtaining the right results from marketing activities? The answer to this question is not simple without in-depth empirical research. The literature of the subject does not provide a clear answer to the question referred for above. It can be hypothetically assumed that the strength of the marketing function in the organization is determined by the place of its implementation in the overall structure of the enterprise, the rank of the person managing it and its impact on important decisions made in the organization, as well as the ability to use the full marketing instrumentation. In the following years of the 21st century, there is a dynamic development of marketing knowledge while dissipating marketing functions in enterprises by creating, for example, positions of customer advisors or customer service offices and *call centres*. (Pluta -Olearnik, 2015, p. 5). As P. Kotler and K.L. Keller point out, companies appoint process leaders who manage interdisciplinary teams that include marketing and sales staff (Kotler and Keller, 2012, p. 676).

For many years there has also been a discussion on the impact of marketing on the financial performance of companies, on the effectiveness, efficiency of marketing (Adamska and Dąbrowski, 2007; Kowal, 2010; Kłeczek, 2012). The problem with demonstrating the link between the level of marketing expenditure and the results achieved was of interest and scientific inquiries in Poland and abroad. While previous research has pointed to the impact of marketing activity on companies' financial performance, the latest research in this area no longer confirms this dependence (Moorman and Rust, 1999; O'Sullivan and Abela, 2007; Merlo, 2011; Mintz and Currim 2013). Research conducted by C. Homburg J. Workman, H. Krohmer (1999, pp.1-17) showed that marketing had a big impact on decisions related to advertising messages, customer satisfaction measuring procedures and consumer satisfaction improvement programs, and the lowest on corporate financial expenses. Research in the 1990s in Poland showed that marketing departments have a relatively large impact on the determination of forms and the amount of discounts, negotiated prices, the definition of advertising targets and the choice of advertising measures, the promotion of sales, the expansion of the production range with new products, the implementation of research with the use of in-house staff and had a small impact on the modernization of products and the withdrawal of unprofitable products from the market (Altkorn, 1999, p. 157). P. Verhoef and P. Leeflang, using the scale of answers elaborated by C. Homburg, J. Workman and H. Krohmer in 1999,

conducted a study which clearly indicated a loss of decision making in terms of pricing and distribution in favour of sales and finance (Verhoef and Leeflang, 2009, pp. 26-27). As a result, the researchers concluded that the organization's marketing function had been losing its influence.

Summing up the considerations in this part of the work it can be concluded that during the period considered the marketing function was losing its relevance to other functions of the organization.

## 5. Conclusion

In the light of the studies carried out in the literature of the subject, a number of essential conclusions can be drawn:

1. The development of marketing was and still is determined by ongoing changes in the environment of businesses. These changes have made a mark not only on the perception of marketing by the company's key figures but also on its position in the overall structure of the company and internal organization, the degree of association with other functions, the development of marketing concepts of management and their relationship with other concepts of the company. The evolution of marketing in the company was accompanied by strong pressure to reduce the role and the importance of a specialized marketing unit in favour of marketing philosophy (a concept) according to which marketing permeates all functions as well as processes pursuing integration of the company's objectives. As a result, marketing has become supreme function category covering the whole enterprise. However, not all organizations have such an advanced evolution of marketing. Still in many of them, marketing is narrowed down to a marketing unit fulfilling its role to a greater or lesser extent.
2. The importance of marketing management concept is increasing at the expense of marketing function. Nowadays marketing is seen as a category that combines goals in the organization. It is an integrator of various organizational projects aimed at the final product. Therefore, thinking in customer categories not only by specialized marketing staff, as it was practiced in the past, but also by owners, boards and employees directly cooperating with customers (from sales departments, R&D, product management) and by the workers making the final product comes forward.
3. There is a tendency to limit the subject scope of marketing function in favour of sales functions, customer relationship management, Research and Development, product management, finance and other functions in the

organization. Building long-term customer relationships has become the domain of customer relationship management, and even in the initial phase of the customer project – Research and Development function, not marketing. As a result, the dissipation of marketing function leads to a reduction in the size of marketing departments, their range of tasks and competences and even their liquidation. Many marketing decisions previously made in marketing units are now taken outside these units. This “stretching” of marketing to other features strengthens the marketing concept of management. It changes people’s mindset about marketing in the organization and a code of conduct. While the literature stresses that this is the right direction as there is no reason for the existence of the independent marketing department, economic practice provides other solutions in this regard. There are still separate functional marketing units in the business sector, as “closed” places of implementation of individual function components. Undoubtedly, the reason for this is, in a sense, still popular functional structures among boards, praxis of having hierarchical systems and difficulties in transforming structure into process-, design-, and more market-oriented solutions. So displacing traditional functional structures through modern structural solutions that many researchers predicted is not taking place.

4. The role and importance of marketing in business practice is changing. Nowadays, new skills of marketing staff are becoming increasingly important, especially those aimed at using marketing knowledge in customer management and marketing analysis as well as interdisciplinary work skills in task or design teams in a virtual environment. Information technology and its rich spectrum of tools play an important role in marketing. New forms of marketing organization are developing going beyond traditional structural solutions using IT tools to communicate with internal, external clients or trade partners. The involvement of customers and contractors in the creation of new products is increasing. Creating value for the customer becomes one of the key elements of modern marketing. The abovementioned changes in the field of marketing affect the internal organization of marketing in the company, its role and position, the scope of marketing tasks carried out, decision-making powers.
5. The prestigious Marketing Science Institute sets research priorities every two years. They also show the directions of marketing development. For the period 2018-2020, the following research priorities have been set:
  - cultivating the Customer Asset,
  - the Evolving Landscape of Martech and Advertising,

- the Rise of Omnichannel Promotion and Distribution,
- capturing Information to Fuel Growth,
- organizing for Marketing Agility.

The tendency of changes in terms of marketing in recent years shown in the elaboration enables one to draw a general conclusion for marketing development in organizations, strengthening its conceptual side and weakening its marketing function in favour of other corporate functions, which in the future will only burgeon.

## Summary

### **Development or decline of marketing - systematic considerations**

The article is an attempt to answer the question: Is the influence of marketing in the organization increasing or decreasing? In the search for answers to this question, changes that took place in marketing over the past twenty years have been analyzed. Particular attention and a lot of space was devoted to the evolution of the marketing function and marketing management concept in the practice of business entities. The considerations undertaken in the study allowed, on the one hand, to indicate the weakening of the importance of the marketing function in favour of the marketing concept of management, and on the other hand to determine their contemporary role in business practice.

**Keywords:** *Marketing function, marketing management concept, marketing development directions.*

## Streszczenie

### **Rozwój czy schyłek marketingu - rozważania systematyzujące**

Artykuł stanowi próbę odpowiedzi na pytanie: Czy wpływ marketingu w organizacji wzrasta czy maleje? W poszukiwaniu odpowiedzi na niniejsze pytanie przeanalizowano postrzeganie marketingu w literaturze przedmiotu na przestrzeni ostatnich dwudziestu lat. Szczególną uwagę i dużo miejsca poświęcono ewolucji funkcji marketingowej i marketingowej koncepcji zarządzania w praktyce funkcjonowania podmiotów gospodarczych. Rozważania podjęte w opracowaniu pozwoliły z jednej strony wskazać na osłabianie znaczenia funkcji marketingowej na rzecz marketingowej koncepcji zarządzania,

z drugiej natomiast na wyznaczenie współczesnej roli, znaczenia i dalszych kierunków rozwoju marketingu w praktyce biznesowej.

### Słowa

**kluczowe:** *Funkcja marketingowa, marketingowa koncepcja zarządzania, kierunki rozwoju marketingu.*

### JEL

**Classification:** M30,M31,L00

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