

## METHODS OF OBTAINING THE INFORMATION NECESSARY TO UNDERLIE THE MARKETING POLICIES SPECIFIC TO PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Marius BĂLĂŞESCU<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** *The aim of the paper is to identify the main ways of obtaining the specific marketing information necessary for the elaboration of the marketing policies used by the public organizations such as the local public administration. The paper aims at justifying the vital need of organizations such as local public administrations to collect quality marketing information and to interpret it at the level of a public institution. Thus, the specific marketing information system has to start first from the identification of the real needs of the citizens and has to lead to the improvement of the activity and to the modernization of the local public administration organizations. The obtained marketing information is a very good way of assessing the general situation, so that a managerial plan can be developed mainly for the satisfaction of the different needs of the citizens.*

**Keywords:** *marketing information, public organization, marketing tools and policies in administration.*

### 1. Introduction

Marketing information is the basis on which analyses, planning and decision implementation are grounded at the management level of the public organization in order to adapt it to the requirements of the external environment and to ensure an active presence in society (Mâlcomete, 2003). The identification of the main directions underlying marketing orientation in the public administration represented the fundamental goal of this paper. The obtained results demonstrate the need to consider marketing in public administration as a distinct marketing specialization.

Marketing in public administration includes notions, principles, methods and techniques meant to know and improve marketing and execution activities in public administration institutions (townhalls, local councils, prefectures, county councils,

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<sup>1</sup> *Transilvania* University of Braşov, [mariusbalasescu@unitbv.ro](mailto:mariusbalasescu@unitbv.ro)

ministries, government agencies, etc.) and it facilitates the analysis of marketing behavior of public administration employees.

Public marketing is marked by a number of peculiarities determined by the specificity of the public sector, by the influence of the external medium on public institutions, by the elements specific to the public service (Nedelea, 2006).

In the literature, 'marketing in public administration is defined as an ensemble of well-defined marketing processes and relationships existing between the components of the administrative system, by which, in a regime of public power, laws are implemented and/ or planned and the activities involved in the realization of services that satisfy the public interest are organized, coordinated, managed and controlled (Stanculescu, 2002)

Institutional communication is today by far more developed in the public organizations. Thus, the large public organizations have specialized departments that deal with this matter and maintain the public image due to a policy and some sustained activities (Alexandru, Matei, 2000)

The specificity of the marketing mix in the administration offers the possibility to know the response of the public institutions to the requirements and exigencies of the surrounding medium. Although it provides administrative services rather than products, it includes the traditional '4P': product, price, distribution and promotion, but highlighting their human side, because public authorities are more involved in the relationship with citizens than the economic organizations (Stanciu, 2002).

For the public institution it is essential to define the product that it provides, to precisely determine what it actually provides: public administration services for citizens.

Public institutions pay special attention to the content of the messages, the type of language used, to the means by which messages are transmitted, with the aim of promoting public services to convince citizens to use them.

## **2. The image and promotion of organizations such as the local public administrations**

As for the overall image of public services, it is in a continuous and rapid change, with an ever-increasing focus on the citizen, the marketing ideas and techniques being, in this respect, especially useful to a public service manager. (Plumb, 2000)

The image plays the role of mediator between people and organizations, between citizens and institutions, between organizations and institutions (Chiciudean, 2000). The institutions, regardless of their type and level of functioning, do not stand out by only their specific features, but by their social image of viable and credible partners in their relations with other organizations and institutions. The institutional components must respond to the expectations of the citizens and of the organizations they cooperate and relate with.' (Teodorescu, 2001)

Promoting public services attempts at providing real and operational information to potential citizens, as well as at establishing and maintaining long-term relationships with them. The specificity of public services has a great impact on the promotional policy, both in terms of the content of the activities and of the means of promotion used.

(Munteanu, 2003). 'The task of public clerks is to provide services to the public in a wide range of activities.' (Buckova, 2015)

Obviously, all of the above-mentioned aspects, in order to be realistically achieved, imply taking into consideration the degree of motivation of the staff employed in the various types of the local public administration.' In order to get correspondingly involved in the development of the activities, the employees in the sector the public administration must be satisfied with the environment where they operate daily and feel part of the organization.' (Popescu, 2017)

### **3. Obtaining the Marketing Information Necessary to Develop Policies Specific to a Local Public Administration. Case Study: Săcele Public Finance Administration**

Irrespective of whether we want to develop a new strategy or to change an existing one, quality marketing information is essential to reduce the risk of choosing a wrong solution. In this context, we have chosen to carry out some qualitative and quantitative marketing research at the level of a local administration in the small urban area, setting off from the hypothesis that smaller public organizations currently have the greatest need to obtain quality marketing information.

The first piece of research was carried out to identify the opinions of the Public Finance Administration employees in Săcele about their work environment and their relationship with taxpayers, and to find out how to improve this institution's relationship with the taxpayers and how they could improve their services. The method that was chosen is that of the focus group quality research. The research was based on an interview guide applied to a group of respondents selected from amongst the employees. The main objectives of the qualitative research were: to improve the relationship of the institution with the taxpayers and to increase the efficiency of the clerks' activities. The starting hypotheses were:

The respondents are informed about the improvement of their relationship with the taxpayers; the employees do not pay attention to the relationship with the taxpayers; the main reasons why the employees do not pay attention to a good relationship with the taxpayers are the lack of motivation and the conditions in which they work. The focus group had 12 female and male participants aged between 25 and 55 who work in the different public administration services in Săcele. After the discussions, both a vertical and a horizontal analysis of the obtained information were made.

After carrying out the qualitative research, the main conclusions are presented below. Most of the participants consider that their working day is busy, with a huge responsibility. The participants believe that satisfaction results from the achievement of the established goals, the taxpayer's satisfaction, and the correct solving of the problems. The dissatisfactions result from the insufficient workplace space, from the stress throughout the program, from the management in that service, from the salary, and from the big workload. Most of the participants characterize today's taxpayer's profile as dissatisfied, nervous, hurried, confused, but, at the same time he is better

informed. According to the participants, the factors that influence the professional and personal behavior are greatly influenced by the level of professional training, as well as by the communication with the taxpayer. Most of the participants consider that in order to be motivated it is necessary for them to work in an adequate space for their working program, for the income to be more consistent, as well as for a good cooperation and communication between colleagues. The improvement of their workplace performance can be achieved by employing competent staff and by a fair sharing of the responsibilities, by participating in training courses, by reducing stress, and by a better communication between bosses and subordinates, among colleagues, by improving their work schedules, by having a taxpayer-oriented, but also an employee-oriented management, as well as, by signing protocols with other institutions in order to access the databases.

The second quantitative marketing research based on a questionnaire had as main aim to gather information about citizens' expectations about the services provided by the Public Finance Administration in Săcele. The main objectives of the quantitative research were: to identify the extent to which taxpayers are satisfied; to identify the factors that prevent the taxpayers from using the services of Public Finance Administration in Săcele; to identify the aspects that can lead to the improvement of the activity. The sampling method was a non-random one consisting in the questioning of 300 respondents at the entrance of the public administration headquarters in Săcele. The interview took place between 18-28 February 2019 on different days and at different hours during the working hours. The correction of the sample was based on the sex criterion, so that the sample had a structure as close as possible to that of the surveyed population where the distribution by the criterion of sex is about 52% women and 48% men.

The main conclusions drawn from the quantitative research are presented below. As for the sources of information about the Fiscal Administration, 86% of the respondents answered that they get the information from the headquarters of the institution, 18% get the information by means of the institutional phone, 25% use the institution's website, and 10% get informed from the mass-media. Of the total of 300 respondents, 65% stated that the premises where the activity is carried out are appropriate, and 35% stated that the spaces are inadequate. The analysis indicates that of the 300 respondents, 20% are very satisfied with the waiting time at the offices of the Fiscal Agency in Braşov, 61% are satisfied and 19% of the respondents are dissatisfied with the waiting time. Of the 300 respondents, 67% stated that they are satisfied with the abilities of the staff, 16% are satisfied with the waiting time and 46% are satisfied with the information. From the analysis of the answers of the 300 respondents it also resulted that 14% are dissatisfied with the attitude of the clerks, 35% are dissatisfied with the working program, 6% are dissatisfied with the received information and 39% are dissatisfied with the waiting time. To the question 'How do you appreciate the attitude of the clerk you were in contact with?' in this analysis, of the 100 respondents, 6% consider that the clerks have an impolite attitude, 11% believe they have an indifferent attitude, and 83% believe that the clerks have an effective attitude. To the

question 'Were you satisfied with the received answer to your request for information?' as a result of the analysis, of the 300 respondents, 86% were satisfied with the response received to their request for information and 14% were not satisfied with the response received to their request for information.

## 5. Conclusions

The quality marketing information obtained by different research methods is nowadays essential in the management of public institutions. For example, the marketing information is essential to carry out the SWOT analysis of any public institution.

The information obtained from the two pieces of marketing researches may lead to the following decisions of the management of that particular public institution: to establish an adequate space for an effective activity of the clerks and reduce the waiting time for the taxpayers; to employ competent personnel with specialized studies; to train existing personnel by their participation in training courses; to provide apparatuses with order ticket issuing systems by categories of requested services; to create a 'call centre' service to provide additional information, as well as to create a telephone line to schedule clients in order to avoid crowding at the counters; to arrange a parking lot near the headquarters of the institution.

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