

FEATURES OF THE SOCIO-POLITICAL MARKETING

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Abstract: *It can be said that the political marketing has certain features which must be taken into account for efficiently applying the marketing instruments in the political and electoral field.*

Key words: *political marketing, commercial marketing, electoral campaign.*

The Romanian Explanatory Dictionary defines the marketing term as an ensemble of activities, methods and techniques having as an objective studying the consumers' demand and satisfying this demand with products and services.

In the Marketing Dictionary, marketing is defined as a modern managerial concept, materialized in planning, organizing, executing and controlling all internal and external activities of the enterprise, in order to direct them towards the commodity market of the unit, so that its objectives would be attained by superior satisfaction and maximum profit for it of the needs, requirements and desires of those to whom the products and services are offered. The essential content of the concept is thus not selling but satisfying the consumer's needs.

Ph. Kotler defines marketing as a social and managerial process, performed by an organization (individual or group) with the purpose of changing the needs and desires of other groups or individuals, by creating and exchanging products and value.

In 2004, the American Marketing Association defined marketing as an organizational function and series of processes intended to create, communicate and deliver value to the consumers and manage the relation with them to the advantage of the commercial company, to the advantage of its shareholders. In 2007, the American Marketing Association established a new definition of marketing. Thus, marketing is defined as an activity, a set of instructions, as well as the creation, communication, delivery and exchange process which constitutes value for consumers, clients, partners and community in its whole. Marketing is at present considered an "activity" instead of a "function". The new definition established by AMA (American Marketing Association) turns marketing into a long-term value supplier.

The marketing concept has been substantiated in 1957 by J. B. Mc. Kitterick – the president of the General Electric company – who, during a meeting of the American Marketing Association, stated: the marketing concept is the

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philosophy of the orientation towards the consumer which implies integrated and coordinated actions, as well as achieving a certain purpose. [6]

Depending upon the nature of the activity performed by enterprises, organizations, institutions or persons, the purpose can be: profit, improving the image, developing tourism, electing a candidate, remedy for a disease, protecting the environment, etc.

In his work "Marketing Management: a Strategic Planning Approach", V. R. Buell uses the marketing concept in legal and managerial terms also, not only economic. A classification of marketing has been made, of course based on scientific grounds. Thus, depending upon the object of activity, marketing falls into the following categories:

1. Marketing in the economic field, which is used in all branches producing goods and services for satisfying the consumer but at the same time also brings benefits to the producer;

2. Marketing in the non-lucrative field, which is performed in branches not producing goods and products but elaborates ideas, with the purpose of determining certain social behaviors, starting from a legitimate social cause. It refers both to socio-political marketing.

Under the conditions of the extension of marketing in the non-economic fields, after 1970 the social marketing concept is also developed. It reflects the appearance of a new exigency in the marketing view and action: taking into account the general interests of the society.

In 1976, Ph. Kotler defined the social marketing as the elaboration, implementation and control of the programs, focusing on the increase of

adhesion to an idea, cause or social behavior, within one or more groups aimed at.

A more recent approach of the social marketing concept carried out by Ph. Kotler shows that the organization must establish the needs, desires and interests of the markets aimed at, and supply the desired satisfactions in a more effective and efficient way than the competitors but in way which would protect or improve the material and spiritual existence of the consumer and society.

The "social marketing" term (the more comprehensive term "socio-political marketing" is preferred) designates a large and heterogeneous range but the concrete applications in certain compartments of this range have received adequate names, by associating the word "marketing" with the name of the approached field or issues.

The establishment of valid marketing concepts for the new sectors of the society taken into account requires however a new classification of the marketing theory.

In its traditional form, marketing implies the presence of four elements – an interested factor (the firm), an environment aimed at (the market), the offered product (the service), and the payment in money (if we refer to selling-buying acts) for its procurement. These elements are found in the approximately same position, even if in an altered form, in case the object is not necessarily a material product, and the "reward" of the performed actions is not assessed in money. The object "remains" mutual, exactly what the essence of marketing belongs to, i.e. a certain attitude: the desire of the interested factor; which can be the society in its whole, its members, a social organization or even an economic enterprise, to know the

requirements of a certain type of the social environment, in order to better satisfy them. If a commercial company with a marketing outlook, using a series of techniques, manages to find out the client's requirements, to offer him an adequate product, and by selling the product to obtain a financial profit, a social organization could do the same, pursuing the spreading of an idea, adhesion to a social cause, changing or creating a certain behavior, a certain opinion.

Scientifically, the marketing techniques have been used in the political field for the first time during the presidential electoral campaign in 1952, in the USA, by the staff of the democrat candidate, general Eisenhower. Practically, on this occasion, electoral television videos have been devised and used, a situation which has determined a visible advantage as compared to his contestants.

The American Marketing Association acknowledged the existence of the political marketing once the definition of marketing has been revised in 1985. This new definition considered marketing as the planning and execution process of conceiving, establishing the price, promoting and distributing the ideas, goods and services, in order to determine exchanges satisfying the individual and organizational objectives. The novelty element of this definition consisted in

adding the word "idea" to goods and services, being looked upon as a landmark in the integration of the social and political issues into the marketing thinking.

In the Marketing Dictionary, the political marketing is defined by G. Brătucu as a concept designating one of the extensions of marketing in the socio-political field, denominating, in particular, the elaboration, implementation and control of the programs, pursuing the increase of adhesion to a party, candidate or political program within one or several electoral groups aimed at. This is the total amount of modern means used by the ensemble of political parties in trying to influence the opinions and, in particular, the electors. As for the market study, the investigation methods used in the political field are, in general, the same as those used in the commercial field but the nature of the information use is different: they generally concern the political attitudes of the electors, image of the parties and politicians, voting intentions and special electoral process. As the most famous companies, the election candidates try to shape the thoughts, perceptions, feelings and experiences of the electors, in order to obtain their vote.

As for the features of the political marketing related to the features of the commercial marketing, they can be structured as follows:

Commercial Marketing	Political Marketing
Product	Party, Candidate, Political program and ideology
Commodity market	Citizens having the right to vote
Consumer	Elector
Exchange mechanism	Vote

In most of the cases, the exchanges taking place within the non-lucrative marketing field are not monetary. As compared to commercial marketing, these can be highlighted as follows:

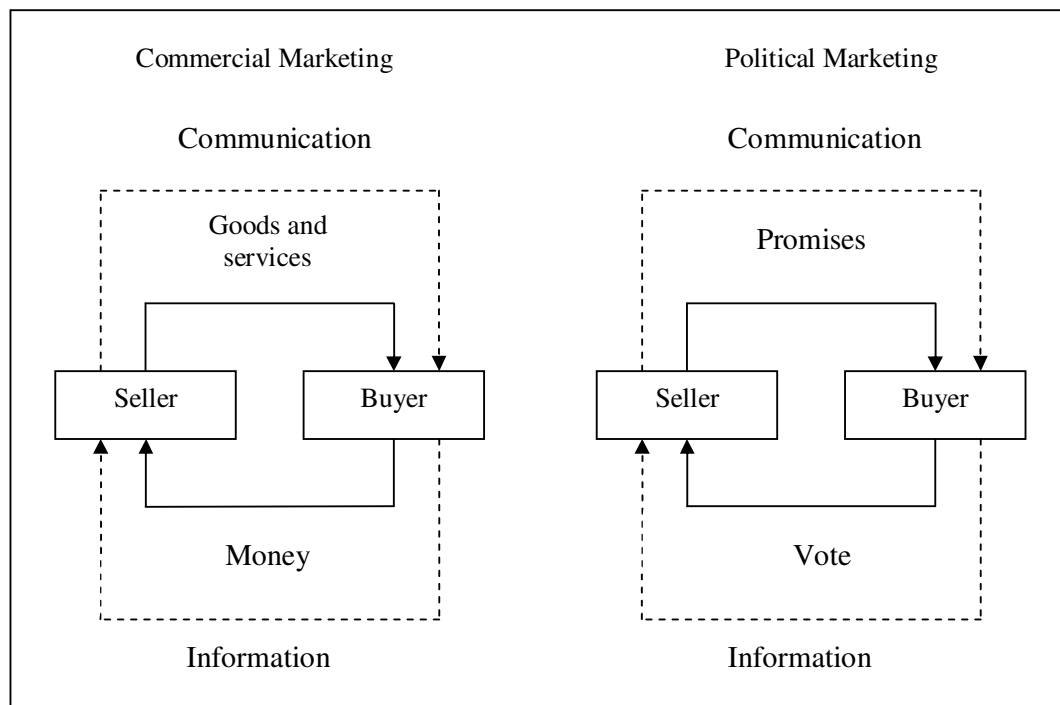


Fig. 1. Structure of the exchanges in the commercial marketing and political marketing

Source: Aguirre Garcia M. S.: *Marketing en sectores específicos*. Ediciones Piramide, Madrid. 2000, p. 237

Similar to the commercial marketing, in the political marketing, the consumers (electors, persons having the right to vote) must choose between the various political products, proposed by means of various channels of communication. These channels of communication are used in order to present and promote the product of the potential market.

Another similitude with the commercial marketing is the fact that the first political marketing activity consists in the market study with the purpose of knowing the desires, reasons, opinions, attitudes and voting intentions of the electorate.

Starting from the analysis of the market and competition, the strategies to be followed in order to attain the political and electoral objectives can later be traced. The political marketing activity mainly focuses on conceiving and developing the electoral campaign. This does not only restrict to the use of publicity and propaganda, using the entire ensemble of social communication instruments. The electoral campaign implies presenting and promoting, for a strictly determined period of time, a political program or candidate, as well as tracing the specific tactics of anticipation and response to the strategies of the contestants.

As a conclusion, it can be stated that the political marketing has certain features which must be taken into account for efficiently applying the marketing instruments in the political and electoral field.

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