E-MARKETING: DISTRIBUTION OF BOOKS BY UNIVERSITY PUBLISHERS

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ABSTRACT

E-Marketing is a process of delivering information, communicating, promoting, and selling products and services through the internet. The introduction of this technique has caused a drastic change in the method for traditional marketing, by which a company that adopts this technique would find itself sustainable. In Malaysia, there are four focused public universities for engineering and technology programs, known as the Malaysian Technical University Network (MTUN). The publishers of these universities are entrusted with the tasks to produce technical reading and reference materials written by the academic staff. However, though the number of publications is increasing, the sales are not encouraging. It was hypothesized that the number of personnel in the department affects the department's outputs. Therefore, this paper studies the problems in the publishing departments of these universities and the potential of e-Marketing as a tool to increase sales.

KEYWORDS: e-Marketing, University publisher, MTUN university, book marketibility

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In Malaysia, there are four public universities with focused programs in engineering and technology. These universities include the Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UTeM), Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP), Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UNIMAP), and Universiti Tun Hussein

Onn Malaysia (UTHM), which form a special network known as the Malaysian Technical University Network (MTUN). The mission of these universities is to produce high-caliber graduates in engineering and technology.

Being new universities, the MTUN universities face a number of challenges; the publication of the academic works is one of them. The University Publishers of other established universities in Malaysia have good track records of the number of publications. Publication is an important activity even for new universities such as the MTUN universities. The MTUN University Publishers (MTUN-UP) strive to increase publications by encouraging their respective academic staff to publish their research findings. This approach has resulted in a small number of publications. Nonetheless, research findings will find their usefulness for at most three years. Thus, the life span of these books is short. It is suspected that the books are considered obsolete after three years of the first publication; hence the marketability of these books is low.

The fundamental elements in the marketing of published works include the authors, printing companies, customers and suppliers. These elements have their own roles within a publication chain. A failure of one element may collapse the whole chain. Therefore, a publication is deemed a failure in the market. The present rapid development in marketing requires creativity and innovation for global markets. Hence, competitiveness is the key. Surviving in the business is the challenge. Similarly for MTUN-UP, they need to devise creative and innovative marketing strategies to stay competitive in the publication industry. It is common knowledge that the internet has been the center of many human activities. Now, e-marketing comes into existence.

1.1.   Research Objectives

This research is to achieve the following objectives:

1.   To identify the factors for the application of e-marketing by MTUN-UP
2.   To investigate e-marketing strategies for book sales.

2.0. MTUN PUBLISHER PERFORMANCE

A. Organizational structure of MTUN-UP

The network was established in 2002. It has been twelve years in existence; however, the number of personnel is still low as compared to UP of other local universities. Table 2 lists the number of personnel for all MTUN-UP in 2010 till 2011. The MTUN-UP is led by a Director and is assisted by an Assistant Registrar. In addition, a Publication Officer handles a unit that focuses on marketing, as well as supervises the process of publications.

An organization needs to ensure that it has a competitive advantage by appointing the right personnel to execute the planned activities well [1]. For MTUN-UP, a sufficient number of personnel are needed to implement the marketing strategies. For conventional marketing, a larger number of work forces are required. However Table 1 reports otherwise. A comparison with the UP of other universities' in Table 2 shows a great difference in the number of staff in executing their marketing strategies. In fact, it also implies that MTUN-UP will have to wait for some years to recruit more staff. This may affect the marketing activities of the Ups

Table 1. The number of staff in MTUN university publisher in 2012

UTeM			
Post (Grade)	*Number of staff*	*Unit*	*Total*
Director (N41)	1	Administration	16
Assistant Registrar (N41)	1		
Secretary (N28)	1		
Assistant Administration (N17)	2		
General Office Assistant (N1)	1		
Publication Officer (N41)	3	Editorial	
Assistant Publication Officer (N27)	2		
General Publication Assistant (N17)	1		
Art & Design Office (B41)	1	Electronics Publication	
Assistant Art & Design Officer (B27)	2		
Designer (B17)	1		
University A			
Post (Grade)	*Number of staff*	*Unit*	*Total*
Chief of Publication (DS52)	1	Administration, Finance, and Training	14
Assistant Administration Officer (N27)	1		
Assistant Administration (N17)	3		
General Office Assistant (N1)	1		
Publication Officer (N41)	1	Publication & Marketing	
Assistant Publication Officer (N27)	2		
Assistant Publication (N27)	3		
Designer (B17)	1	Electronics Publication	
Assistant Art & Design Officer (B27)	1		

University B			
Post (Grade)	*Number of staff*	*Unit*	*Total*
Director (Visiting Professor)	1	Administration	
General Office Assistant (N1)	1		
Senior Publication Officer (N44)	1	Publication	7
Publication Officer (N41)	1		
Information Technology Officer (F41)	1		
Promotional Assistant (N17)	2		
University C			
Post (Grade)	*Number of staff*	*Unit*	*Total*
Chief of Publication (DS52)	1	Administration	
Assistant Registrar (N41)	1		
Publication Officer (N41)	1	Publication	5
Assistant Publication Officer (N27)	1		
Assistant Publication (N17)	1		

Source: The information shown in the table is confidential. The authors replace the university name with a gen
name to allow anonyn

Table 2. Total Number of Staff for University Publisher in Universiti Sains Malaysia, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, and Universiti Utara Malaysia

Publisher	*Total*
USM Publisher	63
UTM Publisher	42
UUM Publisher	47

Source: UPs of USM, UTM and UUM, 2011.

B.   Annual Budget and Income for MTUN-UP

The annual budget and income acquired in three years for each of the UPs is different depending on the spending and the gain. In fact, Table 3 shows that all UPs did not make profits from 2008 to 2012.

Table 3. Annual Budget and Income of MTUN-Up

UTeM			
Year	*Annual Budget (RM)*	*Year*	*Annual Income (RM)*
2012	500,000.00	2012	130,443.20
2011	500,000.00	2011	170,553.18
2010	766,995.90	2010	124,754.30
2009	638,809.00	2009	112,645.35
2008	510,134.00	2008	35,102.00
UP A			
Year	*Annual Budget (RM)*	*Year*	*Annual Income (RM)*
2012	250,000.00	2012	181,802.90
2011	250,000.00	2011	164,027.35
2010	207,615.37	2010	234,611.08
2009	239,042.07	2009	139,246.70
2008	Under Chancellery	2008	233,232.07

UP B

Year	Annual Budget (RM)	Year	Annual Income (RM)
2012	100,000.00	2012	36,445.80
2011	100,000.00	2011	55,135.94
2010	108,710.00	2010	33,257.22
2009	94,093.50	2009	18,982.60
2008	78,128.00	2008	14,460.55

UP C

Year	Annual Budget (RM)	Year	Annual Income (RM)
2012	200,000.00	2012	165,000.00
2011	200,000.00	2011	101,423.40
2010	200,000.00	2010	82, 967.90
2009	350, 200.00	2009	82, 930.90
2008	335,000.00	2008	76, 615.90

Source: The information shown in the table is confidential. The authors replace the university name with a generic name to allow anonymity.

C.   The limitation of the type of Book Publication for MTUN-UP

The mission of MTUN, that is to focus on engineering and technology, results in the needs for the publication of reading materials related to the field. Table 4 lists the number of teaching modules from 2008 to 2010.

Table 4 Total Number of Up in Relation to Engineering & Technology, and Social Sciences

UP	YEAR	BOOKS	
		*ET	*SS
UTeM	2012	8	11
	2011	10	16
	2010	16	26
	2009	12	23
	2008	25	10
UP A	2012	8	12
	2011	10	15
	2010	31	79
	2009	21	72
	2008	22	89
UP B	2012	10	7
	2011	10	7
	2010	8	29
	2009	5	36
	2008	1	24
UP C	2012	15	12
	2011	8	16
	2010	13	9
	2009	17	10
	2008	16	3
JUMLAH KESELURUHAN		187	410

NOTES:
ET   =   Engineering & Technology
SS   =   Social Sciences

Source: The information shown in the table is confidential. The authors replace the university name with a generic name to allow anonymity.

3.0. BOOK MARKETING FOR MTUN-UP

In general, MTUN-UP does not implement modern marketing concepts. They focus on the output and performance of the editorial office. In fact, the aspect of production is the most focused as compared to the marketing. It is found that MTUN-UPs adopt the following techniques:

i)   employing suppliers/traders/bookstore
ii)   directing sales to individual customers
iii) directing sales to institutional customers
iv)   participating in exhibitions

The marketing and distribution of books are usually done by the UP and also by the third parties such as appointed agents, university co-op stores, bookstores, etc. Traditional marketing strategies cost more because the UP will have to provide a large sum of capitals such as for advertisement spaces and agents' commissions. However, it all depends on the policy of the respective MTUN-UP.

4.0. BENEFITS OF E-MARKETING

In the publishing industry, the application of the World Wide Web (www) will ensure that a publisher stays in the competitive world. The www was first implemented in 1990s where companies like Hyperion, Simon & Schuster, and Houghton Mifflin used it as their platform to market their products [2]. The potential use of the www was known to be of importance in Malaysia during the development of the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) in the 1990s. The success of Amazon.com in implementing e-marketing in July 1995 was a driving factor for other publishers to adopt similar techniques [3].

A website may be used for on-line purchase of books, in addition to, marketing and communicating information about the books, and other products and services. Therefore, a website acts like an on-line bookstore for a publisher. This allows a publisher to bypass the dependency on suppliers, thus increases the profit margins and allows book discounts when necessary [3].

A.   Performance in Value Chain

E-marketing introduces new opportunities where speed, cost reduction, flexibility, and supply chain reduction will boost value chain performance. Through the internet, the process of a value chain will increase customer satisfaction, reduce cost and cycle time, and refine the current production [4]

Consequently, competitors will lead themselves to a better condition by implementing even more effective strategies. They put themselves in strategic positions by adding values to their product and services. This is to seek long-term returns for their investments, boost supply chains, be distinctive in the markets, and have suitable strategies according to the company's needs [5]. This is reflected in the current study. In fact, to have a successful business, one has to devise innovative strategies by taking advantage of the Internet and manipulating the traditional styles [6].

Running a business via e-marketing assists to maintain good relationships between the businessman, the customers and the suppliers. In addition, the businessmen will also need to ensure that their customers and suppliers are be able to have easy access to their websites so that decisions may be made based on the information found within the sites.

The main objective in the management of a supply chain is to increase product and service values to the customers by providing good and quality customer services with reduced inventory costs. Values are determined by the management of the supply chain that supports the business' strategies. Successful supply chain management can result in lower system inventories, a network of firms that responds more quickly to market changes, and products that more closely match customer expectations. Thus, firms pursuing differentiation, cost leadership, or quick response strategies, or combinations of these can all find benefits from value system or supply chain management. [7].

B. Effectiveness and Efficiency of Staff within Customer Communication System

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) refers to the business strategy that focuses on the customers. This concept is not new. It evolves over time, and the business community accepts it as one of the concepts in e-marketing [8]. It evaluates the behavior of the staff towards the internal and external customers of an organization. For a dynamic organization, it is integrated in the sales, marketing, services, and customer care, which add values for the business and customers. CRM also refers to a business process and the overall policy that are developed to overrule, keep, and provide services to the customers [9]. It also refers to a technologically clear process that manages the present and potential customers' relationship, which may benefit from the marketing, sales, and service departments without depending on any communication channels [10].

Implementing the CRM online may induce countless benefits. Cost reduction in customer services, improvement in customer relationships, creating opportunities in marketing, and creating opportunity for mass reformation are some of the benefits that e-CRM could offer [11]. Research had found that customers appreciate sales and after sales services more than the price offered [12]. Therefore, investments on e-CRM, in addition to business experience, could attract more customers [13].

There are differences between the cost of attracting new customers and keeping the existing ones in the online environment [14]. It is a common knowledge that e-marketing produces more gains than investments with regard to the customers and business management. By analysing this definition, it can be deduced that CRM systems basically make three things possible (Greenberg, 2001).

1. Having an integrated, single view of customers, by using analytical tools.
2. Managing customer relationships in a single way, regardless of the communication channel: telephone, website, personal visit, and so forth.
3. Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the processes involved in customer relationships.

As a result, the implementation of a CRM System will involve changes in the organisation and operation of each company, resulting in an improvement in its performance and competitiveness. The most notable improvements that can be predicted are the following (Bergeron, 2001).

- Greater customer satisfaction, through offering a better service.
- Greater business coherence, defining corporate objectives linked to customer satisfaction.
- Managing to increase the number of customers and secure greater loyalty thanks to the reorganisation and computerisation of business processes surrounding the customer relations life-cycle (sales, marketing, customer care services).
- Improving and extending customer relationships, generating new business opportunities.
- Knowing how to segment customers, differentiating profitable customers from those who are not, and establishing appropriate business plans for each case.

- Increasing the effectiveness of providing customer service by having complete, homogeneous information.
- Lower costs.
- Sales and marketing information about customer requirements, expectations and perceptions in real time.

5.0. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of e-marketing could increase book sales for MTUN-UP. E-marketing is seen as a technique that could result in MTUN-UP sustainability. Furthermore, the technique could enhance the current relationships among MTUN-UP and their existing suppliers and customers. In fact, it would allow MTUN-UP to promote their product. This would reduce the cost of promoting products through third parties. It is possible that MTUN-UP would become one of the well-known book publishers which focuses on technology and engineering books.

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