# Marketing and Marketing Plan for Information Services

**Sérgio Maravilhas**
*Universidade Salvador, Brazil*

## INTRODUCTION

Marketing is a social and economic process through which individuals and groups meet their needs[1] and desires[2] by creating and exchanging products[3] (and services) among themselves (Kotler, 2000).

Initially, marketing was practiced by companies in selling sectors of products and services and did not seem to fit the non commercial side. However, in recent decades almost all types of organizations adopted the methods and practices of marketing (Iacobucci, 2001), including information services.

To carry out a coherent program of dissemination of products / services developed by an organization, it is necessary to develop a program to properly plan all the actions and resources needed to achieve these objectives, and effectively control the deviations relative to them, allowing correcting the actions that do not get the expected results in order to constantly improve the system implemented (Mohr, J., Sengupta, S., & Slater, S., 2010).

For this it is necessary to devise a marketing plan that focuses on the planning of all activities and objectives we want to achieve and the means necessary to do so (Dibb et al., 2006; Jobber & Ellis-Chadwick, 2013; Kerin et al., 2006; Kotler, 2000).

The Marketing Plan is a strategic document that will serve to identify the position occupied in the market[4], set goals and how they will be achieved, all the resources that are needed and expected results.

The purpose of this plan is to enable entrepreneurs to capitalize its resources, spreading the information on the goods and services they provide and channeling the profits derived from such use for their own funding.

## BACKGROUND

According to Kotler (2001), Marketing is a social and economic process through which individuals and groups meet their needs and desires by creating and exchanging products (and services) among themselves.

We must consider that marketing has to do with the satisfaction of needs and that if several economic, technological and human efforts are made in order to satisfy those needs, ultimately, society as a whole will be the one who benefits the most (Dibb et al., 2006; Jobber & Ellis-Chadwick, 2013; Kerin et al., 2006; Kotler, 2000).

Initially, marketing was practiced by companies in sectors of products and services selling and did not seem to fit the organizations with non commercial side, like information services, with no intention of making a profit. However, in recent decades almost all types of organizations adopted the methods and practices of marketing. Examples of this practice are political parties, religious bodies, social, philanthropic and charitable entities, in a logic which was instituted to be designated as Social Marketing (Dibb et al., 2006; Jobber & Ellis-Chadwick, 2013; Kerin et al., 2006; Kotler, 2000).

The adherence to this practice of management should have in mind the services providing information, essential for the development of collaborative R&D and innovation, although not strictly commercially oriented and intended to make a profit through the products and services they provide (Batchelor, 1997).

Let us not forget that, according to Kotler (2004, p. 9)

*The fact that most of these services are 'free' does not affect the characterization of the products. A product is something that has value to someone. Charge or not for your consumption is a trait tangential, unessential, the definition of its value. In fact, most of these social goods has its 'price', although this is stated not in the usual way.*

Thus, by referring to nonprofit suppliers of this type of product and service we cannot talk about companies but organizations, nor speak of customers but publics. Rather than speak of sales we should be promoting behaviors and instead of return we should mention the achievement of objectives.

*Knowing that the objectives can be non-financial, in this perspective we should opt for a broader definition: «Marketing is the set of methods and means that an organization has to promote the behaviors, conducive to the realization of their own objectives, in the public's that interest them. (Lindon et al., 2000, p. 30)*

We will not discuss here if Marketing satisfies or creates needs because, in one way or another, in the end it will be a need (created or not) that will be satisfied.

According to Zachert and Williams (1986, p. 61) the basic idea of marketing is that the effective response to the needs and requirements of customers are the key to the company's success in the market, being the most successful organization the one that has a proactive attitude towards the constant challenges faced by their clients.

To know our market, and customer requirements contained therein, it's necessary to obtain relevant information about consumer habits and behaviors. We can therefore say that the need to obtain relevant information exists in every business. Seems that companies, especially small ones (which constitute the majority of businesses) have this latent need, but are not informed about what information will meet their needs.

Someone must take the initiative to help them, informing them and directing them to ways of obtaining and using the resources of information from various sources, in order to enable the best way to meet the needs identified in their publics and markets where the company operates.

Also according to Zachert and Williams (1986, p. 61) the organization must foster participation of its customers to allow the design and development of products and services that fit their needs and requirements. The secret, they say, lies in a personal and open communication with them.

## MARKETING-MIX: THE FOUR 'P'S'

Although the commercialization plan, or Marketing-mix, encompasses many activities, in the early 60's Jerome McCarthy proposed a four 'Ps' Marketing-Mix.

These four 'P's' are:

1. Product;
2. Price;
3. Place;
4. Promotion.

They define what is the product/service that our publics really want, the price they are available to pay to have it, where and how can they find and buy it the way they prefer to do it, and how can we communicate with our publics, by which means and media, to let them know we have what they want (Walker Jr., O., Mullins, J., & Larreche, J.-C., 2008).

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