

THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF MARKETING STRATEGY

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Abstract

In information society era market competition assumes much bigger role in anticipating long-term development of the organization, with a basis on strategic management, business process efficiency and organizational capital. The company operating in a modern market economy, in order to improve results, must constantly analyze the internal and the external environment and competitors' actions, investigate consumer needs and consumer trends and take into account the following factors for continuous improvement of marketing strategies. These factors are variable and dynamically changing, therefore the company must constantly scrutinize its work not only today, but for the future as well, to anticipate events and opportunities to benefit and protect itself from everything that prevents its success and what is necessary in order to not only survive, but also to achieve its set objectives and maintain competitive advantage. The article analyzes the concept of marketing strategy, classification of marketing strategies, strategic marketing planning process, evaluation and control of marketing strategy. Marketing strategy is one of the functional strategies of the company, that collectively make up a common business strategy. However, the value of the common marketing strategy – business strategy – is very high, whereas the control key marketing relationships with companies outside of the support functions - delivery of the goods on the market and sales. Management there is a high education and approaches to a strategy of diversity.

Keywords: marketing strategy, strategic marketing process, evaluation and control of marketing strategy.

Introduction

Strategic marketing is a philosophy that leads to the process by which organizations, groups and individuals obtain what they need and want by identifying value, providing for it, communicating it and delivering it to others. The basic concepts of marketing are customers' needs, wants and values; products, exchange, communications and relationships. Marketing is strategically concerned with the direction and

scope of the long-term activities performed by the organization to obtain a competitive advantage. The organization applies its resources within a changing environment to satisfy customer needs while meeting stakeholder expectations.

In the world market the rapid penetration of new markets, increasing level of competition are among the factors that encourage firms to find more effective ways to conquer the global market as well as develop the internal market. For businesses seeking a successful and long-term participation in market, it is expedient to organize their marketing activities; therefore they need to choose a clear marketing strategy. Selection of marketing strategy does not end at the company, as it is essential to evaluate and monitor the selected marketing strategies constantly. In addition to the assessment and effective control, even a well-chosen marketing strategy may be ineffective without adjustments done taking into account market developments and the assessment and monitoring. Marketing strategy planning, assessment and control are often among the most pressing problems at enterprise. In order to achieve marketing objectives the company has set itself, it is necessary to organize not only a systematic and purposeful evaluation, but also an intelligent control. Marketing strategy evaluation and control makes it possible to solve the problem of when and how to adjust, what indicators to select to assess the strategic marketing activities of the company in order to achieve the expected results. Although evaluation of marketing strategy and control of business activities are necessary, but not all companies actually implement that in their own activities. In the literature there is a lack of a common approach to this, what indicators should be carried out on the basis of this assessment. A common approach in this respect is regarded as a theoretical problem of research.

The aim of this research is to assess theoretical aspects of marketing strategy. To achieve the aim, the following objectives were set:

1. To analyze marketing strategy concept;
2. To evaluate classification of marketing strategies;
3. To assess process of planning the strategic marketing;

4. To analyze process of evaluation and control of marketing strategy.

The subject of the research is marketing strategy.

The object of the research is theoretical aspects of marketing strategy.

Research methods are analysis of scientific literature, analysis of the data.

1. Analysis of marketing strategy concept

Marketing is management function responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably. Strategic marketing is a philosophy and a set of techniques that address such matters as research, product design and development, pricing, packaging, sales and sales promotion, advertising, public relations, distribution and after-sales service.

Strategic marketing helps to define the organization's business. Strategic marketing is concerned with problem solving and customer benefits. The organization must be able to answer the following questions:

- What is the problem customers are trying to solve?
- What benefits do customers seek?
- How well does the organization's product solve this problem and provide these benefits?

A statement that the organization is in the movie business is not very useful. An organization is not in the movie business, because that says nothing about customer needs.

Marketing strategy is the best approach to begin to reveal the strategy and strategic marketing concepts, the various interpretations of the scientific literature (see Table 1).

Table 1

Marketing strategies in the concepts of scientific literature

Author	Definition of strategic marketing
General Electric Organization (1952)	Marketing is a philosophy that encourages the organization to ensure that the needs and wants of customers in selected target markets are reflected in all its actions and activities while recognizing constraints imposed by society. This marketing concept first received formal recognition in 1952 by one of its leading exponents, the General Electric Organization. The marketing concept: ... Introduces the marketing man at the beginning rather than at the end of the production cycle and integrates marketing into each phase of business. ... marketing establishes ... for the engineer, the design and manufacturing man, what the customer wants in a given product, what price he is willing to pay and where and when it will be wanted. Marketing will have authority in product planning, production scheduling and inventory control, as well as in sales distribution or servicing of the product
Anderson (1982)	The real lesson of a strategic marketing philosophy is that better performing organizations recognize the basic and enduring nature of the customer needs they are attempting to satisfy. It is the technology of want satisfaction which is transitory. The products and services used to satisfy customer needs and wants change constantly.
Ingman (1992)	According to Ingman (1992), strategic marketing is one of the functional strategies that together constitute an overall business strategy. However, the importance of marketing strategy is very high over all business strategy, because of control of key marketing relationships with organizations outside of the support functions – delivery of the goods to the market and sales.
Buttle (1993)	Marketing strategy – the overall (corporate and marketing) action program, including all elements of marketing complex in order to clarify undertaking to set goals and objectives. This is a logical continuation of the business plan that combines a number of interrelated decisions.
Doyle (2000)	Strategic marketing is the management process that seeks to maximize returns to shareholders by creating a competitive advantage in providing, communicating and delivering value to customers thereby developing a long-term relationship with them. The specific contribution of marketing in the organization lies in the formulation of strategies to choose the right customer, build relationships of trust with them and create a competitive advantage. A marketing strategy consists of an internally integrated but externally focused set of choices about how the organization addresses its customers in the context of a competitive environment.
Hambrick and Fredrickson (2001)	Marketing strategy has five elements: it deals with where the organization plans to be active; how it will get there; how it will succeed in the marketplace; what the speed and sequence of moves will be; and how the organization will obtain profits.
Kotler (2003)	Marketing strategy is marketing logic according to which the business unit is marketing. Marketing strategy focuses on target customers. The company chooses a market, divide it into segments, select the most viable ones and consolidates its forces in the service segment. The company creates a marketing mix, using the tools at its disposal: product, price, distribution, sales support. In order to establish the best marketing mix and be able to take appropriate action, the company performs marketing analysis of marketing plans and carries them out. It carries out these activities by monitoring the environment and adapting to it.

Pranulis (2008)	Marketing strategy is consistently located and coordinated set of marketing actions, aimed at meeting the long-term marketing goals.
Ramanauskienė (2008)	Marketing strategy is a logical means by which the organization seeks to solve marketing problems, the scheme. It consists of individual target markets, product positioning, marketing complex between costs and marketing strategies.
Baker (2008)	The strategic marketing plan is a model of a unit's position in its market relative to competitors and contains a definition of market needs, the objectives to be achieved, the strategies to achieve the objectives and resources required to obtain the desired results.

Some researchers of the marketing strategy, for example, Ingman (1992), highlight the significance of marketing strategy. Chlivickas (2008) notes that marketing strategy development often is one of the most important aspects of business, because it is necessary to achieve company goals, to organize activities in a focused and targeted manner. Marketing strategy addresses specifically how to act to achieve the desired results. Market conditions are particularly important, because marketing strategy allows the assessment of market dynamics and responding to its changes. Ramanauskienė (2008) argues that marketing strategy is aimed to adjust the market segments on which the organization plans to focus its efforts. These market segments differ in their needs and demands, the reaction to the marketing measures and profitability. The organization must possess certain skills to be able to target its resources and energy at preparing these segments, where it could obtain the maximum benefits of competition. For each target segment should be created a separate marketing strategy. Ramanauskienė further notes that marketing strategy focuses on targeted customers. The organization chooses the market, divides it into segments identifying the most viable ones and focuses attention to those segments of the service and satisfaction. It will draw up a marketing complex consisting of the controlled components: product, price, distribution and product support. In search of the optimum marketing mix and its realization, the organization carries out an analysis of marketing information, marketing organization, marketing planning and control. In the following sequence of organization of marketing environment, there is adaptation to the changes.

Virvilaitė (2009) notes that marketing strategy is one of the functional strategies of the company that collectively make up an overall business strategy. However, the value of the common marketing strategy, the business strategy, is very high, whereas the control key marketing relationships with companies are outside of the support functions – delivery of the goods to the market and sales. On the other hand, the company's strategy must be appropriate, i.e., focus on certain specified objectives of the company. Porter (1998) highlights the competing objective. In his view, marketing strategy must be competitive. Its pri-

mary purpose is to carry out offensive or defensive action creating a strong market position, as well as to secure the return on the reversibility. Porter (1998) believes that the strategy is an answer to two basic questions: 1) what is the long-term competitive advantage, 2) how to build long-term competitive advantage. In response to these questions, it can be argued that long-term competitive advantage will be possible only when it benefits the consumer as well as a unique and profitable enterprise and is hard to copy. Therefore, a company must continually create new competitive advantages, thus abolishing the advantages of competitors. On the other hand, this is marketing strategy. In addition, marketing can be perceived as a top strategic management function (Porter, 1980). Thus, marketing strategy is a key strategic aspect of corporate governance, without which the company management cannot be sufficiently effective (Virvilaitė, 2009).

2. Classification of marketing strategies

Sun Tzu is one of the most renowned strategists in history. Although his strategy was about warfare, the principles are still used today in Asia. Sun Tzu said these are the considerations to achieve victory:

Know when to fight and when not to fight. There is time for everything. Act with forethought and dispassion instead of succumbing to emotion. Superiority of numbers or position is not always necessary for victory. The one who understands the rhythm of the battle and is able to freely utilize other natural advantages can achieve victory with a smaller force or inferior position.

Get wholehearted support of your troops. The one who understands how to get the unconditional support of his troops by creating a common objective will have a great advantage over his opponent.

Be well prepared to seize favourable opportunities. One must sharpen his intuition in order to recognize favourable opportunities and be prepared to seize them.

Free yourself from interference. If a superior is constantly giving orders to his general (manager), the general cannot fight an effective battle. Freedom from such interference is essential. If a general has been chosen well, he will insist on being given the freedom to win the battle.

When the time is right, act fast and decisively.

Do not act precipitously, but do not hesitate when the conditions for victory are present.

Various classifications of marketing strategies can be found in literature. Choice of type of marketing strategy may affect the evaluation process. Researchers classified marketing strategies as follows:

1. The main marketing strategy.

2. General competitive advantage in the acquisition strategy.
3. Strategies to compete under certain market share.
4. Marketing strategy for its intended market.
5. Positioning strategy.
6. Strategy of the complex marketing elements.

Table 2

Classification of marketing strategies

Marketing Strategy	Types of Marketing Strategies	Definition
The main marketing strategy	Deep penetration strategy (an old product – an old market)	This strategy is effective if the market is still unsaturated with products. When selling old products in the old market, the advantages can be achieved only by reducing costs of production and by selling goods at lower prices than competitors.
	Market expansion strategy (an old product – a new market)	Applying this strategy, the company can increase sales of old products in new markets or available new market segments.
	Trade creation (modification) strategy (new product – an old market)	Essence of this strategy: new product development for the old market.
	Diversification strategy (new product – a new market)	The strategy is used to avoid the manufacturer's dependence on one product or market.
General competitive advantage in the acquisition strategy	Expenditure leadership strategy	Through expenditure strategy, the company bases its activities on resources, which guarantees the lowest cost in industry in which it operates. The ability to efficiently manage resources allows the company to achieve the lowest operating costs in their field and at the same time to acquire the long-term competitive advantage.
	Differentiation strategy	Applying the differentiation strategy, the company aims at uniqueness. In most cases it is intended to differentiate the company's offered product so that it would be perceived by consumers as unique. The essence of differentiation is profit entity is to receive, creation of customer value, which is different and higher than that proposed by competitors.
	The concentration of the costs and the differentiation	In this case, the company focuses its efforts on any aspect of a restricted area of competition within the industry: consumer group, a specific product or specific geographic market. The objective is a market segment as well as serving it better than the competitors. Competitive advantage can be gained by reducing costs or increasing product differentiation. The company has reached a competitive advantage when competitors cannot serve target market equally well.
Competing strategies by market share	Market leader strategy	Usually one company is ahead of competitors and has taken the largest share of the market. This situation gives more freedom of choosing to compete against competitors in the targeted strategies. The market leader has more options than any other to increase market share, etc. That is, it attracts new customers or encourages existing customers to buy more, or more often. The market leader in advertising and other marketing activities to encourage consumers often chooses just the goods.
	Market strategy for the actor	The main aim for the actor is to become a leader as soon as circumstances permit. Market actor is strong enough and has sufficient resources and expertise to become a leader. It may also increase market share by directly attacking the selected competitor (usually a leader).

	Market followers strategy	Often, the market leader's product or marketing action is copied by the market follower. The strategy is two-fold: some basic concepts and sequence of steps taken by market leader are copied, and everything related to the market leader in product and marketing activities is directly followed, trying to sell goods on behalf of the leadership. All market followers have one thing in common: they do not intend to occupy the leading position, but try to use the leader's proven action in the market. Therefore, over time they are always a little behind, and the same strategy is passive, dependent on actions of market leader.
	Market niche strategy	Market niche strategy is suitable in almost all markets. The primary goal of competing is to adapt to specific market segments of small consumers. Sales volume in the small target market usually is not large, but market niche filler often works very profitably. Market niche filler strategy is used by small businesses, as large companies are not very interested in small segments of the market and not trying to meet their distinctive needs.
Marketing strategy for its intended market	Non-differentiated marketing strategy	Non-differentiated marketing means that the enterprise markets as a homogeneous whole and expects the same reaction to marketing activities from all consumers. It may be that: a) a professional user will not notice the difference b) such differences are insignificant in offering specific products, c) the company does not have the means or desire to adapt to different needs.
	Differentiated marketing strategy	In differentiated marketing, different market shares of the company are offered different things. Usually more or less all the elements of marketing complex are different: a different (often with a different name) product has a different price when sold in different places and in different ways; it is not so well advertised and offered.
	Concentrated marketing strategy	Concentrated marketing has long been considered to be primarily the small businesses strategy, because they can "live" with relatively small market segments. The company's success depends on the ability to identify and properly meet the specific needs of that segment.
Positioning strategy	According to product use	Positioning is a creative activity, therefore it is difficult to express it in a structured way. Positioning can be by product use, consumer goods, on the basis of direct comparison, etc. Positioning decisions cannot be made before the perspective, and in particular the strategy of competitors, is analyzed. Nor can those decisions be made before the selection of the target market, as provided for in the consumer segment of the properties owned and positioning opportunities. On the other hand, positioning strategy should be created before making decisions on specific elements of marketing complex.
	According to consumer goods	
	On the basis of direct comparison, and others	
Strategy of the complex marketing elements	Product strategy	In marketing with the complex element of "product", strategic decisions are made in product mix, quality, and product names in use.
	Price strategy	In marketing with the complex element of "price", strategic decisions are made on new trade price ("penetration" and "picking" strategy), reduction of payment of the issues.
	Distribution strategy	In marketing with the complex element of "distribution", strategic decisions intensify distribution (exclusive, selective, intensive distribution strategy), distribution control system (system of ownership and control methods) issues.
	Support strategy	In marketing with the complex element of "sponsorship", strategic decisions are made in the choice of a common strategy in support ("push", "pull" or mixed), budget allocation, the individual actions to promote the comparative values.

As it is clear from Table 2, one can distinguish different types of marketing strategies. Despite of what marketing strategy the company has prepared; it should be constantly measured and monitored.

3. Strategic marketing planning process

Strategic marketing planning presents the manager with a major challenge, as it calls for a delicate balance between short-term efficiency and long-term

effectiveness (Baker, 2008).

Strategic marketing planning is based on fundamental measures to achieve the objectives of the planning firm, providing the access to markets and the use of marketing programs that meet its objectives.

Tactical marketing planning consists of the tools for strategic marketing plan. Preparation of the marketing program provides effective strategies to implement the plan (Palubinskas, 1997).

Žvirblis (1992) notes that marketing planning is an activity of different durations, it also varies by the significance of the various companies and marketing objectives of the program. Distinction is made between the strategic plans (the future outlook), the medium-term plans (e.g. 2-5 years) and short-term (annual, and monthly) plans.

It is also noted that planning, like any activity, is based on the decision-making. Preference is given to strategic marketing decisions. Marketing planning cycle is as follows (Pranulis et al., 2000):

- strategic marketing plans;
- tactical plans of the implementation of strategies;
- tactical plans;
- control of the results;
- use of the results, preparation of a new strategic and tactical marketing plan.

Pranulis and others (2000) note that by planning of marketing activities, a widely recognized framework is proposed, which relates to the most important aspects of marketing:

1. selection of target market;
2. choice of position;
3. choice of individual marketing mix elements for functional strategies;
4. choice of competing policy.

There is also noted that to target market the following marketing strategies are applicable:

- non-differentiated marketing;
- differentiated marketing;
- concentrated marketing.

The authors argue that in application of non-differentiated marketing strategy, the entire market is considered to be consistent and all users are expected to exhibit the same reaction to marketing activities. This occurs when:

- specialists will not notice the difference;
- such differences as insignificant when offering specific products;
- company does not have the means or desire to better adapt to different needs.

Non-differentiated marketing strategy is rarely effective. Experience shows that there are not many cases when one fits all. There are increasingly more and increasingly smaller market segments with specific needs. Thus, at sufficiently strong competition, versatile offers look less attractive.

Differentiated marketing, different market shares of the company offer different elements of marketing mix: buying a different (usually with a different product name) product that has a different price, the merchandise is in different places and in different ways, unlike advertised and offered to consumers.

When implementing a differentiated marketing strategy, the company needs a number of resources to adequately investigate and segment the market and adapt its activities to different market segments. Therefore, a differentiated marketing strategy suits most large businesses.

Concentrated marketing strategy has long been considered to be primarily the small businesses strategy, because they can “live” with relatively small market segments. The company’s success depends on the ability to identify and properly meet the specific needs of the small segment (Pranulis and etc., 1999).

Fierce market competition encourages companies to prepare marketing strategies and marketing plans. According to them, marketing management is systematically organized, which includes all corporate marketing activities of planning, implementation and control (see Figure 1).

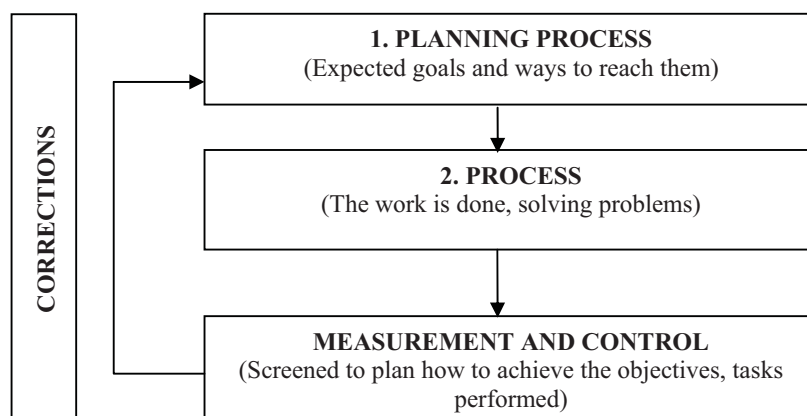


Figure 1. Typical scheme of marketing management process
(drawn with reference to Pranulis and etc., 1999)

The development of marketing strategies is based on a reliable analysis of the current and anticipated marketing situation, as well as the operationalised definition of marketing goals in terms of time and

content. Referring to this data, we will design the marketing strategies. Five strategy levels are taken into consideration:

- Specification of the product-market combination (market field);
- Definition of the kind of market influence (market stimulation);
- Definition of the degree of differentiation of the market influence (market parceling);
- Definition of sales areas (market area);
- Definition of the competitive advantages which are to be achieved (competitor reference).

To define the strategy we use – among others – portfolio models in order to ensure an ideal allocation of resources in a market-related regard. Concrete sales-political measures are deduced from the selected marketing strategies in form of a marketing mix and are in line with the defined marketing area goals.

Every company performs a series of actions that are wholly or at least partially attributable to marketing field. The company develops and improves products, regulates their prices, sales. In addition, efforts are made to explore the needs of consumers through advertising or other means to establish and maintain. All of these activities can be carried out on the spot or be planned. In the first case, each work can be carried out professionally, but not necessarily in line with other aspects of the business. In the second case, the marketing field functions are deliberate and coordi-

nated among themselves and with all the company's activities. According to Pranulis (2008), particularly the business planning enables one to connect and harmonize the various parts into a coherent whole, thereby achieving a better overall result. The definition of marketing planning could be such: the marketing targets, product selection, market segmentation and marketing programs for each product's development for the next period. This definition is sufficiently broad and includes strategic and tactical marketing planning. Different authors provide different structures of marketing plan. These structures are what is marketed is the area of application of the marketing plan, i.e. services or production. This paper will deal with the most popular marketing plan structure and carried out comparative analysis. According to Pranulis (2008), the general strategic plan covers the entire organization's performance and provides a primary goal. Since they are sought by various divisions within the company, it is necessary to move from general company objectives and overall strategy to strategies for each functional area (finance, marketing, production, etc.). These can be further detailed in accordance with each area of activities. This reveals the consistency of a typical marketing planning scheme that is given in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Strategic marketing planning process
(drawn with reference to Virvilaitė, 2008)

According to Winer (2007), in creating stages of strategic marketing planning, one first has to formulate marketing purposes, marketing objectives primarily in market segmentation and provide for a target market. One or more of the target markets provide a

competitive advantage by means of acquisition. The most important component of marketing strategy is value to consumers. In order to implement marketing strategies, marketing mix is prepared. In addition, it should be noted that the successful implementation

of the strategy will depend on the relationship with customers.

Hooley, Saunders and Piercy (2004) proposed strategic marketing planning process. By preparation of marketing strategy, which is a priority for the industry and a company, internal analysis of the possibilities, exploring the strengths and weaknesses of company in comparison to competitors, are taken into account. Based on the analysis of data, basic strategy in line with business and marketing objectives is selected. The next step following the market segmentation is the target market. At the same time the company chooses a competitive advantage in the acquisition strategy, so that it could self-position the market better than its competitors. Marketing strategy depends on the organizational structure of the marketing department. Marketing department staff is responsible for strategy implementation and control. Strategies must be implemented and marketing mix has to be developed. Therefore, Hooley, Saunders and Piercy (2004), in contrast to Winer (2003), emphasize the necessity of control phase of the strategic marketing planning. Dalrymple (2004) offers marketing planning process, stressing the importance of marketing information systems for strategic decisions. Marketing planning stages involve the following procedures: the framing of company goals and objectives, situation analysis carried out in order to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the business side, the distinction between marketing strategies for each activity. Dalrymple points out that the company must first decide what it wants to do, what strategies to choose, and only then look for ways to do this, and what tactics to choose. The author emphasizes the marketing programs and the verification and monitoring phase. Rachman (1988) in the marketing planning process shows that the impact of macro environment is factor in the decision-making. Marketing planning stages are identified as follows: having determined the objectives, analyzed macro environment and evaluated abilities, the company can create a marketing strategy that will give it an advantage in the market. Inspection and control of this process is necessary.

Kindurys (2002) notes that in order for customer awareness to be present in the strategy of the company, it is essential that the strategic initiative includes: 1) the company's business mission, 2) its goals and strategies to achieve them, 3) specific strategies for the implementation of agreed plans, 4) functional plan section role in its implementation. All this helps to better understand customer needs, gives an opportunity to analyze the use of the proposals and their reasonableness. In this case the company will receive income that will lead to better allocation of resources and effective activity. The structural elements of

marketing planning process as proposed by Kindurys (2002) are such:

- 1) market and organizational leadership,
- 2) preparedness planning,
- 3) preparation of strategic options,
- 4) approval of the plan,
- 5) plan of implementation management (consisting of control and aspect).

As it is clear from the strategic marketing planning process, examples of different authors present different marketing decision-making patterns to evolve different stages of the decision-making. However, the examples given in summary may be more common larger strategic marketing planning stages (see Table 3):

1. Formulation of company mission.
2. Undertaking of long-term targets.
3. Survey of company outlook.
4. Company's marketing targets.
5. Designing of marketing strategy.
6. Monitoring and evaluation.

It should be noted that Assael (1995) compiled marketing strategy development models, with emphasis on marketing strategy and control. According to Meffert (1994), analysis of the information is the first step in planning a strategy. The stage is assessed, revealing the future opportunities and identified potential risks. An analysis of the situation is done, the long-term company and marketing objectives and strategy are formulated (defined market segments are selected, the principal behaviour of competitors, customers, business is identified), which are then implemented. The difference between external and internal implementation of measures is that the first one focuses on actions with customers, the second – on the following actions to organize, coordinate and control. In Meffert's point of view, the control phase has exactly the same importance as information analysis, setting objectives and strategy formulation. Vitkiene (2004) in the marketing plan looks at the structure of positions of the services marketing. According to the author, marketing planning is concerned with two major service companies' material aspects of environmental conditions (internal and external) and the anticipation of these changes in the corresponding factors. Marketing forecasting is what is unpredictable. The main purpose of forecasting is to reduce the risk when making the important marketing strategy steps. Before proceeding with it, service marketing plan should answer five important questions that are recommended by Cooper and etc. (1993):

- 1) What do we want?
- 2) Where are we now?
- 3) Where do we want to get?
- 4) How do we go there?
- 5) Where do we go?

The researchers distinguish three stages of marketing development: planning, implementation and monitoring. Authors' point of view is that the control

stage consists of measuring and comparing the results with those expected, positive and negative deviations of assessment, a positive deviation of exploitation.

Table 3

Strategic marketing planning stages according to different authors

Strategic marketing planning stages	Granules and other, 2008	Winner, 2007	Dalrymple, 2004	Rachman, 1988	Assael, 1995	Meffert, 1994	Vitkienė, 2004	Berkowitz, Kerin and Hartley, 1992	Kindurys, 2002
Formulation of company mission	+		+		+	+	+		+
Undertaking of long-term targets	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Survey of company's outlook	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Company's marketing targets	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Designing of marketing strategy	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Monitoring and evaluation	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+

According to data provided in Table 3, it can be stated that almost all authors (Pranulis and others, 2008; Dalrymple, 2004; Rachman, 1988; Assael, 1995; Meffert, 1994; Vitkiene, 2004; Berkowitz, Kerin and Hartley, 1992; Kindurys, 2002; but not Winer, 2007) an important strategic marketing planning stage consider being marketing strategy monitoring and evaluation. In support of this provision of many researchers, it can be argued that without monitoring and evaluation of marketing strategy, planning process is not complete: it does not assess the impact of marketing strategy on the business and marketing results and relevance of marketing objectives, marketing strategy and the absence of control, it would be difficult to decide on the follow-up marketing strategy, company perspectives.

4. Evaluation and control of marketing strategy

For marketing strategy to be successful, it must be refined and evaluated. Xassi (2001) notes that the most important marketing strategy evaluation issues are time segments of the market, competitors and marketing complex elements. In the author's point of view, in terms of marketing strategy in respect to the application of market segments, particularly important is to consider who buy and who use our products and it raises the following questions for assessment of the issues: why?, when?, where?, and how? Assessing marketing strategy in respect of competitors, it is appropriate to answer the following questions:

What are the competitors?
How many?
What is their power?
What are the objectives?
What are the prospects?

What are the relative market shares?

Xassi (2001) focuses on marketing strategy elements of the complex assessment area. In our opinion, for application of that strategy it is necessary to evaluate these marketing complex elements by applying descriptive criteria: 1) the discounted value of profits, 2) risk, 3) compliance with the overall marketing strategy, 4) market reaction. These criteria enable the company to seek further information and let decide on the strategic positions in the market occupancy. Mentioned criteria for evaluation of influence encompass internal company factors: vision, values, competence, image resources, other products and risk propensity inherent in organizational culture, strengths and weaknesses. Ramanauskienė (2008) points out the target users whom the marketing strategy is focused to, the importance of evaluation, by arguing that the organization in order to successfully compete in the market, on higher-level of competition, must focus its activities on customers by providing them with a much higher consumer value than provided by its competitors. First, the organization must understand the customer wants and needs. Good marketing requires a comprehensive assessment of the target people. The authors consider it important to focus on market segments and competitive environment and strength of the company's marketing strategy. Ginevičius (2007) provides marketing assessment of the status of qualitative indicators that can be adapted and modification of marketing strategy of the company's assessment. The following indicators are identified:

1. Marketing (strategy) at the company.
2. Company management, departments, offices, etc. in respect of marketing department recommendations on the marketing strategy.
3. Marketing department staff to be responsible for

- marketing strategy implementation and control, level of professionalism.
4. Marketing strategies in achieving the tasks of precision.
 5. Costs of marketing strategy, implementation, evaluation and control.
 6. Company's ability to assess the strategic marketing implications of the decisions.
- We can classify the following key areas of marketing strategy and assessment criteria (see Table 4).

Table 4

Evaluation areas and criteria of marketing strategies

Evaluation area	Evaluation criteria
Evaluation of the effectiveness of basic marketing strategy	• Is the marketing strategy present and how to comply with its goals? • Marketing (strategy) at the company • Company management, departments, offices, etc. in respect of marketing department recommendations on marketing strategy • Marketing department staff to be responsible for marketing strategy implementation and control, level of professionalism • Marketing strategies in achieving the tasks of precision • Costs of marketing strategy, implementation, evaluation and control • Company's ability to assess the strategic marketing implications of the decisions
Orientation to the target market segment performance evaluation	• Who buys and who uses our products? • Who? When? Where? and How? • Target market segments' response
Orientation to evaluation of the effectiveness of competitors	• What are the competitors? • How many? • What is their power? • What are the objectives? • What are the prospects? • What are the relative market shares? • What are competitors' reactions?
Positioning strategy evaluation	• Was the positioning made before the analyzed perspective and, in particular, the strategy of competitors? • Are strategic decisions not made before choosing a target market? • Does the strategy provide for positioning before decisions on specific elements of marketing complex are made? • What are competitors' reactions?
Marketing strategy of the marketing complex elements of the assessment	• Discounted profit • Risks • Compliance with the overall marketing strategy • Competitors' reactions

Conclusions

1. Marketing strategy is one of the functional strategies of the company, which collectively make up an overall business strategy. Importance of marketing strategy in overall business strategy is very high, because of control of key marketing relationships with companies outside of the support functions – delivery of the goods to the market and sales. Management there is a high school education and approaches to a strategy of diversity. Examination of the schools and theories of analysis helps to expand the overall strategy development concept, a systematic approach is required by the various law schools in the world. The strategy should be an integral part of the design, intuition, vision and learning, transformation processes, programs, environmental analysis, must meet interest of the leaders and the public.
2. In today's economy, marketing knowledge is required at all levels of government business, regardless of whether the company is engaged in manufacturing, sales or provision of services.
3. Appropriate choice of marketing strategy and implementation of its measures are one of the key steps in company's achievement of its objectives.
4. Organization of marketing strategy is influenced by all four marketing mix elements: product, price, distribution, promotion. The organization has to constantly analyze its environment, evaluate the strategies employed by competitors and examine marketing mix elements. One can develop a marketing strategy only knowing exactly what goods are wanted by people, what price they are willing to pay him for the goods, what distribution channels are the most optimal, and what support measures can give the best results.

5. To meet the needs of consumers and companies to achieve the objectives, marketing program the main goal of which is to be concentrated not only on the marketing elements, but also on controls and risk management, is to be launched. It should be noted that each of the mentioned items must have their own individual strategies that are successfully combined with each other and merged into a coherent strategy to ensure company's objectives and competitive advantage.
6. In the literature, various classifications of marketing strategies can be found. Choice of type of marketing strategy may affect the evaluation process. The researchers classified marketing strategies into: 1) main marketing strategy, 2) general competitive advantage in the acquisition strategy 3) strategies to compete under certain market share, 4) marketing strategy for its intended market, 5) positioning strategy; 6) strategy of the complex marketing elements.
7. Different authors propose different marketing decision-making patterns to evolve different stages of decision-making. However, the examples given in summary may be more common larger strategic marketing planning stages. They are: 1) formulation of company mission, 2) its long-term targets, 3) undertaking research perspectives, 4) firm marketing targets, 5) designing of marketing strategy, 6) monitoring and evaluation.
8. Without monitoring and evaluation of marketing strategy, planning process is not complete: it does not assess the impact of marketing strategy on the business and marketing results and relevance of marketing objectives, marketing strategy and the absence of control, it would be difficult to decide on the follow-up marketing strategy, company prospects.
9. The main aspects in assessment of marketing strategy are: 1) evaluation of effectiveness of basic marketing strategy, 2) orientation to the target market segment effectiveness evaluation, 3) orientation to evaluation of the effectiveness of competitors, 4) positioning strategy evaluation, 5) marketing strategy of the marketing complex elements of the assessment.
10. Marketing strategy control may be of three types: 1) based on the control end of the process, 2) control with emphasis on activities execution and adjustment; 3) under continuous planning (plans for adjustment) process, emphasis is placed on development of the situation-oriented planning and management importance.

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M. Išoraitė

Teoriški rinkodaros strategijos aspektai

Santrauka

Rinkos konkurencijos sąlygomis gerokai didesnę reikšmę įgyja numatymas ilgalaikės organizacijos plėtotės, kurios pagrindiniai komponentai – strateginė vadyba, verslo procesų efektyvumas ir organizacinis kapitalas. Įmonė,

dirbdama šiuolaikinės rinkos sąlygomis, siekdama aukštesnių rezultatų, privalo nuolat analizuoti vidinę bei išorinę aplinką ir konkurentų veiksmus, tirti vartotojų poreikius ir numatyti vartojimo tendencijas, o atsižvelgdama į šiuos

veiksnius, nuolat tobulinti rinkodaros strategiją. Šie veiksniai yra nepastovūs ir dinamiškai kintantys, todėl įmonė privalo nuolat nagrinėti savo veiklą ne tik dabarties, bet ir ateities požiūriu, numatyti įvykius, pasinaudoti galimybėmis ir gauti naudos. Be to, apsisaugoti nuo visko, kas trukdo jos sėkmei, ir kas būtina, kad įmonė ne tik išliktų, bet ir pasiektų užsibrėžtų tikslų bei išlaikytų konkurencinį pranašumą.

Straipsnio tikslas – įvertinti rinkodaros strategijos teorinius aspektus. Tikslui pasiekti išsikelti šie **uždaviniai**:

- 1) išanalizuoti rinkodaros strategijos koncepciją;
- 2) identifikuoti rinkodaros strategijos klasifikaciją;

- 3) įvertinti strateginės rinkodaros planavimo procesą;
- 4) išanalizuoti rinkodaros strategijos vertinimo ir kontrolės procesą.

Tyrimų objektas – rinkodaros strategija.

Tyrimo dalykas – teoriniai rinkodaros strategijos aspektai.

Tyrimo metodai – mokslinės literatūros analizė, duomenų analizė.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: rinkodaros strategija, rinkodaros strategijos procesas, rinkodaros strategijos įvertinimas ir kontrolė.