



Was Henry Ford Right? The Marketing Mix.

From Ford to Jobs:

Rethinking the Marketing Mix in Higher Education

Henry Ford avait-il raison ? Marketing Mix.

De Ford à Jobs :

Repenser le Mix Marketing dans l'Éducation Supérieure

Professeur. NAOUI Fouad

Université Cadi Ayyad
Faculté des Sciences Juridiques, Économiques et Sociales L-QUALIMAT
Maroc

AIT ABOULEHCEN Mouhssine

Doctorant
Université Cadi Ayyad
Faculté des Sciences Juridiques, Économiques et Sociales L-QUALIMAT
Maroc

Abstract :

This study explores the impact of the marketing mix on higher education institutions. It begins with quotes from Henry Ford and Steve Jobs, highlighting the importance of understanding and anticipating customer needs. Despite advancements in customer experience, customization, and digital technologies, there are still doubts and challenges in adopting a customer-led approach in Morocco.

The paper emphasizes the historical prevalence of a product-led attitude in marketing, where standardization and high quality were prioritized for productivity and profitability. While some progress has been made towards a customer-led approach in the past decade, the fundamental dichotomy between producer and customer needs remains unresolved.

The author argues that the FE sector has embraced the concept of marketing, primarily through increased promotional activities. However, there is a need to consider other elements of the marketing mix, including product, place, and price. The customer's role in education is more complex than in traditional retail, involving active participation and a range of factors beyond financial obligations.

In Morocco, traditional marketing approaches have favored product-led strategies, prioritizing standardization and productivity over customization. This historical context explains the slow adoption of customer-led approaches, particularly in sectors like education where customer involvement is multifaceted and extends beyond mere financial transactions. The paper discusses various definitions of marketing and proposes a suitable definition for applying the marketing concept to FE. It stresses the importance of customer satisfaction and the dynamic nature of marketing as a relationship-building process.

The elements of the marketing mix, including product, place, promotion, price, and people, are explored in the context of FE. The application of these elements is discussed, considering the development and modification of courses, modes of delivery, distribution channels, promotion strategies, pricing policies, and the importance of people within the marketing mix.

The paper concludes by highlighting the personal development and problem-solving benefits of studying the marketing concept in the FE sector. The research provides insights into applying marketing principles ethically and effectively to address challenges and improve marketing practices in education.

Keywords : Marketing, Customer experience, Personalisation, Big Data, Artificial intelligence, Consumer preferences, Moving from intuitive to predictive marketing, Henry Ford, Steve Jobs, Standardisation, Higher education sector, Marketing mix, Product, Promotion, Price, People, Customer satisfaction, Marketing dynamics, Education, Ethical marketing.

Résumé :

Cet abstract explore le sujet du marketing et son application dans le contexte de l'éducation, en particulier dans le secteur de l'enseignement supérieur. Il commence par des citations de Henry Ford et Steve Jobs, mettant en évidence l'importance de comprendre et d'anticiper les besoins des clients. Malgré les avancées en matière d'expérience client, de personnalisation et de technologies numériques, il subsiste encore des doutes et des défis quant à l'adoption d'une approche centrée sur le client au Maroc.

Le document met l'accent sur la prévalence historique d'une attitude axée sur le produit dans le marketing, où la standardisation et la haute qualité étaient privilégiées pour la productivité et la rentabilité. Bien que des progrès aient été réalisés vers une approche centrée sur le client

au cours de la dernière décennie, la dichotomie fondamentale entre les besoins des producteurs et ceux des clients reste non résolue.

L'auteur soutient que le secteur de l'enseignement supérieur a adopté le concept de marketing, principalement par le biais d'activités promotionnelles accrues. Cependant, il est nécessaire de prendre en compte d'autres éléments du mix marketing, tels que le produit, le lieu et le prix. Le rôle du client dans l'éducation est plus complexe que dans la vente au détail traditionnelle, impliquant une participation active et une série de facteurs au-delà des obligations financières.

Le document aborde différentes définitions du marketing et propose une définition appropriée pour appliquer le concept de marketing à l'enseignement supérieur. Il met l'accent sur l'importance de la satisfaction client et la nature dynamique du marketing en tant que processus de construction de relations.

Les éléments du mix marketing, tels que le produit, le lieu, la promotion, le prix et les personnes, sont explorés dans le contexte de l'enseignement supérieur. L'application de ces éléments est discutée, en tenant compte du développement et de la modification des cours, des modes de diffusion, des canaux de distribution, des stratégies de promotion, des politiques de tarification et de l'importance des personnes au sein du mix marketing.

Le document conclut en soulignant les avantages en termes de développement personnel et de résolution de problèmes liés à l'étude du concept de marketing dans le secteur de l'enseignement supérieur. La recherche fournit des informations sur l'application des principes marketing de manière éthique et efficace pour relever les défis et améliorer les pratiques marketing dans l'éducation.

Mots clés : Marketing, Expérience client, Personnalisation, Big Data, Intelligence artificielle, Préférences des consommateurs, Passage du marketing intuitif au marketing prédictif, Henry Ford, Steve Jobs, Normalisation, Secteur de l'enseignement supérieur, Marketing mix, Produit, Promotion, Prix, Personnes, Satisfaction client, Dynamique marketing, Éducation, Marketing éthique.

Digital Object Identifier (DOI): <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13320810>

Introduction

“Therefore in 1909 I announced one morning, without any previous warning, that in the future we were going to build only one model, that that model was going to be Model "T", that the chassis would be exactly the same for all cars and I remarked :

‘Any customer can have a car painted any color that he wants so long as it is black’.

I cannot say that anyone agreed with me. The selling people could not of course see the advantages that a single model would bring about in production.

My Life and Work (1922) Henry Ford

Selling products, services or ideas

Steve Jobs Apple

Some people say give the customers what they want, but that's not my approach. Our job is to figure out what they're going to want before they do. I think Henry Ford once said, "If I'd ask customers what they wanted, they would've told me a faster horse." People don't know what they want until you show it to them. That's why I never rely on market research. Our task is to read things that are not yet on the page.

More than 100 years later, and notwithstanding all the hype, theories and learned academic writings on the subject of Customer Experience and Customization; and how Big Data, Artificial Intelligence and a strategic Digital Presence will win the Competition Wars and thus ensure both the longevity and profitability of the enlightened, digitally aware and digitally committed enterprise, we find many doubters of such wisdom here in Morocco.

This statement, from the early part of the last century, parallels the approach of many businesses in modern day Morocco. In marketing terms, this statement, reflects a product-led attitude. In order to ensure high quality and productivity, and therefore profitability, the customer was expected to buy what was on offer. Standardization was paramount.

Though many advances have been made over the last decade towards introducing a customer-led approach, this fundamental dichotomy between producer and customer needs has yet to be fully resolved.

The last decade showed a willingness on the part of the FE sector to embrace the Marketing Concept. However, in terms of the Marketing Mix, it is only Promotional Activity which has significantly increased during this period. Realising that people don't necessarily want black cars, the producer has sought to stimulate demand with an advertising campaign. Such an approach is reminiscent of the ‘Sales Era’¹ when businesses viewed selling and advertising as the major profitable activities which a company could be involved in. It is perhaps a legacy of this era that today many people, in FE and beyond, still view marketing as synonymous with coercion, hype, manipulation and greed. ‘Good, honest people would not involve themselves in such low life activity’ is the sentiment which underlies the attitude of many. Those occupying this high moral ground might be disturbed by the following observations:

¹ The mid -1920’s to the early 1950’s

*'In Europe and the US between 25 & 33% of all civilian workers perform marketing activities...personal selling, advertising, packaging, transport, storage, marketing research, product development, wholesaling, retailing and consultancy ... Marketing skills are used to promote political, cultural, church, civic and charitable activities.'*²

*'A family with monthly income of £1000 of which £300 goes on taxes and savings, spends about £700 on goods and services. Of this amount typically £350 goes for marketing activities.'*³

1. Marketing Defined

So what then is this scourge known as Marketing? Can it be applied to the educational sector? Simply to arrive at a working definition of Marketing is an onerous task. The search for such a definition constitutes the first chapter of most textbooks on the subject and few authors manage to concur. Indeed the proliferation of marketing definitions was itself the subject of an article by Keith Crosier in 1975. In the article he reviewed over 50 definitions which he classified as falling into 3 distinct groups:

- Those who perceive Marketing as a *process*
- Those who perceive Marketing as a *concept* or *philosophy* of business
- Those who perceive Marketing as an *orientation* - the phenomenon which makes the process and the concept possible.⁴

For the purposes of this paper, a number of definitions were considered. Of these the 4 which follow were deemed to be appropriate in the application of the Marketing Concept to Further Education :

*'Marketing is not only much broader than selling, it is not a specialised activity at all. It encompasses the entire business. It is the whole business seen from the point of view of its final result, this is from the customer's point of view. Concern and responsibility for marketing must therefore permeate all areas of the enterprise.'*⁵

*'Marketing in higher education involves managing processes to identify, anticipate, and satisfy the needs of consumers, in this case, students, in a way that is both profitable and beneficial for their learning journey'*⁶

According to the marketing concept, an organisation should try to provide products that satisfy customers' needs through a coordinated set of activities that also allows the organisation to achieve its goals. Customer satisfaction is the major aim of the marketing concept. First an organisation must find out what will satisfy customers. With this information it then attempts to

² Marketing - Concepts & Strategies p8

³ Ibid p11

⁴ Quarterly Review of Marketing (Winter 1975) referred to by Baker in Marketing - An Introductory Text.

⁵ Drukket - The Practice of Management

⁶ UK Chartered Institute of Marketing

*create satisfying products. But the process does not end there. The organisation must continue to alter, adapt and develop products to keep pace with customers' changing desires and preferences. The marketing concept stresses the importance of customers and emphasises that marketing activities begin and end with them.*⁷

*'Marketing consists of individual and organisational activities that facilitate and expedite satisfying exchange relationships in a dynamic environment through the creation, distribution, promotion and pricing of goods, services and ideas.'*⁸

The latter definition is perhaps most suitable, indicating as it does the *dynamic* nature of Marketing and the aspect of Marketing as a *relationship*. In FE, the customer is not buying a blouse from Marks & Spencer; knowing that should a button fall off, they can take it back to the store for a refund. In such a retail situation, as long as there is a high level of customer care, expressed in terms of polite, knowledgeable, helpful staff, the customer is happy. In education, polite, knowledgeable, helpful staff are a great asset (and should be considered a prerequisite in the hiring of ancillary personnel) but nonetheless the customer has to participate in a *relationship* which requires much more than pecuniary obligation: they have to pay attention, to study, to attend, to do homework etc. Most retail customers can identify a missing button and are sufficiently aware of Statutory Law to know that they are entitled to a refund or replacement. In Education, if a customer doesn't pass a module they can't simply expect to get their money back. The issues involved are more complex and inter-related, (and beyond the scope of this paper) and would include pre-entry guidance, the educational philosophy such as student centred learning, moderation, verification and quality of teaching and learning etc.

2. The Elements of The Marketing Mix

While increased Promotional Activity is to be welcomed in Further Education, in terms of Strategic Marketing it constitutes only one element of the Marketing Mix.

In order to achieve its goals, an organisation is recommended to effect a balance of marketing activities centred on what Kotler summarised as the *4 P's*:

- Product
- Place
- Promotion
- Price

Perceiving the limits to these variables, over the years marketers have added further P's to the list, some hitting the mark and others dubiously flogging an alliterative dead horse:

- People
- Process Management

⁷ *Marketing - Concepts & Strategies* p11

⁸ *Ibid* p4

- Public Relations
- Physical Evidence

While the merits and demerits of these constituent elements could be debated at great length, it seems reasonable for a service based industry (and indeed any organisation with a outward looking approach) to include *People* in its Marketing Mix.

3. Applying The Marketing Mix To FE

In the interests of brevity, the following table indicates how the Marketing Mix Variables⁹ (the original 4 P's plus People) are traditionally applied and how they could be translated meaningfully for the FE sector:

Product in higher education can include the creation of new courses in response to emerging labor market needs, the modification of existing programs to ensure they remain relevant, and the incorporation of new technologies to enhance the learning experience. For example, interactive online courses or specialized study programs for rapidly growing sectors can be developed.

Price must take into account students' financial situations and available subsidies. It can include scholarships, discounts for certain groups of students, or payment plans to make education more accessible.

Promotion in the education sector could include awareness campaigns about the importance of continuing education, organizing open days or online seminars to attract new students, and using social media to engage both current and potential students.

Place concerns the accessibility of educational services, whether through physical campuses or online platforms, ensuring that courses and resources are easily accessible to students regardless of their geographical location.

<p>Product</p> <p>Develop & test market new products Modify existing products Eliminate products Formulate brand names & branding policies Create product guarantees Plan packages include materials, sizes, etc</p>	<p>Develop & pilot new courses Modify existing courses Drop old/out-dated courses Consider range of Awarding Bodies' courses/qualifications SQMS, Performance Indicators etc Increase & improve college profile Tailor made courses</p>
<p>Place</p> <p>Distribution channels - analyse & design Design programme for dealer relations Establish distribution centres Procedures for product handling</p>	<p>Mode of Delivery including Flexible Learning and Distance Learning Opportunities for Accreditation of Prior Learning</p>

⁹ Marketing Mix Variables as defined in *Marketing - Concepts & Strategies* p5

<p>Inventory controls Transportation methods Location</p>	<p>Outreach Liaison with external agencies, sub-contracts etc Use hotels, conference centres, employers premises etc</p>
<p>Promotion</p> <p>Determine major types of promotion to be used Select advertising media etc</p>	<p>Be creative/resourceful - explore new avenues for promotion Target Segment(s) of Market appropriately - technique, media, language etc and evaluate results</p>
<p>Price</p> <p>Analyse competitors' prices Formulate pricing policies Determine methods used to set prices Set prices Determine discounts for various types of buyer Establish conditions and terms of sale</p>	<p>Reconsider outdated pricing policies inherited from pre-incorporation Consider price as dynamic element ie price does not equal cost Consider ratio of direct versus indirect costs Consider Pricing Objectives Consider Market Penetration policy</p>
<p>People</p> <p>Manipulate the marketing mix (marketers) Make products and services available (intermediaries) Provide market for products (customers)</p>	<p>Staff Development/Training including increasing awareness of needs of Business Generate organisation wide marketing culture Identify clients (customers) and dynamic relationship between them eg employers, day release student etc Support services designed to accommodate Place innovations above eg special library services, Internet facilities</p>

Personal Development: The study of the Marketing Concept has given me a framework for understanding the dynamics of Marketing and how they can be applied ethically and effectively to FE. In practical terms, the project assisted me in developing an objective, structured solution to a problem. Solutions to a number of other problems, for example pricing policy within my own organisation, have been suggested to me by this research.

Conclusion:

This introduction highlights the perspectives of Henry Ford and Steve Jobs on selling products, services, and ideas. It emphasizes the dichotomy between a product-led approach, where standardization was paramount, and a customer-centric approach, anticipating needs before they arise.

Despite advancements in customer experience, customization, and digital technologies, there are lingering doubts in Morocco regarding the significance of these concepts. The higher education sector is gradually embracing the marketing concept, but promotional activities have seen the most notable increase.

The article presents multiple definitions of marketing, emphasizing its dynamic nature and its relationship with customers. In the context of education, the relationship between the provider and the student involves active participation beyond financial obligations.

The marketing mix, consisting of the four Ps (product, place, promotion, price), is presented as a strategic approach. Elements such as people, process management, public relations, and physical evidence are also integrated. In the higher education sector, these variables can be applied by adapting courses, modes of delivery, distribution channels, and pricing, while considering customer needs.

The findings of this study suggest that educational institutions in Morocco must shift towards a more customer-centric approach by re-evaluating their marketing strategies. It is recommended that decision-makers in the FE sector invest in training for staff on customer relationship management, and consider collaborations with digital platforms to enhance the customization and accessibility of educational offerings.

In conclusion, the study of the marketing concept provides a framework for understanding its dynamics and its ethical and effective application in the higher education sector. It facilitates the development of objective and structured solutions to specific problems, such as pricing policy, and encourages personal growth among professionals in the field.

Conclusion :

Cette introduction met en lumière les perspectives de Henry Ford et Steve Jobs sur la vente de produits, services et idées. Elle souligne la dichotomie entre une approche axée sur le produit, où la standardisation est primordiale, et une approche centrée sur le client, anticipant les besoins avant qu'ils ne se manifestent.

Malgré les avancées dans l'expérience client, la personnalisation et les technologies numériques, des doutes subsistent au Maroc quant à la pertinence de ces concepts. Le secteur de l'enseignement supérieur adopte progressivement le concept de marketing, mais les activités promotionnelles ont connu l'augmentation la plus notable.

L'article présente plusieurs définitions du marketing, en insistant sur sa nature dynamique et sa relation avec les clients. Dans le contexte de l'éducation, la relation entre le prestataire et l'étudiant implique une participation active qui va au-delà des obligations financières.

Le mix marketing, composé des quatre P (produit, place, promotion, prix), est présenté comme une approche stratégique. Des éléments tels que les personnes, la gestion des processus, les relations publiques et les preuves physiques sont également intégrés. Dans le secteur de l'enseignement supérieur, ces variables peuvent être appliquées en adaptant les cours, les modes de livraison, les canaux de distribution et la tarification, tout en tenant compte des besoins des clients.

Les résultats de cette étude suggèrent que les institutions éducatives au Maroc doivent se tourner

vers une approche plus centrée sur le client en réévaluant leurs stratégies marketing. Il est recommandé que les décideurs du secteur de l'enseignement supérieur investissent dans la formation du personnel sur la gestion des relations avec la clientèle et envisagent des collaborations avec des plateformes numériques pour améliorer la personnalisation et l'accessibilité des offres éducatives.

En conclusion, l'étude du concept de marketing fournit un cadre pour comprendre sa dynamique ainsi que son application éthique et efficace dans le secteur de l'enseignement supérieur. Elle facilite le développement de solutions objectives et structurées à des problèmes spécifiques, tels que la politique de tarification, et encourage la croissance personnelle des professionnels du domaine.

BIBLIOGRAPHIE

Drukhet - The Practice of Management

Quarterly Review of Marketing (Winter 1975) referred to by Baker in Marketing - An Introductory Text.

Marketing - Concepts & Strategies p11

Marketing Mix Variables as defined in Marketing - Concepts & Strategies p5

UK Chartered Institute of Marketing

The mid -1920's to the early 1950's

<https://www.inc.com/jason-aten/this-was-steve-jobs-most-controversial-legacy-it-was-also-his-most-brilliant.html#:~:text=A%20popular%20quote%20from%20Jobs,to%20want%20before%20they%20do.>

1 <https://www.helpscout.com/blog/why-steve-jobs-never-listened-to-his-customers/>