

Main Characteristics of the Marketing Department inside the Agro-Food Companies from Cluj County

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Abstract. The marketing department role inside a company is linked to its profitability. Each company pursues to obtain a competitive market advantage having better products and smarter strategies. Therefore, the marketing department is the key factor for a successful market activity. The aim of the present article is to identify the characteristics of marketing departments among the agro-food companies from Cluj County in terms of number of members, level of education, the decision-making factor and level of education, relationship between the marketing responsible and marketing. In order to achieve the goal, a survey has been conducted among the agro-food companies from Cluj County during January-June 2012 using the questionnaire. Results indicate that the agro-food companies do not have a marketing department or it has one or two members. The main decision-making factor is the administrator. For the most companies marketing responsible do not have marketing knowledge. Three quarters of the companies do not establish a marketing budget. Marketing is not very well highlighted inside the companies from the agro-food sector in Cluj County especially among the smaller ones. The consequences reflect in the weak policy of promotions and advertising comparing to the foreign companies or the biggest ones.

Keywords: marketing budget, decision-making factor, survey, marketing responsible, marketing orientation

Introduction. The marketing department inside each company is responsible with the marketing activity and marketing function. The results obtained by each marketing department can be measured taking into account the marketing efficiency. Solckansky and Simberova (2010), consider that the marketing audit is the most suitable to evaluate the marketing efficiency. But, first it is necessary to study the marketing department itself, especially within Romanian companies which are not very familiar with the marketing practice, not having a recent marketing tradition because of the communist era. Verhoef and Leeftang (2009) link the marketing department's influence with market orientation and firm performance. So, the major element within one company in obtaining performance is the marketing department and its members. Sabou (2009) approached the marketing audit matter within a study among the Romanian companies from Maramures. Results indicated that less than a half of the companies interviewed have specialized marketing employs and more than a half do not establish an annual marketing budget. Similar studies do not exist in Romania, so this research regarding marketing audit and marketing department is done for the first time.

Aims and objectives. The research aim is to determine the main characteristics of the marketing department among the agro-food companies from Cluj County. The main objectives are to determine the size of the marketing department, to identify the marketing decision-making person, the level of education of the marketing responsible and the existence/nonexistence of an annual marketing budget.

Materials and methods. The North-Western region has the higher number of agro-food companies -1892 (Borg Design database, 2008). Cluj County has the highest number of agro-food companies within the region -551 (Commerce Registry Department of Cluj County,

2012). Therefore, a survey was conducted in Cluj on a sample of 46 agro-food companies. The sample size was established according to the company's age on the market (relevant for the marketing audit process, which represented the main purpose of the investigation). The instrument used was the questionnaire which had three parts: first containing questions for all the respondents, the second part only for companies which did not conduct a marketing audit and the third part only for companies which conducted one. Data was interpreted using the absolute and relative frequencies (Buiga, 2009).

Results and Discussion. Results indicate that 17.60% of the companies do not have a marketing department. Most of the companies (35.30%) have a single employ in the marketing department while 27.50% have two members in this area. 11.80% of the companies have three members in the marketing department. A larger department with 4 and 5 members is encountered for 3.90% of the companies. The marketing decision-making factor is for 45% of the companies, the administrator. In 27.50% of the cases, marketing decisions are being adopted by the manager and only in 17.50% of the cases, the company has a designated marketing responsible. It can be observed that only in a small number of companies the marketing decisions are adopted by marketing specialists; therefore, it is necessary to identify the level of studies of the marketing decision-making persons. Results show that half of the marketing decisions are faculty and master graduates and only 5% are high school graduates. Deeply related to the level of education, is the education area. Only 32.35% of the marketing decisions have economic studies which, from the point of view of the marketing knowledge, are a very small percent. 29.42% of the respondents attended marketing courses and trainings while the higher percent-38.24% answered that marketing was learnt by practice not within a specialized form of education. These are relevant findings because indicate the low level of marketing knowledge inside the agro-food companies. Regarding the existence of an annual marketing budget, 33.33% of the companies establish one annually, while 66.66% do not have one. Results are similar to the Maramures region according to Sabou (2009). The fact that companies do not establish a marketing budget indicates the low importance that marketing expenditures have for the general management, but also the lack of strategic planning.

Conclusion

The marketing departments inside the agro-food companies from Cluj County are not yet developed. They generally have a small number of persons working in this area and they are in most of the cases not marketing specialists. The major problem is that marketing is submitted to management and administration, marketing decisions are being adopted by persons not specialized in this area. The consequences are obvious and reflect into the marketing efficiency. The lack of a marketing annual budget is relevant for the low interest; the managers have for this area which is directly related to consumers and profit.

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