The Effects of Organizational Culture on Strategic Marketing Planning at Universities

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Universities face an increasing complexity in their social and economic environment. Student demand is growing while state resources are shrinking. Marketing a university in order to attract students and running fund-raising campaigns is becoming more and more important. An external focus of the university members is necessary to adapt to these changes.

The concept of university culture used in this work emphasizes the values and beliefs of university members, which are developed in a historical process and transmitted by language or symbols (Deal and Kennedy, 1992). They strongly influence the decision making in universities (Sporn, 1992). Strategic marketing planning is the process of defining the direction of an institution by focusing on goals, resources, markets and changing opportunities (Kotler and Fox, 1985). From a management perspective, strategic marketing can be seen as leadership concentrated on external exchange of services (Raffee, 1989; Bruhn and Tilmes, 1989). Organizational culture is essential in the process of setting goals and defining a mission. Achieving a fit between strategy and culture is a key to the successful implementation of a marketing perspective inside universities.

University Culture Defined

University culture evolves from the confrontation of the university with the environment and the university structure. The members develop specific beliefs, values and attitudes by interaction. The culture then influences the intentions and the mission inside the university. Goal and strategy formulation can therefore be limited to certain alternatives which fit the culture. Figure 1 shows that strategic marketing planning at universities has to take culture into consideration. Furthermore, changing the orientation inside universities by the implementation of strategic marketing influences the values, beliefs and attitudes of university members. Generally, the central idea of understanding university culture is "to minimize the occurrence and consequences of cultural conflict and help foster the development of shared goals" (Tierney, 1988).

A Model of University Cultures

Every organization has a culture. Where some cultures help an organization cope with environmental changes, others become an obstacle to the adoption of

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Figure 1: Relationship of university culture to strategic marketing.
external changes (Arnold and Capella, 1985). A typology of four different types of university cultures-based on the work of Arnold and Capella-allows the evaluation of the implementation chances of marketing concepts at universities. The two dimensions of this typology are the strength and the orientation of the university culture. Strength implies the degree of fit between culture, structure and strategy. Orientation is the focus of the values, attitude and belief of university members. This leads to four different types of university culture (Figure 2).

![Figure 2. Typology of university culture.](image_url)

Since strength as well as orientation of university culture are relevant for the establishment of a marketing concept the different types can help to make strategic marketing planning more efficient. The basic assumptions are that: strong cultures are more successful than weak ones, and externally-oriented cultures are necessary for the integration of a marketing perspective inside universities.

In detail weak, internally focussed cultures have divergent values, beliefs and attitudes. The main characteristics are subcultures with their work being concentrated on internal affairs. Weak cultures with an external orientation also show subcultures but they are interested in the environment. They can be successful in a changing environment. In strong, internally focussed cultures, uniform values, beliefs and attitudes dominate. They are adequate in stable environments, but they will run into problems as soon as changes arise. The members of strong and externally-oriented cultures share the same values, beliefs and attitudes. They have the capacity of reacting flexibly to changes.

### Conclusion

University culture can be identified as a main factor for socialization, development of values, interaction, continuity and satisfaction inside universities. Examination of the role of a university's culture on the implementation of strategic marketing planning leads to several insights: 1) the integration of university culture in the management process of universities leads university leadership in a new direction; 2) marketing concepts for universities can be implemented efficiently if strategy and culture fit together; and 3) the relationship of university culture and marketing planning can best be illustrated by a typology that describes four types of university culture with different implications for the university management.

For universities which develop a marketing concept in order to achieve an external focus, knowledge of the university culture provides a basis for better understanding the internal processes and possibilities for change.

### References


### University and Society: International Perspectives on Public Policies and Institutional Reform

**An Invitational Symposium, June 9-10, 1994**

One of the events which will take place during UNC-Chapel Hill's bicentennial observance is a symposium which will examine the increasing social demands being placed upon universities and the organizational changes that may be required to sustain the university's essential contribution to society. The event is being sponsored by Wirtschaftsuniversitat Wien and The University of North Carolina at Chapel and co-sponsored by the Austrian Ministry of Science and Research and will be held on
June 9-10, 1994 at the Wirtschaftsuniversitat Wien, Vienna, Austria. The symposium is an official event of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Bicentennial Observance. Following is a brief excerpt from the Symposium's invitational brochure, including the theme, format and program.

The symposium will serve as a forum of the struggle which many countries of Eastern and Western Europe are currently facing concerning the appropriate balance between societal demands, governmental regulation and university autonomy. The focus is the traditional university, those largely, self-governing centers of instruction and research in Europe and United States which grant the doctorate or its equivalent. Since many of the demands now affecting major universities stem from governmental reforms, either increased regulations, or the freeing of market forces, issues of national policy and their institutional implications will be covered.

Underlying many of these reforms are assumptions about the university's role as an agent for social development as an instrument for basic research, local economic development, and social mobility. The program will include presentations on the relationship between the university and society from a historical perspective, on the changing policy environment for contemporary universities and on potential responses by universities to this new environment. The sessions are designed to enhance exchange between individuals critical to the debate including university leaders, national policy makers and international scholars.

Symposium Program

Wednesday, June 8, 1994

Welcome Reception at the Wirtschaftsuniversitat Wien
Addresses: Rektor Fritz Scheuch, WU
Chancellor Paul Hardin, UNC-CH

Thursday, June 9, 1994

Introductory Address: An Historical Perspective on the Role of the University in Social Development
Speaker: Professor Sheldon Rothblatt, University of California at Berkeley Director of the Center for Studies in Higher Education

The New Demands and Underlying Assumptions

Governmental Reforms and Initiatives Regarding the Relationship Between the University and Society: The Contemporary Context in Europe, the UK, and the US
Speaker: Professor Guy Neave, Director of the International Association of Universities, Paris

The University as an Instrument for the Development of Science and Basic Research: An Assessment of National Policies
Speaker: Professor Michael Gibbons, University of Sussex Director of the Science Policy Research Unit

The University as an Instrument for Economic and Business Development: Human Capital, Technology Transfer and Regional Development Approaches
Speakers: Professor Harvey Goldstein, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Department of City and Regional Planning
Professor Gunther Maier, Wirtschaftsuniversitat Wien Interdisciplinary Institute of Urban Regional Studies

Friday, June 10, 1994

Implications for University Organization

University Leadership, Management and Structure: Adaptive Strategies for the New Environment
Speaker: Professor Marvin Peterson, University of Michigan Director of the Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education

Academic Differentiation: The Implications of Governmental Policies and Competition for Forms of Academic Organization
Speaker: Professor Burton Clark, University of California at Los Angeles, Comparative Higher Education Group

Alternatives for Financing Higher Education: Potential Reforms and Implications for University Administration
Speaker: Professor Gareth Williams, University of London Director of the Centre for Higher Education Studies

The New Context for Academic Quality: Quality Standards, Performance Indicators, and the Consequences for University Improvement Strategies
Speaker: Professor Frans van Vught, University of Twente Director of the Center for Higher Education Policy Studies

Closing Panel: University 2001: What Will the University of the 21st Century Look Like?