

MARKETING CONCEPT REVISITED. FROM OPERATIONAL MARKETING TO INTEGRATED MARKETING MANAGEMENT

Rafał MATWIEJCZUK

University of Opole, Institute of Economics and Finance, Chair of Logistics and Strategic Management;
rmatwiejczuk@uni.opole.pl, ORCID: 0000-0001-8638-3273

Purpose: The aim of the article is to identify the most important premises and circumstances concerning the transformation of the marketing concept from operational marketing functions and tasks towards the integrated marketing management process.

Design/methodology/approach: The article presents the “road” from marketing functions and tasks related to the operational marketing level towards the integrated marketing management process. A literature review and an identification approach were used.

Findings: Marketing is a very significant tool for building the firm success, firm competitive advantage, firm competitive position as well as firm market success. The contemporary marketing concept is a crucial tool in transformation from operational marketing functions and tasks toward the integrated marketing management process.

Practical implications: The marketing concept is of a great importance both in business practice and firm management. To effectively and efficiently implement the marketing concept in contemporary business management, it is necessary to define the premises and circumstances for the transformation from operational marketing functions and tasks toward the integrated marketing management process.

Originality/value: The most important characteristics concerning the marketing management scope and process were presented. The article is addressed both to researchers as well as managers and other business practitioners.

Keywords: marketing, marketing concept, marketing management.

Category of the paper: Conceptual paper.

1. Introduction

The role of marketing in broadly defined business as well as in firm management is still growing. Marketing, and especially marketing concept is a very significant tool for building the firm success, firm competitive advantage, firm competitive position as well as firm market success.

In the process of firm success and firm competitive advantage building, the concept of marketing is particularly important. This concept represents a decision-making model that encompasses the following components: (1) strategic analysis, (2) marketing goals, (3) marketing strategies, and (4) marketing tools.

In recent years there has been a growing importance of the managerial and strategic aspects of marketing, concerning the perception of marketing as a factor strongly influencing the effectiveness and efficiency of business management as well as the shaping, forming and development of business models (Matwiejczuk, 2006; Mruk, Pilarczyk, Szulce, 2007; Kotler, Keller, 2022). The contemporary concept of marketing is a crucial tool in the process of transformation from operational marketing functions and tasks toward the integrated marketing management process (Rosa, Perenc, Ostrowska, 2016; Matwiejczuk, 2025).

The aim of the article is to identify the most important premises and circumstances concerning the transformation of the marketing concept from operational marketing functions and tasks towards the integrated marketing management process. The article presents in particular: (1) the most significant marketing functions and tasks related to the operational marketing level, (2) strategic marketing functions which are the basis for the marketing concept development and (3) the scope and the structure of the integrated marketing management process.

2. Operational marketing – the most significant marketing functions and tasks

Marketing was initially one of the most general functions of a firm. However, even then, it was a highly diversified firm activity. It encompassed many specific functions that defined relatively homogeneous types (subsets) of the marketing activities of a firm (Niestrój, 1996).

Effective and efficient implementation of the marketing concept within the market activities of the firms involves, among other things, performing a number of diverse functions and tasks aimed at meeting the needs and wants of customers.

Marketing functions of a firm may be defined as a set of actions and activities undertaken in the process of marketing activities to ensure that the firm market offer (products and services offer) meets customer expectations (Pindakiewicz, 1995).

Marketing functions stem from specific principles (rules) adopted for the effective and efficient implementation of the marketing concept in a firm (Kramer, 2004). While marketing functions constitute a set of the firm actions and activities, specific marketing tasks constitute individual actions and/or activities leading to the achievement of the marketing goals. The general hierarchy and structure of the firm marketing functions and tasks presents table 1.

Table 1.

General hierarchy and structure of the firm marketing functions and tasks

Criteria for marketing functions and tasks hierarchy and structure	Marketing functions	Marketing tasks
Marketing functions concerning market information collecting	Analysis of the global environment of a firm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Continuous tracking (monitoring) of the processes and activities occurring in the environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) macroeconomic, b) demographic, c) natural, d) technological, e) political, f) cultural, g) legal.
	Customer preferences research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Identification of the customer needs and wants, as well as prediction of their future development. – Identification of the opportunities to create and maintain long-term relationships with customers. – Data collection and analysis allowing the market segmentation, target market selection as well as product and service market positioning. – Determining the sensitivity and potential reaction of customers for the use of various marketing tools.
	Analysis of the firm capacities compared to the capacities of the other firms / competitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Collecting information concerning the competitors' strategies, their future plans and intentions. – Collecting information concerning the processes and activities conducted by intermediaries (suppliers, wholesalers, retailers, etc.). – Assessing the market position as well as competitive advantage (its sources, types, size, sustainability). – Assessing the resources as well as the capabilities concerning resources use in relation to competitors. – Assessing the possibility of using benchmarking.

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Marketing functions concerning goods turnover	Support of the purchase and sales processes (transactions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Supporting the processes of transferring goods from the manufacturer to the customer (supporting physical distribution). – Supporting the processes of transferring raw materials and materials from suppliers to the manufacturer (supporting physical procurement). – Analysis and formation of the flow of goods (supply and distribution channels).
	Integration of marketing activities with logistics activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Development of the customer service assumptions (standards) and their implementation. – Integration of marketing-mix and logistics-mix components. – Implementation of the “7R” logistics principle.
Marketing functions concerning business management	Marketing as a management concept comprising planning, organizing, implementing and controlling of the processes and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Strategic analysis, diagnosis, and forecast of the marketing business situations. – Strategic marketing goals identification. – Marketing strategies identification and development. – Operational marketing goals identification. – Marketing-mix selection. – Marketing organization of within the firm. – Marketing process and activities implementation and controlling.
Marketing functions concerning social area	Firm cooperation with the firm environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Cooperation between the firm and its customers. – Cooperation between the firm and other firms (competitors, collaborators, market partners). – Cooperation between the firm and intermediaries. – Cooperation between the firm and the other entities in the global environment. – Offering safe, ethical, and useful goods, services, and ideas.
	Forming and shaping the interpersonal relations within the firm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Collaboration among marketing department employees. – Collaboration between marketing department employees and the other departments employees as well as the firm top management employees.
Marketing functions concerning scientific area	Building marketing theory based on pragmatic experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Tasks in the field of the “transformation” of the practical experiences and their outcomes into the marketing theory.

Source: Matwiejczuk, 2006, pp. 7-8.

Individual and specific marketing functions and tasks primarily support the firm market day-by-day operations. These functions and tasks often are the organizational routines that pertain to the execution of ongoing processes and activities.

At the same time, some of the above-mentioned marketing functions and tasks are of the particular importance in the process of forming and shaping the marketing concept, which is the basis for the development of the strategic aspects of marketing and, as a result, the integrated marketing management concept and process.

3. Strategic marketing functions as the basis for the marketing concept development

Taking into account the considerations and comments presented in the previous chapter, two groups of marketing functions play a key (strategic) role within the process of the marketing concept and – as a result – integrated marketing management development (Matwiejczuk, 2006):

- 1) Marketing functions and tasks concerning business management.
- 2) Marketing functions and tasks concerning goods turnover.

Marketing functions and tasks concerning business management are associated with the permanent development and enrichment of the marketing's achievements, reflected in its increasing importance as a management function. Therefore, the contemporary marketing at the strategic level is perceived as a market-oriented management concept (Przybyłowski, Hartley, Kerin, Rudelius, 1998; Matwiejczuk, 2006; Czubała, Niestrój, Pabian, 2020).

In turn, marketing functions and tasks concerning goods turnover are one of the most important platforms of the integration between marketing as market-oriented management and logistics as flow-oriented management. Such an integration is reflected in the concept of the integrated marketing-logistics management, within which a special role is assigned to so-called marketing logistics (Matwiejczuk, 2006; Blaik, Bruska, Kauf, Matwiejczuk, 2013).

Marketing concept – in general – is a decision-making model comprising four levels (Becker, 1983; Sławińska, Urbanowska-Sojkin, 1997): (1) strategic analysis, (2) marketing goals, (3) marketing strategies, and (4) marketing tools (figure 1).



Figure 1. The marketing concept.

Source: Matwiejczuk, 2006, p. 3.

The concept of marketing has had a large number of studies, concerning the classic approach to marketing, which include first of all marketing-mix concept and components (Kotler, 1994; Przybyłowski, Hartley, Kerin, Rudelius, 1998; Lambin, 2001; Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders, Wong, 2002; Matwiejczuk, 2025). In several recent years one may notice an increasing significance of the strategic aspects of the marketing concept, concerning the perception of marketing as a factor strongly affecting business management performance as well as the formation and development of business models (Hutt, Speh, 1997; Garbarski, Rutkowski, Wrzosek, 1998; Matwiejczuk, 2006; Kotler, Keller, 2022).

A properly and comprehensively defined marketing concept, encompassing marketing goals integrated with the entire firm goals, marketing strategies being the integral part of the entire firm strategy and the marketing-mix components within the structure of the entire firm management tools, constitutes the basis for forming, shaping and developing the integrated marketing management of a firm.

4. From marketing concept towards the integrated marketing management process

Considering the forming, shaping and development of the marketing concept, the terms “marketing” and “marketing management” are often used interchangeably. Distinguishing between these two terms is primarily cognitive and didactical (Altkorn, 1995; Niestrój, 1996).

In this context, the term “marketing” encompasses all general knowledge about the principles, methods, and techniques of decision-making as well as actions and activities within the area of a firm relations with its actual and potential customers. Considering the subject as well as tools of marketing activities, within “marketing theory” the following areas can be distinguished (Altkorn, 1995; Niestrój, 1996):

- 1) Consumer behavior theory.
- 2) Marketing research.
- 3) Market segmentation and targeting.
- 4) Product and assortment formation and development.
- 5) Price policy.
- 6) Distribution.
- 7) Promotion.

In turn, the term “marketing management” requires the ordering of the individual issues according to the criteria of scope and sequence of the processes and activities that make up the formation and development of the overall concept of the firm market activities and its implementation in appropriately formed organizational structures and with appropriate use of the management and control systems (Altkorn, 1995; Niestrój, 1996).

The scope of the marketing management process presents the figure 2.

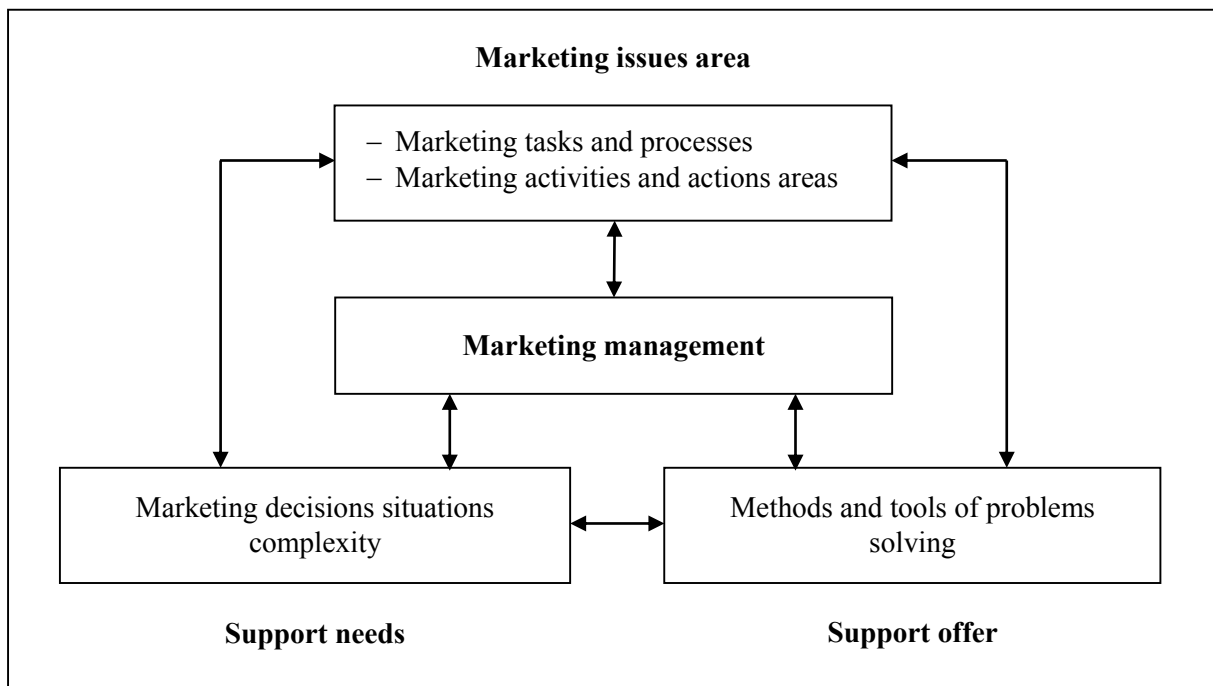


Figure 2. The scope of the marketing management process.

Source: Based on Matwiejczuk, 2006, pp. 9-10.

The starting point in defining (forming and shaping) the scope of the marketing management process is the identification and characterization of the marketing issues area. These problems concern, in particular: (1) marketing tasks and processes, and (2) marketing activities and actions areas.

In turn, the complexity of marketing decision-making situations refers to two basic dimensions of the decisions made: (1) the strategic dimension and (2) the operational dimension.

The strategic dimension concerns in particular:

- 1) Strategic analysis, diagnosis and forecasting of the firm's marketing situations, related to both its current and future market position.
- 2) Defining strategic marketing goals and their systemic integration into the structure of the entire firm's goals.
- 3) Shaping (forming) and developing marketing strategies, integrated both with the entire strategy of the firm as well as the product-market strategies of individual business units.

Operational decisions and actions expand upon and further detail strategic decisions and actions. These are particularly related to the processes and activities implemented within the marketing- mix, i.e., the tools (instruments) encompassing: (1) product, (2) price, (3) place (distribution), and (4) promotion, enabling the firm to actively influence the market through the development and implementation of the marketing programs.

The scope of the marketing management process describes how the marketing concept is transformed into the integrated marketing management process. This process encompasses the subsequent steps that determine the sequence of marketing activities (processes and actions) implemented by the firm, based on the assumptions of the marketing concept (figure 3).

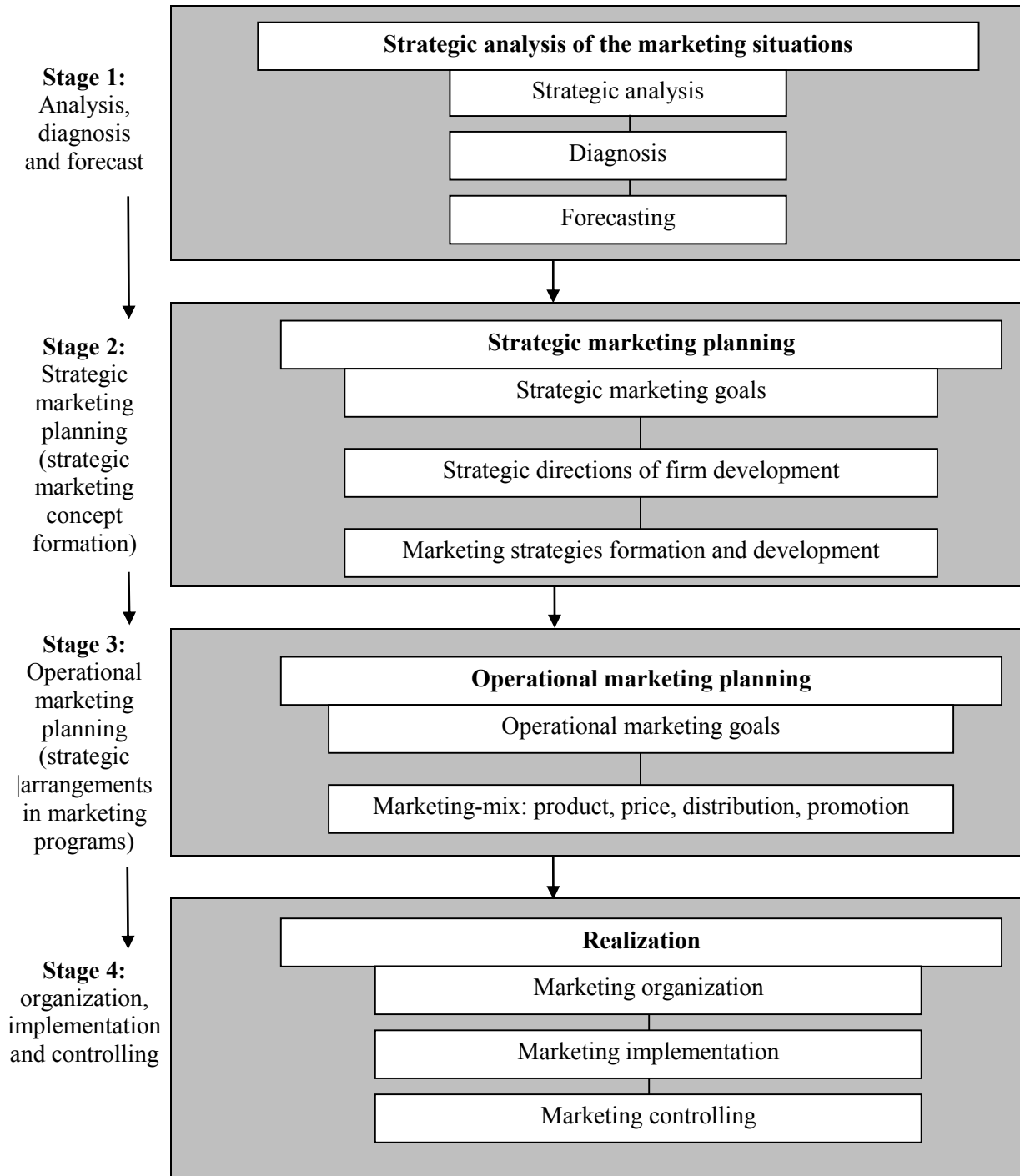


Figure 3. The integrated marketing management process.

Source: Own work.

The first stage of the integrated marketing management process, i.e. the strategic analysis of marketing situations, actually performs both analytical and diagnostic functions as well as prognostic ones.

Considering the scope of the strategic analysis, it covers the following areas (Niestrój, 1996; Romanowska, 2004; Matwiejczuk, 2006):

- 1) Analysis of the firm, including analysis of the tangible, intangible, financial and human resources, as well as analysis of the firm capabilities, competences and knowledge.
- 2) Market analysis (including analysis of customer needs, preferences, expectations and behavior), competition analysis, as well as analysis of suppliers (supply / purchase) and trade intermediaries and sellers (distribution / sales / marketing).
- 3) Analysis of the environment, including in particular the macroeconomic, demographic, natural, technological, political, cultural and legal environment.

The second stage of the integrated marketing management process, i.e., strategic marketing planning, is primarily related to forming and developing the strategic marketing concept within the firm. Strategic marketing planning encompasses a set of activities (processes and actions) leading to the development of the strategic concept for the firm marketing activities, including in particular: (1) defining strategic marketing goals, (2) forming strategic directions for the firm development, and (3) formulating and developing of marketing strategies (Niestrój, 1996; Lambin, 2001).

The third stage of the integrated marketing management process, i.e. operational marketing planning, is primarily concerned with the specification of strategic arrangements in marketing plans and programs. The starting point of operational marketing planning is the specification of the previously adopted strategic assumptions and goals. In particular, such a specification involves specifying the marketing goals that the firm intends to achieve within its market activities. This requires the decomposition of the strategic goals into the operational objectives, also referred to as partial or short-term objectives (Niestrój, 1996; Lambin, 2001). Operational objectives determine the final composition of the marketing-mix components comprising product, price, place (distribution), and promotion, constituting a set of tools enabling the firm to actively affect and influence the market.

Finally, the fourth stage of the integrated marketing management process, i.e. the realization phase, includes three main components:

- 1) Marketing organization.
- 2) Marketing implementation.
- 3) Marketing controlling.

The integrated marketing management process allows not only for the effective and efficient implementation of the marketing concept in the firm market activities, but also for achieving several strategic and operational marketing goals related to building the firm success, building and maintaining the firm competitive advantage, as well as achieving and maintaining the firm intended market and competitive position.

5. Conclusion

As it was presented in this article, the role of marketing both in business as well as in firm management is growing since many last days. Marketing, and especially marketing concept which comprises strategic analysis, marketing goals, marketing strategies, and marketing tools, plays a crucial role in building firm success, its competitive advantage, competitive position as well as its market success.

The aim of the article was to identify the most important premises and circumstances concerning the transformation of the marketing concept from operational marketing functions and tasks towards the integrated marketing management process. The most important stages within this transformation comprise the identification of: (1) the most significant marketing functions and tasks related to the operational marketing level, (2) strategic marketing functions which are the basis for the marketing concept development and (3) the scope and the structure of the integrated marketing management process.

The most significant directions for further research include, first of all, an increasingly deeper embedding of marketing, especially the concept of marketing, within the market orientation, as well as a stronger connection between strategic aspects of marketing and broadly understood strategic business management.

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