



SKIVRE Training Module 2:

MARKETING STRATEGIES

Marketing Mix. Marketing Instruments.
Marketing Communication. SWOT Analysis

Authors:

Wolfgang Eisenreich

Angela Ivanova

Wolfgang Kniejski

Institutions:

WIN -

**Wissenschaftsinitiative
Niederösterreich,
Austria**

INI-Novation Bulgaria

OOD



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This training module is a part of SKIVRE training scheme containing 10 learning modules in total, which has been developed within the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership **SKIVRE - Skills Development for the Valorisation of European Religious Heritage**.

In SKIVRE a team of 6 European institutions – all linked to religious heritage preservation - developed a training scheme for manufacturing and marketing of high-quality handcrafted products of European monasteries. The training contents at a glance:

SKIVRE Training Scheme
Module 1: Introduction Module
Module 2: Marketing Strategies
Module 3: Monastic Products
Module 4: How to Sell Monastic Products Authentically
Module 5: Distribution Channels
Module 6: Social Media and Communication
Module 7: Value Adding Through Networks
Module 8: Creating a Strong Brand
Module 9: Financing Strategies
Module 10: Aspects of Sustainability

You can find more information at the homepage: www.skivre.eu

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About the module

Training description

In this module you will learn about marketing and why it is important for monasteries that produce their own products and feel the necessity to become more informed and knowledgeable about the various instruments and methods used in marketing activities. You will learn about marketing instruments in the so-called “Marketing Mix”, about marketing strategies and about strategy development for your products. The “Marketing Mix” will describe the various types of decisions to be made about product strategies, product pricing and product distribution. Finally, you will also learn and understand the role of communications in the marketing process.

In a society where trends and developments influence each other rapidly, it becomes increasingly important to develop your own strategies and positioning in order to be prepared for the future.

Objectives of this training module

This module gives an overview about those marketing instruments which comply with the specific requirements of monastic production and sales of monastic products. It shows which marketing strategies should be employed and which should be avoided. However, you may dive deeper into selected element of your marketing strategies by looking into the other related modules within this **SKIVRE** programme.

Target groups

This training module is designed to fit the training needs of the monks and nuns, management, staff and volunteers at European monasteries, no matter if they are run by Catholic or Protestant Orders or the Orthodox Church; by public or private operators.

All Modules are relevant for all target groups, but some have a more specific character. They are all interrelated. They are different in terms of information, skills and competences level and target three groups:

- Target group 1: For people working on the implementation level like those in monastery shops three Modules are recommended: Module 1 as introduction to the training, Modules 3 and 4 about monastic products and authentic selling of monastic products. People starting to consider certain strategic aspects might get inspiration from Module 7 on value adding through networking.

- Target group 2: For people with a special knowledge or experiences or a certain background and/or specified tasks in the monastic management Modules 2 on marketing strategies, Module 5 on distribution strategies, Module 8 on creating a strong brand, and Module 6 on social media and communication offer learning content and reflection.
- Target group 3: People on a strategy decision level with a highly specialized / experienced background and respective responsibilities in a monastery (Modules 9 on financing strategies and Module 10 on sustainability aspects).

Gained knowledge and skills after finishing this module

After studying this module, you will:

- Achieve an overview of the different key elements of the Marketing Mix;
- Know the various focus points for strategic marketing and the SWOT analysis;
- Understand the four components of a marketing mix: product, place, price and promotion;
- Know which types of strategic analysis are most suitable for your business;
- Be introduced into strategic thinking; and
- Understand the basic principles of communication for marketing.

Training method

SKIVRE focuses on an interactive training approach, whether you use it as a self-learning course or instructed by a trainer. This training module includes:

- Individualized self-learning - a powerful learning method that enables each learner, on the basis of his/her own experience and knowledge, and on the basis of newly acquired knowledge, to reach development decisions on his/her own;
- Self-assessment - ongoing self-assessment tests or homework that learners send to their trainer prior to the commencement of each subsequent module;
- You might also work in small groups of 2 or 3, e.g. if you decide to implement this module with colleagues as a self-learning group in your monastery or supported by an external trainer.

You gain knowledge individually or in a group using:

- Training materials like this module;

- Training materials in nine more SKIVRE training modules which are closely linked to this module;
- The interactive SKIVRE online training platform: www.skivre.eu/training;
- Facilitated training sessions for learning in a group with a professional trainer.

Training content



Unit 1. Elements of the Marketing Mix

The term “Marketing Mix” is a general expression used to describe the various types of marketing decisions, which need to be taken to bring your product or service to the target market. The marketing mix is also known as the “4Ps” (product – price – place – promotion); presumably the best-known way of characterizing the marketing mix¹.

The correct arrangement of marketing mix (see further elaboration of the 4Ps in Unit 1) by monasteries’ decision makers plays an important role in the success of the marketing activities²:

1. Develop strengths and avoid weaknesses (see details on SWOT analysis in Unit 2);
2. Strengthen the competitiveness and adaptability; and
3. Make the internal and external environment of the monastery work closely together (see details in marketing communication in Unit 3).

1.1. Introduction to Marketing and Marketing Mix

The marketer and academic Edmund Jerome McCarthy proposed the original marketing mix as a framework for marketing decision making. It can be outlined as follows³:

Category	Definition/Explanation	Typical Marketing Decisions
Product	<p>A product refers to an item that satisfies the consumer's needs or wants.</p> <p>Products may be tangible (goods) or intangible (services, ideas or experiences)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Product Design – features, quality ■ Product assortment – product range, product mix, product lines ■ Branding ■ Packaging and labeling ■ Services (complementary service, after-sales service, service level) ■ Guarantees ■ Returns

¹ Kotler, P., Marketing Management, (Millennium Edition), Custom Edition for University of Phoenix, Prentice Hall, 2000, p. 9

² Mintz, Ofer; Currim, Imran (2013). "What Drives Managerial Use of Marketing and Financial Metrics and Does Metric Use Affect Performance of Marketing-Mix Activities?". Journal of Marketing 77

³ McCarthy, Jerome E. (1964), Basic Marketing. A Managerial Approach, Homewood, IL, USA:

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing products through the life-cycle
<p><i>Product strategies are explained in Subunit 1 of this module as well as in Module 3 “Monastic Products”, in Module 4 “How to Sell Monastic Products Authentically”, and in Module 8 “Creating a Strong Brand”.</i></p>		
Category	Definition/Explanation	Typical Marketing Decisions
Price	<p>Price refers to the amount a customer pays for a product.</p> <p>Price may also refer to the sacrifice consumers are prepared to make to acquire a product (e.g. time or effort).</p> <p>Price is the only variable that has implications for revenue.</p> <p>Price also includes considerations of customer perceived value.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Price strategy Price tactics Price-setting Allowances – e.g. rebates for distributors Discounts – for customers Payment terms – credit, payment methods
<p><i>Pricing strategies are explained in Subunit 2 of this module.</i></p>		
Place	<p>Refers to providing customer access.</p> <p>Considers aspects of distribution.</p> <p>Considers providing convenience for consumer.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategies such as intensive distribution, selective distribution, or exclusive distribution Market coverage Supply chain member selection and relationships Assortment Location decisions Inventory Transport, warehousing and logistics
<p><i>Distribution strategies are explained in Subunit 3 of this module as well as in Module 5 “Distribution Channels” and in Module 7 “Value Adding Through Networks”.</i></p>		

Category	Definition/Explanation	Typical Marketing Decisions
Promotion	<p>Promotion refers to marketing communications.</p> <p>Promotion may comprise elements such as: public relations (PR) such as articles and organizing events, advertising, direct marketing and sales promotion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Promotional mix - appropriate balance of advertising, PR, direct marketing and sales promotion ■ Message strategy - what is to be communicated ■ Channel/ media strategy - how to reach the target audience ■ Message frequency - how often to communicate
<p><i>Promotion strategies are explained in Subunit 4 of this module as well as in Module 6 “Social Media and Communication” and in Module 8 “Creating a Strong Brand”.</i></p>		

Table 1. Introduction to Marketing

■ Marketing Mix

Marketing mix refers to determining which elements of the product are necessary for successful selling. You need to do extensive customer research in building a good marketing mix. Knowing your competitors and your target market will give you an idea about coming up with a product that appeals to customers. You must know your product strategy, as well as your pricing strategy, distribution strategy and also promotion strategy to fully develop a deep understanding and ensuring maximum success.

In summary, [marketing](#) is simplistically stated ‘putting the right product in the right place, at the right price, at the right time.’ It sounds like an easy proposition. However, if even one element of the marketing mix is not considered thoroughly enough, a promising product can fail completely and end up costing the monastery substantially. The use of a marketing mix is crucial to help understanding what the product or service can offer and how to plan for a successful product offering, commonly executed through the 4Ps as detailed below.

1.2. Product

Usually, the monastic product is tangible, although it can also be understood as something non-material, e.g. a concert. This “product” should meet the customers’ specific expectations and needs. Products usually follow a natural lifecycle and that’s why you should strive to understand and plan for each stage accordingly - **identify what needs** the product is expected to satisfy, **understand the benefits** that you product provide according to your customers, as well as **the features of the product** itself – quality, storage, etc.

For a product or a service to be successful, it has to meet and satisfy a specific need and it should be able to function as promised. The features and benefits of the product or service should be clearly communicated to your current and potential customers.

Another vital feature of a product is branding, because this is what differentiates it from other similar products in the market - please see information in detail in Module 8 “Creating a Strong Brand”. It also creates customers’ recall and loyalty. These factors ultimately affect your product strategy.

■ Product Mix

The product mix is your portfolio of monastic products. Within this portfolio are products that can be linked closely together to form product lines. Products, in a product line, share characteristics or offer similar benefits, although they are individual items that have different appearances and functions. Each item has three major factors you need to focus on – **branding, packaging, and services**.

■ Product benefits

Understanding benefits is a core part in a product strategy. A product’s benefit can be categorized in the following three levels:

■ Core:

This is the main benefit of the product and should be the first to be defined. For example, a souvenir in a museum’s shop can be used to capture memories that will last a lifetime.

■ Actual:

These are benefits that differentiate the product from the competition. For the souvenir example, it could be additional benefits beyond being only a “nice item”, e.g. because it includes a practical feature, such as a timer.

■ Augmented:

These are the benefits that you can offer to your customers to earn their loyalty. Examples are, for instance, follow-up activities.

■ Product Decisions

Product decisions come after understanding the product mix and defining the product benefits.

Product decisions should consider:

- **Design:**
You need to decide how the design will affect your product mix. Should it complement the product's features? Or should the features be designed around it?
- **Quality:**
Understanding the target customer is vital for this decision. You can assign a high price to a high quality product but not every customer may be able to afford it.
- **Features:**
You need to come up with the final set of the product's features. If it adds to the actual and perceived benefits, you can price it higher.

You can find more information in the SKIVRE Training Module 4 (How to Sell Monastic Products Authentically) and Module 8 (Creating a Strong Brand).

1.3. Price

This refers to what you expect the customers to pay for your products. The pricing can have either a positive or negative impact on its sale. This depends more on how your customer perceives the value of this product than on the actual value of the product itself. If a product has a higher or a lower price than the perceived value, it might not sell as expected. Therefore, it is important to understand what your customer perceives before you decide to price a product. If the customer's perception is positive, it is likely that the product will even go for a higher price than its actual value. On the other hand, if the product has very little or no value for the customer, it might be beneficial to under-price the product just to make some sales.

Price is the amount of money that your customers have to pay in exchange for your product or service. Determining the right price for your product can be a bit tricky. A tempting strategy could be to create a bargain pricing impression by pricing your product lower than your competitors. Although this may boost your initial sales, a low price usually equates to low quality and this may not be what specifically culturally interested visitors in your monastery and customers should see in your product.

Therefore, your pricing strategy should reflect your product's positioning in the market and the resulting price should cover the cost per item and your profit margin. This amount should not appear to show your business as timid or greedy. Low pricing hinders your business' growth while too high pricing kicks you out of the competition.

1.4. Placement (Distribution)

Placement (Distribution) refers to how the product will be made available to your customers. A suitable placement strategy will assess the best and most suitable distribution channel for the product.

Place refers to distribution or to the methods and location you use for your monastic products or services to become easily accessible to the target customers. The type of your product or service dictates how it can be distributed.

In this subunit the most common distribution channels are addressed. A more detailed elaboration on possible distribution scenarios and strategies can be found in Module 5 “Distribution Channels”.

■ **Selling directly – there is more than one way**

Direct selling is certainly the most frequently used method in all monasteries. One advantage of selling your products directly is that you get a more personal feeling for the market because you interact directly with the customers; and you can easily adapt to changes. Another advantage is that you control your product’s pricing and the methods how it should be sold.

The most important distribution method for direct selling is selling on-site (“outbound sales”), but you should seriously think to include also e-commerce (“inbound sales”).

■ **Selling through a reseller**

If you want to have a wider distribution of your product, you can sell it through a third party, who will then resell your product or service. However, there are several other possibilities. Imagine some of the following strategies:

- Some of your products are also available in the hotels, restaurants, grocery stores and shops in your region.
- Your handicraft products are also available in the museum shop.

Successful businesses through resellers requires a dense collaboration network. More details about how to build, to operate and to maintain such a network can be found in Module 7 “Value Adding Through Networks”.

1.5. Promotion

This subunit refers to the marketing strategies and communication techniques used to advertise your product to the targeted customers. Promotion includes activities like special offers, advertising, public relations and also sales promotions. Any promotional channel used should always be adequate for your monastic product, for your customer and also for the price. Remember, marketing is different from promotion because promotion only concerns the communication aspect of marketing.

Promotion is the part of marketing where you advertise and market your product or service. It is also known as promotional strategy. Through this strategy, potential customers get familiar with what you are selling. In order to convince them to buy your product or service, you need to explain what it is, and why they should buy it. Promoting makes your customers feel that their needs can be satisfied by what you are offering to them!

An effective promotional effort contains a clear message that is targeted to a certain audience and is done through appropriate channels. The target customers are people who will use your product or service. Identifying these people is an important part of your market research. The marketing image that you are trying to convey to them must match with your advertisement's message. It should catch your target customers' attention and either convince them to buy or at least state their opinion about the product. The promotional method you choose in order to convey your message to the target customers may probably involve more than one marketing channel.

■ Advertising

Advertising is a key promotional strategy and can be done through the following:

■ Printed materials and newspapers:

Print advertisements can be distributed via direct mail or print media which include newspapers, flyers, trade and consumer magazines. You can also send letters, fact sheets, brochures, and coupons to current or potential customers across the whole country. Print advertisements let people know what, where, when, and why they should buy your product.

■ Electronic media:

You will certainly advertise electronically through your website and provide important and relevant information to visitors and customers. You can also send advertisements via direct e-mail as part of your promotional strategy. You will find more about how to use electronic

communication and especially social media in the Module 6 “Social Media and Communication”.

- **Word of mouth**

They say the best advertisers are satisfied customers and the reverse can also be said. When customers like or dislike your products, they tell other people about it.

- **Public Relations or PR**

Public relations is usually focused on building a favourable image of your organisation. You can do this by doing something good for the community like holding an open house or being involved in cultural community activities. You can engage the local media and hold press conferences as part of your promotional strategy.

The proliferation of the Internet has given birth to other promotional channels that were not available before. E-commerce has also changed the way companies and customers do business. Social networking sites like Facebook reach a very wide audience and putting up advertisements through them may lead to more customers.

You will find more about how to use electronic communication and especially social media in Module 6 “Social Media and Communication”.

Tags for Unit 1

Marketing strategy, marketing mix, product, price, placement, promotion, distribution, branding

Unit 2. Marketing Strategy

The main task of strategic marketing is to adapt your current situation to the expected development and to your intended objectives.

Strategies are long-term decisions or specifications that determine the framework of your organization's policy, usually with a time frame of five to ten years. Such strategies can be compared with a guiding roadmap helpful for the daily management of your monastic enterprise, leaving space for short term tactical manoeuvres.

The marketing strategies are large scale and they determine structures, whereas short term marketing planning is tactical marketing and covers a time frame of approximately one year. It refers to certain defined measures and details.

2.1 Strategic management leads to acting instead of reacting!

The main task of strategic marketing is to adapt your current situation to the final goal and the intended objectives of your production and sales activities. Such strategies can be compared with a guiding roadmap helpful for the daily management of your monastic enterprise, leaving space for short term tactical manoeuvres.

Strategies are long-term decisions or specifications that determine the framework of your organization's policy, usually with a time frame of five to ten years. They are large scale and they determine structures, whereas short term marketing planning is tactic marketing and covers a time frame of approximately one year. It refers to certain defined measures and details.

Neither short nor long term marketing is completely rigid and irreversible; it must be constantly checked for success and adapted to the respective market development. As rapidly as consumers' tastes change, so must marketing strategies.

2.2 Basic Characteristics of Strategic Thinking

Strategic thinking and acting is a combination of applied knowledge of marketing management know-how. In addition, **logical thinking** should be applied as well by following logical conclusions from market analysis. If you apply some **creativity** by developing the right ways for the future and by coordinating them accordingly, you will build a very good base for your marketing strategy.

The basic characteristics of strategic thinking are:

- **Visionary thinking** to recognize future possibilities;
- **Differentiation thinking** to be different from the competition, to search for uniqueness, to head for innovation instead of imitation;
- **Advantage thinking** to search for competitive advantages;
- **Directional thinking** to search for options for the future, to identify alternative ways how to reach the goal;
- **Potential thinking** to recognize and understand influence factors.

The basic strategic task is to recognize and develop these strategic building blocks for your products and services.

2.3 Methods for Strategic Analysis

Depending on the type of your monastic business, you may employ various types of analysis. In this unit, we will present the most useful methods for strategic analysis that will help to understand the internal and external starting point and the development possibilities.

■ SWOT Analysis

The SWOT Analysis is a frequently used planning tool that investigates a context by examining the **strengths (S)**, **weaknesses (W)**, **opportunities (O)** and **threats (T)**. The analysis assesses challenges and opportunities by both **internal** and **external** factors, as summarised by the following image⁴:

⁴ The original image can be found in: Sam Thatte, Presentation Design

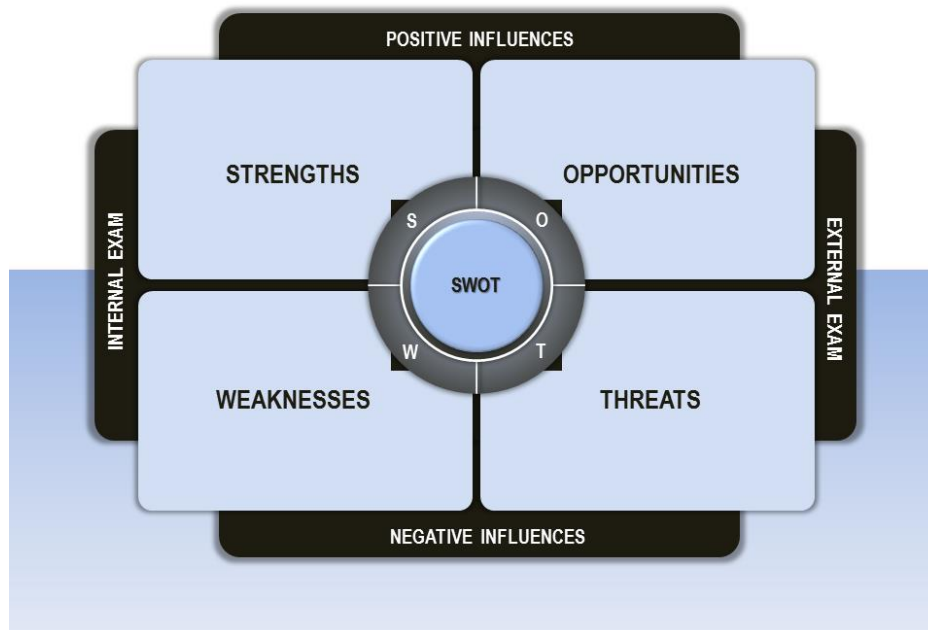


Figure 1. SWOT Analysis

■ **Strengths:**

What advantages do our monastic products have? What benefits do they provide for the users?

Examples: Unique features in terms of culture or ecology, history, environment, built infrastructure, quality, community support, diversity of products, name recognition, human resources, accessibility, support.

■ **Weaknesses:**

What might account for losing users of our monastic products, or for losing an opportunity to produce with a better quality?

Examples: The quality of the monastic products which are not acceptable to users include unattractive packaging, restrictive shop opening hours. There are not enough monks, or local people to work in the monastery, there are no clearly defined production or quality rules under which local people can work for the monastery, etc.

■ **Opportunities:**

Which trends, external to the monastery, benefit the production process in the monastery?

Example: Increasing health awareness (related to ecological products), trends in buying environmentally clean products, certain laws or rules that enable the monasteries to produce and sell monastic products, certain support by the Church, national or local authorities; existing support by local people, etc.

■ **Threats:**

Which trends or external conditions hurt the production and selling processes, or even prevent them?

Examples: there are no workers, there is no support by the church or by the authorities of the country, economic recession, changing tastes and preferences of users, etc.

Important: the strengths and opportunities should outweigh the threats and weaknesses. If they don't, there is something wrong!

When you prepare your SWOT analysis, be aware that the Strengths and Weaknesses are internal to the monastery, therefore, the monastery has influence and control over them with its activities. The Opportunities and the Threats are always external to the monastic environment, connected with laws, environment, trends and tendencies over which the monastery has no influence and cannot control.

The SWOT analysis, if used correctly, can direct attention and reflection toward aspects of the context that may have been overlooked or underappreciated. The results can become substantial raw material for further development and marketing of the monastic products.

■ **Situation analysis**

Next, you should identify the strengths and weaknesses of your monastic business. An effective marketing is constantly taking inventory of its strengths and weaknesses.

The key techniques which you can use for completing the situation analysis are: **Product (product development) analysis; Competitive analysis; Customer (users) analysis**. You can find short explanations about them below:

- **Product (Product development) analysis** - a product analysis is a careful assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of your products, ideally based on inputs from a variety of sources within and outside the destination;

- **Competitive analysis** - a competitive analysis is an element in the marketing of monastic products. Most competitors vary by target markets and therefore it is best if you divide the competitive analysis in that way;
- **Customer analysis** - you should have a good perception of your competitors, but the best source are your customers themselves. Asking them in surveys to pinpoint other providers that they considered for their purchase is one way to tackle this. Another option is to use a focus group approach in which past or potential consumers reach a consensus on the closest competitors. Be creative in order to find out what kind of experiences your consumers had with competing providers – you might also find out that a competitor could be a partner on a certain topic! From time to time, i.e. every two to three years, you should undertake a customer analysis. The categories of information which this analysis should provide include
 - Demographic and socio-economic characteristics;
 - Previous visit patterns;
 - Revisit intentions (probability of a return visit);
 - Attraction usage and awareness;
 - Travel information sources;
 - Media usage (TV; newspapers; magazines; Internet and social media, etc.);
 - Likes and dislikes;
 - Suggested improvements to the products;
 - Suggestions for related products.

You can find more information about product development in SKIVRE Training Module 3 (Monastic Products) and Module 6 (Social Media and Communication).

2.4 Strategy Development

In the light of all diverse marketing requirements for monastic products, you will most certainly need an integrated approach when you develop your marketing strategy. Actually, you need to consider – and develop - several types of strategies: **Development strategies; Competition strategies; Customer strategies.**

The result of these strategic possibilities is your **strategy mix**.

Some producers perform undifferentiated marketing; they address the entire market without knowing whom they could reach with their strategy and how. They want to reach with one or a low number of products as many costumers as possible. Such mass marketing is not suitable for monasteries as their products are only a fraction of their existence. Mass marketing is an absolute “no go” and the market would punish you heavily if you try.

Therefore, you should opt for selective or differentiated marketing. With this approach, you will have the advantage of being really competent in your market, you will be able to develop unique selling points; and competitors will have a more difficult access to this market.

■ Development strategies

Many people fear that strategic operations mean to make everything “new and different”. However, most strategies build upon existing offers and aim at securing a position in the market in the future. Several possibilities exist:

- Growth strategy: depends on your resources and is often limited by existing infrastructure and by ecological or social boundaries;
- Stabilisation strategy: Because of the aforementioned limitations, it is often important to think of maintaining the same volume, but to think of qualitative growth instead;
- Shrinkage strategy: This need not be a sign of defence or crisis. A supply shortage may lead to higher prices and thus to better economic results.

Another development strategy is the timing strategy: It makes a big difference if you are a pioneer and the first in the market or if you enter a market after it has been accepted by customers.

■ Competitive strategies

Here you look at your own market position vis-à-vis your competitors. Depending on the situation, you might decide to go for more aggressive or for more cooperative strategies, depending on whether you plan to enlarge your market share or to defend it.

In aggressive strategies you will use your own strengths. This may concern:

- Quality leadership: you use your success position or USP as an asset;
- Cost leadership: if you have cost advantages over your competitor, then you could employ aggressive pricing strategies, but this not a qualified option for monasteries.

You can also opt for a niche strategy through specialisation where you try to obtain price advantages.

In some cases, monasteries prefer a co-operative strategy: Several monasteries try to build the market together. They enter into co-operation, networks and strategic alliances and achieve cost advantages in joint purchase and advertising.

■ Customer strategies

These strategies deal with market segmentation according to target groups. Segmentation criteria can be put together using various criteria, e.g.:

- Socio-demographic segmentation;
- Segmentation according to travel styles;
- Psychographic segmentation.

These groups have implications in terms of preference for certain products and predisposition to spend money.

The methods for segmentation are often combined to create richer and nuanced customer profiles that permit even more targeted marketing and product development. In other words, the more marketers know about their customers, the more they are able to refine their products and advertising to meet the customers' desires and needs.

Tags for Unit 2

Marketing strategy, strategic marketing, SWOT Analysis, market analysis, customer analysis, strategic thinking, strategy development, customer strategies, competition

Unit 3. Marketing Communication

The objective of this unit is to understand the role of communication in the marketing process in its entirety. Communication is not just advertising for the consumer, communication means to establish a relationship on many levels, from suppliers via consumers to one's own employees.

Communication (and in particular, the sales promotion communication, e.g. advertising) is one of the main areas of the marketing mix next to the product, the price and the distribution. In the ideal case, it should be incorporated from the beginning of a marketing concept and occupy an equally important position.

Communication should not be reduced to the issue of advertising!

3.1 What is Marketing Communication?

Marketing Communication refers to the means which a monastery can adopt to convey **messages** about their monastic products and the brands they sell. Monasteries can use different **marketing channels** to provide their messages directly or indirectly, to the interested people. The goal is raising awareness about monastic products and their qualities. Those messages may attract more people to visit the monastery and to buy monastic products.

■ Create the message for your monastic products

The goal of communication should be in any case that of your message to the people interested in monastic products to be effective. In most cases the goal is to increase the awareness of the positive features of your monastic products or monastic shop, and therefore, to increase the visitors to buy the products. Other targets could be the creation of a positive image in the local community, higher awareness of monastic services for the local people (if there are any), or a higher level of customer satisfaction.

■ Choose your Marketing Communication Channels

There are several communication channels that a monastery can use:

- **Events** organized by the monastery;
- **Personal selling** in the monastic shop;
- **Website** organized as an online shop;
- **Direct selling** at the customers' homes;
- **Articles and publications** about the monastery and the products;

- **Social media** communication
- **Advertising** is a paid method to communicate your message, which is less preferable for the purposes of the monasteries.

A monastery can choose one or more marketing communication channels to provide information about their monastic products according to their needs and internal philosophy. Therefore, every monastery can have a unique mix of marketing communication channels that serves best to the purpose to sell more monastic products.

■ **Follow some communication rules**

In order to be successful in delivering your marketing message, you should follow some **basic communication rules**:

1. Your communications should arrive without interference to the receiver, i.e. the receiver should understand the message in its entirety and not just perceive selectively. Do the receivers understand what you say? Do they also understand what you mean?
2. Get to know your target audience. Only when you know with whom you enter into a relationship, do you choose the right messages and channels (media).
3. What is the effect you want to achieve with your message? Please be sure to specify the target beforehand. The desired effect determines the type of the message and the selection of the receivers.
4. Adjust the contents of the message and the design to the target group;
5. Select the right media (communication channels) - this is only possible if one knows both one's audience and existing communications and connects them.

Basically, it should be noted that the various communication activities cannot be regarded separately and that they should result in a holistic action. Ideally, they fit into each other and are firmly anchored in a marketing plan (strategic planning). It should also be mentioned that you cannot perform specific actions "by the way". The field of communication requires careful planning and often professional support and should certainly not be the area to which less attention than to other areas of the marketing mix is paid.

■ **Identity and image**

The Identity of a monastery can be regarded as the pillar of communication because it deals with the central concern of each communication, message, or question: What do you want to communicate? It is closely related to your mission statement and must not contradict it. Therefore, having an understanding of your own, specific Identity is one of the most important tasks. The topic of **Identity is very much related to the topic of Branding**, thus you will find detailed information in Module 8 "Creating a Strong Brand".

In this context, we must first and foremost point to the close relation between “image” (public image) and “identity”.

Image is the opinion of the people about the monastic products and even about the monastery. Those people know the monastery, or they are visitors, or they are customers of the monastic shop, or just users of the monastic products. They build their opinion on the basis of personal experience or on the basis of other people’s experiences. Positive opinion means a positive image and it will lead to positive decisions – more volunteers to help in the monastery, more visitors in the monastic shop, more donations, etc. Negative opinion means negative image of the monastic products or even of the monastery and it leads to lack of donations, or less visitors in the monastic shop, less volunteers, etc.

In order to be successful, it is important to distinguish between “self-image” and “public image”. The self-image is a result of your self-assessment, of your own opinion about your monastic products and monastery. The public image is an assessment from outside through the people as we have explained above. Why we distinguish between self-image and public image? Because only in very rare cases they are identical. This is an important concept to keep in mind. Therefore, you need to follow carefully the opinion of the people, of the public, because it is important for the monastery.

The public image consists of two components:

- The cognitive component, concerning the knowledge about the product or service, e.g. the knowledge about a certain destination due to previous experience.
- The affective or emotional component focuses on feelings, attitudes and needs for the subjective imagination. It contains diffuse sympathies, antipathies or prejudices towards a place like a monastery or people that have been created through one’s own experiences or traditional thinking patterns or opinions of other people and media.

■ Sales promotion

Sales promotions are all communication measures that encourage distribution. Those measures can be handled on your own, or by external sales persons or sales units, as well as retailers. They are directed towards the consumers, which is also defined as consumer promotion or merchandising, the focus of this unit. We will discuss the two most important forms of merchandising through providers.

Here, the purchasing behaviour of the customer of the monastic shop is largely influenced by the advice and persuasive skills of the staff who is in direct contact with him/her. Through the sales conversation, the customer should be stimulated to buy a specific offer. Therefore, the general requirements for the sales persons are:

- They need to know how to communicate;
- They have to be self-confident;
- They need to know the monastic products very well;
- Don't forget that they are there to serve the customers of the monastery shop;
- They should be careful and polite with the customers, to treat them as special guests.

Although we came to the conclusion that personnel changes in monastic enterprises is rather low, we want to highlight this aspect, because a central element of success is the consistency of personal relations between the sales people and the customers of the monastery shop.

Good sales people are experts in marketing:

- Distribution: They are responsible for distributing the product or service to the customer;
- Market research: They receive first-hand information about the needs and wishes of the customers.
- Controlling: They have an overview about the effects of marketing and communication activities.
- Public relations: They contribute to the public image of the monastery by building good relationships with the customers, leaving wonderful impressions, giving enough information about the products and the monastery.

Tags for Unit 3

Marketing Communication, sales promotion, advertising, corporate identity

Good Practice Examples

There are several good practices referring to this module in our library:

- Good practice 2. Bronnbach Monastery Shop, Germany
Download link: <https://training.skivre.eu/gp.php/GP2-EN>
- Good practice 4. Manufactum – Good Things from Monasteries
Download link: <https://training.skivre.eu/gp.php/GP4-EN>
- Good practice 5. Tturnogorski Monastery – Authentic Monastic Products with a Strong Brand
Download link: <https://training.skivre.eu/gp.php/GP5-EN>
- Good practice 6. Digital Storytelling for Monastic Products linked to Mount Athos in Greece
Download link: <https://training.skivre.eu/gp.php/GP6-EN>
- Good practice 7. Digital Storytelling for a Monastic Product: Saint Augustin and Serafeim of Sarov Monastery, Greece
Download link: <https://training.skivre.eu/gp.php/GP7-EN>
- Good practice 8. EUCOSMIA e-shop
Download link: <https://training.skivre.eu/gp.php/GP8-EN>
- Good practice 9. Klösterreich - Feel Free to Step Away from Your Daily Routines
Download link: <https://training.skivre.eu/gp.php/GP9-EN>
- Good practice 10. Kremikovtsi Monastery "St. George the Victorious" – Successful Sales with a Strong Brand
Download link: <https://training.skivre.eu/gp.php/GP10-EN>

- Good practice 15. The Hieronymite Monastery of Saint Mary of Guadalupe
Download link: <https://training.skivre.eu/gp.php/GP15-EN>

- Good practice 20. The Brand “Abbey Beer”
Download link: <https://training.skivre.eu/gp.php/GP20-EN>

- Good practice 21. I segreti del chiostro - Monastic Products of Monastero Santa Caterina d’Alessandria Palermo / Italy
Download link: <https://training.skivre.eu/gp.php/GP21-EN>

- Good practice 22. Products of Santa Maria Novella, Florence/Italy
Download link: <https://training.skivre.eu/gp.php/GP22-EN>



Check your Knowledge

Exercises



Exercise 2.1. - Start with your SWOT

Fill the boxes

As a beginning, you can start with SWOT analysis. You can do it about a product of your monastery, or about the monastic shop.

A. *Select one of your selling products and create a SWOT analysis for it.*

Strengths (S)	Weaknesses (W)
Opportunities (O)	Threads (T)

B. *Now, please repeat the exercise and make SWOT analysis about the monastic shop.*

Strengths (S)	Weaknesses (W)
Opportunities (O)	Threads (T)

This exercise is a good base for understanding the other modules and all other exercises.

Exercise 2.2. - Make your small research

Make small research and identify who your customers are (more young people, or more older people, or families are the most frequents visitors, etc.).

For this research your sales people in the monastic shop will be helpful. **They can create small questionnaire** (not more than 5 questions) for the visitors of the shop to ask them:

- what they like to buy most from the shop,
- what has to be improved in the shop - more products, or different working hours of the monastery shop, etc.
- other questions that will provide important information for you about your products and monastic shop,
- try to identify who is coming in the monastic shop – local people mainly, or pilgrims, or tourists.

At the end you will have a picture of your customers, the level of their satisfaction, and their needs. This picture will be very beneficial for your decision about what else you can sell, how to improve the service in the shop, what are the favourite products of your customers.

You can use this small research as well for your brand definition (Module 8 “Creating a Strong Brand”).

Exercise 2.3. - Marketing communication channels

Define your marketing communication channels that are most appropriate for your monastery.

References

■ Study Materials

Kotler, P., Marketing Management, (Millennium Edition), Custom Edition for University of Phoenix, Prentice Hall, 2000, p. 9

Mintz, Ofer; Currim, Imran (2013). "What Drives Managerial Use of Marketing and Financial Metrics and Does Metric Use Affect Performance of Marketing-Mix Activities?". Journal of Marketing

McCarthy, Jerome E. (1964), Basic Marketing. A Managerial Approach, Homewood, IL, USA

■ Videos

Philip Kotler: Marketing, video link: <https://youtu.be/sR-qL7QdVZQ> (EN)

The Good Struggle: Life In A Secluded Orthodox Monastery, video link:
<https://youtu.be/LXqVRgEwqpg> (subtitles in EN)

The Monastery of the Holy Spirit, video link: <https://youtu.be/Mq46T8CY3hQ> (EN)

The SKIVRE Partnership: Empowering monasteries to harvest the potential of monastic products

SKIVRE is an Erasmus+ project aimed at empowering management, staff, monks, and nuns at monasteries with a most interactive training approach in gaining relevant skills for raising revenues for the preservation of religious heritage sites:

The **SKIVRE** homepage www.skivre.eu (including access to many social media tools) provides you with an inspiring multi lingual blog on monastic products, data and analyses, training material and training events in seven European countries.

The partnership comprises a multidisciplinary European team, which represents the target groups and expertise needed for training development:

media k GmbH | GERMANY (coordinator)

media k GmbH offers long-year expertise in religious heritage preservation and in the management of heritage preservation projects.

www.media-k.eu

Future for Religious Heritage | BELGIUM

Future for Religious Heritage is a non-faith organisation open to all. It brings together those working to protect religious heritage all over Europe.

www.frh-europe.org

GUNET | GREECE

GUNET is a Greek specialist in creating online learning platforms, which offer different kind of learning experiences adapted to different topics.

www.gunet.gr

INI-Novation Bulgaria OOD | BULGARIA

INI-Novation is an education provider specialised in generating economic effects from cultural heritage.

www.ini-novation.com

Bronnbach Monastery | GERMANY

Bronnbach monastery is a former Cistercian monastery now operated by a public authority in the German Tauber valley. The monastery started to develop monastic products based on the history of the site.

www.kloster-bronnbach.de

Wissenschaftsinitiative Niederösterreich | AUSTRIA

Wissenschaftsinititative is an education provider with longstanding experiences in developing learning platforms and learning material for heritage preservation.

www.wissenschaftsinitiative.at

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