AN EMPIRICAL APPROACH TO MARKETING CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Recent developments and changes in the business and academic worlds are driving business schools to redesign and adjust curriculum to match the demands of the dynamic marketplace. To respond to these marketplace pressures, business schools must often make difficult decisions of "right-sizing" programs to meet fluctuating demand. This can mean adding or eliminating courses and/or combining offerings into hybrid classes. Little direction has been offered to marketing academics who seek to make their cadre of classes sufficiently cover the field of marketing or to provide insight into what classes might be added, dropped or combined in light of budget cuts, increased demand or other externally-imposed constraints.

Method

The goal of the project was to examine faculty members’ perceptions of different marketing courses at a single institution. A case study approach was employed as diverse teaching styles and institutional missions could create a variation in the perceived characteristics of given courses.

A mini-group consisting of a convenience sample of four marketing professors was asked to summarize into six or fewer dimensions, the general skills and perspectives offered by a marketing major (or concentration). The dimensions identified and subsequently used in the study were: Quantitative Techniques, Consumer Behavior Theory, Strategy Development, Implementation, Environmental Trends and Persuasion/Presentation.

Based on the focus group input, a questionnaire seeking perceptions of the dimensional emphases of twelve marketing courses was developed and distributed to a department of ten marketing professors and a large public institution. Five responses were received. The questionnaires were analyzed using point-vector MDS to allow the assessment of relationships between key dimensions of the marketing curriculum, as well as to evaluate the relative positions of the courses taught.

Findings and Discussion

The perceptual map resulting from the above analysis yielded insight into the both the relationships between the dimensions identified in the mini-group discussion as well as the relative position of the selected classes in the resulting hyper space. The teaching of consumer behavior theory and quantitative techniques were seen as opposites while strategy development and environmental trends were viewed quite similarly. Persuasion/Presentation was seen as an unrelated dimension.

The distinctive courses among the twelve evaluated included Marketing Research, Personal Selling, Sales Management and Promotion Management. Consumer Behavior, Retailing, International Marketing and Product Management were clustered quite tightly, making them candidates for consolidation consideration.

With the insight provided by the proposed approach, marketing educators can develop an integrated program that avoids duplication of coverage and reinforces desired concepts and skills as students progress through the curriculum.