

## A ROLE OF TELEMARKETING AS A PROMOTIONAL TOOLS FOR STUDENT ENROLMENT

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### ABSTRACT

*The ability to sustain in the competitive market, an organization and the company really need advertising and promotion as a medium and tool to attract people and customers to buy the product and service. To increase the profit, the organization uses several type direct marketing such as telemarketing, email direct marketing, short message service (SMS) marketing and direct mail marketing. So, the purpose of this paper is to examine The Role of Telemarketing as a Promotional Tool for Students' Enrollment in one of the private institutional college in southern areas. This study focuses on the telemarketing area only to see the effectiveness of telemarketing as a promotional tool for student enrollment. Basically the company use telemarketing, short message service (SMS) and direct mail to reach customers more closely. This medium of promotion can create consumer awareness, good image of the company and good relationship between organization and customers. The selected of the type of promotion is very important to organize image because it can affect customer perception towards company's image and indirectly give positive impact towards the company.*

Key words: Telemarketing, promotional tool, student enrollment, effectiveness

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### Introduction

The promotional mix is a set of tools of advertisements that the company usually uses to communicate effectively towards their product or service to the customer and potential customer. So, in order to achieve marketing objectives it is a must to implement all the promotional mix which consists of a technique and method of marketing activities. This is very important for companies to choose the right type of the promotional mix to promote the product and create brand awareness among target market and potential target market to achieve the best result.

Normally, as a private higher learning institution, the enrollment of students as their target market needs a good marketing plan to attract the students to enroll at their college. One of the strategies done by the college is by telemarketing activities. Telemarketing can be defined as an activity that use the telephone or other tool to connect to a telecommunications network to reach a consumer for marketing, selling goods, advertising, and services to expose the product and service to customers and potential customers. A telemarketer can be defined as any individual or organization that involved with telemarketing.

So the purpose of this study is to determine the roles of telemarketing as promotional tools for student enrollment at the college. The effectiveness of telemarketing is in term of skill of telemarketers, the message delivered to customers, the increase of student enrollment and the response towards the advertisement.

There are several problems that identified in this college that can make an issue to proceed the research. For this particular study, it focused on the effectiveness of telemarketing as a promotional tool for student enrollment on one of the private institutional college in the southern region of Malaysia. This is because the college has a decreasing number of students per year affect the

student enrollment. So did the institution have a problem with promotional use recently? Did telemarketing was not effective anymore to use to recruit student? The institution needs to understand well the process of telemarketing to pursue the marketing goals and fulfill the company target per year of student enrollment. According Gronross (1989) marketing concept is all the activities based on needs and wants of customers. So, it's very important to know very well how to persuade and convince the customer to buy the product or service. Advertising is so important to the organization or companies.

The main issue of the research wants to identify the roles of telemarketing and investigate the effectiveness of telemarketing as a promotional tool for student enrollment of the institution. What are the roles of telemarketing that been practiced by the institution? Does the telemarketing is effective as a promotional tool for students' enrollment of the institution?

### Definition Of Telemarketing

Leiderman, (1990) defines telemarketing as any measurable activity, using the telephone to help find, get, keep and develop customers. Telemarketing is a system staffed by trained specialists who utilize telecommunications and information technologies for the purpose of implementing marketing strategies in a cost-effective manner (Vorhees, 1983). An initial activity usually is the featuring of a toll-free telephone number and/or a coupon in an advertisement, catalog, or any other medium (Vorhees, 1983).

A telemarketing center can take orders, provide fast answers to customers' questions, defuse their complaints, call on marginal accounts, open new accounts, and even manage an entire sales operation (Vorhees, 1983). It happened because the capability of a telemarketing center was related directly to a marketing objective (Vorhees, 1983). Telemarketers must be provided with an efficient workspace equipped with telephones, headset, scripts, tally and response forms, an information handbook, computer terminal for data entry and monitoring system (Sedwick, Carpenter, Sherman and Alan, 2001). In business, telemarketing permits a company to serve cost-effective accounts that would only be marginally profitable if face-to-face sales coverage was used (Vorhees, 1983).

In addition, telemarketers must be provided with an efficient workspace equipped with telephones, headset, scripts, tally and response forms, an information handbook, computer terminal for data entry and monitoring system (Sedwick, Carpenter, Sherman, & Alan, 2001).

### Roles Of Telemarketing

Although, direct marketing is clearly a convenience for the time-constrained contemporary consumer, it can also be its own worst enemy because the consumer can be bombarded with a mountain of mail with little time to sort it all (O'Malley, 2001). Furthermore, in the Tele Business Report, (1998) the popularity of the telephone stated that only over half the UK population is comfortable using the phone for the business. Kotler and Armstrong (2009) proposed the primary role of direct marketing is to drive a response and shape the behavior of the target audience and the audience.

In fact, in 2005, The Direct Marketing Association recorded the telephone calls were the media with the highest average response rate (Ng, 2005). It's also supported by, US Direct Marketing Association's media it is a direct communication to a consumer or organization that is designed to generate a response, a request for further information, and to purchase the certain product and services (Ng, 2005).

Telemarketing uses the telephone service to sell directly product and service to customers. Based on Armstrong and Kotler (2005) telemarketing become the major direct marketing communication tool that is a 39 percent of all direct marketing expenditures and 36 percent of direct marketing sales.

Finkle (2006) argued that direct marketing is a powerful tool for building customer relationship at the same time to control resources and implementation cost and lower-cost. Telemarketing has created a low-cost solution to direct marketing, whereas to the customer it may bring different responses (Geetika, Tiwari, & Gupta (2012).

### Effectiveness Of Telemarketing

Table 1: Type of Telemarketing and Its Effectiveness

	Direct Mail	Telephone	Email	SMS
Reach	All Household	Most Household	Internet Users	Mobile User
Response Rate	Approx. 2%	10%-20%	3.5%-15%	Not Known

Cost	Medium \$1	High \$10	Very Low 5c	Low 10c
Response Time	Slow	Quick	Quick	Quickest
Persuasive Impact	Medium	High	Low	Low
Interactivity	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Intrusive	Low	High	Medium	Medium-High

Based on this table, telephone technique or telemarketing has a higher response rate and very quick response time. Also the intrusive is very higher rather than other type of direct marketing. The advantages of telemarketing are its persuasiveness, response rate, interactivity, and measurability, major disadvantages are the high cost and nonacceptance by of some consumers, (Shapiro &Wyman 1981; Leiderman 1990; Stone 1996).

SMS has been described as the 'killer application' of m-commerce, (Quios/Engage 2000). SMS advertising is growing rapidly, Merrill Lynch, (cited in Andersen Consulting 2000). Telemarketing has the advantages of impact, persuasiveness and interactivity; its major disadvantages are high cost and intrusiveness, which reduce consumer acceptance, (Leiderman, 1990; Stone, 1996).

Based on Rettie & Brum (2001), telemarketing or telephone technique has a quick response time and can save time when contact customers. By Mark Swanson (2003), telemarketing is about captures market response and gets feedback from customer’s mouth. To get a faster response from customers, it’s through a well-trained and rewarded staff or salespeople have a good calling list and effective script (Berry & Wilson, 2004). So, have an awareness from customers generate interest that will lead to making a potential students apply and enroll at university (Namulia, 2011). The goals of the telemarketer include re-establishing contact with customers and generating sales opportunities that increase revenue for the practice.

**Method**

This research approach is based on qualitative inquiry and data collection method used both primary and secondary data to conduct research at one of the private institutional college in the southern region of Malaysia. The information will be collected from the type of data collection method that used in studies such as interview and observation. So data collection is the process for collecting and gathers the information to answer the question and collect findings. Primary data are the data that are originated by the researcher and a data that observed or collected directly from the original persons or statement.

A personal interview from staff marketing was obtaining information on the issue of interest. The personal interview has been conducted between researcher and staff of the marketing department. There are two methods of the interview that have been used which is unstructured interview and also structure an interview. The unstructured type of interview allows the researcher ask the respondent by using open-ended questions that give a chance to respondent express the feeling and opinion more freely. It’s normally happened without any proper plan and the questions were popping out depending on the current situation at that time. The researcher does this type of interview with few staffs in the college. While for the structured type of interview is the set of questions that have a direct and short question that related to the scope of the problem. The interview session discusses on the telemarketing that the company applied on the marketing activities and promotion.

**Discussion**

Based on the findings shows that the telemarketing is an effective way in promoting student enrollment at the college. The finding shows, telemarketing has a quick response while delivered the product knowledge and information. Also, telemarketing is to promote the service and product more details. This is because; the objective of direct marketing is to generate a quick response from customers (Namulia, 2011).

The result from the interview also agreed that the role of telemarketing is to collect all the information. Before do telemarketing, staff marketing will collect all the students’ information by inquiry form at all the roadshow but sometimes the students reluctant to fill up the personal information such as address, identification number and final result. These will give the lack of information to staff marketing scanning the qualification of students to enroll the college. So, by doing telemarketing, staff can ask more directly to the student. In addition, it is supported by Sedwick, Carpenter, Sherman, & Alan (2001) as an effective telemarketing campaign can enhance recruitment and enrollment goals while addressing the informational needs of potential students through personal one-one-one contact

Telemarketing is the effective way of telecommunication because have two-way communication between customers and staff. By doing telemarketing the staff can get the information from customers directly when the staffs ask the questions and make the conversation more interesting and interactive. Based on Hawary and Batayneh (2010) described that by giving the sufficient information about the university or college will give the curiosity to a student that can increase student enrollment.

By doing telemarketing staff marketing can save the time differ than do the roadshow at the outside that will take more times to attract the students. Telemarketing or telephone technique has a quick response time and can save time when contact customers (Rettie & Matthew, 2001).

Telemarketing can save the cost because telemarketing is very cheaper promotion rather than SMS blast and direct mail. Finkle (2007) argued that direct marketing is a powerful tool for building customer relationship at the same time to control resources and implementation cost and low cost. Hale Indian River Groves, has found that telemarketing is a cost-effective method of reactivating previous buyers and keeping borderline customers. Telemarketing has created a low-cost solution for direct marketing, whereas to the customer it may bring different responses

Personalized contacts are more effective than direct mail for high ability students with special emphasizing on campus visit (Wanat & Bowles, 1989). The individual campus visit was most influenced influential, with the organized group campus visit, telemarketing contact by student teams, direct mail also rated highly (Kellaris & Kellaris, 1988).

A positive contact with a university representative can have a significant influence on enrollment of those who are reluctant to commit or those who do not list the university as their first choice (Sedwick, Carpenter, Sherman, & Alan, 2001).

To put this definition in term of enrollment management, telemarketing is the planned use of the telephone as are recruitments, follow up, and retention medium in conjunction with traditional recruitment programs to increase the yield rate for inquiries to admit to enrolled students in the most cost efficient and timely manner (Sedwick, Carpenter, Sherman, & Alan, 2001). Miles (1988) suggests the importance of making telephone calls to admitted students to gain insight on what might be causing doubt about their decision to attend (Sedwick, Carpenter, Sherman, & Alan, 2001). Top management of universities usually has a greater market orientation and strategic planning to determine the effectiveness of the marketing tool to gain market (Namulia, 2011). Based on Sevier (2000) the recruited student can be done through direct mail, the World Wide Campus, campus visit programs, telemarketing and special events. Based on (Neumann, 1994), the size of student enrollment at university is a key for understanding college and university effectiveness.

## Conclusion

Telemarketing is the one technique or method to promote the product and service. The reason companies use the telemarketing is to provide the customer and potential customers with information by creating awareness of the product and to persuade them to buy the product or services by promoting the product, service and company's benefit. Lastly, the reason company use telemarketing is to reinforce and reminding the existence of the product and service. Telemarketing also is to create awareness and remind the customers and potential customer about the programmed offered.

Based on the findings, the researcher can conclude that role of telemarketing are to promote the service more details, collect all information, telecommunication tool, save time, save distance and save cost.

The researcher also finds that the effectiveness of the telemarketing as a promotional tool based on telemarketers skills/knowledge, through feedback from students, students interested in registering and by increase numbers of students. From that show that telemarketing is effective to use because having an interaction between two parties to close the deal and increase the numbers of student enrollment.

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