

Tetyana Serkutan<sup>1</sup>, Nataliya Shlapak<sup>2</sup>, Oleksiy Serkutan<sup>3</sup>

## PECULIARITIES OF SOFTWARE PRODUCTS MARKETING

*The article deals with the issues of software marketing mix development, taking into account its specific character as a commodity. The difference between the notions of "software product" and "software tools" from the marketing perspective is reasoned.*

**Keywords:** marketing; software; market; information technologies.

Тетяна Серкутан, Наталія Шлапак, Олексій Серкутан

## ОСОБЛИВОСТІ МАРКЕТИНГУ ПРОГРАМНИХ ПРОДУКТІВ

*У статті розглянуто проблеми розробки комплексу маркетингу програмного продукту з урахуванням його специфіки як товару, доведено різницю в поняттях "програмний продукт" та "програмне забезпечення" з точки зору маркетингу.*

**Ключові слова:** маркетинг; програмне забезпечення; ринок; інформаційні технології.

*Літ. 11.*

Татьяна Серкутан, Наталия Шлапак, Алексей Серкутан

## ОСОБЕННОСТИ МАРКЕТИНГА ПРОГРАММНЫХ ПРОДУКТОВ

*В статье рассмотрены проблемы разработки комплекса маркетинга программного продукта с учетом его специфики как товара, продемонстрированы различия в понятиях "программный продукт" и "программное обеспечение" с точки зрения маркетинга.*

**Ключевые слова:** маркетинг; программное обеспечение; рынок; информационные технологии.

### Introduction

The software products market is rapidly developing in Ukraine, and although foreign-made products still dominate, domestic soft products get increasingly bigger interest. The market segment of big universal software is mainly filled up, our software engineers could well compete with foreign companies at the market of specialized and unique software, provided they use marketing wisely.

Still, experience shows that small companies, specializing in developing software on demand are unable to arrange the work on a permanent basis. On the one hand, they do not consider it necessary to hire qualified marketing specialists and the lack of sufficient knowledge and practice of application of modern marketing tools of software designers reduces drastically the efficiency of their sales. At their presentations they weary their potential buyers with technical details, which often are not clear for final users, because the latter believe that a software product must sell itself.

On the other hand, marketing specialists, due to specific qualities of software products, even if they are staff members of IT-companies are unable to promote their product efficiently at a market, as they cannot describe its advantages in the language of final users (Yehlakov, 2009).

### The research and publications analysis

A number of scientists investigated the problems of application of various marketing elements in the sales of software products. Among them we may mention I.S. Aglitskiy, Y.P. Yehlakov, D. Harhcenko, A.A. Kozyrev, I.N. Kurinin,

<sup>1</sup> National Academy of Management, Kyiv, Ukraine.

<sup>2</sup> Priazovsky State Technical University, Mariupol, Ukraine.

<sup>3</sup> National Academy of Management, Kyiv, Ukraine.

N.V. Makarova, N.G. Marchenkova, V.I. Nardyzhev et al. Still, the peculiarities of application of marketing mix for software product as a commodity require further investigation.

The peculiarities of software marketing are primarily caused by specific features of this commodity.

Different authors give similar definitions of a software product:

A software product is a combination of separate programmes, their specifications, quality assurance, advertising materials and measures, aimed at users teaching, distributing and accompanying of such programmes (Kozyrev, 2003; Kurinin, Nardyzhev, 2006).

Some consider software product as a commodity only; "A software product is a complex of interrelated programmes for the solution of a certain problem (task) of mass demand, prepared for realization, just like any other type of industrial output" (Makarova, 2004).

According to domestic normative documents a software product is a software tool, designated for delivery to a user, which may be treated as a complex of computer programmes, assisting user in the process of solving the tasks, without manufacturers' participation ("On the general requirements ...", 2009).

ISO 12–207 international standard defines software product as a set of computer programmes, procedures and documents and data, possibly linked with it.

#### **The unresolved issues**

However, from the point of view of marketing, it is advisable to separate the notions "software products" and "software tools", as they are determined for different segments of buyers, they possess different consumer qualities as commodities and require different marketing techniques.

#### **Key research findings**

Nowadays the market of IT-technologies is full of many different products, which are used by consumers at different branches and which are able to satisfy absolutely different needs. Except software products, these include computer games, development of Internet sites etc.

Thus, from the marketing perspective "software product" means a prepared computer solution (information technology), specified for a particular final user, and "software tools" is the development of programmes and information systems for IT specialists, who model such programmes, creating, in turn, software products of their own. For the first case it could be consumers, buying goods for their use and also corporate clients, purchasing products to support their main activity, in no way related to IT-technologies.

Hence, the definition of software products in the domestic standards seems to be most satisfying.

Experience shows that such division stipulates not only different aims of buying software products but also different requirements of buyers.

Final consumers are primarily interested in the possibilities for software application, its productivity and results. As a rule, they estimate software products by the following criteria:

- functionality of the product proposed, solving particular problems of users and possibilities for further upgrade;

- combinability of the processing algorithm with the required standards, regulations and orders of appropriate business processes;
- the possibility of downloading of a complete functional demoversion of a software product and testing its work capacity;
- software reliability, possibility of its recovery in case of a system failure, availability of tests and examples of "critical" processing procedures;
- comfort of application, simplicity and intelligibility of interface, quality of registration and operating speed;
- teaching of personnel and opportunities of regular consultations for staff (Yehlakov, 2009).

IT specialists evaluate a software product from the point of view of difficulties with its implementation and further maintenance. The list of parameters under such analysis most often includes:

- simplicity of software installation and quality documentation;
- future expenses on maintenance and technical support;
- the possibility for product integration with other applications;
- the possibility of exploitation of a proposed product on the existing software platform and possibility for shifting it to other software platforms;
- the required capacity for installation and its time, and also time, required for recovery after the programme failure;
- the degree of protection from unauthorized access and possibility of monitoring this;
- the availability of qualified support for software products from developers and the cost of user's support;
- services, connected with supply of software tools;
- product's quality, verified by certificates and other documents;
- sufficiently long period of product's existence, which should be a good sign of its reliability;
- official status of product, confirming serious, long-term intentions of its manufacturers, i.e. official registration of a software product and the registered trade mark;
- the implementation efficiency and quick reaction to users' requests (Yehlakov, 2009).

The price of a software product is certainly the most important consumer characteristic, both for the first and the second case and as cheaper versions of software products have appeared lately, price formation is increasingly becoming one of the major factor in sales (Aglitskiy, 1998).

At the same time specific character of price for software products in a marketing mix often presumes that the price of software products is but a product's positioning, rather than the reflection of production costs. And if it is still possible to predict a potential market for a software product, prediction of demand seems to be very difficult, due to difficulties in assessing the value of a product for potential buyers and permanent upgrade of technologies (Marchenkova, 2008). For some software products the price could be sufficiently lower than the price of services, related to it, like implementation, personnel training, consulting, technical support etc.

That is why marketing strategy of IT companies developing software products must necessarily take into account time factors, risks and uncertainty, as well as the influence of competitors and state policy in this sphere.

Sales and promotion within the marketing mix of the software products also have peculiarities of their own and require separate analysis, due to their importance and specific character.

### Conclusions

Marketing of software products has its own peculiarities, which are explained by specific character of such commodity. Diversification and permanent renewal of forms, types and technologies at the IT market, on the one hand, and different aims and requirements for software products by different groups of consumers, on the other, require to diversify the entire marketing mix and develop a strategy and tactics for each its element, which will fully take into account the specific character of a particular software product, as well as the characteristics of a discrete segment of consumers.

### References:

*Алицкий И.С.* Модели и методы управления маркетингом программных продуктов в условиях переходной экономики: Автореф. дис. ... канд. экон. наук / [Электронный ресурс] — режим доступа: <http://www.disscat.com/content/modeli-i-metody-upravleniya-marketingom-programnykh-produktov-v-usloviyakh-perekhodnoi-ekon>.

*Ехлаков Ю.П.* Вывод прикладного программного обеспечения на рынке корпоративных продаж: взгляд разработчика/[Электронный ресурс] — режим доступа: <http://www.mavriz.ru/articles/2009/4/4989.html>.

Информатика: Учебник /Под ред. Н.В.Макаровой. — М.: ФиС, 2004. — 527 с.

*Козырев А.А.* Информационные технологии в экономике и управлении: Учебник. Изд. 3-е, перераб. и доп. — СПб.: Изд-во Михайлова В.А., 2003. — 496 с.

*Курунин И.Н., Нардюжев В.И., Нардюжев И.В.* Использование компьютерных технологий в образовании — М.: Изд-во РУДН, 2006. — 355 с.

Маркетинг для высоких технологий / Бондаренко М. и др.) / [Электронный ресурс] — режим доступа: <http://innosfera.org/node/1075>.

*Марченкова Н.Г.* Информационные технологии в профессиональной деятельности / [Электронный ресурс] — режим доступа: <http://rudocs.exdat.com/docs/index-206674.html>.

Про затвердження загальних вимог до програмних продуктів, які закуповуються та створюються на замовлення державних органів /Постанова Кабінету міністрів України від 12 серпня 2009 р. № 869 / [Електронний ресурс] — режим доступа: <http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show>.

Програмные продукты / [Электронный ресурс] — режим доступа: <http://www.philosoft.ru/software.zhtml>.

Програмные продукты и их основные характеристики / [Электронный ресурс] — режим доступа: <http://gouspro.ru/?p=151>.

*Харченко Д.* Особенности программного обеспечения как продукта и ценообразования для него (часть 1) / [Электронный ресурс] — режим доступа: <http://dmitryh.blogspot.com/2008/11/1.html>.

Стаття надійшла до редакції 26.09.2013.