Increasing the Attractiveness and Visibility of Educational Institutions Using Modern Marketing Channels

Case: Fontys Minor program

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ABSTRACT

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ABSTRACT

This project was commissioned by Fontys International Business School (FIBS), Minor program. Like all international business schools also Fontys wants to ensure international learning environment for their students. Fontys Minor is a very suitable program for exchange students and that is why course coordinator Daniël van Melis would like to double the amount of exchange students choosing the Minor program from the exchange programs offered by FIBS. The aim of this project was to answer a research question: What are the concrete actions to undertake in order to attract more exchange students into the Minor program in Fontys International Business School (FIBS)? Recommendations that can solve this challenge are offered to the Minor program.

Theories about educational institution marketing, value driven marketing, service marketing, content marketing and social media tools were carefully viewed to create a solid theoretical foundation to build this project for.

Interview and a survey were conducted in order to map the current situation of the Minor program and determine starting point for the project. Secondary data was used to add reliability of the research and back up research findings.

It was founded that Minor program has very motivated and professional team but they are lacking marketing planning and students are not engaged as part of the creation of the program. There are several different solutions offered for Minor program team to overcome these problems so that they can consistently communicate their message and attract more exchange students to choose the program. For example by creating a content marketing plan, utilizing social media channels and updating the old content and marketing channels it is possible for the Minor program to reach their goals.

Keywords   Content marketing, social media, co-creation of value

Pages   67 p. + appendices 10 p.

TIIVISTELMÄ

Tämän projektin toimeksiantaja on Fontys International Business school Minor ohjelma. Kansainvälisenä liikealan kouluna kansainvälisen oppimisympäristön tarjoaminen oppilaille on ehdottoman tärkeää Fontysille. Minor ohjelma on erittäin sopiva vaihto-opiskelijoille ja kurssikoordinattori Danïel van Melis haluaisi kaksinkertaistaa vaihto-oppilasmäärän kyseisessä ohjelmassa. Projektin tavoitteena on vastata tutkimus kysymykseen: Mitä konkreettisia toimenpiteitä Minor ohjelmassa voitaisiin tehdä jotta useammat vaihto-opiskelijat valitsisivat kyseisen opinto-ohjelman? Ja antaa suositukset kuinka tämä haaste voidaan ratkaista.

Teorioita opilaitosten markkinoinista, arvojen markkinoinnista, palvelujen markkinoinnista, sisältömarkkinoinnista ja sosiaalisesta mediasta käytettiin työkaluina tutkimuksen perustan luomiseen.

Projektin lähtökohtien selvittämiseksi ja Minor ohjelman tämän hetkisen tilanteen selvittämiseksi tehtiin haastatteluita ja luotiin kyselytutkimus. Tutkimuksen tueksi myös sekundaarilähteitä toisista tutkimuksista käytettin hyväksi.

Tutkimuksista voitiin todeta että Minor ohjelmalla on hyvin motivoitunut ja ammattitaitoinen tiimi, mutta markkinointi suunnitelu ja oppilaiden sitouttaminen osaksi ohjelman toteutusta ottaminen puuttuvat. Luomalla sisältömarkkinointi suunnitelma, käyttämällä hyväksi sosiaalista mediaa ja päivittämällä vanhaa sisältöä ja markkinointikanavia on mahdollista saavuttaa Minor ohjelman asettamat tavoitteet.

Avainsanat Sisältö markkinointi, sosiaalinen media, arvon yhteiskehittely

Sivut   67 s. + liitteet 10 s.

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1   INTRODUCTION

There has been a growing emphasis in international learning and globalisation. Almost all European universities offer programs in English and going abroad for exchange or even studying the complete diploma in another country is very popular. (Maailmalle.net 2015.)

But why is the international learning so important? As more and more companies go overseas and meet new cultures, people might need completely new skills in order to succeed in the situations they are facing. It is extremely important to understand the differences between cultures, learning methods and habits. Especially when it comes to business life; International learning is crucial. It is important for a business student to understand the processes of multinational corporations. Also the importance of leadership skills and sustainability is constantly growing due to the globalisation. Without learning these skills students today could face many difficulties when they enter their future careers because of attitudes, lack of communication skills, poor strategic thinking or unclear communications. (Haikala 2003.)

From the reasons mentioned above it is easy to understand why ensuring the international learning environment in Business schools is important. This project is commissioned by Fontys Business School (FIBS): Minor program. The program coordinator would like to double the amount of incoming exchange students who choose the Minor program. In this paper the current situation of the program is investigated. From these findings the aim is to deliver concrete recommendations to the Minor team so that they can overcome possible obstacles and reach their goal of doubling the amount of exchange students participating in the program. (Mëlis van, interview 18.9.2015.)

Around 1999 a new way of thinking emerged in the business world: now organisations have realized that their customers and other stakeholders want something more aspirational and personal instead of just getting their needs fulfilled. The change in economics and consumer behaviour from a product-centric era to experience-centric has a basic concept that customizing turn's product into a service. Creating unique experiences in co-creation with the customer will play the key role of getting competitive advantage. In this paper, this new approach is applied to Fontys Minor to increase the program attractiveness by appealing to the student's human spirit fulfilment. (Kotler, Keller, Brady, Goodman, & Hansen, 2009, 409.)

This research paper has 9 chapters. First you are introduced to the company, following the full project description, objectives of the project and research methods. After that, relevant theories used in this project are introduced and explained. From the data analyses you will continue to the thorough situation analysis of the Minor program following the specific problems that the Minor program is facing. After, based on the theory, research findings and situation analysis recommendations are given. Last chapter concludes this project.

2   COMPANY DESCRIPTION

2.1   Fontys University of Applied Sciences

Fontys Hoegescholen or Fontys University of Applied Science is one of the biggest universities in The Netherlands. Fontys offers Bachelors and Masters Degrees and short term programs in 3 locations in south of Holland; Eindhoven, Tilburg and Venlo. The main focus in Fontys is in their Bachelor and Master's degrees. All together Fontys campuses had 44.486 students and 4.343 employees in the year 2014. In 2014 Fontys was in fourth place in the top5 Universities in the Netherlands. Fontys emphasises the importance of international learning. Nienke Meijer the President Executive Board of Fontys University of Applied Sciences says that*: "Having international learning experience may be an increasingly important factor in terms of your future profession."* (Fontys University of Applied Sciences n.d.)

Fontys University is a foundation. Supervision and management of this foundation is the responsibility of Board of Governors and the Executive Board. As a competent authority the Executive Board is in charge of the foundations results, reporting forward to Board of Governors. The Board of Governors monitors that Executive Board follows the principles of the Sector Code for the Governance of Universities of Applied Sciences. Both Board of the Governors and the Executive board are established strictly based on Dutch government regulations for education. (Fontys University of Applied Sciences n.d.)

Core activities (education, research and contracts) are taken care off by Fontys individual institutions, based on their market segments. For example Fontys International Business School FIBS, introduced later in this chapter, is in responsible for their own core activities. For these core activities support is provided by 8 separate Support Service Departments. (Fontys University of Applied Sciences n.d.)

Both the Fontys Bachelor and Masters Degrees at Fontys are financed by the Dutch government. Like all Dutch universities Fontys collects tuition fees from both EEA and non-EEA students. For EEA students tuition fees are 1.951€ in 2015-2016. These fees are set by the Dutch government. For non-EEA students the fees depend on their field of studies and vary in a range from 6.000€ to 9.600€. Exchange students from partner universities do not pay tuition fees for Fontys. (Study in Holland n.d.)

The education provided by Fontys is based on the developing three core competences: knowledge, skills and professional attitude. The purpose of these competences is to prepare and develop student's professional practises and prepare them for self- employment. The objective of Fontys is *"to promote an organisation-wide mentality that will result in continuous attention for quality improvement in terms of education, content and processes."* (Fontys University of Applied Sciences n.d.)

Fontys aims to be an institution that provides *"inspiring growth through support & challenges"* to their students and other affiliate stakeholders. Fontys slogan "think bigger" is a metaphorical figurative about their aim to be educational institution that encourages students to personal growth and learning. Also quality is one of the driving forces of Fontys vision; despite the fact that Fontys is a large university, education is arranged in a small scale, ensuring high quality and possibilities for professional growth for their students. (Fontys University of Applied Sciences n.d.)

Internationality is the key in all the education provided by Fontys. It can be seen from the wide variety of study programs offered in English: 13 Fontys Bachelor programs are offered in English, 10 Bachelor programs in mixture of English/Dutch and German language, all the Master's Degree programs are offered in English and students can choose from 7 different study fields. Fontys also offers short-term programs such as language courses, summer courses and exchange programs both for incoming and outgoing students. (Fontys University of Applied Sciences n.d.)

2.2 Fontys Venlo

Venlo is a city of approximately 100.000 inhabitants located close to the German border. 3 higher educational institutions are located in the Fontys Venlo Campus: Fontys International Business School (FIBS), Fontys University of Technology and Logistics, and Fontys Teacher Training Institute.

4 International Bachelor degrees are offered in Venlo campus; International Marketing (IM), International Business Economics (IBE), International Business and Management Studies (IBMS) and International Fresh Business Management (IFBM). As an addition to this, Fontys Campus Venlo offers 6 other Bachelor programs: Industrial Product Design, Mechanical Engineering, Mechatronics, Software Engineering, Business Informatics and Logistics Management. Fontys Venlo has also 3 Masters Programs (Master of Business Administration, Master of Science in Business and Management and Master of Science in International logistics).

On top of these, exchange programs, summer and winter school and language pre-courses are offered in Fontys Venlo. Programs are offered in many different languages: English, Dutch and euregional stream which is mix of German, Dutch and English languages. (Fontys Venlo 2015.)

Fontys Campus has approximately 4.000 students. 70% of the students are international, presenting almost 40 different nationalities. However, majority of the students are German, due to the close location of the German border. Fontys international Campus Venlo has more than 100 partner universities in 50 countries. Close collaboration with these universities enables Fontys students to study their semester abroad and students from the partner universities to study in Venlo as an exchange student. (Fontys Venlo 2015.)

Fontys International Business studies are a mixture of practical learning cooperated with many multinational companies. Fontys Venlo has very international atmosphere. Students are encouraged to continuous learning and working together with new cultures through the usage of interesting and multiple learning methods. (Fontys University of Applied Sciences n.d.)

2.2.1 Fontys International Business School (FIBS)

Fontys Intenational Business Schools (FIBS) is located in the Fontys Campus Venlo and offers 4 International Bachelor's degrees: International Marketing (IM), International Business Economics (IBE), International Business and Management Studies (IBMS) and International Fresh Business Management (IFBM). FIBS also offers other programs; including Minor programs (introduced later in this chapter), exchange programs for incoming exchange students, Master degrees and variety of summer school options. (Fontys Portal, 2015.)

International Bachelor studies take 4 years, build from 3 phases: Propaedeutic phase (semesters 1 and 2), main phase (semesters 3-6) and graduation phase (semesters 7-8). In the main phase, semester 5 is planned for work placement and semester 6 for a minor. This means that the students are spending third year of their studies somewhere else than in campus: first doing internships in companies and after either minor abroad or in FIBS. Next part of this chapter will explain the minor in more detailed manner. (Fontys Portal, 2015.)

2.2.2 Fontys Minor

On 6th semester on FIBS, students need to choose minor studies from three options. Each minor program is total of 30 credits.

Minor International Business Management (IBM)
IBM consists three courses: International business management, Individual research project and a third course that is chosen from the following options: International Marketing for Marketers, International Marketing for non-Marketers, Enterprise Recourse planning or Internal Control and Quality Management

Minor Euregional Business Management (EBM)
Also Minor in Euregional studies has three courses: Euregional Management, Euregional Business Culture and a foreign language course. In Euregional Minor, lectures are offered in a mixture of Dutch, German and English languages.

Minor Abroad
FIBS students can study their minor in Fontys partner universities all around the world. This is possible due to the partnership with other universities and ERASMUS program (European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students). Majority of the students decides

to study abroad and FIBS also encourages students to choose the minor abroad. (Fontys Portal, 2015.)

Minor in the International Business Management is very internationally motivated course module. Lecturers are chosen so that they are the best fit to respond the international needs of the students and often have some practical experience from multinational corporations. Minor has been designed to meet the educational skills that other students gain from their exchange semester abroad for students studying their minor in the home campus.

2.2.3 Incoming Exchange Students

Incoming exchange students can choose from a large variety of programs and are participating to the courses in a normal classroom setting amongst full-time students. Programs are fixed and exchange students cannot combine courses from other exchange programs. All the exchange programs are 30 ECTS and as an addition students can choose English and Dutch language courses. (Fontys Venlo 2015.)

Also the Minor programs are offered to the exchange students. Minor programs are really suitable for exchange students as the program is designed to fulfil the full-time students' semester abroad. The program is planned on the basis of international atmosphere and practical learning. Everyone attending to the Minor is new in the class which makes integration of the exchange students as part of the class easier than in other programs, where classes have been formulated in the first year of the studies. In other programs, worst case scenario students need to integrate into a class that has been studying together for 3 years. Also lecturers are more aware of the exchange students attending to the Minor program and can compensate this into their teaching, as students from different universities might have different educational foundation than Fontys students. This is not always possible in the other course modules. (Melis van, interview 18.9.2015.)

Exchange students can get an accommodation arranged by Fontys or choose to look for their accommodation by themselves. Students live in the close location of the campus Venlo and usually use bikes to move around the city. Exchange students who come from the Fontys partner universities do not have to pay fees. Other incoming exchange students pay fee of 70€ per ETCS. All exchange students get a "buddy" to help and support them during their stay in Venlo. Buddies are full-time students, usually from their second or third year of studies. (Fontys Venlo 2015.

3 PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

"The student population from various foreign countries at the Fontys campuses adds to the learning and social experience, with an opportunity to study and interact with students from a wide range of cultural backgrounds" (Fontys Venlo, 2015).

For an International Business School like Fontys it is important to have multiple nationalities in the class room setting in order to ensure international learning experience for the students.

Like said earlier in the company description, incoming exchange students are participating to their courses in the normal classroom settings amongst the full-time students. Also it was mentioned that the Minor program is particularly suitable option for exchange students to choose because of the international atmosphere and practical learning methods offered in this program.

Daniël van Melis, the Course Coordinator of the Minor Program has faced a problem to get more balance between full-time students and exchange students in the Minor programs. He wishes that the Minor program would be chosen more often by the incoming exchange students.

At the moment approximately 25 exchange students per semester choose the Minor program from the FIBS offering, but Daniël van Melis would like to increase this number to 50 students. This project is concentrating on what is the current situation of the program and based on these findings; create recommendations to attract more students into the program. (Mëlis van, interview 18.9.2015.)

This project aims to give FIBS Minor coordinator Daniël van Melis answer to the management problem:
"How to attract more exchange students to the Minor program?"

Also he would like to receive answers for the following questions:

- Which concrete actions they could launch?
- Which students (and from which universities) should they address?
- Which information do they desire? Which information should be provided?
- How could they convince the students to choose Minor program? (Mëlis van, interview 18.9.2015.)

Purpose of this thesis is to answer these questions and give relevant and important knowledge for all the stakeholders in this project.

Stakeholders are: student (author), commissioning company (in this case university Fontys) and HAMK University of applied sciences. Student will be able to use and develop both practical and theoretical skills in real life

marketing case, commissioner will receive professionally executed research and recommendations and HAMK will receive important information about international learning environment and marketing in International Business Schools.

There are four objectives given for this project:

Objective 1: Theory- Student will review multiple sources to find relevant theories for the project. Basic marketing theories, strategic marketing and consumer behaviour theories are all studied carefully by the students to create knowledge and theoretical background to full-fill other project objectives and answer the research question.

Objective 2: Current situation- Analysing the current situation of the commissioning company will define a starting point for the project. This is done by interviewing the representative from the commissioning university and also conducting a survey amongst students participating to the relevant program. Also secondary data is used. From the data collected from these researches, the current situation of the program should be clear and fields in need of improvement clarified.

Objective 3: Problems and challenges- based on the situation analysis, problems and challenges in the Minor program are carefully analysed. It is important to have very clear picture of problems that the commissioning university is facing, and reasons behind it: solving these problems is the key for creating beneficial recommendations and answering the research question.

Objective 4: Recommendations- In the end, based on the previous steps, recommendations are created. This will give concrete actions for commissioning university to undertake in order to improve the Minor program. These recommendations will answer the research question and also other questions set by the commissioning university. All the actions should be useful also in practice and based on the research and theory used in this project.

3.1   Research Question and Methodology

The research question of this project is:

What are the concrete actions to undertake in order to attract more exchange students into the Minor program in the Fontys International Business School (FIBS)?

To answer the research question three different kind of research methods are used:

Literature Review
For this project literature is critically reviewed. This is extremely important for the focus and understanding of the research. Literature is col-

lected mainly from primary (reports, theses, emails, government publications) and secondary sources (journals, books, newspapers). In the book Research Methods for Business Students by Saunders it is stated that: *"Although you might feel that you already have a good knowledge of your research area, we believe that reviewing the literature is essential. Project assessment criteria usually require you to demonstrate awareness of current state of knowledge in your subject, its limitation, and how your research fits in this wider context."* (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009, 59.)

Interviews

In this research, interviews are non-standardised one-to one interviews conducted via e-mail or Skype conversations. Face-to-face interviews are not possible because of the long distance between the commissioner and the researcher. Interviews are conducted between the commissioning university and the student to find out the following data: resources available, ideas and needs of the commissioning organization and background information to create a survey for situation analysis. Also interviews will provide important background information for the research. (Saunders et al. 2009, 349-351.)

Survey and Usage of Secondary data

For this project, a survey is conducted to collect data about the current situation of the Minor program. Sample size is approximately 40 exchange students, both currently studying and former students of the Minor program. The survey is self-administered and distributed online through two channels: direct email to the students and through Facebook pages of the Fontys exchange students. There are three types of data variables that are collected with the survey: opinion, behaviour and attribute. With the opinion variables student's current feelings about the Minor program can be studied. With the behavioural variables reasons for choosing the Minor program and students' behaviour while choosing the program can be examined. With the attribute variables, the differences between behaviour and opinion attributes can be examined. For example, how information research about the exchange programs (behavioural attribute) differs between students from different countries (attribute). Survey includes both closed and open ended questions. However, to get the most reliable data, questions are mainly closed. Survey is online survey created with Google Forms and analysed with Google Forms and Microsoft excel. (Saunders et al. 2009, 363-385.)

Also secondary data is used in the research. The term secondary data means that data, already collected by others, is analysed. In this particularly project complied data is used, which means that the data is already analysed and published as a summary or in other forms by other researcher. As a secondary data source, publications, journal articles, organisations webpages, government publications and many more are used. The secondary data is used to create more solid foundation for the research due to the limitations of time and resources in this particular project. (Saunders et.al 2009, 256-259.)

4 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Marketing in Educational Institutions

Let us first begin with the definition of marketing for educational institutions from Philip Kotler:

"Marketing is the analysis, implementation, and control of carefully formulated programs designed to bring about voluntary exchanges of values whit target markets to achieve institutional objectives. Marketing involves designing the institutions offerings to meet the target markets' needs and desires, and using effective pricing, communication and distribution to inform, motivate, and service these markets." (Kotler & Fox, 1995, 6.)

Exchange is the key when it comes to marketing for educational institutions: exchange is used to receive the needed resources (tuition fees, tax euros, donations etc.). As a return from these resources educational institution offers their services to students (courses, programs, degree). (Kotler & Fox 1995, 3-9.)
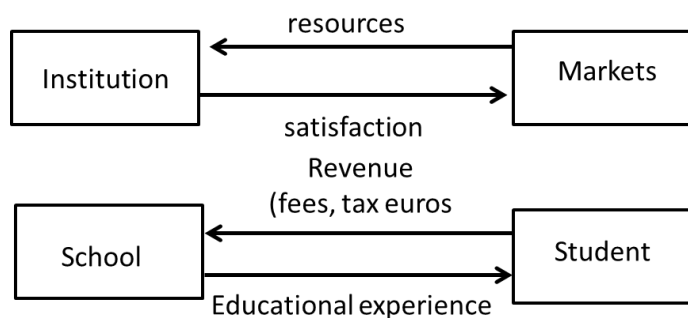
Figure 1   Exchange between educational institution and students (Kotler & Fox 1995, 7).

The basic idea in this exchange is: Customer gives something they value for the organization to receive certain benefits; customer will choose the alternative (including the possibility of choosing nothing) which ratio of benefits to possible cost is the best. Marketers need to ensure that the promoted exchange is more beneficial to the customer (student) than other alternatives. Other alternatives in educational institutions case are different programs and other institutions. All benefits to the customer are considered as cost for the marketer (advertising costs, creating value etcetera) and vice versa costs for the customer are benefits for the marketers (tuition fees, tax euros, donations, time and energy) (Kotler & Andreasen 1996, 25-111.)

Figure 2   Exchnage between marketer and customer (Kotler & Andreasen 1996, 111)

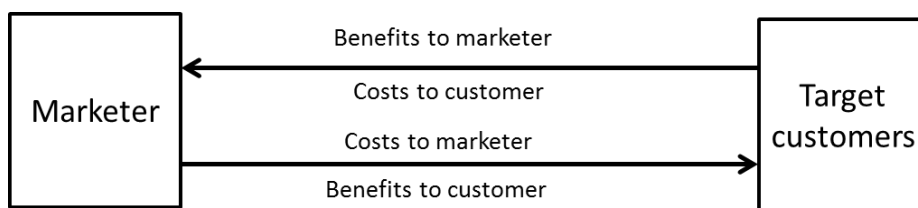Quotation: *"By offering something attractive, they acquire what they need in return."* explains this transaction between educational institutions and its stakeholders very accurately. The main goal is to receive needed resources; for example international students, by offering them interesting courses and high quality education in return. (Kotler & Fox, 1995, 6.)

In order to attract students and to get the needed resources as an exchange, educational institutions need marketing skills as much as businesses that make profit. This includes planning, implementation and control. Marketers need to do research about their customers in order to understand their needs and wants and create service that matches these values to fulfil students' needs. More importantly, these service that match students' needs and values, needs to be offered and communicated in the right places at the right time. It is clear that educational institutions marketing have to have a customer oriented focus in order to be attractive enough to the students. Like said already before, student will choose the option that brings the most benefits in lowest costs. (Kotler & Fox 1995, 3-8.)

Marketing for educational intuitions is important in order to survive in the competition. Students are beginning to act more like consumers. Because of the increasing competition and change in students' decision making process, educational institutions should take many factors into consideration when planning their marketing strategy.

Choosing a university is a big decision for a student, and has huge impact on their future. That is why students want to feel confident about the suitability of their chosen educational institution. Students do a lot of "post purchase" research before their decision. That is why educational institutions should provide information that the students need early in their school choice process.

Educational institutions, especially in higher educations should pay attention to their online presence by providing needed information in right places. Also the importance of social media should be recognised. It has noticed that many students use their mobile phones to look for information – however many institutions do not have mobile friendly websites or apps. (Bhupesh 2013.)

4.2   School Choice – Buyer Decision Process

According to Kotler deciding which school to choose is a very complex process. It is probably one of the most important decisions in young person's life with great affect in their career and future. Most of the everyday decisions are low involvement decisions. These are the everyday, low cost purchase that do not need much time consider or do not have high impact on a personal level. However educational decisions are high-involvement level decisions. High-involvement decisions have either one or many of the following conditions: It will reflect to consumer's self-image and have long-term consequences. The impact of the decision is relatively high and will involve economical or personal sacrifices. The risks of the decision are high and wrong decision might have significant consequences on student's life. Choosing an educational institution is highly complex and because of this very time consuming process. (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 252-254.)

However as said in the previous chapter, students are starting to behave more like an average consumer. Also as this project concentrates on the exchange students, the high complexity can be eliminated from the equation. The decision of an exchange university is only a short term decision and does not have such severe long term consequences as the decision of studying the complete degree in a certain university. That is why the regular buying process is far more suitable in this project than highly complex decision process. In the following buyer decision process students are referred as consumers.

Buyer decision process is a 5 stage process that consumers take when they are buying a product or a service. The model is introduced with all 5 stages, however in more routine purchases consumers can skip and/or reverse some stages.

Need recognition: In this first stage consumer recognizes a problem or a need. There are two triggers: Internal stimuli or external stimuli. Internal stimuli means needs or problems that arise from consumers normal needs like hunger, thirst etcetera. External stimuli are triggered by external factors like talk with a friend, or advertising. For example, if a person is not in a real need for clothes because of cold or other internal stimuli and still purchases a product because of appealing window display: need is triggered by external stimuli. It is important for markets to know which kind of needs or problems their product or service fulfils in their consumers' mind. Educational needs are influenced by culture and considered as external stimuli. (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 252-254.)

Information search: Second stage is where consumers search more information about the product. It is also possible that the consumer feels stimulated enough from the previous step that will go directly to the next stages. Consumers have many sources to get information from: personal sources like family and friends, commercial sources for example advertisements and sales people, public sources like mass media and internet search and experimental sources which means that consumer is testing the

actual product. The importance of personal sources is notable. Word-of-mouth has a huge impact on consumers' purchase decision. Also the information created by other consumers has huge influence and the influence has been increasing with the rise of social media. It has been studied that blogs, forums and other user generated sources are three times more influential than traditional marketing. For marketers this means that they should identify which sources are most beneficial for their product or service and what kind of information their consumers desire. (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 252-254.)

There are many influencers for educational decisions. Influencers can be parents, professional staff, friends, and faculty members, etcetera. (Kotler & Fox 1995, 258.)

Evaluation of alternatives: In the third stage consumers evaluates the brand alternatives based on the information they have received. This process varies individually from consumer to consumer and is also dependable of the situation. For example some consumers are more analytical and also this reflects on their information process. Some consumers relay more on feeling and intuition. However in different situation, for example making a decision of a very expensive product, this same consumer might go for a more analytical way of making the decision. Factors driving these needs can be explained by Maslow's theory about hierarchy of needs. In this project instead of the traditional view of hierarchy of needs, hierarchy of need is viewed revised. More about this model can be read in chapter: Values Driven Marketing. (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 252-254.)

Purchase decision: In this stage consumer decides which brand, product or service to purchase. There are still two factors that can influence their decision: attitude of others and unexpected situational factors. For example if your friend thinks the product you are purchasing is too expensive, your chances to go for a cheaper alternative increase. Unexpected situational mean changes in expected income, expected price, and expected product benefits.

Let us assume that student's parents are funding the education. For example students' parents think school's tuition fees are too expensive, chances to choose a cheaper alternative increase. For example student's parents get smaller salary this year than expected and this situation affects the choice to go for a cheaper alternative. (Kotler & Fox 1995, 258-263.)

Post purchase behaviour: After purchasing the product or a service consumers are either satisfied or dissatisfied with their decision. For example dissatisfied customer will tell about their bad experience about the service they received in a hairdresser – bad word-of-mouth which is very bad advertisement for a company. Or a satisfied customer writes a good review of the product to her blog and the followers are influenced and also want to try the product - good advertisement for the company.
Explained in the educational institution's point of view, after purchasing the product or a service (university program) consumers (student) are either satisfied or dissatisfied with their decision. For example dissatisfied

students will tell about their bad experience about their exchange year in their home university – bad word-of-mouth which is very bad advertisement for the university. Or a satisfied student writes a blog of a very successful exchange semester and followers are influenced and also want to enrol for this exchange program - good advertisement for the university. (Kottler & Armstrong 2012, 252-254).

4.3   Value Driven Marketing

To better understand value driven marketing it is better to start by introducing the two other stages of Marketing: Product centric era and customer oriented era.

Product centric era: Best example of this era is Henry Ford's model T where "Any customer can have a car painted in any colour that he wants as long as it is black." In product centric era standardised basic products were sold to the mass markets. Most important thing was to produce in big scale with low manufacturing costs in order to offer the lowest price possible to the consumers. (Kotler 2010, 3-5).

Customer oriented era: "Customer is the king" and they can choose from wide range of products with alternative of characteristics. Consumers have different tastes and preferences and products are developed to fulfil the needs of different market segments. Marketers are appealing to consumers' mind and heart, while consumers are not engaged in marketing and are playing rather passive part as the targets of the marketing campaigns. (Kotler 2010, 3-5).

Values driven era: Instead of just approaching consumers' minds and hearts, Values driven era is also aiming for fulfilling the needs of a human spirits. As consumers are seeking for solutions to make the globalized world a better place, values driven era answers these consumer needs by reflecting companies operations on social, economic and environmental changes. In values driven era companies differentiate by their values. There are 3 major forces that are affecting more companies to exploit values driven era and these are introduced in next section of this chapter. (Kotler 2010, 3-5).

Participation and Collaborative Marketing
The age of participation and collaborative marketing has developed as technology has changed. Consumers can buy computers and mobile phones in reasonable price and internet is cheap and connectable in almost everywhere in the world. Today, consumers are not just isolated individuals; they are connected to each other and able to interact individually or in groups by using new technologies.

Usage of social media has come part of people's everyday life and it has also been noticed in the business world today. Consumers are no longer just consumers; they also create news, ideas and entertainment using social and collaborative media. In social media like Facebook, blogs, Twit-

ter, YouTube, and Instagram users publish their own content to the page or application. In collaborative social media like Wikipedia or Craigslist users are creating the content in collaboration with the provider. Because of the age of participation and collaborative marketing, marketers no longer have the full control of the brand as consumers are active, informed and influenced by other consumers. (Kotler 2010 5-12).

Globalization and Cultural Marketing
Globalization is also driven by technology; exchange of information between nations, corporation and individuals is relatively easy these days. Cultural brands can address many social, economic and environmental issues that society is facing today. This leads to a situation where companies need to adapt cultural differences into their business model and understand issues in communities that are related to their business. Consumers are feeling the pressure of conflicting values rising from the globalization and being locally responsive at the same time. It is important that marketers understand different cultures and local communities at the same time and respond to both of these needs simultaneously. (Kotler 2010, 12-17).

Creative Society and Human Spirit Marketing
People in creative society are those people who work in science, art and professional services. Even though there are less creative people in the society than working class, their role is dominant and influences other consumers' lifestyles and attitudes. These creative people are the ones who take the most out of social media and often act as the innovators, creating new ideas and bringing them into awareness of the masses. Creative society is growing and more and more people adapt artistic way of living, people are looking for spiritual fulfilment. Actually, it seems that spirituality and self-actualization is replacing survival as the primal need of human beings. The creative society is looking for brands that are collaborating with consumers and realising importance of their cultural values. It has been noticed that spiritual motivation can be adapted to the company's business models and companies who are implementing value driven marketing, bring their social, economic and cultural values as part of the corporate culture. (Kotler 2010, 18-21).

Hierarchy of needs is a theory of why people are driven by certain needs on a certain time. It is created by Abraham Maslow, and it is sometimes connected to value driven marketing, however it is viewed upside down. Basically if an individual satisfies one set of needs, he will move to the next in order to elicit greater motivation. People would try to satisfy their needs, step by step starting from physiological needs moving to safety needs, social needs, esteem needs and finally to self-actualization. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012, p. 148)

When Hierarchy of need is viewed reversed it turns self-actualisation as the prime need of a human being. This way of examining the Maslow's hierarchy of needs has become more popular especially amongst creative people and fulfilling the needs of the heart, mind and human spirit more important to businesses today. (Kotler 2010, 20).
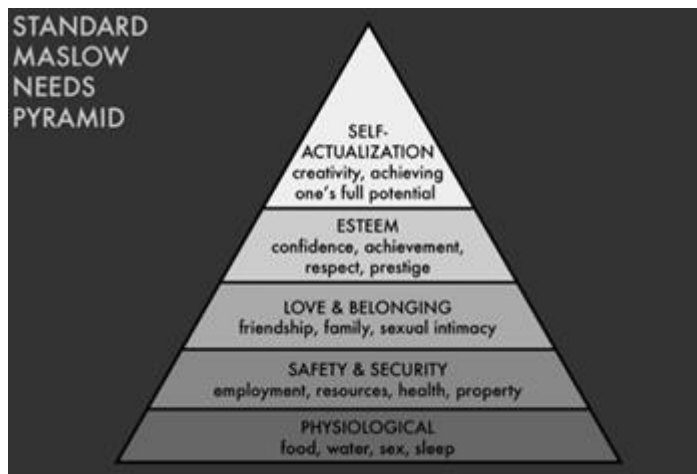
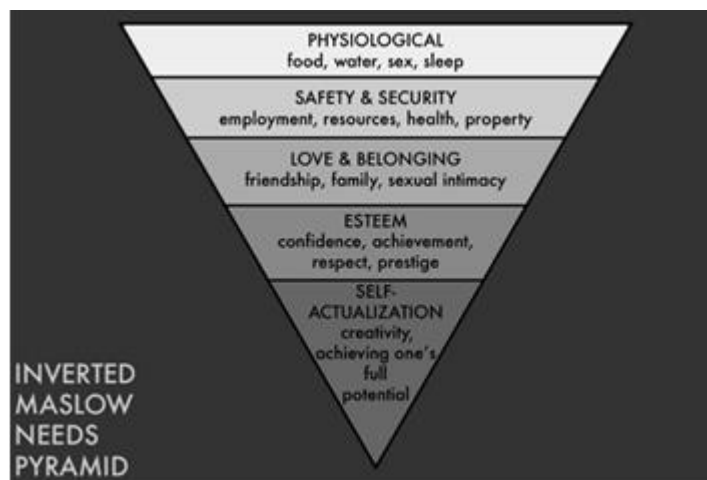Figure 3 Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Simpson 2012.)

Figure 4 Maslow's hierarchy of needs inverted (Simpson 2012.)

4.3.1 Experience Economy and Co-creation of Value

Companies have realised the importance of satisfying their customers' needs. However, now companies have realized that consumers want something more aspirational and personal. This is called experience economy which basic concept is that customizing turn's product into a service. The change in economics and consumer behaviour from product-centric era to experience-centric leads to an age where co-creation of value and unique experience will act as a competitive advantage of the company. (Kotler et.al 2009, 409).

New way in marketing is to think that all companies are in fact service companies despite if they are working in a service industry or not. This so called "new dominant logic" suggests that a company, institution or organization does not offer value to consumer; instead it is co-created with the consumer. This means that the consumer shapes their experience of the product or a service offered. A very good example of new dominant logic is the car industry. Without the consumer's ability to drive the vehicle, there is no value from the car to the consumers. But when the consumer can drive and use the car as a vehicle to move from one place to another,

the car has value. The value creation needed both parties: the car and consumers' ability to benefit from the product.

Consumers should be involved in the creation of the product or a service right from the beginning. Like this, consumers are involved and engaged to the creation of the brand and it is possible to appeal to their spiritual fulfilment needs. (Kotler et.al 2009, 9, 24, 409, 453.)

Steps in the co-creation process:

1. Defining clear objectives for the project.
2. Map who are the right customers to be involved in co-creation project.
3. Working together with the customer in order to find out what they really want from the market offering of product or service.
4. Create market offerings based on these customer needs.
5. Share the customer experience through different channels.
6. Change management- there might be resistance from seller, buyer or partners from product-centric to experience-centric view.

(Kotler et.al 2009, 409.)

4.3.2 Services Marketing

In the beginning it is important to explain the term: Services Marketing. Services are: *"All economic activities whose output is not physical product or construction, is generally consumed at the time it is produced, and provides added value in forms (such as amusement, timeliness, comfort and health) that are essentially intangible concerns of its first purchaser."* (Zeithaml & Bitner 2012, 5.)

And why is services marketing so important? Service sector in Europe accounts 70% of the GDP and 2/3 of the jobs. Service sector is also growing; 9 out of 10 new jobs are created in the service sector. (European Commission 2015).

Services have 4 characters that have an influence on marketing activities: Intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability and perishability.

Intangibility: As services are deeds, processes and performances it cannot be seen, tasted, felt or touched like tangible products. As an example: Students in a classroom receive knowledge from their teacher. Even they can touch and feel some tangible elements like the classroom or equipment, service, in this case knowledge, cannot be touched, felt, seen or tasted. (Zeithaml & Bitner 2012, 16-18.)

Heterogeneity: Heterogeneity means that none of the services are precisely alike. There is always the human factor influencing the process. None of the people performing or receiving the service are completely alike. Let us use the same example about education again: Students receive same lecture from the same lecturer at the same time. This means the service deliv-

ered is exactly the same. However, personal differences in students' background, knowledge and learning styles are different. As an end result students might remember and learn different things from the same lesson. (Zeithaml & Bitner 2012, 16-18.)

Inseparability: Inseparability means that services are produced and consumed at the same time. Service producer is essential part of the "product" and has a big influence on consumer's service experience. In education this means for example that the education cannot be provided if the teacher is not present in the classroom. Online learning where students study without direct contact to the teacher is becoming more popular but service is still inseparable; teacher is still needed to create the material, give feedback, answer questions and correct assignments and exams. (Zeithaml & Bitner 2012, 16-18.)

Perishability: Services cannot be stored, resold or returned. For example lectures cannot be stored for another time or delivering absolutely alike lectures to students is impossible. Also if students are unhappy with the quality of the lecture they cannot return the already received lecture. (Zeithaml & Bitner 2012, 16-18.)

Services Marketing Mix

Marketing mix is one of the most basic concepts in marketing. Let us begin with the explanation of the term Marketing mix:

"Marketing mix: The set of tactical marketing tools- product, price, place, and promotion-that the firm blends to produce the response it wants in the target market." (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 51).

These four P's are used as core variables in many marketing actions like marketing plans and decisions.

Product: Product means everything company is offering to its customers. It includes everything from the product design to the brand name and packaging.

Price: Price is the amount of money customer needs to pay the company to purchase the goods. This part of the marketing mix includes all pricing aspects from setting up the price of the goods to discounts and payment methods.

Place: Place does not only include the concrete location of the facilities but also logistics and transportation, channels and coverage.

Promotion: Promotion part of the marketing mix concentrates on the advertisement, sales promotions and public relations. (Kotler & Armstrong 2012 51-52).

The Extended Service Marketing Mix

As explained previously in this chapter marketing of services differs from marketing of tangible products. That is why extended marketing mix for services was created. Services marketing mix includes the same 4 P's as the traditional marketing mix, with 3 additional P's extending service marketing mix to 7 P's. These 3 additional P's are: People, Physical evidence and Process. (Zeithaml & Bitner 2012, 21).

People: As services are intangible, heterogeneous, inseparable and perishable the human factor has huge influence on the service experience of the customer. Everything from the personnel performing the service, customer itself to other customers have an effect that leads either to positive or negative result. Everything from personal appearance, attitude and behaviour reflects to the service. As an example, educational institution people included in the marketing mix are all the staff on the campus from the librarian, cleaning staff and teachers to the head of the whole institution. Also student themselves and other students have an effect on the service experience. (Zeithaml & Bitner 2012, 21-23).

Physical evidence: Service itself is intangible and customers cannot touch, feel, see or taste it. Physical evidence includes all the tangible aspects related to service. For example it includes everything from the facilities, decorations, furniture, equipment, business cards and uniforms to the brochures etcetera. As services are intangible these tangible aspects are extremely important role in delivering company's message to their customers. In educational institution this would mean the campus: decoration, furniture and lighting, classrooms, equipment: computers, printers etc., and the physical appearance of the staff: for example in business school that lecturers dress up accordingly. (Zeithaml & Bitner 2012, 21-23).

Process: Process means the actual steps that customer needs to take in service process from the beginning of the service until the end of the process. From the flow of these possesses customer can evaluate the success and satisfactory level of their experience. For an educational institution good example could be one course during one semester: Process start from enrolling to the course, continuing with the teaching and ending in the final exams. Student's satisfaction probably is highly attached to the easiness and successfulness of this process flow. (Zeithaml & Bitner 2012, 21-23)

4.4 Content Marketing

Definition of content marketing*:*
"Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly-defined audience — and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action." (Content marketing institute, no date).

When it comes to content marketing for non-profit organizations, definition is slightly different:

"Content marketing for non-profits is creating and sharing relevant and valuable content that attracts, motivates, engages, and inspires your participants, supporters, and influencers to help you achieve your mission." (Miller, 2013).

It is possible to see that for the non-profit organization providing relevant content is even more important than to the companies seeking profits: stakeholder need to be engaged in a spiritual level so that the organization will receive important recourses in return and will reach their mission.

As this project is concentrated on educational institution, the definition of content marketing for non-profit organizations would be more accurate.

Content is everything companies and organizations create to communicate with their customers and other associates: direct mail, articles, web pages, social media and many more. (Miller 2013, xxvi.)

However, instead of pushing all this content to people, it should be used to attract and pull the people towards the company; this is called a content marketing strategy. And why is pull better than pull? Pushing information into people's screens is interruptive. People who are receiving the content pushed into their screens or mailboxes will have a negative feeling. Instead companies and organisations should try to become the information source for their consumers and by providing right information, attract more visitors and customers. Creating interesting content is the key to become important source of information for the customers. Like mentioned before, content should pull the consumer towards the organization and consumers should be engaged in the creation of content. (Miller 2013, 4, 25-27.)

Consumers are looking for education and entertainment from different kind of channels. Many times this kind content is created by brands and their followers; this means consumers are communicating with brands and consuming content that they are providing, even before the purchase decision. Consumers can be influenced easier and earlier in their purchase decision process. (Odden 2012, 53.)

"Engagement means getting people to interact with your organization in ways that build a relationship between you and your organisation, so they are more likely to follow through on actions that help you achieve your mission." (Miller 2013, 4).

Instead of just publishing articles, updates and other marketing content randomly, with content marketing strategy, organisation will systematically create and publish material which all are a part of larger story in other words the mission and vision of the organization. (Miller 2013, 31)

Companies should develop their content marketing strategy before social media strategy. The purpose of the content marketing strategy is to consistently create, communicate and distribute interesting stories to the target audience. Social media is used to share these stories and as anyone can be a publisher there is a huge number of interesting stories to compete against. Without interesting stories social media would not be attractive place to people to interact. You can read about motivations why people join social networks from chapter 4.5.1 social media marketing. With content media plan marketers ensure that the stories are consistent to the message of the brand and also interesting enough to attract and retain customers and other supporters. (Redsicker 2011).

Content marketing plan includes the following 6 steps:

1. Setting objectives
SMART is a good rule of thumb when it comes to setting up objectives: S: Specific: using specific small objectives, goals are easier to reach and monitor than very broad objectives. M: Measurable: Measurable in numerable or other specific ways. A: Attainable: Goal should not be too easy, but still possible to reach. Working for a goal that is not achievable is not motivating. R: Relevant: Objectives should be chosen in a way that they really have impact on the outcome. T: Time bound: Setting up deadlines for measuring the results or actions. (Miller 2013, 69-71.)

2. Defining the audience
Target audience is consuming, creating and sharing companys content. Content should fit the target audience persona and that is why it is importan to define carefully what kind traget audience content is created for. (Odden 2012, 55-56.)

3. Creating the content plan
How to reach the objectives by creating content for the target audience? Content plan should answer this question. Content plan includes all the actions to overtake in order the company to reach the objectives. (Odden 2012, 103.)

4. Promotion
Promotion is the execution of the content marketing plan. Content is published according to the plan and consumed and shared by the target audience. (Odden 2012, 55-56.)

5. Engagement
Companies want to build their social networks. This can be done by listening to target audience, engaging them by sharing and participation. (Odden 2012, 56.)

6. Measurement
The effects of actions taken should be measured and monitored. (Odden 2012, 56).

As already said in chapter Values Driven Marketing, consumers are look-ing for companies and organizations to fulfil their spiritual needs. Organi-sations need to connect to their customers in order to get the attention. When it comes to non-profit organizations this is even more important: In business sector the main goal is to create sales. Non-profit organizations on the other hand want to attract, engage and involve their customers in order to get them to participating programs, change behaviour and spread the organisations mission by word-of-mouth marketing. To reach this, stakeholders needs to be reached in the spiritual level. (Miller 2013, 43-47).

"How you tap into that human spirit and get people inspired and motivat-ed to act has little to do channels you use." (Miller 2013, 9). Content is the key element for non-profit marketing: organizations should use chan-nels that fit their content marketing plan, and the key is to offer content that pulls customers towards the organization. Even using multiple mar-keting channels the main message of all the content should remain the same. As technology has changed, importance of the social media has in-creased its popularity. However, social media is only a marketing tool and also in social media marketing, right content needs to be produced first. (Miller 2013, 8-13, 32).

Content Types

Like said earlier in this chapter, content is all the communication pieces companies create for their customers. There is great amount of different content types. Content type should be chosen based on the resources avail-able for the creation and according to target audiences' preferences. (Odden 2012, 107-109.)

It has already been mentioned before that content and marketing channel should be chosen based on the target audience. Also the consumer buying process should be taken into consideration. Depending of which part of the buying process company wants to influence, different content types and communication methods should be used. The method is also dependant on organisations content strategy and objectives.

Table 1   Types of content and methods of communication (Own illustration based on Odden 2012 12-13).

	Awareness	Consideration	Purchase	Service	Loyalty
Content type/ communica tion methods	• Public relations • Advertising • Word of Mouth • Social Media	• Search marketing • Advertising • Social Media • Webinars • Product and service reviews • Blogs • Direct response	• Website • Social commerce	• Social Media • Social CRM • Online messaging • E-mail • Search	• Newsletter • Webinars • Blogs • Social networks • Forum/community

Blogs

Blogs are stories/articles/reviews etcetera published in webpage. Blogs are published regularly and can be created either by an individual or corporate author. Publications made by individuals can be considered as word-of-mouth marketing. Many companies offer their products to famous bloggers in order to get them to write about it in their blogs. This is a good way of advertising but also risky: companies cannot regulate what individuals write in their blogs so bad reviews and publicity is possible.

Corporate blog is a blog updated by corporate author. Publications can be anything from interviews with customers, articles etcetera. However, it is important to remember the consistency of publications with company's content strategy. (Wijnen, lecture 24.5.2015.)

Testimonials

Testiomonial is usually given by a customer but also can be given by some other relevant stakeholder for the company or organisation. It is a formal statement and can be added to company webpage, blog or social media channels. For example educational institution can publish statements given by their students. Pictures, name, age and other details about the person giving the statement streghtens the message and realibility of the statement. It also helps the reader to relate more to the person who has given the testimonial. (Wijnen, lecture 24.5.2015.)

Video

Videos are a great way to spread the company's story visually. In a video, message can be presented in a faster and sometimes more interseting way to target audience.Videos are also a good way to present different kind of feelings: it is sometimes harder in a written format. (Wijnen, lecture 24.5.2015.)

Infographic

Infographic is a visual illustation of information. It usually contains a lot of numerical data, but this data is illustrated in easily understandable way by using pictures, text boxes, figures etcetera (Appendix 6). (Wijnen, lecture 24.5.2015.)

Mobile application/content

Mobile internet usage has increased tremendiously last years. (Statista 2015.) Based on this it is extremely important for companies to assure that their webpage and other online marketing tools are suitable for mobile use. Organizations can create fun and easy to use applications related to their product or a service. It is a great way to attract and retain customers. (Wijnen, lecture 24.5.2015.)

4.5   Content Tools

4.5.1   Social Media Marketing

Social media has become a huge part of people's everyday life. However let us revise the definition of social media: *"Social media is a collection of web pages and applications that are designed to allow users to interact with their friends. "* (Brown 2012, xvii).

Social media allows individuals to share and communicate content with their friends and social networks. In these social media platforms users become the publisher of the content. (Treadaway & Smith 2012, 26)

Social media on its own without content marketing strategy does not bring customers; consumers do not join social networks to make purchace decisions. (Odden 2012, 40-42). Motivations to belong in social network are influenced at least one of the following factors:

- Love: Finding love or keeping contact with the loved ones.
- Self-expression and emotions
- Sharing opinions and influencing others
- Showing off achievements and success in life
- Humour / Fun
- Keeping in contact with old friends
- Using social media for professional growth / success

(Treadaway & Smith 2012, 32).

However, it is vital that companies take social media as a part of the organisations multichannel marketing. Like this companies can engage customers, create collaboration and content. By applying social media marketing visely companies might receive huge benefits which can be for example:

- Brand awareness
- Brand confidence
- Influence on purchase decision
- Get supporters and followers
- Referrals (word-of-mouth marketing)
- Customer service (serice recovery)

(Odden 2012, 40-41).

Using social media as a marketing- and communication channel for educational institutions has tremendously increased in last few years. In a study made by University of Massachusetts it was founded out that 100% of the universities use some sort of social media. 84% of universities use twitter and 98% Facebook. (Silverman 2012).

It has also founded out that today's higher institution students are expecting two-way communication and engagement from the educational institutions social media channels. Like stated earlier in the content marketing

chapter, social media should be the publishing channel for the content that pulls the students towards the organisation, instead of just pushing information into their screens. (Bhupesh 2014).

There are several opportunities how organizations can engage their customers and communicate through social media. Bad experiences spread fast. When people share their bad experience in social media channel, organisation has a good opportunity to work on the situation fast and turn unsatisfied customer into a satisfied one. On the other hand when customers give good feedback or praise organizations product or service online it can be used as a reinforcement of good company image (see also viral marketing). Organizations should also adopt a recommendations strategy. Publishing testimonials online can be used as a tool to manage feedback. (Treadaway & Smith 2012, 48-49).

Five reasons how social media can engage students:

1. Connectivity: Social media helps the connectivity between the student and the educational institution. (Web Chanakya nd).

   According to Jeff Berg, Senior Social Strategist of Peterson's Interactive & CUnet, 51% of students want to be contacted by their educational institution through social media. (Berg 2012).

2. Community building: Social media can be used to networking and lead to better industry exposure.

3. Knowledge and discussion: In social media students, educational institutions and other affiliates can give and receive the knowledge on hand.

4. Parental involvement: Also parents can be involved in student's life and be more informed about the activities within the educational institution.

5. Visibility: 65% of population search educational information online. This means that the educational institutions that actively use social media have the advantage of being more visible than the possible rivals who are not actively applying social media features. (Web Chanakya nd).

Social Media channels

Facebook: Facebook has become the number one social media channel. 55% of the users log into their Facebook account first thing they go online. As users find Facebook so important so should the companies; almost all companies have their own Facebook page and even their traditional advertisements are directing consumers to visit their Facebook page. (Treadaway & Smith 2012, 13-14)

In 2nd quarter of 2015 Facebook had 1,490 million active users (Active users are users who have locked into their accounts in last 30 days). In 2010 Facebook had only 100 million active users and has been rapidly growing since 2008. (Statista, 2015).

In Facebook users can connect with their friends and family and share status updates, likes and join groups. For organizations and brands Facebook offers many opportunities like:

- one-to one, one-to-many and many- to-many conversations with their customers and followers
- Relationship building with individuals
- Mapping interest of customers and followers
- Share content
- Promotion
- Interaction with customers and followers

(Odden 2012, 163-166.)

Twitter: Twitter is a website created for micro blogging: users can publish maximum 140-character messages in their profile. These messages are called tweets. Twitter is popular amongst celebrities and politicians who can publish real-time opinions and news for their followers. In fact the most followed accounts are not brands but individuals known for the public. Top three in Twitter in September 2015 was Katy Perry, Justin Bieber and Barack Obama. (Twitter counter, 2015)

Opportunities twitter can offer for organizations:

- Target to clients more effectively
- Observing competitors activity and connections
- Real time Q&A for customers
- Twitter chats
- Content marketing

(Odden 2012, 168-170.)

Snapchat: Snapchat is a mobile app where users send pictures and videos for the chosen people who they are connected with. Message shows up in a screen for chosen time and other users answer with pictures, videos or messages. In a simplest way formulated Snapchat is a picture chat where sent message only appear for a short period of time. (Betters, E. 2015.)

Websites: Recent studies have shown that the students applying to universities are so called "secret shoppers". This means that student takes no contact to university before actually enrolling, but students are still searching for information from their online channels, like webpage and social media channels. In a study made 2010, 24% of college bound high school seniors have ruled out possible colleges because of their experience of the institutions webpage. Also 65% of the students reported that their opinion of certain college improved by the impact of the institutions webpage. (Noel-Leviz, 2010).

Organizations webpage is a very important marketing tool. Organizations want to ensure consumers to repeat visits to their page. This can be done by offering right content to target markets, content factors and constant change of a webpage. (Kotler, et al. 2009, 754)

Webpages should have direct links to the pages where content is published, to ensure easy process for customer to find out information they need. For example company or institution webpage should have direct link to their Facebook page. (Odden 2012, 133-134.)

Consumers will evaluate their experience about the website performance by 3 attributes:

1. The site downloads quickly
2. First page is easy to understand
3. Easiness to navigate to other pages that open quickly

And websites physical attractiveness by following factors:

1. Pages are clean and not crammed with content
2. Typefaces and font size is readable
3. Use of colour and sound

(Kotler et al 2009, 754.)

4.5.2 Word-of- Mouth Marketing (WOM)

Studies have shown that word-of-mouth marketing have a huge effect on companies' success. It is particularly important for small companies with more personal relationship with their customers. Usage of social media like Facebook and Twitter has created an environment where communication between companies, customers and other affiliates is easy. Word-of-mouth can be divided into two categories: Buzz and viral marketing. In buzz marketing information about market offering of a product or a service is revealed only for few customers. These consumers are willing to positively spread the word of the product or a service simply because of the factor of being chosen for the "inner circle". (Kotler et al. 2009, 703-704.)

Viral marketing is another form of word-of-mouth marketing. In viral marketing advertisement message is spread by consumers online. Marketing managers can use the influence of their current customers to promote service to the prospective customers or post the advertisement in different channels. In these cases content and marketing channel has to match up with the prospective customer profile. A very good example of the viral marketing is Hotmail: In the end of every e-mail that their customers send to their friends, family and other connections, an advertisement of free Hotmail account appears. Like this marketing message is spread every time a customer uses Hotmail service. (Kotler et al. 2009,130, 703-704.)

Social media has made viral marketing very easy in these days. As people are more connected, both good and bad experiences are much easier to share in social media. Today people's lives are more open to others, mainly because of social media; choices, success and failures are shared in social networks. As social media is a very fast and reactive channel, usually reaching a big audience, consumers tend to use this channel for sharing. It is important for organizations to understand the fact that viral marketing can reach a huge audience and also bad publicity can spread quickly. Viral marketing cannot be forced; by doing so it might have the reversed expected effect and result negatively on organizations image. (Treadaway & Smith 2012, 47-48.)

5 CURRENT SITUATION OF FONTYS MINOR

5.1 Interview Results

Daniël van Melis, course coordinator of the Minor programs was interviewed about the current marketing situation of the program. The answers are summarised below, complete memo of the interview can be viewed in Appendix 2.

1. What kind of marketing channels are used to promote Minor program at the moment?
   - Marketing does not largely differ from the marketing activities of the other programs.
   - Exchange subscription procedure = Fontys information office communicates different program opportunities and other information to Fontys partner universities → partner universities deliver this information to their student.
   - Information brochure for prospective students (distributed by the partner universities to students who are interested to study in Fontys Venlo)
   - Word-of-mouth marketing
   - Promotion trips (Sweden and Eastern Europe)

2. Are there any specific universities where promotion is concentrated on? If yes, which ones and why?
   - At the moment there is no certain universities where promotion is concentrated on

3. What would you specify as the target market of the Minor program?
   - All prospective exchange students in Fontys partner universities. Target market is not limited to certain geographical areas.
   - However there have been many Mexican students attending Minor in previous semesters.

4. What would you think are the reasons Minor program is suitable for exchange students (maybe even better than other programs)?
   - Real international classroom setting
   - Lecturers with international experience and orientation
   - One semester program
   - Easy for students to integrate as everyone is new in the class
   - Interesting classes, concentrating on the latest developments
   - Interdisciplinary classroom settings
   - Focus on skills, knowledge and attitudes

5. Have there been any marketing activities promoting Minor programs suitability for exchange students?

- Marketing activities are concentrated in overall promoting of the Minor program with activities mentioned in question 1.

6. What kind of marketing activities you have already tried? Which ones worked and which ones did not?
   - Marketing activities mentioned in question one
   - Results have not been measurable or seen yet as Minor program did not have marketing strategy different from other programs.

7. How many exchange students are now in FIBS? How many in Minor programs? And what would be the target for minor program?
   - Minor program: 15 students in Autumn semester 2015
   - Target: double the amount of students per semester

5.2 Introduction to the Survey

A survey (Appendix 1) was created in order to map the current situation of communications and marketing channels used to promote Fontys University Minor programs. Also one goal was to get to know the information sources students use and would like to use, when they are looking for information about their prospective exchange university.

The sample was delimited to exchange students participating the Minor programs or exchange students who did participate the Minor program in the previous semesters. Survey was released on 25.9.2015 and closed on 19.10.2015, collecting responses approximately for three weeks. The Survey was distributed via e-mail to 39 students. Answers were also personally requested by the researcher from 10 students. Survey was also published in Facebook in Fontys exchange student group. The non-response rate cannot be calculated due to the fact that a definite amount of recipients cannot be confirmed.

Total of 36 students answered the survey. This can be examined as a reliable sample as Minor programs have approximately 20 exchange students attending to the program per semester. In the on-going autumn 2015 semester there are 15 exchange students attending to the program.

Survey had total 12 questions. 4 questions were list questions so that student can choose as many possibilities as they want from given options. This was due to the fact that all possible options regarding to marketing channels and communication wanted to be taken into consideration. 5 open ended questions were presented in order to get detailed answers. As the sample in this survey was relatively small, large amount of open ended questions were possible to be asked. To find out how many students would recommend Fontys Minor program, scale from 1 to 5 was used. Lastly, 2 questions were category questions with possibility to choose from only one category. Questions were mainly opinion and behavioural questions: the target sample was already well known (check chapter 5.2 Interview results) so there was no need to find out attribute variables. The survey was

designed in a way that it was as easy as possible to understand for the students. Choice sets were the same in list- and category questions so that respondents were familiar with the possibilities already after the first question. This also made answering the survey faster and easier for the respondent. Open ended questions were placed at the end of the survey to ensure that the respondent finished the survey and to reduce the possibility for non-response because of difficult questions at the beginning.

5.3   Introduction to the Secondary data

As the sample size was relatively small, 36 respondents, secondary data was used to support the findings from the survey. Two researches were used as the main source; 2015 E-expectations report by Ruffalo Noel-Levitz and 2015 E-expectations report by Ruffalo Noel-Leviz about International students.

E-expectations is a study made in collaboration with three sponsors: Ruffalo Noel Levitz, Omni Update, College Week Live and NRCCUA. For the study, more than 3000 US high school juniors and seniors answered their questions. Sample had 50% of respondents from each class level and also 50% between female and male participants. Study was implemented in 2015 and focusing on the online behaviour of students regarding educational institutions.

The report: How to Engage International Undergraduate and Graduate Students in the Admissions Process, is a study made 2015 also by Ruffalo Noel-Levitz and College Week Live. The survey had 2.700 respondents from 160 countries. Both graduate (bachelor) and undergraduate (master) students answered the survey. The study is concentrating on international students applying to study in the US, and their online behaviour and information research in their decision making process.

5.4   Analysis of the Survey and Secondary data

It was first determined which university students are from to find out an answer for the question: Which students (and from which universities) should Minor program address?

When examining the answers, there could not be seen clear evidence that the students in Minor program would come from some certain University or region. However, when examining universities by their location (which country the university is located in), results were clearer. 29% of the recipients were from Mexico. Second biggest group was Germany with 23% of recipients. Rest of the respondents were from different countries all representing 3-6% of the total sample. There are no significant findings about certain nationality or university students attending to minor program, expect for Mexicans and German students. With 29% of recipients being Mexicans and 23% of Germans we can state that they are the biggest group choosing Minor program. This also amplifies the statement from

Minor coordinator that Mexican students have shown interest towards Minor program.

When the students were asked about reasons why they chose the Minor program it was clear that the biggest influence was the course selection. Students were able to choose as many factors as they wished. It seems to be extremely important to students that the courses they select fit to the program they are having in their home universities. 61% of the respondent recorded that courses fit to their home university program was the reason to choose Minor program. *Interesting courses* was an important factor to half of the respondents. *International classroom* setting had influence on choosing minor program for 31% of the students. *Lecturers with international experience* seem to have little bit less influence as 19% of students recorded this factor to have influence on their decision and 11% of the students informed that their *home university decided the program* for them. *Everyone is new in the class* was not important as only 3% of the students decided to participate to the program because of this.
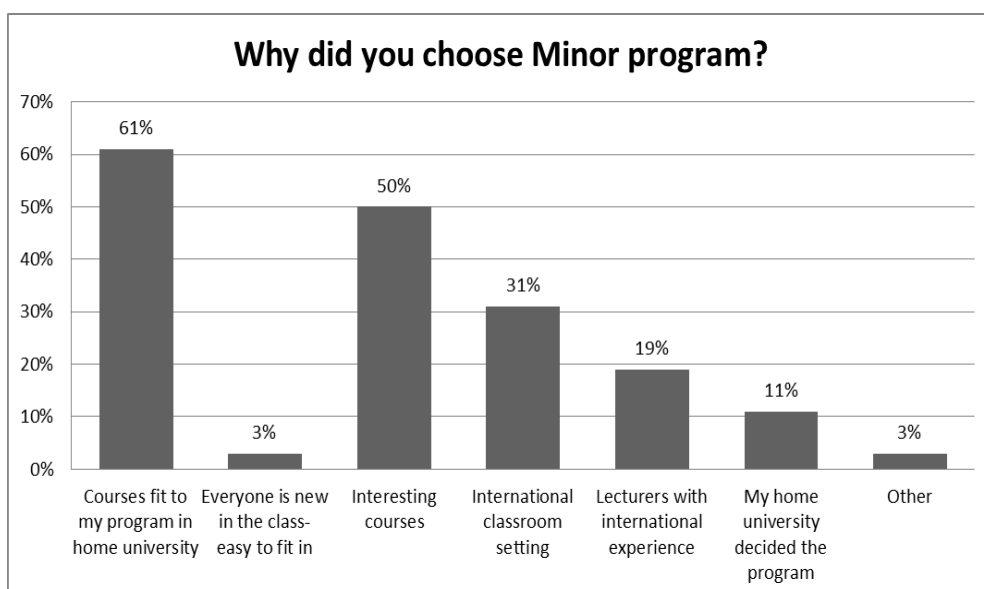

Figure 5   Fontys survey, Question: Why did you choose Minor program

Students were also asked to rank in a scale from 1 (not likely) to 5 (very likely) how likely they are going to recommend Fontys Minor for other students. Results were very encouraging for the Minor program: In average Minor program scored 3,9. Only 3% of the students were not likely to recommend Fontys Minor. No one chose 2 from the scale. 19% chose 3, 58% 4 *somewhat likely* and 19% 5 *very likely.* It seems that Minor students are satisfied to their program choice. This is also very encouraging as Minor coordinator Daniël van Melis mentioned that Word-of-mouth marketing is one of the marketing channels used at the moment. Students were also asked reasons why they would not recommend Fontys Minor. Only few students answered this non-mandatory open ended question. One student mentioned the reason to be the confusion about choosing a school in Eindhoven and ending up studying in Venlo. Also too much work for an

exchange semester was mentioned and that courses were not interested and did not meet up the expectations they had about them.

5.4.1 Information Search in Educational Institution Decision Process

A study made in 2010 reveals that students do not often contact institutions before applying. In 2010, 36,5% of students applying for 2-year public and 34,5% of students applying to 4-year public institution in US said that submitting their application was the first point of contact towards the educational institution. The phenomenon has become more common: In two years students applying to 2-year public institution are 11,5% more likely to not contact the institution prior applying, for 4-year public institution the difference is slightly less, 4,5%. (Noel-Levitz Report 2010, 3-4.)

The reason for this trend seems to be in the usage and development of the web and electronic media. Students do not have to inquire information directly from the institution because internet offers this information fast and easy. 74% of US College bound high school seniors said that they first look for information from the institution webpage. The importance of the website and other web tools for educational institutions is increasing. (Noel-Levitz Report 2010, 3-4.)

When looking at the results from the survey answered by exchange students from Fontys they first seem to hear about Fontys from their home university: 53% of the exchange students first heard about Fontys Minor program from their *home university database*. 19% of the students first heard about the Minor from *Fontys webpage*. 14% students heard about Fontys Minor from an information session arranged in their home universities and 8% heard about it from someone as word-of-mouth marketing. The exchange reports seemed to be the least possible source for first contact, however, the importance grows later in the information seeking process.
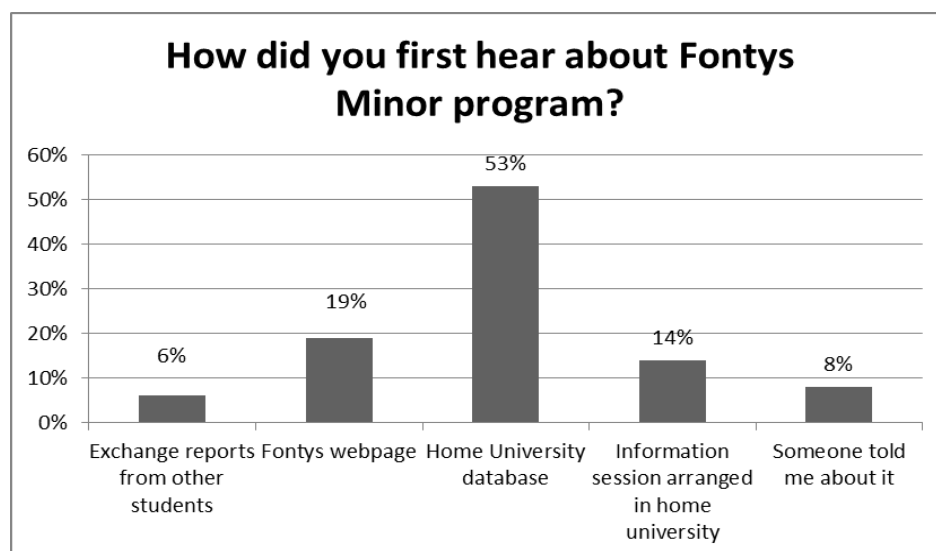

Figure 6   Fontys survey, Question: How did you first hear about Fontys Minor program?

Exchange students were also asked if someone told them about Fontys Minor, who was it? Teachers, friends and exchange coordinator were mentioned. It is clear that the home university is the most important source where students hear about Fontys Minor program for the first time.

When thinking about this data and study made by Ruffalo Noel- Levits, it is possible to state that there is higher possibility for Minor team to hear about the prospective students before they are applying to the program than in Ruffalo study: most of the exchange students come for Erasmus exchange from Fontys partner universities. This means that the exchange students need to choose their prospective exchange university from the list of partner universities offered by their own home university. That is why Erasmus exchange students first hear about Fontys from their home university. Basically, Fontys Minor teams level of knowledge about the prospective exchange students depends largely on the activity of the students and partner universities.(HAMK n.d.)

However, after the first contact, information search was similar to the findings from the other reports: In the study made by Ruffalo Noel Levitz and CollegeWeekLive, undergraduate students ranked *websites* 4.22 and graduate students 4.32 as the most influential resource for international students (Scale from 1 to 5 where 5 is most influential). *College rankings* came as a second influential source (ug: 4.12, g: 4.26) following *the college search sites* (ug: 3.89, g: 3.93). *College brochures* and *social media sites* all scored above 3.4 from both undergraduate and graduate students. (Ruffalo Noel Levitz & CollegeWeekLive 2015, 7.)

It is clear that the educational institution webpage has a huge role in the information search process when students are searching for their prospective institution. Noel and Levitz report that the impact of the college webpage is significant: 78% of college seniors and 77% of college juniors in US stated that college webpage has an impact for their perception about the institution. Only 22% of senior students and 23% of juniors say that the webpage does not influence their perceptions. (Ruffalo Noel Levitz, OmniUpdate, CollegeWeekLive, & NRCCUA 2015, 3.)

When Fontys students were asked about the information search, Fontys webpage was also clearly the most important information source, 81% of the students are looking for information from the webpage. Like said earlier in this chapter, online channels do give students the possibility to access information they need fast, so direct contact to prospective university is decreasing. *Home university database* was the second important source with 36% of students. Already we can see that even students do not first find out about their prospective exchange university from the exchange reports, later they are looking for information from this source. 28% of the exchange students looked for information from exchange reports written by other students. This really gives a clear picture how important information sources home universities are for their students. There is clear evidence that by influencing the materials (data and information) provided to the Fontys partner universities it could be possible to influence the amount of exchange students choosing the Minor program. The only difference to

the Noel-Levitz research is that only 14% of Fontys students looked for information from social media channels when in Noel-Levitz research social media ranked relatively high (3,4) in importance.
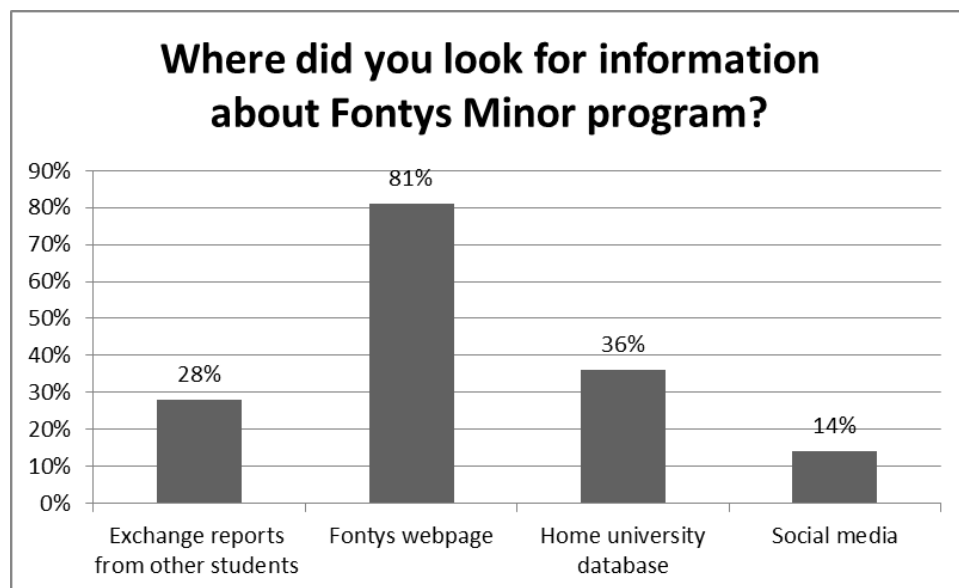
Where did you look for information about Fontys Minor program?

Figure 7   Fontys survey, Question: Where did you look for information about Fontys Minor program?

However, when students where asked where they would like to look for information about their prospective exchange universities the results were as followed: 75% of students would like to look for information from *Fontys webpage*. 44% of the Fontys exchange students would like to look for information from *social media*. Compared to the results where students did look for information, result for social media has almost tripled. Reason behind might be that the social media channels are not offering students the information they are looking for. More about this in chapter: 5.4.3 Social Media. 42% of the students would like to look for information from their *home university database* and 33% from the *exchange reports from other students*. 31% of the students would like to attend to an information session arranged in their home universities.

Fontys exchange students were also asked if they feel that they received enough information about which exchange program to choose prior to the final decision. 72% of the students felt that they received enough information. 28% of the students felt they did not receive enough information before making their decision.

5.4.2 Content in Educational Institution Webpage

Content is the key character when students look for information from institutions webpage. Delivering the right information is essential in order to catch students' attention. Like said already in this report, content should be created to pull the target audience towards the institution. In the Ruffalo Noel Levitz report all of the top 7 content types offered by educational intuitions were viewed at least half of the graduate or undergraduate stu-

dents. Clearly the first priority for the students is to know what to study, following financial questions. (Ruffalo Noel Levitz & CollegeWeekLive 2015, 8.)

Table 2   Top 7 of content types (undergraduate/graduate) / (Ruffalo Noel Levitz & CollegeWeekLive 2015, 8.)

1.   Academic programs/majors (89% / 89%)
2.   Costs (87% / 82%)
3.   Financial aid (87% / 88%)
4.   Admissions information (69% / 68%)
5.   Applications (62% / 57%)
6.   Student life information (61% / 49%)
7.   International student services (59 % / 70%)

Like already presented in this report, spiritual fulfilment in terms of creating value and engaging customers has become more important part of educational institutions marketing. From the table below it can be seen that the students are first interested in outcomes that reflect to their future careers. Many students are also interested of testimonials and school placement (aka student exchange). Information of the programs offered in different content forms also seems to interests the students. (Ruffalo Noel Levitz et.al 2015, 9.)
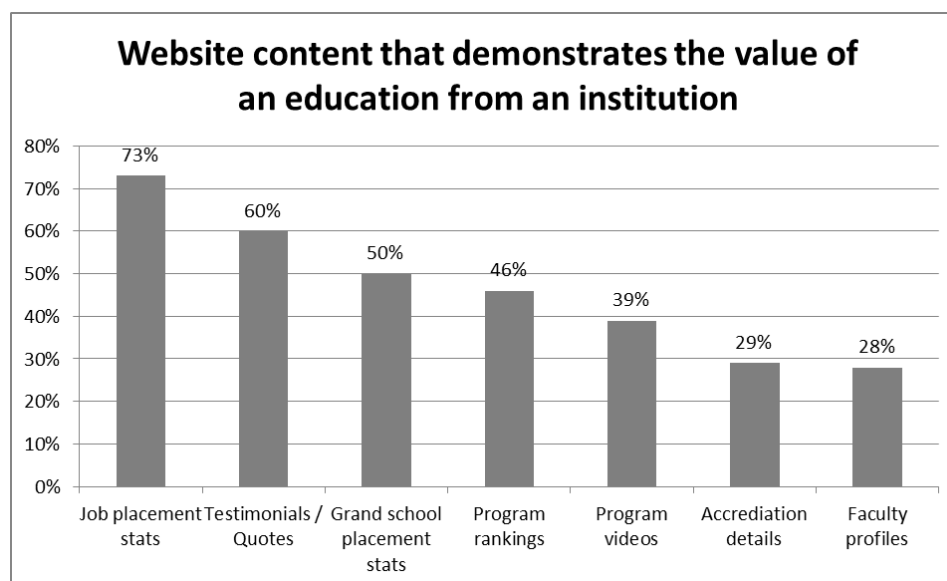

Figure 8   Website content that demonstrated the value of an education from an institution. Answers from US College bound high school seniors. (Ruffalo Noel Levitz et.al 2015, 8.)

Fontys exchange students were asked open ended question about what kind of information would have been helpful for them when deciding which exchange program to choose. Following list summarises the answers:

- In detail course descriptions / information about the teachers / example exam
- Concrete experiences from other exchange students / testimonials
- Timings and schedules
- Pictures about facilities / students / student life

Detailed course descriptions were mentioned many times. It seems like the students are not completely aware of what do their courses actually includes. Also couple of the students said they had confusion about which campus they are going to study: Fontys Venlo was listed as Eindhoven. This might be a big confusion for the students.

Students were also asked about how Minor program could be developed in order to attract more exchange students. Following list summarises the answers:

- More student trips during the semester
- Wide usage of photos in the webpage focusing on student life
- Testimonials from students who have studied this program and became successful professionals
- Linking the benefits from the program to students future career (how will be Minor program beneficial for them?)
- More social media marketing
- Interesting videos published in social media
- More collaboration with partner universities
- Concrete examples of the semester in Minor (examples of case studies, assignments, lessons, exams etcetera)
- Calendar about activities for the full semester
- Better online presence and detailed information about the program (there are a lot of rumours about programs that are not correct)
- More collaboration with partner universities regarding grading systems (splitting credits) and simplifying the Fontys Module system which is extremely hard to understand.

Comparing answers from the Fontys students and the report by Ruffalo Noel Levitz results were similar: students are looking for content containing information about the programs and majors, student life and professional career possibilities.

5.4.3 Social Media

YouTube, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram and Twitter are in the top five of social media channels that junior or senior college students use at least once a week according to the Ruffalo Noel Levitz report. *YouTube* is on the first place with more than 70% of the students using this channel weekly. *Facebook* is in the second place with over 60% of the students logging into their accounts at least once a week. Picture chat application *Snapchat* had the highest increase in usage: +14% compared to the year 2014. (Ruffalo Noel Levitz et.al 2015, 12.)

Facebook is the number one social media site when high school students
look for information about colleges (seniors 54%, juniors 47%). When
students were visiting educational institution Facebook page, more than
60% would press the like button. In 2014 only 36% of students liked the
page. 44% of students would join a Facebook group and 23% would add a
comment. It is clear that the social media users are becoming more and
more active. This can be explained by swift into participation and collabo-
ration age. (Ruffalo Noel Levitz et.al 2015, 13.)

YouTube came as the second important source in the Ruffalo Noel Levitz
report (31% seniors, 33% juniors). 41% of senior high school students
viewed videos linked from the college site, 36% viewed college YouTube
channels, 29% viewed videos in the social media and 9% subscribed the
channel. Twitter came as the third (both seniors and juniors 27%) follow-
ing Google + and Instagram as the most important educational institution
social media channels. (Ruffalo Noel Levitz et.al 2015, 13.)

When Fontys students were asked about the social media channels, results
were similar: *Facebook* was clearly the most popular, 91% of the students
would look for information from this channel. 36% would like to watch
YouTube videos, 28% to read *blogs* and 22% use *Instagram*. Only clear
difference is Twitter, as in Noel-Levitz report it was much more popular
than amongst the Fontys exchange students where only 3% would prefer
Twitter.
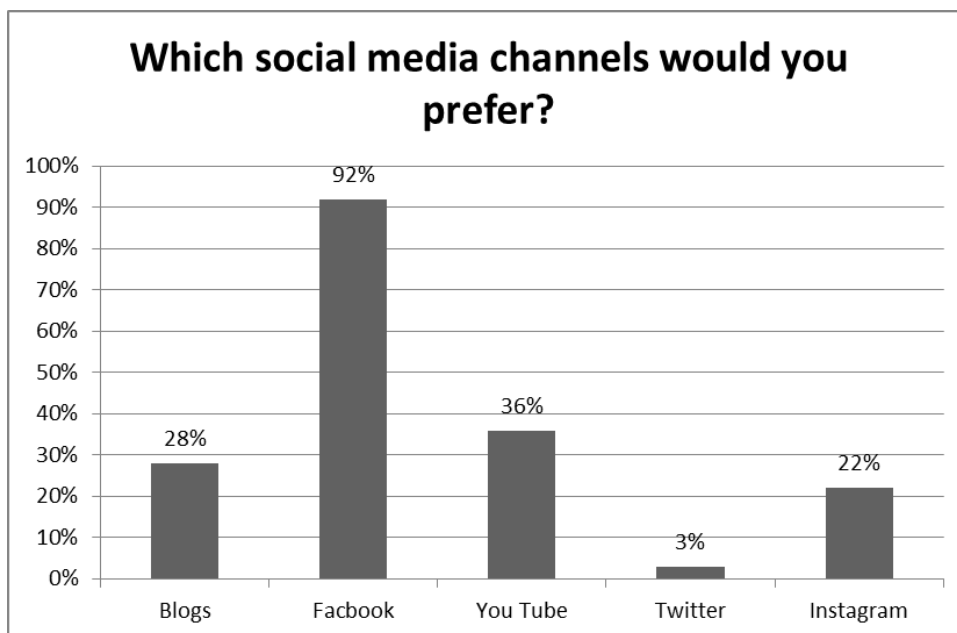
Figure 9   Fontys survey, Question: Which social media channels would you prefer?

Earlier in the research it was found that the students did not use much so-
cial media to look for information about the Minor program, but when
they were asked which channel they would like to use there was +30% in-
crease in the usage of social media channels. Reasons behind this might be
in the fact that the social media channels of Fontys Venlo are not well

managed: Some of the publications are only in Dutch. Also Fontys International Campus Venlo has only one Facebook channel, mixing all the information from euregional studies (which are in Dutch, German and English) and international studies and from all the programs (from engineering to business.) Minor programs do not have their own webpage or Facebook page. Moreover Fontys international studies have their own Facebook page with 763 likes but no publications or activity in the page. As an addition, there are many other related Facebook pages for Fontys and it might be very difficult for a student outside of Fontys university to recognise which one is offering the right information they are looking for. (Facebook, 2015.)

5.4.4 Mobile Usage

In 2015, 37% of students mostly accessed internet from their mobile phones. Mobile phone usage has increased +9% in one year. 78% of undergraduate students and 69% of graduate students have checked the university website from their mobile devices. Increase from 2014 to 2015 is +6% of undergraduate and +10% of graduate students viewing the institutions website from their phones. An educational intuition needs to understand the importance of the mobile usage in information search and create mobile friendly webpages and apps. (Ruffalo Noel Levitz & CollegeWeekLive 2015, 9.)

Fontys Venlo website is not optimised for mobile usage. Some of their web tools, like a student portal, are optimised for mobile use. Also Fontys offers one smartphone application. However the last two mentioned are developed for students already studying in the Fontys University of Applied Sciences and would not help prospective exchange students in their information search. (Fontys Venlo 2015.)

5.5 Marketing Mix

Marketing mix introduces all the 7 P's of the Fontys Minor program. This part will analyse and conclude the current situation of the program. For this project some of the P's were more important than others. Because of the nature of the research, main focus is on promotion, product and process. From the following reasons and the limitations of the research, other P's are only addressed briefly.

Product
It is clear that the product = Minor in Fontys can be defined as a service. It is clearly intangible as it cannot be touched, felt or tasted. Students can see the lecture, touch the materials and other tangible elements, but the education itself is intangible. Also none of the lectures will be precisely alike because of the human factor: lecturer might be having a bad day, students have different learning styles or other students are disturbing the lesson, so it is clear that education is also heterogeneous. In addition education is inseparable from the lecture; without the lecture there would not be any knowledge to share for the students. Education is produced and consumed

at the same time. Lastly it is clear that there is no way to store the education or return it if the student is dissatisfied; so education is also perishable. (Zeithaml & Bitner 2012, 16-18.)

Minor for Marketers and Non-marketers is formed from 3 courses: International Business management (12ETCS), Individual Research Project (6ETCS) and either Marketing for marketers or Marketing for non-marketers (12ETCS). (Fontys Portal 2015.)

International Business Management course includes many different real life business cases which students solve in groups. Lectures are arranged to support the theoretical and practical framework around these cases. Students have one interim exam and a final oral exam related to the business case. In the marketing studies students work on a marketing plan for a case company selected from a certain choice set. Students also have a written interim exam and a final, oral exam. Students cannot directly affect the courses as the structure has already been decided. Students are asked to give feedback in the end of the semester and the lecturers are ready to listen to the students' wishes about the content of the classes. However, students are pretty passive part of the course. Students are encouraged to participate in the class with a reward of 1 point in the final grade. Also different kinds of learning methods are used in the class like group work and presentations. Overview of the program assessments and schedules can be seen in the Appendix 3 and 4. (Minor IBM- Course manuals 2015.)

In the individual research project, students work on a research project of their choice. In the beginning set of three sessions are arranged to introduce the students to the course and to the basic research skills. After that students will work individually and get supervision from their supervising teacher in case needed.

Price
Exchange students in the Fontys University of Applied sciences do not have to pay tuition if they are from Fontys Partner University. Most of the incoming exchange students in the Fontys Venlo are in ERASMUS exchange and send by the Fontys partner universities. Other students have to pay 70€ per ETC. (Fontys Venlo, 2015).

Place
All the activities related to the service (education) are executed in the Fontys Venlo campus. Lectures are arranged in the normal classrooms, guest lectures in the lecture hall. Students are doing group work and meetings regarding to their assignments. Students can arrange meetings in any place they wish. The Minor program does not involve any online lessons neither any online tool is used. The Minor program does not use social media channels but they are presented in the Fontys Venlo webpage. (Fontys Venlo, 2015).

Promotion

Minor program is currently promoted through following marketing channels:

- Exchange subscription procedure
- Information brochure (distributed by the partner universities to the prospective students)
- Word-of-mouth marketing
- Promotion trips (Sweden and Eastern-Europe

Minor program marketing does not considerably differ from the other Fontys programs. In the exchange subscription procedure Fontys Minor team delivers needed information to the partner universities, where the partner university is in charge of distributing this information forward to the prospective exchange students. Regarding to this, Minor team has delivered information brochure about the programs to the partner universities as extra information for the prospective exchange students.

Word-of-mouth marketing: Word-of-mouth marketing was mentioned as a marketing source by course the coordinator Daniël van Melis. From the research it was found that none of the respondents have first heard about Fontys Minor through word-of-mouth marketing. When students were asked from who they heard about Fontys Minor; teacher, exchange coordinator and friends were mentioned. It seems that at the moment word-of-mouth marketing has relatively small role in attracting exchange students to the Minor program. However in average scale from 1 to 5 Fontys Minor scored 3, 9 of how likely students are going to recommend the program. Also majority of the students chose above the average: 77% chose 4 or 5 very likely to recommend Minor program to other students.

Fontys / Minor Webpage: Fontys Applied Sciences and Fontys Campus Venlo both have their own webpages. Neither one of these webpages are optimised for mobile usage. Fontys Minor program does not have own webpage. Information about the Minor programs is presented in the exchange program section for incoming exchange students in the Fontys Venlo webpage. In the course listing Minor programs are presented on the top of the list. Also with a closer look, Minor program offers much wider course descriptions than the other programs Fontys Venlo is offering. (Fontys Venlo 2015.)

Social media presence: There are like and follow buttons for Fontys Facebook page and Twitter account in the Fontys Venlo Homepage. However there is no link to access the Facebook page or Twitter account and it is not basically possible to visit these accounts through the like and follow buttons. Fontys International Campus Venlo has 8.400 likes in Facebook and 803 followers on Twitter. (Fontys Venlo 2015.)

On top of the official account there are several other Facebook accounts for Fontys; for sports team, library, different pages regarding to field of studies etcetera. In the Fontys International Campus Venlo webpage all kinds of content is published: videos, pictures and articles. The publications are for different fields of studies and published in Dutch, English or

German. From the Facebook page there are direct links to the Fontys webpage for the right study programme student is looking for. There is also links to the Fontys YouTube, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn accounts. Fontys Minor does not have own Facebook page or other social media channels. Also there was no specific news, publications, videos or pictures regarding Fontys Minor. (Facebook 2015.)

People
Human factor can have a huge influence in the quality of the service and satisfaction of the customer (in this case the student). Good service experience needs to be maintained to ensure positive word-of-mouth marketing and to maintain the collaboration with the students. (Zeithaml & Bitner 2012, 21-23.)
Each subject in the Fontys Minor program has own lecturer. Lectures in the Minor program are chosen so that they have international focus in their teaching and experience from multinational companies or international affairs. All the lecturers use multiple learning methods and are very collaborative with students from different backgrounds. (Melis van, interview 18.9.2015.)

Also other staff members like staff in the cafeteria, international office and library can have an impact on the service quality. It is important that the quality of the service is measured and standardised to ensure the best possible experience for the exchange students. It needs to be recognized that the exchange students are not familiar with the practises of Fontys University and might need more guidance and understanding compared to the full-time students. (Zeithaml & Bitner 2012, 21-23.)

Other students and the atmosphere in the class can have an effect on how much students enjoy their semester abroad and their studies in the Minor program. For the Minor program a great benefit is that the program is studied only for one semester and everyone in the class are new. This makes the integration of the exchange students as a part of the class much easier than in the other programs where students have studied together already for several years. However, according to the survey only 3% of the exchange students chose the program because of this reason. Also as a part of International Business School, FIBS obviously wishes to offer international classroom setting to all of the students, this means that there should be multiple nationalities in the classes. 17% of the students who responded the survey stated that the international classroom setting was the reason why they chose Minor program. In the autumn semester 2015 25% of the students per class were exchange students.

Physical evidence
As education is a service and cannot be seen, felt or touched physical evidence gives student an easier way to evaluate the quality of the service. In the Minor programs case physical evidence is for example the information brochure offered to the prospective students. Also hand-outs during the class and other certificates for example the transcript of records, certificate from Dutch lessons and proof of learning documents can be considered as physical evidence. For example in the Minor marketing classes students

do not have to buy a book as the reading material is offered to the students as a hand-out: books are expensive and for exchange student very hard to take home with them when returning from their exchange semester. Selling the book in the end of the semester means extra work for the exchange students. Providing a reader for the students adds the value of the program. Also the Fontys facilities and classrooms can be considered as physical evidence as also the appearance of the staff and the lecturers. (Zeithaml & Bitner 2012, 21-22.)

Physical evidence is an excellent way for Minor program to communicate their message and quality standards for the exchange students. It can be considered as a very strong and effective marketing tool and can used in many different ways to deliver strong messages to the students. (Zeithaml & Bitner 2012, 21-22.)

Process
One of the processes concerning exchange students is of course the application process to Fontys. Fontys exchange applications are done through an online platform called mobility online. This includes everything from the choosing of the course modules to applying for an accommodation and insurance. In the survey answered by the Fontys Minor exchange students some of them mentioned confusion between Fontys Eindhoven and Fontys Venlo. This might indicate into a problem in the process.

Also the processes in the end of the exchange semester, including receiving the correct transcript of records are important. It was mentioned by some of the exchange students that they have had problems whit split credits. These kinds of problems with transcripts might cause dissatisfaction amongst students. Benchmarking the Fontys processes to the partner universities procedures is vital for the satisfaction of the students.

5.6 Summary of the Research Findings

- 29% of the recipients are from Mexico, 23% from Germany. No other significant findings could be found about which university students are from or which nationalities are more likely to choose the minor program.

- Most important reason for exchange students to choose Minor program is that the courses fit to their home university program. Also interesting courses and international classroom setting attracts students to choose the Minor program.

- Minor students are likely to recommend Fontys Minor. In scale from 1 to 5 how likely student is to recommend the program Minor got an average of 3,9

- Exchange students first hear about Fontys Minor from their home university database.

- Exchange students looked for information from Fontys webpage, home university database and exchange reports from the other students.

- However when asked where students would like to look for information; Fontys webpage, social media and home university database were the most important sources.

- University webpage has a big influence on the student's decision about their university: 78% of college seniors and 77% of college juniors in US state that college webpage has an impact about their perception about the institution.

- Students are looking for content that provides information about the programs/majors, student life and professional career possibilities.

- Facebook and YouTube are the most important social media channels. Also blogs and Instagram are interesting for the students. For Fontys exchange students' Twitter was not an important social media channel.

- 78% of undergraduate students and 69% of graduate students have checked the university website from their mobile devices.

6 CHALLENGES IN MINOR PROGRAM MARKETING

There are many different factors that can create challenges to the Minor program marketing. By strategic planning it is possible to optimise and develop Minor programs marketing strategy in a way that these challenges are reduced or even completely erased. This will reflect as more positive marketing outcomes and attract growing amount of exchange students to the Minor program. It could also have an effect in the student satisfaction and lead to positive word-of-mouth marketing. By finding solutions to the problems that Minor program is facing, it is possible for the Minor team to reach their target of doubling the amount of exchange students attending to the Minor programs.

Minor program is getting resources from an exchange with the students. Minor program offers students an educational experience and in return Fontys and Minor program will receive different kind of benefits. There are several recourses received by Fontys Minor team from the stakeholders: As a result from the partnership with other universities Fontys students are able to study abroad without paying tuition fees. Without receiving exchange students to Fontys program, sending Fontys students to their year a broad would be almost impossible. If exchange student comes from another university than Fontys Partner University, Fontys will receive tuition fees.

Moreover just receiving international students can be viewed as an important resource: FIBS is an international business school and more international students in the university can be considered as a vital asset. This will enable international learning environment for all the business students in the Fontys Venlo campus. There are also marketing benefits: positive experiences of the exchange students can result as positive word-of-mouth marketing in student's home university and bring even more exchange students to Fontys Venlo. Positive experiences will also shape the image and popularity of the university which yet again may result as an increased interest towards Fontys and in higher amount of international applicants.

Exchange students will receive different kind of educational and social experiences in return: Students will receive knowledge provided in the lessons, meet new friends, travel in new country and other experiences that studying abroad may offer. Students also might learn skills that differ from the skill they would have learned in their home universities and this supports their professional growth.

When it comes to the decision making process, students will choose the university or the study program which they gain the most benefits compared to the costs. Benefits are the resources student will receive; costs are resources that students need to give. Like mentioned earlier in this report, spiritual fulfilment and experience economy are in the key part of making the customers satisfied in today's overwhelming supply of products and services. By offering these attributes to students as a benefit from their re-

sources it is possible to attract more students and build competitive advantage. Fontys Minor needs to ensure that by choosing the Minor program students will receive more benefits in a "lower costs" than from the other Fontys exchange programs. In order to bring these "benefits" and "costs" into the students awareness effective marketing planning is needed. It is a big challenge for the Minor team to deliver right marketing message to the right students at the right time and after that, meet the made promises.
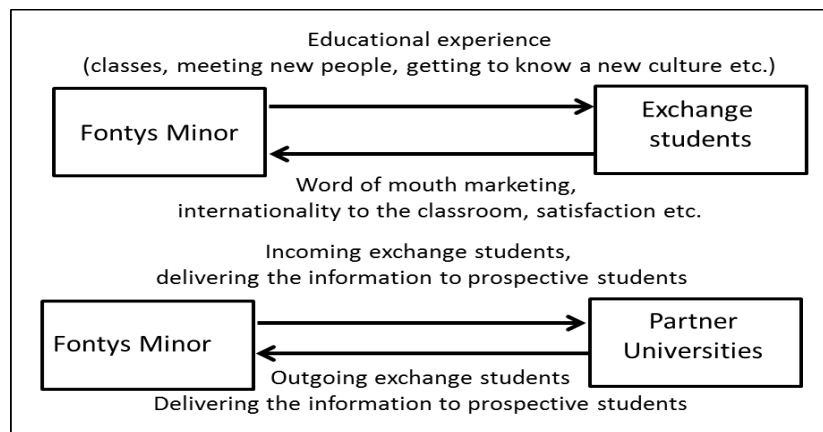

Figure 10   Exchange between Fontys Minor and its stakeholders

Another important exchange for the Fontys Minor team is collaboration with the partner universities. From the survey answered by the exchange students in Minor program it was found that the students first hear about Fontys Minor from their home university database. This step is crucial, even though the home university's importance decreases later in the information search process. Prospective exchange students would not be aware of the Minor program if their home university would not have been providing this information for them. Collaboration with these partner universities is extremely important in order to attract more exchange students. Attracting more exchange students relies heavily on how likely and how accurate information about the program partner universities are distributing to the students. It makes the marketing of the Minor program especially tricky as control of the distribution of information relies heavily on the partner universities actions.

Fontys Minor has a great challenge in communicating the marketing message to the prospective students. More importantly the relationship and collaboration between partner universities and FIBS is in key role to attract more students to choose Fontys Minor. The fact that marketing relies heavily on the partner universities activity and motivation will challenge Minor program marketing even more.

6.1   Value Driven Marketing

Like mentioned earlier in this report, students are beginning to act more like consumers. It has been shown that consumers' behaviour is turning into an experience-centric era. This means that instead of just focusing on

the product, in Fontys Minors case a service, Fontys Minor team should start to approach their program in a way that it fulfils students' spiritual needs and creates experiences. Company, institution or organisation can no longer just offer value: it needs to be co-created with the consumer.

At the moment students participating Fontys Minor can be considered as quite passive part of the program: the structure of the program is designed upfront and even though students can express their opinions which topics to focus on, production of the service relies on the lecturers and course co-ordinators. Very important part of value driven marketing is that the consumer, in this case student, will be taken as a part of the creation of the service. This new way of marketing will bring a lot of challenges. As students are much more active in terms of collaboration and participation, marketers would not have the full control of the brand anymore. Also in order to reach hearts, minds and spirits of the students, global and cultural issues should be addressed as part of the Minor programs core business. The large variety of different nationalities in the class and majority of German students might make this challenging for the Minor team. Also, based on the study there was no indication of a clear pattern which nationalities would be more likely to choose the Minor program. This means that the cultural backgrounds cannot be addressed upfront. Multiple nationalities in the class mean that there are many different ways of learning in one classroom. Also students might bump into cultural differences. This will make determining the target audience more difficult and creating marketing activities and right content very challenging.

From the survey answered by the exchange students and the study made by Noel-Levitz it was found that students desire not only information about the programs itself but also information related to their future careers and professional growth. This can be considered as marketing appealing to students' fulfilment and spirits. Brochure created by the Minor program and distributed in Fontys webpage does mention the professional benefits that students will receive by choosing the Minor program. However, this message is not consistently communicated throughout multiple marketing channels.

It is a great challenge for the Minor team to adapt the value driven approach. Co-creation of value will take the full responsibility of the service from Minor program team and share it with the students and other stakeholders. Cultural aspects will add the challenge as there are multiple nationalities in the class. It is also challenging to communicate spiritual and experience focused approach consistently in all activities and marketing channels.

6.2   Service Marketing

As Minor program is a service not a tangible product, it brings its own challenges for the Minor team.

- Intangibility: As education itself cannot be felt, touched or tasted, it is not possible to display or clearly communicate Minor program to the students.

- Heterogeneity: As none of the "produced" services are completely alike it is hard to ensure that the quality of the service stays in determined level. This means that it is hard to ensure the quality of each lesson to the students.

- Inseparability: As services are produced and consumed at the same time, satisfaction about the service is dependent of what happens in real time, and human factors can affect the quality. The quality is difficult to ensure beforehand and it is hard to inspect.

- Perishability: As services cannot be stored or returned, in case of students dissatisfaction the service cannot be returned.

There are definitely several challenges for the Minor team regarding services marketing. It is important that consistency of the service quality is ensured. However because of the characteristics of the service this might be very challenging. There are many factors that can affect the service quality like the human factor: for example other students are disrupting the class, teaching methods do not fit to student's learning style or other factors. Sometimes students might not be able to address their needs correctly or the lecturer is not willing to fulfil the students' needs accordingly. Also the level of quality is very hard to communicate to the students as it cannot be physically shown and service is heterogeneous so it will never be exactly alike. This also brings challenges to the marketing activities: how the quality can be communicated effectively without over or under promising. The course coordinator has a challenging task to ensure that the marketing promises will meet the service quality and that the service quality is kept consistent. Communicating the image of the Minor program consistently and engaging all the stakeholders into the creation of the Minor program can be a demanding task for the Minor team.

As a service is produced and consumed at the same time it is practically impossible to test the service design or quality beforehand. This means that the Minor team cannot test the changes they make for the program in advance and in case of a bad decision, it transfers directly to the students experience and might result as dissatisfaction. As Minor programs marketing relies partly on word-of-mouth marketing this can be viewed as a negative effect.

It is also challenging to select and motivate the right lectures to meet the quality standards of the Minor program. Minor program has very experienced, internationally oriented and motivated lectures, which indicates that Minor program is doing a good job in recruitment and selection. However, this level should be maintained also in the future.

How to communicate the quality and value to the students is the key issue of this project. Consistent message should be delivered throughout differ-

ent marketing channels. Many characteristics of service make this difficult and require throughout planning. After that, maintaining and monitoring the quality level ensures that the students' expectations are met and students will be satisfied of their course choice which will reflect as positive marketing outcomes. (Zeithaml & Bitner 2012, 16-18.)

6.3 Providing Content and Information for the Students

Content marketing for Fontys Minor would mean that by creating and sharing relevant and valuable content it is possible to attract, motivate, engage and inspire students and other stakeholders (employees, partner universities etc.) Like this it is possible for the Minor team to reach Minor programs mission. (Miller 2013.)

Information search is one of the very important parts of the student's decision making process regarding which exchange university to choose. When students are looking for information about their prospective exchange university it is important that right content is offered in the right places at the right time. In that way students can find the information needed to make their decision. This can be done with developing a proper content marketing plan.

From the research introduced in the previous chapters, it was found that students would like to find content about the academic programs in a form of detailed course descriptions. At the moment Fontys Minor publishes this information in their information brochure and course manuals in Fontys webpage. This document includes very into detail course descriptions about the Minor. However students also mentioned that pictures, videos and other kind of content types would increase the attractiveness of the content. Information brochure is a little over 4 pages of plain text in PDF form. It has been studied that the huge amount of content offered to the consumers and 24/7 accessibility for information has affected peoples' behaviour: consumer attention span is shorter. People today are not keen on doing in depth analysis and they lose their patience sooner if the right content is not presented fast and clear. It is a challenge to marketers to grab the attention; otherwise information seeker will just change to another page. The length and monotonous appearance of the information brochure might affect in a way that prospective students would not like to read it completely and important information about the Minor would be missed. (Weatherhead 2014.)

With a short research view to the Fontys webpage and Facebook page indicates that the content, especially for the Minor students or prospective Minor student cannot be found. It is clear that at the moment Minor program does not have a clear and consistent content plan. There is content provided by Fontys in multible marketing channels, but most of them seem to lack consictency in the puplications: many different content types are published in different languages but no consistent message or focus can be found.

Following list summarises the channelleges that Minor program is facing regading content marketing:

- Identifying the target audience (which students they should address and create content for)
- Lack of planning / No content plan
- Creating relevant content to the defined target audience according to the content plan
- Distribute the right content through right marketing channels
- Resources: budgeting and who will take care of the creation and updating of the content?
- Consistency: How to make the Minor content marketing plan to fit Fontys Campus Venlo marketing?
- Comprehensibility: As Minor is only one program, how can the message and the idea be made as understandable as possible for the students through content marketing?

6.4   Lack of Social Media Presence

Social media has become a very important marketing channel. Social media can be used as a very effective tool to distribute content for the target audience. Like mentioned earlier, 100% of educational institutions use some sort of social media channels in their communication with their current- and prospective students. (Noel-Leviz 2010.)

There is a wide variety of social media channels today. It would be vital for Fontys Minor to recognize the most relevant channels for their target audience. Social media presence could ease the word-of- mouth marketing by offering an easy channel for the students to communicate with each other. It could also increase the awareness about Minor program as supporters and followers would share the content published in the channels. It could be also used for customer service porpoises: current and prospective students could use this channel for inquiries and Minor program preventative would be able to answer these in real time. This could also to help to prospective student's decision which program to choose and lower the barrier of first contact before the application phase.

There is a clear problem in the Minor program's social media presence: Minor program is not presented in any social media channel. According to the study 44% of the students would like to find information about Fontys Minor from social media but only 14% did. This can be easily explained by the fact that there simply is no information offered in the social media about the Minor program. Especially Facebook pages seem to be important social media channels for the students. There are several Facebook pages related to studies in Fontys Venlo. However this might be also confusing for the information seekers and even for the current students: some of the pages are administered by Fontys some by students. There is no clear pattern how Facebook pages are organised. As an example, exchange student could be following several pages like Fontys Venlo Facebook page, Fontys University page, page related to their studies and another one

related to their field of studies. It is clear that this might seem overwhelming for students. In this over supply of Facebook channels there was no Facebook <u>page</u> related to the exchange studies in Fontys. However there was Facebook <u>groups</u> for the exchange students, but groups are closed and would not help prospective students to find information or to attract new followers. (Facebook 2015.)

Fontys Venlo has own YouTube, LinkedIn and Twitter account. Minor program is not presented in these social media channels.

The following list summarises the problems that Minor program is facing regarding the social media presence

- Choosing the right social media channels to fit the target audiences preferences
- There is no social media channels used for Minor program marketing
- Fontys Facebook page selection is overwhelming – this would be in need of optimisation
- Content plan needs to be created first and social media channels used as a tool – now there seems to be no content plan which transfers as a confusing message to students

6.5   Choosing Effective Marketing Channels

Students look for information in several sources: personal sources like family, friends and their university staff. Commercial sources which include advertisements in TV, newsletters and other material created to commercial purposes. Public sources are mass media and for example usage of search engines. It is clear that managing all these marketing channels can be challenging for the Minor program. It is extremely vital that the right message is communicated in the right place at the right time. The fact that Minor program is a service not a product will make the marketing channel choices even more challenging.

Table 3   Sources where Fontys exchange students looked for information and which they would prefer to look information from

Where did you look for information about Fontys Minor?		Where would you <u>like</u> to look for information about Fontys Minor?	
Fontys webpage	81%	Fontys webpage	75%
Home university database	36%	Home university database	42%
Exchange reports from other students	28%	Exchange reports from other students	33%
Social media	14%	Social media	44%
Other	3%	Other	3%
Information session arranged in home university	0%	Information session arranged in home university	31%

The course coordinator Daniël van Melis mentioned four marketing channels that are used at the moment:

- Exchange subscription procedure
- Information brochure (distributed by the partner universities to prospective students)
- Word-of-mouth marketing
- Promotion trips (Sweden and Eastern-Europe)

When the table above is compared to the list of Minor programs marketing channels we can see that there is some differences. Fontys Minor does not have own webpage but the Minor program is presented in the Fontys Venlo webpage in the exchange section. The Information brochure is presented in this webpage. The impact of the webpage in students' decision is significant and Minor program team should assure that the webpage is designed in a way that it attracts new exchange students:

Consumers evaluate webpages by following characteristics:

1.   The site downloads quickly
2.   First page is easy to understand
3.   Easiness to navigate to other pages that open quickly

And websites physical attractiveness by following factors:

1.   Pages are clean and not crammed with content
2.   Typefaces and font size is readable
3.   Use of colour and sound
(Kotler et al 2009, 754.)

Home universities of the exchange students have the biggest impact as the first source where students hear about Fontys Minor and the importance continues throughout the information search process. This means that the Minor program should concentrate a lot of their marketing efforts to the relationships between them and the partner universities. Particularly challenging is that the partner universities have a lot of influence on students' choices; this means the Minor program does not have the full control of the marketing channel. Now relations are handled by the international office through exchange subscription procedure. It was also mentioned in by some of the exchange students that there was some confusion between Fontys Venlo and Fontys Eindhoven. It seems that city Eindhoven is used in some databases instead of Venlo, which creates confusion amongst students. This kind of problems could be eliminated by focusing on updating and monitoring the information provided to the partner universities.

Word-of- mouth marketing does not have much of an influence as a source where students first hear about Fontys Minor. However, later students do read exchange reports written by other students. Also many students mentioned that they talked about the Minor with teacher, exchange coordinator or a friend.

The following list summarises the challenges Minor program is facing regarding choosing the right marketing channels.

- Minor program does not have a clear, long-term marketing plan
- There is no content plan so there is no consistency in the marketing message.
- Partner universities have a big role in Minor program marketing, Minor program does not have the full control of the marketing channels.
- Students would like to look information from social media – there are no social media channels for Minor program.
- Optimising the webpage could attract more students to the Minor program.
- Engaging students more in the creation of Minor program to create more positive word-of-mouth marketing.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Creating a Content Marketing plan

Minor program is currently missing a marketing plan. It would be the best for the Minor team to create a content marketing plan first, after that other relevant marketing strategy could be implemented. It is however important to begin with the content marketing plan as Minor program is a service and the lack of tangible elements makes the communication of the marketing message more difficult than with tangible products; quality standards and organisations message needs to be consistent throughout all of the marketing elements.

It was also mentioned earlier in this report that educational institutions receive their resources through exchange with their stakeholders. In Fontys Minors case, just receiving more exchange students could be considered as a benefit. However in order to attract these students into the program Fontys Minor needs to create something that students' desire. As the world today is turning from product centric era to experience economy it would be beneficial for Minor program to reach the students by appealing their need for spiritual fulfilment. Content marketing plan could be the right tool to communicate the Minor programs message and engage the students into the co creation of the program.

Content marketing plan is crucial in order to provide content and information to prospective/current students and to attract more students to choose the Minor program. Content marketing plan is a very effective tool to communicate organizations values and story to the students and reach not only their hearts and minds but also the human spirits. People today share content that is inspiring and exiting and will bring fulfilment to their lives. Providing this kind of content can lead to shares and likes and through that, to positive marketing results.

From the research it was also found that it is difficult to define any specific target audience for the Minor program.Content marketing plan will overcome this problem by attracting the right students to Minor program.

Content plan should include the following features:

1. Objectives
2. Audience
3. Content plan (what to publish)
4. Promotion (where to publish)
5. Engagement (co-creation of value)
6. Measurements

SMART objectives should be defined for the Minor program content marketing / marketing plan. This would give a framework to build the plan for and also set a direction for the project. From the research it was found that the target audience includes all the prospective exchange students from Fontys partner universities. This increases the importance of the content

plan: with right content it is possible to attract students' regardless to their consumer profile.

It is very important that the Minor team defines a clear framework about what kind of information to publish. By having a consistent message in all of the publications, the concept of the Minor program would be easier to understand for the prospective students. Also the quality standards and benefits and costs for exchange students should be clearly communicated. When having a clear plan, students can be engaged by providing them content that attracts their hearts, minds and spirits. Students who answered the Fontys Minor survey mentioned following content types that they found attractive:

- Pictures
- Videos
- Into detail course descriptions
- Professional growth

Promotion plan is also very important for the Minor team. It is not enough to define what to publish but also when and where to publish this content. Later in this paper the suggestions of which channels to use is offered. As the Minor program promotion has been relatively similar to the other programs offered for the exchange students, it is realistic to start by concentrating on small set of channels and possibly widen the range of marketing channels later on. As the resources are limited, co-creation of value with the students is a great opportunity to both engage students and create marketing visibility at the same time. Details about this are presented in the next chapter: Co-creation with the Students. In order to track the successfulness of the marketing actions Minor program should set measurements and follow the results in on-going basis.

7.1.1 Co-creation with the Students

It is obvious that there are relatively limited resources for Minor program. As the Minor program is part a of the Fontys University of Applied sciences which is a non-profit organisation there will be no possibility for extensive marketing budget or a marketing team.

However Minor program can combine the co-creation of value and student engagement and receive marketing resources in return. Most of the students are either marketing or management students from their 2nd or 3rd year of studies which means that they are already having at least the basic knowledge of business and marketing. Also the marketing courses are concentrating on creating a marketing plan to a company and the students are studying subjects like strategic marketing, content marketing and service marketing.

Students are working to build marketing campaigns to case companies. Marketing plans are not actually used; those are created in practising purposes only. Lecturers have offered a certain set of companies for students

to choose from. In spring semester these companies were Escape room, Hello Fresh, Mexx and Netflix. Minor program could give their own marketing strategy as one of the option for the students to choose. This would mean that the students would create an actual marketing plan for the Minor program in collaboration with the lecturer and the course coordinator. This would also engage students in the spiritual level, especially if their work is actually used. As the marketing courses are concentrating on services marketing Minor program would actually fit to the case company profile very well.

Creating content for the Minor program could also be used as a part of the courses. Students could be creating content like blogs, videos and pictures. This would not only engage students to be part of the Minor program but also appeal to their spiritual side. Students would receive practical knowledge about the marketing tools and the Minor program content with minimal expenses. Content marketing is actually a topic for some of the lectures and it would be a great opportunity to students to actually use the learned skills in practise. To give some examples, students could be creating following content and activities for the Minor program:

- Pictures / memes to publish in Facebook page
- Promotion video for Minor
- Videos to publish in Facebook page or Fontys YouTube channels
- Blog posts
- Marketing plan for Minor
- Idea generation for further marketing actions of Minor

In order to succeed in the co-creation of content with students' Minor program should first have a clear content plan in mind. Also it should be remembered that the Minor team should always be in charge of what content is published and in which channels. The whole process of co-creation should be handled in an organised way. This will ensure that the consistency of the marketing message is maintained, quality standards are met and risks minimised.

Steps in the co-creation process:

1. Defining clear objectives for the project
2. Map who are the right students to be involved in co-creation project.
3. Working together with the students in order to find out what they really want from the market offering of the service.
4. Create market offerings based on these student's needs.
5. Share the students experiences through different channels (Facebook, blogs, YouTube)

(Kotler et.al 2009, 409.)

7.1.2   Social Media Presence

Minor program is not currently present in the social media. However, it is one of the most important sources where students look for information about their prospective exchange programs.

Facebook: Facebook was clearly the most important channel for the students when it comes to social media. Minor program should be presented in the Facebook. Facebook could be used as an excellent channel to publish the created content. Minor program would be also able to share interesting articles published by others if they are consistent with the content plan; for example Minor team could be re-posting an article about preparing for exams, close to the exam weeks. This is also very good and low cost way of sharing content and attracting more students. There are couple of options how Minor program could be presented in Facebook; in collaboration with other exchange programs or by creating their own Facebook page. Both of the possibilities have pros and cons.

Table 4   Pros and cons of the Facebook page options

Facebook page in collaboration with other exchange programs		Own Minor Facebook page	
Pros +	Cons -	Pros +	Cons -
More followers	How to sell the idea to international office?	Full control of the page	Are there enough resources to maintain the page?
Concept is easier to understand by the exchange students	How can be the content of Minor is highlighted from the other content?	Content cannot be mixed to other programs	Would students understand the concept behind the Minor?
Page will be having more activity as there are more things to publish	How to keep the content consistent when there is many programs mixed?	Content can be clearly pointed to the students interested of Minor / current student	How to attract enough followers if the page is only about the Minor?
Page would be easier to find by the exchange student: It is not likely that students search with Minor program name	How to sell the idea of the Facebook page to other programs and get them engaged?	Content published would directly benefit Minor, not the other programs.	How to stand out from the other Fontys Facebook pages?

YouTube Channel: Fontys Venlo has own YouTube channel. There is no special need for Fontys Minor to create an own YouTube channel. However Minor program could create videos to publish in Fontys Venlo YouTube channel. From there videos would be easily shared also to other social media channels, like Facebook. As an example Minor could publish videos of student testimonials, word from the course coordinator and promotion videos. Also introduction about the courses with short video clips from the actual lectures could be used to meet the needs of students into

detailed course descriptions. Video is a very good way of delivering the Minor program message to the students in an interesting and inspiring way.

7.2 Improving and Updating the Information Brochure

Like mentioned earlier Fontys Minor offers an information brochure in the Fontys webpage in the exchange program section. This 4 pages brochure offers a lot of information about the Minor program to the prospective exchange students. However it is rather long and only text which might lead to a situation that students would not read it. It has been noticed that because of 24/7 reach of information and the huge amount of content today, information seekers seem to frustrate fast and are not willing to read long documents or do extensive research. This might switch out from the page because of the slightest irritation. (Weatherhead 2014.)

To avoid this and to make Minor program brochure more interesting and to attract more students to choose the program, the following changes are suggested.

- Word from the course coordinator. This would also make the information feel more personal for the student.

- Adding an infographic to clearly inform numerical information and interesting data. Inforgraphic is a fun way to present information and can be used as a real attention catcher.

- Optimise bullet pointing: Bullet points are already used but there is too many and too much information packed in one point (Appendix 5). The information in the bullet points needs to be formulated in more clear and shorter way. Some of the information could be transferred into an infographic.

- Adding student testimonials. Two student testimonials with a picture of the student and small information box can be used to catch readers' attention and also refresh the monotonous style. (Appendix 7)

- Reduce the amount of information about the courses to a short introduction and change it with more inspirational content to reach students hearts, minds and spirits. Into detail course description are already offered to students in course manuals.

- The front cover and the content in the brochure are all very good and can be used in the brochure; the basic idea needs to be delivered to students in a way that it catches their attention and raises their interest.

Word from the course coordinator: By adding regards from the course coordinator in the beginning on the brochure it is possible to communicate very welcoming atmosphere to the students. It also feels more personal for the students and it is possible to reach also the hearts, mind and spirits by using inspiring wording. Word from our course coordinator could be also presented in a video form. This would decrease of the amount of text in the brochure as some of the information would be in a video. Video could also be more interesting to the students. A very good example is actually the word from our president in Fontys University of Applied Sciences webpage:
http://fontys.edu/About-us/Word-from-our-President.htm.

Infographics: There is a lot of numerical data that could be used to create an infographics. Example of the infographics is seen on the Appendix 6. Infographic could include for example the following information:

- How satisfied students are to Minor program
- Which countries students are coming from
- Ranking of Fontys university in top 5 Dutch universities
- Information of the courses: for example the testing method and criteria
- +1 upgrade to final grade by participating actively in the course
- Study load of the courses and what kind of competences do they get in return

Student testimonials: By adding a student testimonial it is possible to communicate real life experiences of other students to the applicants. It is also easier for the students to relate to this. It could also be a good idea to inform their name, age and university / home country to make the characters to feel more approachable. A picture is a must be as it gives a face to the person and also adds the graphic features of the brochure. Moreover by choosing students from different ethnical backgrounds the international atmosphere can be communicated to the prospective students.

Improvements of the brochure can be viewed in Appendix 8. The example of the brochure was created in illustration purposes only and the information provided might not be accurate.

7.3   Improving the Webpage

The importance of the university webpage is huge. It can have positive or negative affect on students' opinion about the university. The problem with Minor program is that it is one single program amongst other exchange programs. Creating own webpage for Minor program would only be confusing for the students. That is why optimisation should be done for the Fontys Venlo webpage. The Fontys Venlo webpage downloads fast and it is easy to navigate to the exchange course page. The link to the exchange programs can be found already from the first page which is very good. However when comparing the Fontys University of Applied Sciences- and the Fontys Venlo webpage, Fontys Venlo webpage is a bit old

fashioned regarding to font and design. Fontys Venlo webpage also has links to like and follow their Facebook page and Twitter account, but it is not actually possible to visit these pages straight from the link. This should be changed so that student can access these pages from the direct link in Fontys webpage. It might be beneficial to unify the appearance of Fontys University of Applied science webpage and Fontys Venlo webpage into similar appearance.

Neither Fontys University of Applied Sciences nor Fontys Venlo has mobile optimised webpages. Developing mobile device compatible webpages would be very important regarding to students information search. It was mentioned earlier in this report that almost 78% of undergraduate students and 69% of graduate students have checked the university website from their mobile devices. (Ruffalo Noel Levitz & CollegeWeekLive 2015, 9.)

In the exchange programs page each exchange program of Fontys Venlo offers short course description and course manuals. To offer as much versatile content and information as possible for the prospective exchange students Minor program should offer following features:

- Course manuals
- Improved information brochure
- 2 videos: video regards from the course coordinator and promotion video about Fontys Minor

7.4 Improving the Collaboration with Partner Universities

From the research made for this project it was found that home universities have a huge impact on which program students choose. Students mostly first hear about Fontys Minor from their own home university database and continue looking for information from this source. Also the exchange reports that are published by other students in their home university databases are popular information source amongst prospective exchange students. Minor program should ensure that they have provided all the latest information for the partner universities. All the information needs to be updated regularly and the changes informed to the partner universities immediately.

Even more important finding was that 61% of the students stated that compatible courses to their home university program were the reason to choose Fontys Minor program. For 50% interesting courses affected their decision. This implicates the huge importance that Minor program should offer courses that go well along with other International Business degrees. This can be done by investigating the course structure of other universities and benchmarking them to Fontys Minors course offering.

Fontys offers complete course modules as exchange programs. This differs from many other universities as most of them offer courses to choose from: exchange students in Fontys need to take the whole course module and courses can be only eliminated but not added. This might have an ef-

fect on students not choosing some of the programs. Fontys Minor has relatively big courses: there are only three courses and all of the courses are worth of lot of ETCS. The problem is that in case that one of the courses does not fit into the student's current curriculum student might drop the whole module: completing only 18-24 ETCS on exchange semester is not a possibility to many students.

From the research carried out in this project it is possible to say that the collaboration and benchmarking to partner universities might be the key factor to attract more exchange students to the Minor program. However, as this project was commissioned by the Minor program not the Fontys International Office it is not possible to get into this topic in more detail. It would be recommended to the Minor program coordinator to report these findings to the international office and discuss further actions in collaboration with them.

CONCLUTIONS

As an International Business school it is obvious that Fontys International Business School in Venlo wants to ensure international learning environment in the campus. Incoming exchange students bring almost 140 different nationalities to the campus and together with the international full-time students they create the international atmosphere that every International Business School is looking for. Fontys Minor program is designed to specially meet the needs of exchange students and fulltime students' year abroad. In the Minor program the importance of international learning is even increased: one of the goals of the program is to deliver the multicultural skills that other students gain in their year abroad for the full-time students who will stay at the campus. That is why it is important for the Minor program to increase the amount of exchange students to choose this program and the goal is set to double the amount of international students attending to the program.

From the research answered by 36 of Fontys Minor's current and former exchange students it was founded that Minor students are not specifically coming from some certain university or country. However it was founded that the biggest groups participating in the Minor program were Mexican and German students. Despite this, it was possible to say that target audience for Minor program marketing is actually the entire prospective exchange student population from Fontys partner universities. This brings some challenges to the marketing planning. In order to attract all these students content marketing plan seems to be the most appropriate solution. By producing interesting content to students and publishing these in different marketing channels it is actually possible to pull the suitable exchange students towards choosing the Minor program. Also, as Fontys Minor is a service, having a proper content plan will ease the consistent communication of the marketing message, even there are not many tangible elements to help in the mission.

Moreover it has been noticed that the people today are looking for a spiritual fulfilment and instead of just buying products and services that will satisfy their needs, people are looking for experiments. From the secondary- and research data it was found that students are mainly looking for content that includes detailed program descriptions and information that is related to their professional growth. All these content types can appeal to student's spiritual fulfilment and desire to gain experiences. By developing the Minor program in collaboration with the students to meet their hearts, minds and spirits it is possible to the Minor program to develop competitive advantage and attract more students to choose the program. With a consistent content marketing strategy all this can be created, delivered and communicated to the students.

Student's home university has a big influence in the student's decision about their exchange university. Most of the students first hear about Fontys Minor from their home university database. This can be easily ex-

plained by the fact that students need to choose their prospective exchange university from the selection of partner universities offered. Home university database and other information offered by the students home university maintains its importance throughout the whole decision and information search process. Also one of them most significant finding was that 61% of students stated that courses that fit to their home university program was one of the most important reasons to choose Fontys Minor. This means that the Fontys Minor team needs to ensure that all the information that they are providing to the partner universities is up to date and updated regularly. It could also be beneficial to do research about the structure of the International Bachelor's degrees of Fontys partner universities in order to benchmark them to Fontys courses. Like this, it could be possible to optimise the Fontys Minor courses to fit as many prospective exchange students curriculum as possible. This is a big task and would require close collaboration with Fontys international office.

One of the current marketing methods is word-of-mouth marketing. When Fontys exchange students were asked would they recommend Fontys Minor in scale 1 to 5, the average was 3,9. This is very encouraging to the Minor program. In fact only 3% of the respondents would not recommend Fontys Minor and 97% chose above 2, somewhat unlikely. However, when students were asked where they heard about Fontys Minor, word-of-mouth was mentioned only couple of times. It is still possible to increase Minor programs word-of-mouth marketing by ensuring the consistent quality level of the service and providing social media channels for viral marketing.

From the research the very high importance of the university webpage was found. 75% of Fontys exchange students wants to look for information about their prospective exchange program from Fontys webpage. From the secondary data it was found that 78% of college seniors and 77% of college juniors in US state that college webpage has an impact about their perception about the institution. This again indicates that content plan is in order to ensure that right and consistent information about Fontys Minor is published. As Fontys Minor is only separate program it might be confusing to students if Minor would have their own webpage. That is why optimisation should be done to Fontys Venlo webpage. Updating the layout and font could communicate Fontys message in more modern way. Also Fontys Venlo webpage should have the direct links to social media channels: now it is only possible to like or follow their Facebook or Twitter account. It was also found from the research that mobile usage has increased amongst students and 78% of undergraduate students and 69% of graduate students have checked their university home page via mobile device. Educational institutions should ensure that their home pages are suitable for mobile usage. In Fontys case, neither Fontys University of Applied sciences nor Fontys Venlo webpages are optimised for mobile device. By optimising the webpage it would be possible to reach more students and this might have positive outcomes in attracting more students. Also there should be more versatile information offered about Minor programs. It is suggested that the information brochure that is already offered in the page, would be updated. By adding word from the course coordinator, student

testimonials and infographic to the brochure, it could be more attractive for the prospective exchange students to read. Also video from the course coordinator or promotion video about the program could be an interesting way to offer information and catch students' attention.

Social media as a marketing channel has become extremely important to companies and organisations today. It has been a big influencer on creating the experience economy where consumers wish to be more part of the brand and are making a statement by choosing brands and products that fit not only their needs but also to their values. People today are connected to each other in real time and are able to share experiences, emotions, opinions and other parts of their life with their friends, family and other social networks. Social media can increase the brand awareness, work as a channel for word-of-mouth marketing, practice customer service and get followers and supporters. It was found that many students would like to look up for information from social media: 44% students would like to use social media in their information search. However, only 14% did. This could be explained with the fact that Fontys Minor is not presented in any social media channels. Reasons behind this might be that Minor is only separate program; it could be confusing to students to understand. Facebook was ranked clearly the most important social media channel, following You Tube, blogs and Instagram. Minor program should definitely consider creating a Facebook page; through this channel it is possible to also share the produced content to attract more students. Facebook page could be either created in collaboration with international office to cover all the affairs considering exchange students or individually just for Minor program. Both options have pros and cons and it is vital to create a proper content marketing strategy, so that the marketing message is clear and understandable for the exchange students.

When concluding it all together, we can see that the Minor program is doing good job on ensuring the quality of the program and engaging the lecturers and other employees on the building of the program. However Minor team is facing some problems how to communicate these values to the prospective students in a way that it appealing not only to their needs but also to their values. The question is: How to get the students really excited about the program and inspires them to engage on the development and co-creation of the program? The solution is in careful marketing planning, choosing the right marketing channels, optimising the webpage and developing relations and processes with the partner universities.

People share stories that are inspiring, exiting and provide solutions to their everyday problems. People want to be part of companies and organisations that are empowered to make their life easier and our world today a better place to live. Technological development has provided people a way to be connected to each other, yet they feel more and more isolated and are looking for ways to connect, belong and engage. Organisations that understand the importance of the change from product-centric era to experience-centric economics, companies that will adopt this into their core business and reflect it in all of their actions will gain competitive advantage and win consumers loyalty. (Huffington, seminar 1.10.2015.)

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SURVEY

Fontys Minor Program

You are now participating or have been participating Fontys Minor program. International experience is one of the key characters of Minor in Fontys. That is why we want to ensure that even more exchange students will find their way to Minor programs.

The aim of this survey is to find out the information search process of exchange students so we can ensure that right information is provided in right place at the right time. Like this we can help exchange students decisions of which program to choose.

Your answers are extremely valuable for us and used for future developments of Minor programs.

* Required

Which University are you from? *

[   ]

How did you first hear about Fontys Minor program? *

○ Exchange reports from other students

○ Social Media

○ Fontys webpage

○ Home University database

○ Information session arranged in home university

○ Someone told me about it

○ Other: [   ]

If someone told you about Fontys Minor program, who was it?

For example: friend, other student, teacher etc.

[   ]

Where did you look for information about Fontys Minor program? *

☐ Exchange reports from other students

☐ Social media

☐ Fontys webpage

☐ Home University database

☐ Other: [   ]

Where would you like to look for information? *

☐ Exchnage reports from other students

☐ Social media

☐ Fontys webpage

☐ Home university database

☐ Information session arranged in home University

☐ Other: [   ]

If you would look for information from social media, which channels would you prefer? *

☐ Blogs

☐ Facebook

☐ You Tube

☐ Twitter

☐ Instargam

☐ Other: [   ]

Why did you choose Minor program? *

☐ Interesting courses

☐ International classroom setting

☐ Lecturers with international experience

☐ Everyone is new in the class- easy to fit in

☐ Courses fit to my program in home university

☐ My home University decided the program

☐ Other: [   ]

Before making the decision of which program to choose: Do you feel that you received enough information about Fontys Minor program? *

[▾]

What kind of information would have been helpful for you?

[   ]

Would you recommend Fontys Minor program to another student? *

1 2 3 4 5

Very unlikely ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Very likely

If you wouldn't recommend Fontys Minor program, please explain why?

How do you think Minor program could attract more exchange students?

Submit

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

Appendix 2

EMAIL-ITERVIEW DANIEL VAN MËLIS 18.9.2015

1. What kind of marketing channels are used to promote Minor program at the moment?
At this point of time, the minor relies on the 'regular' exchange subscription procedure. Our International Office forwards information to the IO from our partners, and they communicate the opportunities to their students. We designed the attached document to inform potential students. Next to this, word-of-mouth is important for the minors. Moreover, we arranged two trips (Sweden and Eastern Europe) to promote the minor to potential students.

2. Are there any specific universities that promotion is concentrated on? If yes, which ones and why?
Word-of-mouth: former students. Promotion trips: we discuss this with the IO. Mostly universities who are not recently visited by a colleague, who seems to be attractive for the head IO.

3. What would you specify as the target market of the Minor program?
Target market: the world. For me, diversity and quantity are both important. I do not care where they come from. However, we do have good experiences with students from for example Mexico, many of them joined the minor last years. Probably it is good for us to concentrate us more on the countries which were popular in the past.

4. What would you think are the reasons Minor program is suitable for exchange students (maybe even better than other programs)?
Real international classroom setting. Lecturers who have international experience and are internationally open minded. The programme is one semester, everyone is new in a class (students do not join an existing class and become isolated). Interesting and state of the art courses where the latest developments are discussed. Interdisciplinary classroom settings. Focus on knowledge, skills and attitude.

5. Have there been any marketing activities promoting Minor programs suitability for exchange students?
Reasons named at point four are communicated by the activities in point 1.

6. What kind of marketing activities you have already tried? Which ones worked and which ones didn't?
Tried: point one, mostly the promotion trips. We see this year if this worked, the potential students seemed interested. Some partners are really interesting to visit, some not.

7. How many exchange students are now in FIBS? How many in Minor programs? And what would be the target for minor program?
Minor programmes: see current class lists. FIBS: no idea, you could ask Marjan Geertjens.

Appendix 3

MINOR IBM - Specialisation marketing for marketers - Marketing

Method of testing and criteria

- Interim theory exam (written exam, 120 minutes)   25%
    - Exam material: specified sections of the reader as discussed in class and its application in cases and real-life business situations

- 2 Intermediate group presentations (group grade)   15%

- Interview skills (analysing own held interview) (individual grade)   10%

- Final presentation and oral examination (90 minutes per group, individual (40%)   50%
+ group grades (60%)
    - Group presents International Marketing Plan designed by the students (max 30 minutes)
    - Individual defence of presentation and making crosslinks between theory and practical context.

LW[1]	CW[2]	Subject	Contact hours	Self-study
L1	7	Introduction	8	8
	8	Holiday		
L2	9	Services Marketing	8	8
L3	10	Research + KANO	8	8
L4	11	Subgroup meeting + KANO	8	8
L5	12	KANO + Interview skills	8	8
L6	13	Hofstede + Blue Ocean Strategy (BOS)	8	8
L7	14	BOS + Golden Circles	8	8
L8	15	Interim exam week	2	8
L9	16	Subgroup meeting + Campaigning	8	8
L10	17	Catch up week (interim exam MLA 1)		
L11	18	Promotion	8	8
	19	Holiday		
L12	20	Promotion + Pricing	8	8
L13	21	Product (other p's services)	8	8
L14	22	Final exam prep + Subgroup meeting	8	8
L15	23	Catch up week		
L16-18	24-26	Final examinations	14	8
L19-20	27-28	Re-examinations		

(Minor IBM- Course manuals 2015)

Appendix 4

MINOR IBM - Specialisation marketing for marketers – Business Management

Method of testing and criteria

- Interim theory exam (written exam, 120 minutes)   25%
  - Exam material: Book Hill, Jones and its application in cases and real-life business situations

- Case study assignments (written solutions, both individually and in groups)   25%
  - Specific assignments, see course structure on Intranet

- Final presentation and oral examination (120 minutes per group, individual grades)   50%
  - Group presentation on real-life business challenge, designed by the students
  - Solution should be presented based on toolbox Hill, Jones and Bartlett, Beamish
  - Individual defence of presentation and making crosslinks between theory and practical context.

- Individual participation   [-1,+1]

The content of the test of this LA is always related to the study targets described in this Course Manual.
The test criteria of this LA meet the requirements as stipulated by the Management Team in the FIHE test policy. The test criteria are conform the demands for adequacy, transparency, validity and reliability.

LW[1]	CW[2]	Subject	Contact hours	Self-study
L1	7	Introduction MLA 1	8	8
	8	Holiday		
L2	9	Hill-Jones 1+2	8	8
L3	10	Hill-Jones 3	8	8
L4	11	Hill-Jones 4	8	8
L5	12	Hill-Jones 5	8	8
L6	13	Hill-Jones 7	8	8
L7	14	Hill-Jones 8	8	8
L8	15	Catch-Up week		
L9	16	Hill-Jones 9+10	8	8
L10	17	Interim exam week	2	8
L11	18	Bartlett-Beamish 1	8	8
	19	Holiday		
L12	20	Bartlett-Beamish 2	8	8
L13	21	Bartlett-Beamish 3	8	8
L14	22	Bartlett-Beamish 4	8	8
L15	23	Catch-Up week		
E	24	Examination week MLA 1	6	4
E	25	Examination week MLA 1	4	4
E	26	Examination week MLA 1	4	
RE	27	Re-examination week MLA 1		
RE	28	Re-examination week MLA 1		

(Minor IBM- Course manuals 2015)

EXAMPLE OF THE CURRENT INFORMATION BROCHURE

Programme overview

Introduction

Globalization is the key word in today's world economy. Small as well as large enterprises in any sector of business are confronted with the challenges of this development. Within the minor IBM, students are confronted with these challenges. We will invite students to virtually enter multinational companies, and confront them with real life decisions CEO's, CFO's and marketing managers face in daily life. The aim of this minor is to explore the newest ideas for turbulent times in a way that is interesting and valuable to students.

Didactical approach

- In the minor IBM, students do have at least 16 lecture hours every week.
  - International Management 8 hours a week
  - Individual Applied Research and Report writing offers classes in the first weeks, afterwards a coach will guide you with your research
  - Deepening courses from choice package 8 hours a week
- Moreover, students face group projects and individual assignments. The entire study load for the minor IBM is 720 hours.
- Various didactical approaches and methods of testing will be used, depending on the course. Please read the course descriptions for more detail. In general:
  - Using a combination of established teaching, new ideas and real-life applications students will see how interesting and challenging modern business life can be;
  - The minor IBM will use the most up-to-date literature, relevant knowledge about all the relevant fields of interest will be gained;
  - Recent developments, cases and examples in today's business will be used by the lecturers; theory will be linked to daily life examples;
- Analytical skills will be gained during the courses. Students will be challenged to take the hot seat from decision makers, and are asked to make decisions based on their own analysis;
- The minor is interactive, students will participate in classes, interact with their lecturers and colleague students, debate their case solutions and develop their knowledge, skills and attitude;
- Students have to pass all the separate learning arrangements in order to pass the minor IBM. Students who fail one learning arrangement get the opportunity to redo the examination from this learning arrangement.
- Our heterogeneous student population creates an international and dynamic classroom setting where you could learn from each other, experience other cultures and make relevant contacts. Highly trained and experienced lecturers guarantee our expertise and a top grade education.

Professional work field

The work field context of this minor is International Business Management. Each student links his major context with the work field of International Business Management.

Within the study of the International Business Management minor, various professional job contexts and situations are considered. The work field comprises a variety of possible jobs.

3

(Minor IBM - Specialisation marketing for marketers 2015)

Appendix 6

EXAMPLE OF THE INFOGRAPHICS

MINOR PROGRAM IN A NUTSHELL

3,9

Is the average of students to recommend Minor program in a scale from 1 to 5

25%

Of rhe Minor students are exchnage

Minor students come from all over the world

"EDUCATION IS THE PASSPORT TO THE FUTURE, FOR TOMORROW BELONGS FOR THOSE WHO PREPARE FOR IT TODAY"

Malcolm x

Created with: infogr.am

EXAMPLE OF THE TESTIMONIALS

"Studying in Minor program was a great decision. I gained so much knowledge through real life business cases and I developed my problem solving skills. International learning environment is great. I feel that Minor program prepared me to the coming graduation phase through fun and interesting learning methods. And I got lifelong friends from my classmates too."

Iiris 26, HAMK University of Applied Sciences, Finland

"Minor program is a great way to learn from real life business cases. Our lecturer had a lot of real life experience from multinational corporations and I feel like I learned things that I will be really beneficial in my future career."

Rogelio 23, Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico

EXAMPLE: ILLUSTRATION OF THE IMPROVED INFORMATION BROCHURE