

## ***Principles of Marketing in the Public Administration in Romania***

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***Abstract:*** *With the increase of the role of public services in increasing the quality of life of citizens of our country, there is a need to implement and develop marketing in public administration, where there is an inexplicable lag behind.*

***Keywords:*** *public administration, public marketing, citizens`needs, public sector, administrative system*

### **Introduction**

Marketing in public administration requires officials a new way to conduct that involves both, responsiveness to citizens' demands, high capacity to the evolving needs and demands of society, transparency, availability to reduce bureaucracy, flexibility mechanism of functioning of public institutions, vision unit on activities and maximum efficiency obtained as a result of effective orientation activities to the real needs of citizens. Concept orientation of marketing in public administration aims to identify, achieve and quantify the needs and wishes of citizens and their satisfaction by state institutions (etymologically the word "administration" comes from the Latin word "administrare", which means "to serve").

With the increase of the role of public services in increasing the quality of life of the citizens of our country, there is a need to implement and develop marketing in the public administration, where there is an inexplicable lag behind.

### **1. Public Marketing**

Public marketing is marked by a series of particularities determined by the specificity of the public sector, by the influence of the environment on public institutions, by the specific elements of the public service.

Public marketing has as a basic component the marketing of public services. In the category of services public are included: defending national, security of citizens (for example, services Inspectorate General of Police), education (kindergartens, schools, colleges, universities, inspectorates school) health public (hospitals, directions sanitary) service diplomatic (missions Diplomatic and Consular) service of information (for example SRI, SIE), culture (libraries, public, museums, institutes and cultural, etc.), services social (offices for pensions, homes the insurance of health) service public sanitation, pest control, lighting street, transport aviation, transportation on the way railway, services institutions of administration public (municipalities, prefectures, councils county, ministries, institutions in subordination government) etc.

The main actors of public marketing are the market, the provider and the user and the public need. In public marketing, there is the question of applying "the methods that will allow the public service to be the public service [8, 37]:

The concept of marketing in public administration in Romania involves the following [8, 379]:

- represents a conception regarding the organization and development of the public administration activity in our country;
- supposes that the process of public administration is permanently adapted to the present and future demands of the citizens;

- satisfying them with maximum efficiency;
- means a new perspective on the relations between the public administration and its environment;
- the activities, methods and techniques with which they operate must be oriented towards the study of the beneficiaries and the satisfaction of their demands;
- the marketing of the public administration to be revised in the planning at the institution level;
- the concept must be learned by the manager of the administrative bodies and his team and adopted as a basic principle in the practical activity of the civil servants, which is equivalent to underlining that the respective institution has acquired the marketing orientation;
- implies dynamism, generated by the movement and transformation supposed by the reform of the public administration in Romania, treated not only from the perspective of the present but also of the future, which entails the use of forecasts and the organization of the future strategy.

In the case of Romania, as well as of the other former socialist countries, it is necessary to carry out the reform on a democratic basis of the public administration, as well as to ensure the necessary premises for European integration in this field. Customer orientation is still the domain of the future of the public sector (to a large extent this is true for the private sector in Romania), but things are changing at a pretty good pace.

Following the events of December 1989, Romania has undergone major changes in both political and economic terms. Notable progress has been made in the process of implementing the legislative and administrative reform, in order to align the national legislation with the rules of the European Union. The new regulations regarding local autonomy and the decentralization of public services in the context of our state's permanent dialogue with the institutions of the European Union lead to a reconsideration of some reports by local communities and other public institutions.

Local authorities must not only implement a significant part of the community body, but also face challenges in the social, economic and environmental fields.

The transition to the market economy has involved numerous economic, social and political changes in Romania. In this framework, a particular place is held by the substantial changes in the concrete plan of the organization and functioning of the public administration, on principles of modernity and efficiency, of approaching citizens, of connection to the European norms in this matter in order to be able to respond effectively to the specific requirements.. In this way, the public administration acquires a new philosophy, acquires its own identity and generates a special configuration.

The promotion of marketing is a new problem for the Romanian public administration. We find that there are timid attempts to use the managerial valences of marketing in this sector of activity. The implementation of marketing programs in the administration depends on the conception of the executive authorities, who can orient the marketing activity either towards the quality of the public services from the perspective of the citizens' requirements or towards the social environment. [6, 83]

All public administration institutions in our country must seek to meet the public service needs of the population, but not all are really oriented towards this fulfillment and do not place the client-citizen at the center of their concerns.

It currently institutions of public administration in Romania (eg Government) is obliged to do pressures to the meet the needs and requirements of citizens. Thus, we can notice:

- amplifying the pressure on public budget;
- continuous restructuring of the functions and services of the public sector;
- the tendency of privatization or the outsourcing of services by outsourcing (reinventing government);
- need of the public administration in relation to citizens/taxpayers.

In recent years, one of the objectives on the agenda of political decision-makers, regardless of their political origin, has been to increase the transparency of the administrative act and to promote openness to citizens. The progress made in this regard was visible, in the sense of complementing the legislative framework with normative acts regulating the free access to information of public interest or the obligation of transparency of decision-making.

Currently, public administration organizations are located in a competitive world, organizations adopt private behavior. Concept on marketing activities of companies can be extended if public institutions if one takes into account the peculiarities of public administration. This possibility lies in the fact that the entire apparatus of the administrative system, which in the position of public service provider must promote specific marketing strategies such activities.

The modern contemporary administration requires the Romanian public authorities to ensure the proper functioning of the public services market and to guarantee the general interest, in particular, to satisfy the primordial needs of the citizens and to conserve the public goods, when the market fails to do so.

Surveys conducted at the level of public opinion in Romania indicate a deficit of population confidence in the public administration. One of the most obvious explanations is the low credibility of the administrative system in Romania.

Thus, the IRSOP conducted an opinion poll entitled Citizens' Perception of Public Function. The study was conducted in the municipality of Bucharest, Bacău, Prahova and Timiș counties, on November 5-25, 2005, on a sample consisting of 500 adults. Regarding the **degree of satisfaction** of the subjects in relation to the relation with the civil servants, it was found that 47% of the citizens were satisfied with the way they were treated at the level of the central public administration institutions (ministries and agencies). The degree of satisfaction decreases with respect to the other institutions, starting with the social insurance houses and up to the school inspectorates or prefectures. The degree of satisfaction is higher in terms of the qualities shown by the civil servants with whom the subjects interacted (honesty, professionalism, competence, kindness) and lower regarding the working conditions or the atmosphere of the respective institution. 46% of the subjects consider that the civil servant is appointed on political criteria, 49% that he is corrupt, 44% that he is involved in business, 44% that he uses the function in personal interest. The level of citizen satisfaction with the way they are treated in public institutions is relatively low. The main aspects of dissatisfaction are related to the atmosphere in public institutions, the way the activity is organized with the public and the inefficiency of the officials.

The media and civil society, as image trainers, transmit a series of messages with negative connotations regarding civil servants, which generate a negative perception of public opinion regarding the body of civil servants.

In addition, unfortunately, this image is taken, assimilated and implicitly mediated by civil servants.

The Romanian civil servant is often perceived, through the image transmitted by the press or through direct perception, as incompetent, poorly motivated, bureaucratic, obedient, politicized, uninitiated, corrupt and arrogant. All these deficiencies are associated with the public administration as a whole. The public system appears as radically different from the private one, based on professionalism, open competition, objectivity and merit. A reinvigoration of the image of the Romanian civil servant should start from here, from the change of the state sector mentality to a type of mentality specific to the private sector. One solution in this regard is the implementation of a marketing program, with the full range of services designed to optimally meet the needs of customers. The public administration, whose purpose is to satisfy the needs of the citizens by providing quality services, should be oriented towards this type of thinking in order to increase productivity and to get closer to the citizens.

The reality of the Romanian public administration system shows that civil servants in state institutions often have inappropriate behavior. One of the causes of these deficiencies is related to the fact that the authorities in this field have a monopoly position. As a result, there is a lack of flexibility of public bodies in adapting them to the needs and desires of citizen-clients. In this regard, it is noted that a number of public institutions set their time for resolving requests received from citizens (for example, approving plans for extension or modification that they want to make to personal property buildings).

We mention that the regulations provide that the answers to these requests will be given within eight weeks, but in many cases (these vary depending on the local authorities), the definitive answers are far beyond the legal deadline.

In addition, the administrative system in our country seems to do nothing to develop more (material) forms that are more friendly to citizens. As a result, the general image of the public administration in the perception of the population is that the activity of the state institutions is burdened by a heavy, complicated bureaucracy, which makes it difficult to meet the needs, wishes and demands of the citizens.

In Romania, too, the development and improvement of city and municipal administrations, police and other public institutions is taking place, with their transformation into increasingly modern and efficient service institutions, within which citizens are at the center of attention and action. Unfortunately, a large number of citizens continue to perceive critically the civil servants as representatives of the public authority (at the state, county or commune level).

Among the public institutions, the National Agency of Civil Servants (ANFP) has a key role to play in building trust in civil servants. ANFP may consider the following marketing measures / actions in public administration [12,127]:

- Organizing a Day of civil servants (action that can be registered in the field of public relations);
- Establishment of visual identity elements for the civil servants' body (logo, motto, portal);
- Organizing public sessions and debates, with the participation of civil society and the media, in which to present the performances of civil servants;
- Investigating the opinion of the civil servants regarding the degree of trust in the institution or public authority in which they operate;
- Building a network of communicators at the level of public institutions, with the role of improving the self-perception of the body of civil servants.

A positive change in the perception of public administration institutions among the public is much more difficult than its deterioration. This is because the public is not always objective in assessing the activity of the state, given that, in the not too distant past of Romania (in fact even today), the state, through its institutions, has neglected the individual interests, beating currency on the general interest of the community, which, in reality, has become a restricted interest, as a group, of those in power.

A policy of rebuilding trust in the Romanian public administration can ultimately lead to both the increase of the efficiency and effectiveness of the civil servants, as well as to the increase of the satisfaction of the citizens, of the civil society and of the media towards the public services.

The realization of the reform in the public administration in Romania implies not only the replacement, elimination or creation of institutions, the adaptation to the new conditions of their management and marketing, but also the change of the mentality of the civil servants. The marketing orientation of the activity must be adopted as a basic principle, to be endorsed both by the heads of public administration institutions in our country, as well as by all civil servants engaged in serving the citizens.

As a result, it is necessary to initiate training programs for the responsible civil servants with the information in the reception area of the public from the offices of the public organizations, the clear and concise structuring of the forms and the instructions for their use.

It should be taken into account that, in the marketing perspective, the citizens of a municipality or city are at the same time voters and beneficiaries of the administration services, if they are the clients of public institutions. If in the past they were rather "petitioners or" applicants, and even more "bad", recipients of orders, today they are considered more than clients, partners with equal rights of the administration. [3,86]

The public administration authorities have a monopoly position. Romanian citizens appeal to the public services offered by the state institutions because they have no choice and prefer to use what is offered to them (although, often, they are dissatisfied), rather than to do without.

The orientation and development of the activity of the public administration institutions in our country in a marketing vision requires the integration of the marketing concept at all levels of the structure of the respective organization. To this end, the following measures are required [8, 37]:

- organizing activities that contribute to the understanding and recognition of the need to connect the public administration's concern to the concrete demands of the market and the environment;
- orientation of the practical activity in the direction of satisfying these requirements by ensuring an appropriate organizational framework;
- integration of the main flow of communications in the field of marketing of public administration in Romania;
- the development of working skills with the public at the civil servants who have such attributions in the job description, considering that they represent the interface between the administration and the citizen;
- reducing the pressure exerted by the large influx of the public on the institutions of the public administration;
- reducing bureaucracy;
- creation of extra-institutional information points for a better orientation of citizens;
- educating the population for the use of distance communication means in relation to public institutions: telephone, post, internet;
- arranging the interior spaces of public institutions and ensuring a comfortable atmosphere in their premises;
- more intense publicizing of the activity of the public administration.

The scientific, logical and comparative approach of the concept of marketing within the public administration, together with the application in practice, may represent an important lever for improving the activity of the administrative-public institutions in accordance with the requirements of the reform. Satisfying the needs of public services of the citizen-clients, at the same time as obtaining the social profit (social prosperity), under the conditions of an efficient marketing organization, is the basis of the modern marketing in the public administration institutions in Romania.

The application of marketing principles in the public administration in our country will have to take into account the following aspects [8, 35]:

- the marketing to intervene at all the hierarchical and functional levels of the institutions of the public administration, ensuring the increase of the cohesion and the efficiency;
- marketing will have to contribute to the promotion of modern organizational structures in the Romanian administration;
- IT systems for conducting the marketing activity will enable marketing in the public administration to be a source of information for the development of sustainable local development strategies and policies.

## **2. Proposals for the Application of Marketing Principles in the Public Administration in Romania**

The citizen should ask his opinion on the services offered by the public administration institution in order to be able to assess if they meet the expectations. In this regard, it is recommended to encourage the system of suggestions and complaints, which will allow citizens dissatisfied with the services offered by the public administration, as well as the use of questionnaires and surveys to evaluate the image of public administration institutions among citizens.

The attitude of those who are in direct contact with the citizens is characterized by [10, 25]:

- Kindness and solicitude;
- High knowledge and desire to share them;
- The interest shown in meeting the needs of the citizen-clients.

In relation to the public administration institutions, the citizen must find that he receives good quality services. If he receives a service that is better or faster than expected, and the mistakes are openly acknowledged and rectified without discussion, these transformations will greatly depend on the image that the citizen will form on the public administration.

The citizen should not be bothered and bored with the problems that the public administration institution has. Lack of staff, malfunctions on the computers provided, power outages are administrative problems and should not affect the client.

Public administration institutions need to find out the exact benefits their citizens expect. The expectations and demands of the client-citizens concern: quality of service, confidentiality, competitiveness and simplicity, punctuality, kindness, trust etc.

### **Conclusions**

The reform in the public administration is necessary to look at the whole problem of civil servants, to retain as civil servants only those persons who have vocation in this field or whose vocation can be cultivated in time, through intensive professional training courses.

The reform of the public administration does not only mean the reform of the organizational system, but it is very necessary to bring about essential changes at the attitudinal and behavioral level by implementing / adopting marketing optics among civil servants. This is possible because, as John Naisbit said in his work *Megatendencies*, the young generation transforms any institution through which it passes.

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