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DOCTORAL FIELDS: MARKETING**

**THESIS SUMMARY**

**STUDY ON MARKETING STRATEGIES USED IN ROMANIAN  
PAINTS AND VARNISHES MARKET**

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# **PHD THESIS SUMMARY**

**Keywords**

**Introduction**

**Summary of Chapters Thesis**

Chapter 1: Research Methodology

Chapter 2: Marketing strategy. Conceptual

Chapter 3: Types of Marketing Strategies

Chapter 4: Marketing Strategies Used in Romanian Paints and Varnishes Market

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## **KEY WORDS**

Strategy, strategic planning, marketing plans and programs, environmental marketing, crisis, risks and threats, resources and skills, potential strategic marketing objectives, segmentation, budgeting, customer behavior, organizational market, retail, loyalty programs.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Addressing the theme "Study on Marketing Strategies Used in Romanian Paints and Varnishes Market" in a context of uncertainty in the economic, political and social field is a challenge, especially in terms of approach to achieve an overview of the marketing environment and analyze the time evolution of the major market players.

The choice of the theme was influenced by the absence of systematic approach to marketing companies in the building materials industry, aspect noted over a period of ten years of practical experience in the field. In addition, if we make a parallel between the stages of development and the development vision of Romanian marketing managers, we believe that a focus on production for sale prevails, added to a policy of solving the current problems of the company.

The concern with the marketing strategy originates in the professional expertise gained over a period of 12 years, and the preoccupation for: "what is the reason why companies fail or succeed?". The study of the marketing literature in an attempt to find solutions and answers, along with strategic models to be followed by companies, led me into choosing our theme "Study on Marketing Strategies Used in Romanian Paints and Varnishes Market ". The economic context of Romania crossed emphasized concern for strategy, along with identification of the impact of environmental factors on marketing and choices made by companies for the use or otherwise of models aimed at their adaptation to the environment, leading to results desired.

To our knowledge, in the marketing literature there are no empirical studies that address the topic of marketing strategies in Romanian paints and varnishes market. Due to privacy policies, companies do not allow access to information related to marketing

activity in general and even less to data about their objectives, marketing planning and strategy. Furthermore, in our experience, the marketing functions as described in the marketing literature, prior to production and marketing (ie market research, market choice or target segments, product design, price fixing, choosing distribution channels and strategy development communication) are relatively less developed in practice. In terms of models of strategic planning and marketing used by the companies studied, we are able to observe the practical absence of a structured activities, as indicated in the literature, in the building materials market, allowing us to conclude that the predominant component is that of operational marketing activity, marked by budget planning and calendar of actions reflected in the annual marketing plan.

The construction materials industry is a strategic area in the economy of a country, in terms of human and material resources involved, through tangible contribution to increasing the quality of life but especially because of its impact on GDP. Due to the challenges recorded in the international economic environment, particularly due to the financial crisis installed in the US in 2007, which was subsequently extended in Europe, the evolution of this industrial area is far from predictable. Romania was not spared by the turbulences in the international economic environment of the last decade, whether we refer to the technological, cultural change and economic developments. Pressures transferred to companies, managers and marketing departments has increased tremendously since 2009. The paint and varnish sector is an important component of the building materials industry. Paints and varnishes market was significantly affected by the recession, between 2009 - 2014, with declines in production volumes as well as the financial results of companies in the field. In this context, strong competition and struggle for survival requires further rigor and pragmatism on behalf of marketing professional, in order to build successful strategies for their companies.

This thesis provides a theoretical and methodological framework necessary for analyzing marketing strategies used by major players in the Romanian paint and varnishes market.

In choosing the theme of this paper, we considered the following:

- market decline of paints and varnishes, both in relation to the studied period (2005 - 2014) and in relation to the activity registered in the European Union,
- significant reduction of marketing budgets of companies activating players in the Romanian paint and varnishes market,

- own experience regarding the limited concern for structural studies of the market, concern of increasing competition and preserving market shares limited market development prospects that come from reduced state investment in infrastructure projects,
- lack of consistency of government programs that were aimed at inducing increases in volume throughout the construction materials industry by financing infrastructure projects, public buildings, investments in rehabilitation of historic buildings.

## **SYNTHETIC PRESENTATION**

Following the research objectives, the PhD thesis entitled "Study on Marketing Strategies Used in Romanian Paints and Varnishes Market "is divided into five chapters and conclusions.

Chapter 1, entitled "Research Methodology" refers to the research objectives, coverage, choice of method, research types and stages of research.

Chapter 2, entitled "Marketing Strategy. Conceptual Insights"and Chapter 3, entitled "Typology of marketing strategies ", uses documentary research to determine the current level of knowledge in the field marketing strategy and marketing planning. We followed up on the evolution of the concept of marketing and strategy, from a historical perspective, in order to capture the concern for the environment and the influence of strategy elements from the military, political and economic environment. The strategic planning process is analyzed in terms of the relationship that marketing has with the vision, mission and company values, as well as the organizational culture and the operational component, translating how the companies address the current activity and budgetary challenges and analyze marketing performance.

Chapter 4 entitled "Marketing strategies in Romanian paints and varnishes market " is an extensive research that aims to bring new elements to already known issues in the light of latest developments in the marketing environment. Marketing environment analysis highlights the changes that disrupt the activity of companies analyzed. The study is based upon desk research on secondary data about marketing environment and the evolution of the main competitors of firm Caparol, as well as a qualitative research and research-based group interview. These studies refer to consumers in the paints and varnishes



market and issues that influence purchasing decisions and changing consumer behavior in the recession.

In Chapter 5, entitled "Types of marketing strategies in firms paints and varnishes market in Romania", we present a quantitative analysis based on questionnaire in which we define the competitive environment in the market of paints and varnishes in Romania. In Chapter 5, we analyze the usage of marketing strategies in Romanian paints and varnishes market, through the study conducted at Caparol against the first four manufacturers of paints and varnishes. Using the strategic diagnosis method of the competitive environment, the model proposed by Porter on the concept of competitive advantage, we analyzed generic strategies, strategies based on competitive position and strategies in the marketing mix, identified in the activity of the companies subject to the inquiry.

The "Conclusions" are a display of the results obtained as a result of research performed that bring new elements to already known issues. Also, the implications of the research are presented in theory and management, research limitations and future research directions.

## **CAPITOLUL 1. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The main purpose of this study is to identify marketing strategies used by companies in Romanian paints and varnishes market, in order to achieve marketing objectives. Attending the strategic marketing goals requires meeting several objectives derived, including:

- identification of the external environment factors influencing the performance of companies in the paint and lacquer industry in Romania;
- analysis of how companies adapt to environmental factors, in terms of strategies implemented by companies studied;
- analysis of the internal environment of Caparol in terms of capacity mobilization, adaptation and achieve marketing objectives pursued;
- establishing the role of consumers in formulating marketing policies in the companies analyzed.

In the absence of a more structured research on building materials market in Romania, especially the market of paints and varnishes, we believe that our scientific approach

brings new elements that can be used in marketing decision making and strategic decisions for the entire sector activities.

The research is aimed at analyzing the competitive environment of the paints and varnishes market in Romania and sales representatives perception research on customer purchasing behavior and attitudes DIY segment. The study of Romanian consumer motivations and attitudes aims to explaining the behavior of the target audience. These two studies were preceded by a primary and secondary documentary research on environmental influences on consumer behavior in terms of demographic, economic, political and cultural, as identified features that define the Romanian consumer of finishing materials and latest developments in purchasing style given the period of nearly ten years that our analysis extends to.

## **CHAPTER 2. MARKETING STRATEGY. CONCEPTUAL INSIGHTS**

Our scientific approach continues with the conceptual approach of the strategy. The economic literature is very rich in definitions and approaches to business strategy in general and in particular marketing strategy. In this chapter we present a selection of approaches to marketing strategy, its relationship with the organizational strategy and strategic marketing planning.

A review of the literature on strategic planning and marketing strategy aims at the evolution of the concept as well as the differences between the different approaches and "schools" established around the concept of strategy. We have also observed how schools of strategic thinking addressed the link between the conceptual and operational aspects of the strategy or strategic marketing planning used in economic activity. The strategy should be seen as a formula for how the companies should act in the competitive environment, how to formulate goals and what policies are needed to achieve their goals. We adhere to Michael Porter's approach (1980), author of strategic thinking school known in the literature as "School of Strategic Analysis of Industries and Competition" who refers to the competitive strategy as a means to differentiate in the customer's mind and to add value through a mix of different activities from those used by competitors. Henry Mintzberg (1984), in his book "The Rise and Fall of Strategic

Planning" defines the strategy through five assumptions that reflect the theoretical and practical reflecting organizations (Băcanu, 2014). The strategy can be a plan, a trick, a pattern of behavior, a perspective or a position. All these variants may be applicable, since the organization is making plans for the future and at the same time, their past conduct gives rise to patterns of action. Thus arises deliberate strategy and strategy achieved. Fully materialize intentions can be called deliberate strategies and those that do not materialize, unrealized strategies. Strategy designates emerging issues which, although materialized in reality were not intentional (Mintzberg, 2000: 41-42). CK Prahalad and G. Hamel authors (1990) are theoreticians to the "School of Resources and Strategic Skills". They consider that the success of an organization's strategy should be defined in terms of how it uses its resources wisely.

In our opinion, the vision of Chamberlain (2010) is the most applied and used in companies. As with Quinn (1980), the strategy is a plan prepared by the management of an organization to achieve its goals and mission, previously aspect of Steiner (1979). Porter's vision is closer to the concept of military strategy, while Chamberlain has the conceptual limitations of the strategy of the organization and the environment in which it operates. In this respect, Romanian authors such as Nicolescu (1996), or Zorlențan and others (1998), commented in terms of combinations in management strategy for establishing major objectives of the organization long-term assessment of available resources and formulating options for achieving the drive in order achieve competitive advantage and help adapt the organization to the environment. Strategic marketing is an art and a science, according to Lee and others (1994), which characterizes large organizations, in terms of establishing a deliberate plan aimed at achieving a state in a certain time frame, within the presence of a general manager to develop, to advise and be responsible for its implementation (Băcanu, 2014). We believe that the vision of academic specialists on the strategy field must be completed and by practical elements applicable to managerial level.

### **CHAPTER 3. TYPOLOGY OF MARKETING STRATEGIES**

The reason companies succeed or fail is, according to Porter (1991), the central question in the field of strategy. "This question is at the core of the strategy as a scientific domain since its inception five decades ago. The cause of success or failure of a company

encompasses all the other questions that have been raised. Strategy is inextricably linked to issues such as differences between firms, as they behave like choosing strategies and how they manage their strategies "Generic strategies, strategies based on competitive position and strategies in the marketing mix: all models are aimed at building a firm connection between the options in terms of industry, positioning and configuration activities and results. According to Porter (1991), the right choices depend on the firm's position in the market, which can be measured systematically through its value chain in relation to competition, assessed by the same value chain, in the broader context which depends on a thorough understanding of industry structure.

Porter (1980) believes that the strategy covers two managerial decisions: the direction the company should follow and how to get there. In 1991, Porter completes this general definition using the concept of competitive advantage: "competitive advantage arises from the fact that the company creates value for its buyers that exceeds the firm's cost of creating that value. Value is what buyers are willing to pay, and superior value stems from offering lower prices than competitors for equivalent benefits or providing unique benefits that compensate for a higher price. The presence of segments in the market, with features on quality items and items requested by buyers and buying habits highlighting the company undertakes to adopt certain strategic alternatives, known in the literature under the name of "alternative position" (Mâlcomete, Vorzsack: 1976). These alternatives are called "marketing unsegmented" "segmented marketing" or "selective marketing", while Florescu (1997) classifies them as "undifferentiated strategy," "differentiated strategy" and "focused strategy." We will use the terminology proposed by Porter or minimal cost strategy (cost leadership in the original) and differentiation strategy.

According to some authors, generic strategies are two in number, namely through cost leadership and differentiation. Other authors add a third strategy, that of concentration, explained in relation to the first two (Balaure: 2002). Porter himself refers to the two options that generate competitive advantage (Porter, 1997: 7) or three generic strategies (Porter, 2001: 43). Also, Colin Campbell-Hunt (2000: 1) analyze the theory of Porter's generic competitive strategy, and as a source of competitive advantage are indicated cost and differentiation strategies. We consider important to present the strategy of concentration, along with low cost and differentiation strategy, as part of the overall strategy developed by the specialized literature.

When several companies sell or buy the same goods on a certain market, they will manifest a certain rivalry (Gherasim, 1995: 68). Among the companies competing for the same market, there are several sources of onset or intensification of competition, after Gherasim (1995): lack of companies that wish to entering that market, allows suppliers to influence the competitive battle, power customers negotiations or availability of substitutes in the market. It is a reformulation of the five competitive forces model proposed by Michael Porter (1980), namely: the rivalry between the firms with the same activity, the threat created a market penetration of new competitors, the threat created by substitution products or services, bargaining power of suppliers and the bargaining power of buyers (consumers). Identifying competitors owners of a company along with identifying potential competition are issues that should not be neglected (Porter 1991). After Hunt (2012), potential competition can occur at four levels (depending on the degree of substitutability of a product) to the companies that offer a product or service similar, in the same market at the same price level (Ex. Cola Cola and Pepsi Cola) in all companies that manufacture the same product (ex. drinks) at the companies that meet the same need (ex. thirst) and the companies that produce the same product class (ex. food).

Knowledge of current and potential competitors and strategic groups (consisting of several companies operating in the same sector) is very important for understanding their strategies. In 1994, Kotler and Armstrong (2001: 665) grouped strategic choices of a company according to its market share. Kotler (2001) divided them according to the role the companies played in the target market, namely the leadership, challenge, prosecution or serving niche markets, where a firm can be market leader, challenger, follower or niche player (specialist ). On the Romanian paints and varnishes market, the top five producers have approx. 55% of the total output, followed by approx. 170 small and medium producers and 110 importers (according to the Interbiz, 2013).

The marketing concept is the orientation of the marketing mix of the company, according to internal resources and market conditions by combining a whole, coherent form of programs, policy elements of product, price, distribution and promotion (Brunner, 1989). Based on company resources, within the firm specializes profile, how to achieve business contacts with the market and drive its resources in order to meet its objectives market, Professor Neil H. Borden defines the concept of marketing mix (Florescu, 1997 : 287).

Delimitation of content marketing mix was done by Jerome McCarthy (1968) by combining all the tools available to the firm around the four pillars of marketing: product, price, distribution (placement) and promotion or 4Ps. The marketing mix was defined as a group of endogenous variables under the control of the company, ie a "composition" of elements that use the company to achieve the desired position (Shipp and Lamb, 1996, Hill and Sullivan 1997). Florescu (1997: 288) states that the product and promotion are indeed controlled by the company, but the price may be imposed from outside (by competition regulators, etc.) and for distribution of products generally available systems are used in market. The composition of the marketing mix and the position of each of its components depend on the company's opportunities and market demands (Shipp and Lamb, 1996). The four components of the mix is not, according to Florescu (1997: 289) a single instrument, but sets of tools focused on one central element. The characteristic of the marketing mix will be given by the market, and the focus will be on the first and most important part of the mix - product - the primary means of business communication with the market. Hunt (2010: 80) considers that the position and order of importance of the four elements varies depending on the mix concrete implementation of specific strategy which is placed in service.

#### **CHAPTER 4. MARKETING STRATEGIES USED IN ROMANIAN PAINT AND VARNISHES MARKET**

Paint market is a complex and economically important market; paints and varnishes provide protection for surfaces without forgetting the aesthetic component and the function of improving quality of life through the development of representative environments, be it business or arranging destinations living spaces. Each application requires a specific type of paint, depending on the expected performance and the process of painting. Exposure to natural substances such as oxygen, water, salt and carbon dioxide causes corrosion of the iron, corrosion of aluminum and wood rot. Paint products have different characteristics depending on the destination: domestic segment, represented by decorative paints represent about 75% of the market of paints and varnishes along with industrial segment: auto (original and repainting), metal packaging, furniture, airplanes, trucks , public transport, electrical and electronic equipment, ships, metallurgy etc., with a share of 25%.

The paint and varnishes industry in Romania has evolved considerably in the years 2000 - 2014, from a structure formed mostly of local small and medium enterprises, to one that encompasses many large international companies alongside with small producers. Meanwhile, across industries there have been significant amounts invested in research and development programs, in new equipment to increase safety and to protect consumer health, as well as environmental protection. The products have gained high quality for surface protection and low environmental impact. Production processes are automated and industrial applications became safer and more efficient (InterBiz Study, 2013). The evolution of local companies in Romania paints and varnishes market is determined by a variety of factors related to market structure and the impact of marketing environment, ie a set of agents and forces likely to affect how firms develop their market exchanges (Apetrei, 2009).

In this chapter we presented the evolution of marketing environment components over a period of ten years, between the years 2004 - 2014 in order to identify those factors in the external environment that are more likely to influence the performance of companies in paints and varnishes market in Romania and their ability to adapt to environmental analysis of key market players.

The first secondary objective that seeks to identify factors influencing the performance of the external environment evolves companies paints and varnishes market in Romania is reached in Chapter 4. Continuous analysis of marketing environment, especially the external environment is a primary necessity essential to adapt management decisions and anticipating market trends. In the paints and varnishes market in Romania, there is a number of factors, which significantly influence the sector.

Demographic environment is an indicator of a country's population trends. It is essential to adapt marketing strategies and expectations to the evolution of the population. In Romania, we should approach with realism migration, both in relation to the construction or renovation of housing need in relation to the working population, the evaluation of potential customers and to the craftsmen who work on construction sites, given their need for ongoing assessment and investment in training programs and awareness of products and the application thereof.

Economic environment. From the perspective of analysis that brings elements covering developments in the construction sector for a period of 30 years, there is an unexpected perspective that balances the current developments in the field. The financial crisis

(which started in Romania in year 2008) is transient and is caused by global influences. Following the cyclical evolution of the industry, it is worth noting the importance of long-term strategies that enable manufacturing companies to see beyond the "now", and to forecast the sustainable development of their business over time.

**The natural environment.** Romania has a tradition of ignoring the value of the natural resources and their exploitation inadvertently. Romanian producers still use imported raw materials, while multinational companies in Romania open their operations to exploit natural resources (ex. Cement producers). Due to volatility of financial climate, finding suppliers of raw materials locally can be a key competitive advantage in the long run.

**Technological environment.** We note that only recently, due to the conditions imposed by our status as an EU member, Romania passed legislation limiting the use of old equipment manufacturing and production of emissions of volatile organic compounds (paint and lacquer industry), which is a good news for the environment and human health. This limits access to the market virtually non-compliant products, producers with outdated technologies and equipment. This measure causes the bankruptcy of small producers and strengthens the position of producers with modern production facilities.

**Political environment.** We recommend a realistic analysis of the measures taken by the government in order to determine their potential for firms on the paints and varnishes market. Especially in the legislation of thermal rehabilitation, companies that offer products with a high quality level have limited access to this type of work, due to preference for products with low prices, along with problems in collecting. In this case, an opportunity has practically become a threat to producers.

**The cultural environment** is extremely important in determining the buying behavior of a population, but also in evaluating the product. Companies fail to analyze, in our experience, the influence on the psychological level of consumers expectations, desires and vision. Cultural environment in Romania has, according to psychologists and sociologists, several specific features that favor finishing materials producers. We refer in particular to quality interior finishing products with special optics. However, certain trends introduced by multinational companies or imported from external markets have proven failure (Example ranges of colorful paints ready for children). Creating a "favorable buying environment" is no longer the prerogative of luxury stores, but becomes a key factor for attracting customers even in finishing materials. Old street trade is replaced Showrooms and Concept Center sites where the customer has access to a range of services in addition to products purchased.



The second secondary objective that seeks to analyze the internal environment, precisely of the company Caparol 'ability to mobilize, adaptation to the environment and achieving marketing objectives pursued, was reached in Chapter 4 of this thesis, by analyzing resources and competences Caparol company, along with analysis business potential, ie SWOT analysis.

Caparol company's trade capacity analysis allows the identification of three weaknesses in pricing, distribution and promotion, which indicates how the company has chosen through a period of uncertainty in the business environment in Romania (in terms of reducing marketing budget and limiting the company's ability to support campaigns to promote products and brand Caparol). Looking toward the strengths of the company (company reputation, product quality, service quality, innovation capital), they are mostly obtained through membership of Caparol group. Quality of service is a strength of the team built entirely in Romania, over 11 years of efforts Caparol employee, joined by teams of distribution partners (in that it is the territory on the company and providing services to clients them). From the perspective of financial capacity analysis, we can say that the adjustment of risk-based values, which took place on the international financial and industrial markets in 2010 and 2011 affected their performance, thus influencing market consumer goods and industrial goods markets Romania, leading to increased uncertainty about future economic developments in productive capacity analysis reveals an important asset of the company, due to a large investment program for modernizing and enlarging it. Organizational capacity analysis reveals that Caparol Group affiliation with excellent relationship with suppliers of raw materials to ensure a climate of stability and a balanced management that allowed the company to cross without major problems during the recession of 2008-2010. Analysis of opportunities and threats in the external environment constantly reveals the need to harmonize the company's capacity and potential opportunities and threats in the external environment. Thus, the analysis of the main forces macromediului (demographics, economic, technological environment, political, natural, cultural) and microenvironment components (clients, competitors, distribution channels, suppliers) the company must harmonize with the ability to track targets achieve them.

The third secondary objective, related to determining the role of consumers in formulating marketing policies in companies analyzed was followed in Chapter 4 by performing an extensive analysis in the consumer profile of paints and varnishes, the

company Caparol perspective. The three research conducted or consumers of research Profile Caparol and attitudes of target groups B2C segment, research atitudinileor customer buying behavior and buying from DIY stores and buying behavior modification research in the B2B segment customers Caparol underlying the formulation Caparol company's marketing policy, and implement a set of measures including: project loyalty and applicators craftsmen under the name Caparol Club, launching a line of products under the brand Caparol intended segment costs and low quality, the provision of based promotional marketing of large volumes of products, measures have contributed to the goals Company, in terms of strengthening the relationship with customers (especially of the craftsmen and applicators Caparol products) as well as distributors of Caparol. In terms of establishing the role of consumers in formulating marketing policies of companies in the market of paints and varnishes, there were three categories of consumers targeted by the manufacturers of paints and varnishes, namely: B2B customers (construction companies, real estate developers and private companies ), occasional customers (buy through shops, showrooms representations and presentation) and retail customers (individuals and businesses who make purchases of building materials through networks DIY). At the same time, the development potential of rural market concern firms by building a distribution network with a focus on small local traders in order to cover these areas, which amounts to about 50% of all construction and renovation of Romania, so a very important market.

Increasing the share of DIY stores represent significant benefits for customers, with reference to his bargaining power and a wider range of interest largest supplier to promote their products. Offering own brand , the Do-it-Yourself stores present an important competition for brands in the market, especially in terms of price and shelf space. Due to increased poverty related to low income level, consumers objective is to acquire a paint to beautify the appearance of the dwelling. In response, manufacturers have introduced finishing materials in product range and medium to low quality items which hopes to compete with private labels in DIY chains.

## **CHAPTER 5. TPYPOLOGY OF MARKETING STRATERGIES USED IN ROMANIAN PAINT AND VARNISHES MARKET**

This section aims to investigate the marketing strategies used by companies in the building materials market. The changes in the marketing environment in Romania after 2008 required the re-evaluation of objectives and marketing strategies used by players in the market of paints and varnishes. Analysis of the competitive environment in the paints and varnishes market in Romania is based on a descriptive quantitative research based on responses from 64 producers of paints and varnishes market in Romania. Quantitative research is complemented by a literature research of its own which is based on external secondary data or studies conducted by market research companies, organizations in building materials, statistical data published by the Romanian authorities, official studies and interviews by producers of building materials to describe the main components of the competitive environment in the market of paints and varnishes in Romania. We believe that our research brings elements of novelty by highlighting new aspects in marketing practice of firms in the market of finishing construction materials. Also, in terms of competitive environment analysis and rivalry of competitors operating in that area, the entry of new competitors or analysis of substitute products, this chapter brings original elements useful for validating management decisions.

The fourth secondary objective, namely the analysis of the adaptation of companies to environmental factors, in terms of strategies implemented by companies studied was followed in the analysis of the competitive environment in paints and varnishes market in Romania. Namely we analyzed generic strategies, marketing strategies depending on the competitive position and strategies of the marketing mix. Evaluation of the size of these strategies in Romania by companies active in the building materials market was conducted through an empirical analysis extended to the strategies identified in the top five producers of paints and varnishes in Romania. We studied both the types of strategies used by companies subject to the inquiry (ie generic strategies, strategies based on competitive position and strategies in the marketing mix) and were able to generate a strategic diagnosis of competitive environment where we introduced a quantitative research based on questionnaire. The resulting data are complemented by an analysis of the rivalry between competitors operating in paints and varnishes market in Romania, entry of new competitors analysis, analysis of the degree of threat of substitute products and the ability to negotiate customers and suppliers.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This chapter presents our findings and recommendations, from research conducted in the thesis entitled "Study on the marketing strategies used for paints and varnishes market in Romania". Based on these research objectives assumed, based on literature study and empirical research, the following conclusions were drawn:

- in terms of size using generic strategies at the level of the five companies analyzed, we can not identify a single generic strategy as described in theory, but there are elements of generic strategies that can be found in the activity companies mentioned. We found that the prevailing low cost strategy, which is explained by the need for companies to adapt to market hub-recession;
- in terms of strategies based on competitive position, we can mention companies adherence to a set of shared objectives aimed at increasing market dominance and market growth in total;
- in relation to the marketing mix strategies discussed in section 5.3, we note an intense product and price components, characteristic for periods of economic contraction;
- regarding the marketing impact of environmental factors, we found the presence of specific factors for paints and varnishes market, which are able to significantly influence both the development of market demand (demographic issues related to the phenomenon of migration and declining birth rates), price development to finished products (through a more effective use of natural reuserselor impact on commodity prices) and the positive development of demand for products with high added value (by exploiting factors that are manifested in the cultural environment, impact on expectations , customer desires and vision of home);
- regarding mobilization capacity, adaptation and achievement of the objectives pursued by the company Caparol and the four competing companies studied, we identified common characteristics, among which the influence craftsmen and applicators have on customer buying decision relative to finishing purchase products, as confirmed by the study of perception on the level of the salesforce on customer purchasing behavior and attitudes on the DIY segment;
- in terms of establishing the role of consumers in formulating marketing policies in the companies analyzed, we observed a high level of awareness of customer expectations and concerns, both those in organizational market and retail trade. We identified concerns to stimulate organizational procurement market

customers, but we found the absence of strategies that add value to targeted customers. The predominant concern for pricing strategies and specific strategies involving the product selection and assortment diversification, which aims to significantly reduce costs, both the production and the costs of packaging and storage of goods, therefore companies choose to look inside, and less toward the market as a whole and to customer satisfaction as a purpose in itself. The same trend is also reflected in retail, where increased pressure on component prices have the effect of pricing based on the alignment of objectives aimed at the survival and less realizing the benefits of the market. Customer satisfaction is a constant only in terms of pricing practiced by all five companies studied.

From the three empirical research conducted, we were able to conclude the following:

- the research aimed at changing organizational buying behavior of organizational market finds: increasing demand for cheap products in large volumes, with the aim of completing the work parameters discounted contracted by large developers, interest in the production of simple and inexpensive and finishing support for training of applicators in site acquisition disparate products (process reduces costs by combining elements with lower price instead of a complete, professional, with a higher price), increased risk in terms of late payments and numerous bankruptcies.
- The research studying the perception of purchasing behavior of customers in retail, highlights the increase in the number of stores and product ranges of finish, along with decreased opportunities for information on specific products, by reducing the level of marketing communication. The main conclusions drawn from our research are:
  - most important factor influencing the decision to purchase is the price. Customers are willing to accept different levels of compromise to get a lower price: accept a low quality product, acquiring an unknown brand or product with a non-standard aspect;
  - least important factor influencing the purchase decision: the brand;
  - perception of quality is related to the association: product of German origin with a high quality product at the expense of local products;
  - marketing actions selling point decrease in importance;
  - product design has little significance;

- quality and durability of the product over time - just purchase components declaratively
- The research at the level of the competitive environment reveals organizational interest for customer service by allocating specialized teams (sellers and technicians), concern for improving relations with distributors, increasing production capacity to meet the demands great products at low price concern for ecology and the development of product lines 'customized' for large consumers (eg. for construction companies with large projects).

### **CONTRIBUTIONS TO GENERAL KNOWLEDGE**

We believe that both our vision on the theme and the results of the research conducted will contribute significantly to the expansion of the research field . In the theoretical and conceptual approaches, the contribution to the improvement of knowledge in the field is manifested by that it:

- defines and clarifies some basic concepts about strategic marketing planning and marketing strategies typology,
- identifies and presents marketing environment factors that influence the activity of the analyzed companies and draw conclusions on the measures recommended to increase the performance of companies in this context,
- establishes the importance of a strategic approach to marketing particularly in an economic context marked by recession, by extracting the literature approaches renowned authors.

In the present context, our research entitled "Study on Marketing Strategies Used in Romanian Paints and Varnishes Market" is valuable at the scientific level, as it contributes to development of knowledge, having the merit of a structured presentation of the strategies used by companies within a relevant sector. The originality of the thesis is given by the researches and practical examples used to validate the fundamental theoretical knowledge.

## **MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The overall marketing and management experience gained in 12 years of practice, led us to believe that a construction must begin with structuring knowledge in theory, reinforced by a solid practice based on relevant studies. Our thesis has a strong theoretical support provided by documentary research. The paper also presents a diagnostic characteristics in two ways:

- by revealing consumer concerns and participants in the act of selling (producers, managers, sales representatives) in a period of prolonged economic recession,
- by revealing the challenges faced by companies and their reactions (in terms of marketing strategies used) under the influence of marketing environment factors.

From the management point of view, the results obtained in this PhD thesis represents a real support in making management decisions, providing a valuable contribution in practice for companies in Romanian paints and varnishes market.

## **RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT DIRECTIONS**

Due to confidentiality policies, companies in the building materials market in Romania are reluctant to grant access to information related to their marketing and even less data about objectives, marketing planning and strategy it intends to achieve the desired results. Another limit of the work comes from the fact that research conducted based on a small sample, reflecting the perceptions of certain audiences (sales representatives, distributors or managers of companies in the market for paints and varnishes) on the phenomena studied. Extending a consumer research on a nationally representative sample is difficult, in terms of logistical and financial considerations involved. Undertake research on urban consumers is another limitation of the research. If we refer to the demographic characteristics of the population of Romania, 44% of the population (according to 2011 census) lives in rural areas.

Future research directions automatically start the limits listed above. Documentation and applied research conducted and the limits of the research findings add new elements studied issues and new directions for future research:

1. Conducting a research on consumer profile in rural areas, thus studying a nationally representative sample, and highlight specific regional issues, can bring new contributions to developing the theme;
2. Expansion of market research conducted in Romania paints and varnishes in the market for building materials and the use of extensive samples, nationally representative can provide valuable information and can use the experience gained in the research;
3. Extension of the international research in two ways: studying marketing environment in order to anticipate potential environmental developments that will influence and Romania, and marketing mix analysis to companies operating in international markets anticipating their potential market entry in Romania can bring new information at both the conceptual and theoretical and operational level, to base management decisions.

In light of the issues indicated, we consider it important to develop collaborations between academic and businesses environments, with the aim of designing analytical models that allow more structured market research that will contribute to a better understanding of the phenomena that occur in market.



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