

The Marketing Strategy of Non-Profit Organization for Meditation Center in the United States of America and the United Kingdom

กลยุทธ์การตลาดขององค์กรไม่แสวงผลกำไรสำหรับศูนย์ฝึกสมาธิ
ในประเทศสหรัฐอเมริกาและสหราชอาณาจักร

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Abstract

The objective of this research was to study the marketing strategy of a non-profit organization for a meditation center in the United States of America and the United Kingdom. The research employed in-depth interviews on executives and instructors of meditation centers as well as focus groups of people interested in meditation in order to design the questionnaire. The survey research was conducted on 435 British and 435 American nationals as well as respondents interested in meditation using quota sampling with a self-administrative questionnaire. The data obtained was analyzed by descriptive statistical methods and Inferential statistics such as T-test and Path Analysis. The results showed that the target group were male aged 20-30 years old. They liked reading and writing and had positive attitudes towards meditation. Their objectives were relaxation and inner peace. In comparing two target groups in the U.K. and the U.S.A., there had been differences in decision making when choosing centres. In addition, most of the hypotheses were retained and some were rejected. The marketing strategy that the target group considered important to the meditation centres consisted of a peaceful atmosphere and easy access. It should also offer genuine service with professionalism with marketing through word of mouth. Important factors considered in choosing the mediation centres were: process of teaching meditation, service offered by meditation center, qualifications of personnel, physical evidence and place.

Keyword: meditation center, marketing strategy, non-profit making organization

บทคัดย่อ

วัตถุประสงค์ของการวิจัยคือ ศึกษากลยุทธ์การตลาดขององค์กรไม่แสวงผลกำไรสำหรับศูนย์ฝึกสมาธิในประเทศสหรัฐอเมริกาและสหราชอาณาจักร โดยใช้การสัมภาษณ์ผู้บริหารศูนย์ฝึกสมาธิ ผู้สอนสมาธิ และวิจัยกลุ่มย่อยผู้สนใจฝึกสมาธิที่เป็นชาวสหรัฐอเมริกาและชาวสหราชอาณาจักร เพื่อนำมาใช้ในการออกแบบสอบถามสำรวจผู้สนใจฝึกสมาธิในประเทศสหรัฐอเมริกาจำนวน 435 คน และประเทศสหราชอาณาจักร 435 คน รวมเป็น



870 คนวิเคราะห์ข้อมูล โดยใช้สถิติพรรณนา และใช้สถิติเชิงอนุมาน ได้แก่ t-Test และการวิเคราะห์เส้นทาง (Path Analysis) เพื่อทดสอบสมมติฐาน ผลการวิจัย พบว่า ปัจจัยส่วนบุคคลและคุณลักษณะของผู้สนใจฝึกสมาธิ ส่วนใหญ่เป็นเพศชาย อายุประมาณ 20-30 ปี ระดับการศึกษาปริญญาตรี ฐานะปานกลางขึ้นไป อาชีพเป็นพนักงานในองค์กรธุรกิจ มีพฤติกรรมในการดำรงชีวิตที่ชอบอ่านหนังสือ มีบุคลิกเป็นผู้รักอิสระ มีแรงจูงใจในการฝึกสมาธิเพื่อต้องการผ่อนคลาย และความสงบทางจิตใจ และมีประสบการณ์การฝึกสมาธิมาบ้าง ผลการเปรียบเทียบระหว่างผู้สนใจฝึกสมาธิของทั้งสองประเทศมีความแตกต่างกันในเรื่องการให้ความสำคัญกับกลยุทธ์การตลาดของศูนย์ฝึกสมาธิ เช่นเดียวกันกับการตัดสินใจเลือกศูนย์ฝึกสมาธิ ผลการทดสอบสมมติฐาน พบว่า ปัจจัยส่วนบุคคล การให้ความสำคัญกับกลยุทธ์การตลาด และการตัดสินใจเลือกศูนย์ฝึกสมาธิมีความสัมพันธ์กัน ศูนย์ฝึกสมาธิที่ผู้สนใจฝึกสมาธิมีความต้องการคือ ศูนย์ฝึกสมาธิที่สงบ ร่มรื่น พร้อมการบริการที่ยืดหยุ่นและใส่ใจ โดยมีค่าใช้จ่ายในการฝึกที่คุ้มค่า สามารถเดินทางไปที่ศูนย์ได้สะดวก การส่งเสริมการตลาดที่ดีที่สุดคือ การบอกต่อ และต้องการฝึกสมาธิกับผู้สอนสมาธิที่มีประสบการณ์ มีความเชี่ยวชาญ โดยมีขั้นตอนวิธีการฝึกสอนสมาธิที่ง่าย และนำติดตามต้องการศูนย์ฝึกสมาธิเพื่อสุขภาพ แทนที่จะเป็นศูนย์ฝึกสมาธิอย่างเดียว ความสำคัญของปัจจัยที่มีผลต่อการตัดสินใจเลือกศูนย์ฝึกสมาธิ คือ ขั้นตอนวิธีการฝึกสอนสมาธิ การบริการของศูนย์ฝึกสมาธิ คุณสมบัติของบุคลากรของศูนย์ฝึกสมาธิ

คำสำคัญ: กลยุทธ์การตลาด, องค์กรไม่แสวงผลกำไร, ศูนย์ฝึกสมาธิ



Background and Significance of the Study

The impact of globalization has created a wave of world-wide competitive advantages thru information technology, data, knowledge, facts, probably distorted and undistorted (Rigginsed, 1997, Kothari 1997, Hay and Watson 1999 and Esteva 1999) and has increased conflicts and more seriousness (Walker, 1993) including problems arising from business transaction thru E-commerce (Smith, 1995). All these phenomena create human misbehavior, immorality and have a constant negative impact on economic and social regression.

People have been searching for new solutions and new social values to solve there problems (Vago, 1980). In the year 2000, UNESCO declared “The decade of the culture of Peace (2000-2009)” and encouraged all nations to set up activities enhancing the promotion of the culture of peace throughout

the world. The campaign focused on solving human problems, thru the human mind and spiritual based activities, and meditation is now widely accepted as one of the solutions to grass roots causes of the problems. At present, many religious organizations, especially the main religions, have meditation practice in different and various forms, to build a stronger spirit and bring peacefulness to the society and the world, to replace existing conflicts and violence (Goleman, 1988). Therefore, more and more leaders, businessmen, and professionals have turned to practice meditation in their daily lives to bring the good life and peacefulness to themselves and the society (Aburdene, 2005). Presently, there are more than 100 million people around the world practicing meditation, In the United States alone, it is estimated that more than 10 million Americans are practicing meditation, as well as people in many countries in Europe (Deurr, 2004). Consequently, Meditation Centers are booming, and there are a,

variety of forums of meditation methods to serve the fast growing demand of people around the world, both in the form of business for profit and non-profit Organizations.

Moreover, many works from famous academic professionals such as Andreasen et al., 2005; Anthony & Herzlinger, Bruce, 1995; Cousin, 1990; Drucker, 1989; Hannagan, 1992; Kotler & Andreasen, 1991; Sargeant, 1999, 2001a, 2001b; Shapiro, 1973; Fox and Kotler, 1980) have called for the application of modern marketing strategy, to apply in non-profit making Organization to achieve greater success. The marketing strategy for non-profit Organization is called Social Marketing or Societal Marketing.

Many religious non-profit making Organizations have now developed structures to establish funds and foundations and are applying successful business strategies, recruiting highly skilled, experienced, honest and dedicated personnel to work together systematically (Andreasen & Kotler, 2003). While most Thai meditation teaching centers in overseas market still operate in the form of traditional Thai temples, typical meditation practice and Buddhism centers are spreading rapidly. The finding of this research revealed that in general, most westerners are looking for meditation practice for relaxation and inner peace, rather than any involvement with any religious ceremonies & practices.

Eventually, the research findings of “the Marketing Strategy of non-profit Organization for Meditation Center in United States of America and United Kingdom” will create a new conceptual model for establishing or developing a new Meditation Center that ideally responds to the right demands

of the westerner interested meditation. Fortunately, after rigorous studies and research regarding this topic, no exact study of such manner has been performed before. Therefore the data and findings from this research should forms the basic for future and more extensive research. The interested organization can apply this knowledge to help establishing their new see previous corrections non-profit organizations in overseas market, to expand more and meditation practice centers that match the right need of the westerners.

Objective of the Research

The objective of the research of “Marketing Strategy of Non-profit making Organization for Meditation Center in United States of America and United Kingdom” was to study 1) The marketing strategy of non-profit making organization for meditation center 2) Decision making in choosing the meditation center of people 3) Demographic and Psychological characteristics of the meditation interested 4) The relationship between demographic and psychological characteristics of the meditation and their decision making, in choosing the meditation center and the marketing strategy of the center.

Scope of the Research

Since this research aims to study the marketing strategy of non-profit making organizations for meditation centers in the United States of America and United Kingdom, the sampling data was collected in California, Oregon and New York for the United States, and London and Manchester for the United Kingdom. The research was done from June 2007, -to October, 2008; the data collection was done from February to-June, 2008.

Assumption of the Research

To achieve the objectives, the researcher has adapted assumptions based on the study of the relationship between demographic and psychological characteristics of the meditation person, the decision making in choosing the meditation center and the marketing strategy of the meditation center in the United States and the United Kingdom.

Theories and Related Literature

After reviewing the related works of literature in 4 parts (1) The concept of meditation practice

form a religious and scientific viewpoint and the trend of opening the meditation centers on the world market (2) The concept of non-profit making organization (3) The theory of Social Marketing and the marketing strategy of non-profit making organization (4) the related research which was composed of a marketing strategy of non-profit organization and the research study on meditation.

In accordance with the concept study, theory and related literature review, the conceptual framework was set up as shown in Figure 1.1

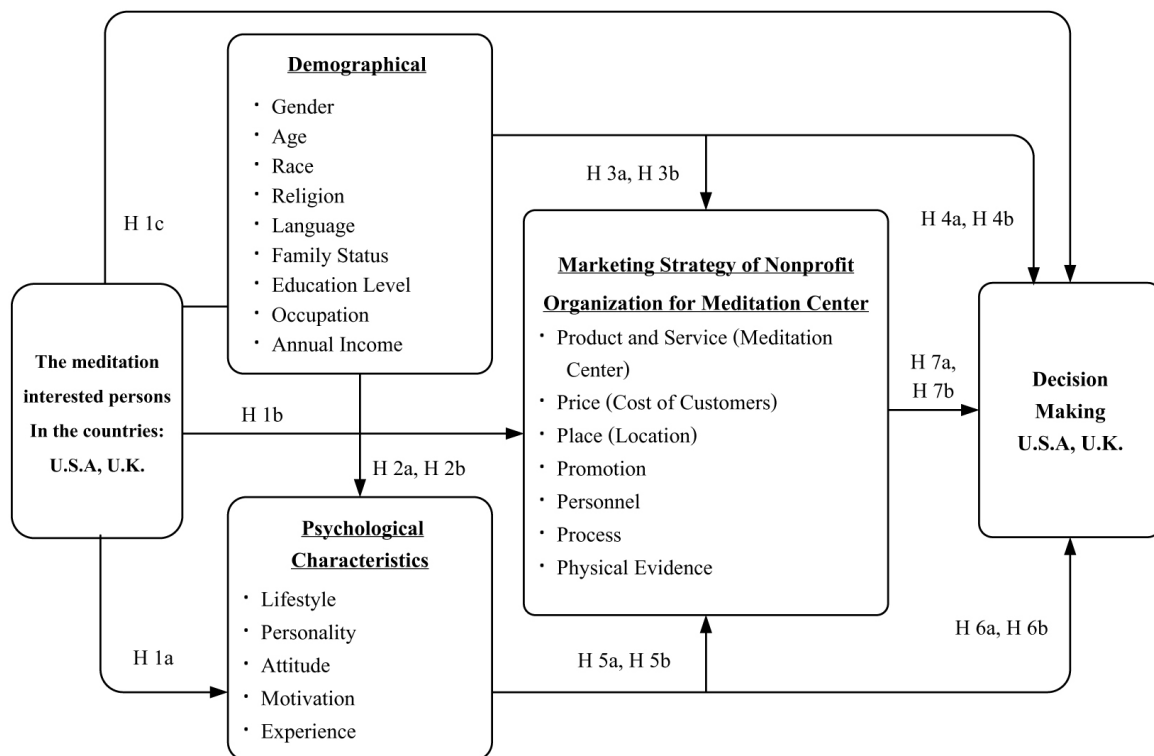


Figure 1.1 The research conceptual framework for marketing strategy of non-profit making organization for meditation center in the U.S.A. and U.K.

The Research Methodology

The research is the quantitative survey. The data collection was started from the in-dept interview and focus on group discussions before designing the questionnaire. The defined variables

are (1) Independent variables which included demographical and psychological characteristics of the people interested in meditation in the U.S.A. and the U.K. (2) Covariates which include the marketing strategy of non-profit making organization

for meditation center. (3) The Dependent variable which included the decision making of the meditation interested persons to choose the meditation center in the U.S.A. and the U.K.

The sampling group selection and sampling collection was arrived at purposive sampling. The researcher focused only on those respondents who showed a specific interest in meditation practice, persons between the age of 20-60 years who lived in the U.S.A. and U.K. The research field work was conducted in the U.S.A. and U.K., with 435 respondents each country and the total of 870 samplings were collected.

Data Analysis

The descriptive statistics which analyze data were based on the demographic, and psychological factors of those interested, such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. Inferential in meditation statistics for testing hypothesis by path analysis, were used in order to find the coefficient direct and indirect factors.

Research Conclusion

1. The marketing strategies of the meditation center that had a strong appeal for the meditation interested persons are listed as follows: The peaceful atmosphere and an easily accessible location, the hospitality & friendly service, reasonable charges, word of mouth from the reference group, the highly experienced meditation instructor, case of understanding and practice and above all, the meditation center with some health facilities & activities is more popular than ordinary and traditional meditation center.

2. The manufactures in fluency the choice of the meditation center of the meditation interested

persons are as follows: (1) The process of meditation teaching (2) The service of the meditation center and (3) The qualifications of staff personnel and management.

3. In demographic term, the group which shown the greatest interest was make, aged between 20-30, educate to bachelor degree level a white-collar wonder in a middle income group. The psychological characteristics and character trust show a fondness of reading, being independent, having positive attitudes towards meditation, some meditation experience, looking for peace and relaxation in meditation.

4. Hypothesis testing of the relationship of every variable confirmed that mostly there was a significant relationship between demographical and psychological characteristics of the meditation interested persons and the influencing marketing strategy and decision making in choosing the meditation center.

Discussion

In conclusion, the finding of the research and study of the marketing strategy of non-profit organization for the meditation center in the U.S. and the U.K. is summarized as follows:

Marketing Strategy of Non-profit making Organization for Meditation Center

The 7 strategies that Meditation Center should adopt are:

1. Product and Service Strategy: The Meditation Center should be situated in a peaceful environment, a green atmosphere, a meditation room that is large enough, not too crowded, ample space for convenience, friendly hospitality, providing advice before and after meditation practice.

2. Pricing Strategy: (The cost of the meditation class), the practitioners are willing to pay the lesson charges, even though the organization is non-profit making. But the charges should be reasonable and the quality and service offered comparable to other meditation centers.

3. Place Strategy: The location of the Meditation Center should not be far from the residences or workplace place of the meditation interested group, easy of access, avoiding long travel, with ample parking space and consistent with the target group's way of life.

4. Promotion Strategy: The most effective promotion and communication of the meditation center by word of mouth from reliable sources and reference groups. The center should cooperate with build a network of academic or government institutions to enhance trustworthiness.

5. Personnel Strategy: The Management should focus on the importance of the meditation to the instructor or trainer. The target group looks to the experience and skill of the trainer, to easily understandable to understand processes, and simple and interesting methods.

6. Process Strategy: The meditation training process should be simple, easy to understand, easy to follow, with some advice before practicing and consultation after practicing. The class should not be overcrowded, and should provide comfortable seating such as mat or a chair.

7. Physical Evidence Strategy: The outlook of the meditation center should be trustworthy, fully equipped facilities, ample parking space, comfortable accommodations, not related with religious ceremony and faiths. The ideal center should incorporate some health facilities and activities, such as Yoga or health foods, etc.

The Decision-Making Process in Choosing the Meditation Center

When asked to list their priorities, the meditation interested group ranked their 3 main preferences upon choosing the meditation center respectively, as follows:

1. The Process: The meditation teaching process should be simple, well communicated, interesting, and easy to follow and practice.

2. The Service: The service and hospitality of the staff member and skilled meditation coaching advice before and after the meditation.

3. The Teacher & the Management Personnel: Highly experienced teacher, reliable, good communicators, good personality and good management of the center.

The Demographic Characteristics of the Meditation Interested Target Group

The findings from this research can segment the primary target group of meditation interested persons in the U.S. and U.K. as follows: Makes predominating over females, aged between 20-30 years, young adults, at the beginning of their career, facing problems and complexity of highly competitive business life, looking for self potential development, demanding happy and healthy life. The other reason is young people at this age are energetic, alert in acquiring new knowledge, new wisdom, can easily access the world-wide knowledge base via the internet and new emerging books, magazines, etc. the new trendy generation.

The Psychological Characteristics of the Meditation Interested Target Group

The habit and way of life of the primary target group above from the findings confirmed that they are: Fond of reading and writing, love freedom and being independent, practice sports and outdoor life participation, are internet users, possessing positive attitudes towards meditation, some previous experience and knowledge about meditation, appreciating the value of meditation for stress relief and relaxation, and realizing that meditation is good for health, both physically and spiritually. However, although they are satisfied with previous meditation experience, to the interesting comments are “Still not finding the right meditation center”, they are still looking forward for the ideal one. Another observation from the finding is that the target group in the U.K. is slightly more interested in meditation practice than the target group in U.S. slightly.

The Relationship Between Demographical and Psychological Characteristics of the Meditation interested Group and the Decision- Making Process in Choosing the Meditation Center

All major factors are inter-related: characteristics of the target group (Demographic and Psychological), the decision-making process and the marketing strategy presented by the Meditation Center. The factors that directly influence the decision making, on demographic characteristics are age and income of the target group, on psychological characteristics are lifestyle, motivation, attitude and personal experience on meditation. As well as the 7 marketing strategies of the meditation center which reflect a strong impact

on the decision-making process of the target group. All the aforementioned factors are related to each other and in the end, play a major role the final decision making in choosing the meditation center of the target group.

Recommendation

1. The management and the leader of meditation training center should sit back and review their attitudes, perceptions, beliefs towards the old policies, strategies, structures, systems, staff, and styles. The inside-out attitude which does not serve the new changing world customer demand, today the new outside-in perspective completely replaces the old strategy and brings a better and more effective and efficient organization.

2. The management and the leader of a spiritual organization who would like to expand meditation in the western hemisphere should apply these research findings as their guide to create an ideal meditation center that attracts westerners who are interested in meditation practice. The focus must be on the right segmentation, targeting and positioning strategy on the potential prospects.

3. The Meditation Center management should incorporate an appropriate course, training process, easy to understand practice which harmonizes with the target group's lifestyle.

4. The key success factors; the meditation training process should be simple, easy and interesting, with friendly hospitality & service, qualifications of instructor & the advisory staff. It is essential that the organization should place their importance on personnel recruitment, training, service-minded attitudes, commitments and dedication to continuous human resources development programs for staff.

The Research Application

After analyzing the research findings, even though the higher group are young male aged 20-30 respondents, the secondary target group is very close. It is recommended that the selection of the male and female target group, the early age of 30-40 is preferable, due to higher income, more matured, more problems and more stress on life. According to the model, age and income directly effecting the decision-making, rather than education, to focus on the middle level management those who are a little older with, higher income is more attractive for the strategy.

In psychological application of the model, the Management of the meditation center should adjust the center's physical attributes to appeal to

the daily life behavior of the target group, such as providing a library for reading books on meditation and new age spiritual and health topics. The atmospheric design and the introduction of health activities to create a relaxing and recreational center in which all personal factors and marketing strategy are fully related, Will create a strong appreciation in choosing & retaining loyalty to the center.

In conclusion, the planning of the marketing strategy for the Meditation Center in the future, the management not only has to set realistic targets, but must also a thorough study of demographic and psychological characteristics and applied. And after all, the application of the 7 strategies of the Meditation Center i.e., Product & Service, Pricing, Place, Promotion, Personnel and Process to achieve the best results for the organization.

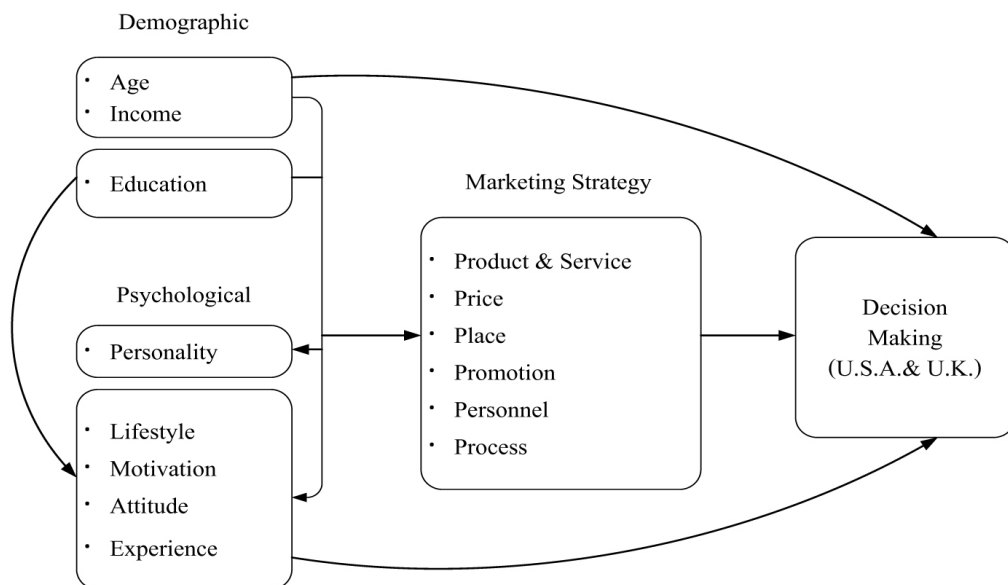


Figure 1.2 Model of marketing strategy for non-profit making organization in the U.S.A. and U.K.



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